



# The Holy See

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## EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

### *HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS*

*Vatican Basilica*

*Holy Saturday, 4 April 2015*

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#### **[Multimedia]**

Tonight is a night of vigil. The Lord is not sleeping; the Watchman is watching over his people (cf. *Ps* 121:4), to bring them out of slavery and to open before them the way to freedom.

The Lord is keeping watch and, by the power of his love, he is bringing his people through the Red Sea. He is also bringing Jesus through the abyss of death and the netherworld.

This was a night of vigil for the disciples of Jesus, a night of sadness and fear. The men remained locked in the Upper Room. Yet, the women went to the tomb at dawn on Sunday to anoint Jesus' body. Their hearts were overwhelmed and they were asking themselves: "How will we enter? Who will roll back the stone of the tomb?..." But here was the first sign of the great event: the large stone was *already* rolled back and the tomb was open!

"Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe..." (*Mk* 16:5). The women were the first to see this great sign, the empty tomb; and they were the first to enter...

"*Entering the tomb*". It is good for us, on this Vigil night, to reflect on the experience of the women, which also speaks to us. For that is why we are here: *to enter, to enter into the Mystery* which God has accomplished with his *vigil of love*.

We cannot live Easter without entering into the mystery. It is not something intellectual, something we only know or read about... It is more, much more!

"To enter into the mystery" means the ability to wonder, to contemplate; the ability to listen to the

silence and to hear the tiny whisper amid great silence by which God speaks to us (cf 1 *Kings* 19:12).

To enter into the mystery demands that we not be afraid of reality: that we not be locked into ourselves, that we not flee from what we fail to understand, that we not close our eyes to problems or deny them, that we not dismiss our questions...

To enter into the mystery means going beyond our own comfort zone, beyond the laziness and indifference which hold us back, and going out in search of truth, beauty and love. It is seeking a deeper meaning, an answer, and not an easy one, to the questions which challenge our faith, our fidelity and our very existence.

To enter into the mystery, we need humility, the lowliness to abase ourselves, to come down from the pedestal of our "I" which is so proud, of our presumption; the humility not to take ourselves so seriously, recognizing who we really are: creatures with strengths and weaknesses, sinners in need of forgiveness. To enter into the mystery we need the lowliness that is powerlessness, the renunciation of our idols... in a word, we need to adore. Without adoration, we cannot enter into the mystery.

The women who were Jesus' disciples teach us all of this. They kept watch that night, together with Mary. And she, the Virgin Mother, helped them not to lose faith and hope. As a result, they did not remain prisoners of fear and sadness, but at the first light of dawn they went out carrying their ointments, their hearts anointed with love. They went forth and found the tomb open. And they went in. They had kept watch, they went forth and they entered into the Mystery. May we learn from them to keep watch with God and with Mary our Mother, so that we too may enter into the Mystery which leads from death to life.