

Easter Vigil: The Weekly Easter

Ave Maria Catholic Church, March 30, 2024. Fr. David M Vidal

Jesus the victorious Christ is the one who said: *“Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,”* (Matt 28: 20). Jesus comes victorious: He is the conqueror of Satan, sin, and death. And the victorious Jesus is with us. He is present in our lives. He blesses us through the Church and through the sacraments of the Church.

Dear catechumens, on this holy night, you will participate in the great victory of the Lord. This participation in the victory of Christ begins with the Sacrament of Baptism. In the waters of Baptism, you will die with Christ to rise with Him. Then, catechumens and candidates, by being sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptismal grace will be brought to completion. You will be more perfectly bound to the Church and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Now, the victory of Christ in you is oriented towards a greater communion with the victorious Jesus. This greater union with Christ happens in the Eucharist, which is *“the source and summit of the Christian life,”* (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

Why is the Eucharist the source and summit of our Christian life? Because in the Eucharist, the whole spiritual good of the Church is contained, Christ himself, our Pasch.

In the Eucharist, we see Christ's victory as the mystery of ‘immortal death.’ The death and resurrection of Christ, historically speaking, happened once, but through the Eucharist, is perpetuated in a sacramental manner.

Christ is our Pasch. He passed from death to immortal life. And Jesus wants to share His immortal life with us; He wants to share His immortal life with you.

The Eucharist is the memorial of Jesus’s Pasch. It is a memorial that brings the past to the present. The victory of Christ, which historically speaking happened once, is now applied to you.

You are conquered, not with silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ. This is a night that must be remembered. The victory of Jesus in your lives is now part of your memory as it has always been a central part of the memory of the Church.

In a particular way, the Church remembers the victory of Christ on the Sunday Eucharist. The memory of Jesus’s victory over death is so important that the Church makes it a commandment. The Church commands the participation of all Catholic faithful in the Sunday Eucharist. Your participation in the Sunday Eucharist must be part of your weekly memory.

What do we remember?

During the Sunday Eucharist, we celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord. And our memory is more than an image. During Mass, the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection are re-enacted, the Holy Sacrifice of the Lord on the Cross is renewed in a sacramental manner, and we can be part of it.

The Sunday Eucharist becomes our weekly Easter. Pope Innocent I said: *"We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we do so not only at Easter but also at each turning of the week."*

Dear catechumens and candidates, do not lose your Catholic memory. Do not forget that you were rescued from sin and death and purchased by the precious Blood of Christ. If you truly live this mystery in its fullness, you will understand that the Sunday Eucharist is not the burden of a commandment but the joy of a grateful heart. If you truly live this mystery in its fullness, you will remember during your participation in the Sunday liturgy that you were conquered by the Precious Blood of Christ.

The Sunday Eucharist is the celebration of a new creation. It is the first day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, when Jesus makes all things new. Jesus restores humanity. Jesus brings humanity back to God. Now, if the Israelites remembered the Sabbath as the culmination of the work of creation, how are we not going to remember the wonderful work of redemption with the Sunday Eucharist? How are we not going to be part of the memorial of the miracle of redemption?

Finally, the Sunday Eucharist is also the image of eternity. Sunday is not only the first day of the week; it is also "the eighth day." The Easter celebration elevates us to a new dimension, that is, eternity. Christ brings eternal life to us. We live in this world, but we do not belong to this world. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, our lives have a new direction, that is, to the eternal dwellings in God's Kingdom.

The Sunday Eucharist is "the eighth day" because it rises above the routine of the week. The Weekly Easter allows us to be lifted above the platitude of a worldly life. The Weekly Easter brings consolation in our sufferings, strength to our weaknesses, the fullness of joy that only Christ can give, and complete meaning to our existence.

Dear catechumens and candidates, in a sense, this is a new beginning in your lives. However, this is not the end of your journey. Today, Christ will bless you. And He will never abandon you; do not abandon Him. Stay close to Christ in your journey towards eternal life by remembering the wonderful works Christ has done for you during the Sunday Eucharist, the weekly Easter.