



**Easter Vigil 2016  
Homily**

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St Mary's Cathedral, Perth  
26 and 27 March, 2016

*"Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens" (Eph 1:3).*

These words from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians capture beautifully the thoughts which fill the hearts and minds of Christians around the world tonight as they gather in majestic cathedrals, parish churches, or small humble chapels to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. We are part of this worldwide community as we, too, gather here in our beautiful Cathedral to thank God for the extraordinary gift of life which comes to us through the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

The joy of tonight's celebration follows the great sadness of our celebration on Good Friday, as it follows, too, the emptiness of the hours which have passed since then. Our Easter celebration, in fact, really began when we celebrated the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday night and reaches its culmination now, but it is important to remember that we cannot separate the death and Resurrection of Jesus from His whole life. Indeed, this year, in just eight days, we will turn our minds to the Feast of the Annunciation, the celebration which recalls for us the visit of the angel to Mary to announce the conception and birth of Jesus. As for us, so for Jesus, death only really makes sense in the context of the life which has gone before it. We will only understand the meaning of the death and Resurrection of Jesus in the context of His life.

There are two words which can help us as we seek to allow the mystery of this night to enter into our own daily lives. The first is "fidelity" and the second is "presence". Jesus died on the cross because He was, above all else, a man of fidelity. The Gospels are shot through with the idea that Jesus was sent by His Father for the salvation of the world. This was how Jesus understood Himself and, certainly, how He spoke of Himself. We might well say that Jesus knew who He was, He knew what His Heavenly Father was asking of Him, and He was committed completely to His mission, no matter what the cost. He was a faithful man.

As disciples of Jesus, and that is what brings us to the Cathedral tonight, we, too, are being called to live faithful lives in imitation of Him: faithful to God, faithful to His Church, faithful to our families and friends, faithful to our brothers and sisters who, together with us, make up the family of humanity.

During His own lifetime, the faithful Jesus was not always surrounded by faithful followers. Just two days ago, we reflected on the cowardice, shame and infidelity of the closest disciples of Jesus,



who deserted Jesus when He needed them most. But, if we read the Gospels carefully, one thing becomes very clear: Jesus never fails His failing disciples. He never walks away from them, even when they walk away from Him. And He will never walk away from us, no matter how often we seek to distance ourselves from Him. Jesus is present to us, close to us, always holding His hand out to us, and never willing to give up on us.

Ultimately, this is what the Resurrection is all about. This man, who seems to be defeated by His enemies and destroyed by death, is risen again to a new life, one which means He is no longer tied to the dusty roads of the Holy Land but is now with us, and among us, and within us. He is here now, symbolised in the flame of the Easter Candle, in the celebration of this Mass, in the community of faith which we are. He is calling to us, inviting us to come to Him, encouraging us to open the doors of our hearts to Him, and seeking to unite Himself to us in the extraordinary gift of the Eucharist.

It is this risen Lord whom we will receive tonight as we come forward for communion. His broken and now risen body, and His spilt and now life-giving blood, will be our food and drink for the journey. They are the living sign of His desire to be present to us in a communion of life and love. That is His promise that, united to Him and in Him, we can become the people God has created us to be.

*So yes, “Blessed indeed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens” (Eph 1:3).*