

Easter Vigil, 2013

Text: Various

Title: Your Story

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In this world we are aliens and strangers. In this world we don't quite fit in. We have our own rites and traditions. We speak our own language. We think and act in ways that seem strange to outsiders.

Life in this world can be wearisome and even exhausting.

From time to time we need to step back and take a fresh look at ourselves, and rediscover who we are. We need to hear once more who we really are, and remember what matters most.

Tonight is that night. It may take some time, but that's okay. It's worth it. It's worth it to hear and know once more who you are, down at the very core of your being.

You are God's special creation. You aren't an accident of evolution, a result of random genetics, but you are made in God's image. You are the pinnacle, the crown of creation. When everything else was made, it was all good. When God made humanity, He declared it **very** good. To be human is a good thing, a very good thing, indeed.

You are a child of Noah, saved through the waters of baptism and protected in the ark of the church. Outside the storm waters rage, drowning the multitudes, but in here, tonight, you are safe, one of the eight, born again from our eight sided font.

You are a child of Abraham and Isaac. The Lord chose to sacrifice His own Son, the very Lamb of God so that you could go free.

You are one of God's people set free from the slavery of sin, brought through the Red Sea, led by the Light of Jesus Christ. You are now in the wilderness, being tempted and tested. But you are not alone. Jesus, your true light, the pillar of fire will bring you safely home to the Promised Land.

You were nothing but a pile of dead, dry bones, lifeless, hopeless, until the Spirit of the Lord was breathed into you through God's Holy Word, bringing you back to life to live forever.

You have a redeemer, Jesus Christ, one who will fight for you. And even if worms destroy your body, one day your flesh will rise and you will see God.

You are there in the fiery furnace, because you have refused to give in to the pressures of this world. You have risked your very life rather than bow down to idols. And Jesus joins you in this furnace. Though the flames rise around you, they will not harm you, but Jesus will bring you safely through.

This is who you are, this is who we are, made God's people through Holy Baptism, the body of Christ joined to Him in the Lord's Supper. Every story, every page of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation is about you, and what God has done for you. Every page points to Jesus and you and Jesus are one.

And most of all, on this most holy of nights, you are a child of the resurrection. You are one with the risen Christ. His grave is empty, and yours will be, too. You will rise again because Jesus is risen.

This world will pass away. The evil will be destroyed once and for all, but you will live forever through Jesus Christ.

You will feel strange and out of place in this world because you are strange, you're different, and that's okay. God has made you different. He has called you out of darkness and into light, he has called you out of the evil chaos, the floods and the fires, the death and suffering to a better place, a place of love, forgiveness, healing and light.

Here on earth, the church is that place, your refuge, your island of sanity in the midst of the chaos of this world, your true home. Here you find life and beauty and peace.

And there is always room for more, here in your Father's house, always one more spot at the table, always a room ready and waiting for a new guest. When you find people who have also become weary of this world, who feel out of place and out of step with others around them, invite them here to come home with you for a meal and some good company, tell them the stories, the stories worth telling, the stories that show them who they really are and what Jesus Christ has done for them.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!