Diocese of Orange to Baptize Nearly 1,000 People in Annual Easter Vigil

Descripción

THE GREAT EASTER VIGIL IS THE MOST MOMENTOUS LITURGY IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. Garden Grove, Calif., (April 2, 2015) – The Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange, will baptize the elect and accept candidates into full communion in the Roman Catholic Church during the Great Easter Vigil held at Holy Family Cathedral in Orange, April 4, 2015 at 7:45 p.m. Across the Diocese of Orange nearly 1,000 people will be baptized and more than 550 baptized candidates will be received in-to full communion during these sacred rites. “We are blessed as a Diocese to baptize so many new Catholics on this Holy Saturday. This ceremony is the Church’s most significant vigil and is the climax of the liturgical year,” said Bishop Vann. This ceremony consists of four main parts: The Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, Christian Initiation and Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and the Holy Eucharist. The first part of the service, The Service of the Light, begins outside the church in the dark. The dark rep-resents evil, deceit, and sin and allows the believer to reflect on the darkness found in the world. Worshippers gather around a bonfire also known as the new fire or Easter fire. This portion of the vigil consists of the blessing of the new fire and the lighting of the Paschal candle, which symbolizes the Light of the Risen Christ. The priest will carry the lit Paschal candle at the head of a procession in-to the church and at three points will stop and chant “Light of Christ,” to which the people will respond “Thanks be to God.” Once the procession has entered the sanctuary the Easter proclamation or Exultet is sung. This ancient hymn of praise recounts God’s saving acts throughout history, and asks God to accept the Easter Candle as it dispels the darkness of night as does Christ who sheds his graceful light on all humankind. The people take their seats for the second part of the ceremony, the Liturgy of the Word. This Liturgy consists of seven readings on the history of the People of God and an Epistle reading. Then the altar candles are lit, bells are rung, and the alleluia is sung (which had not been used during the 40 days of Lent) all in preparation of the proclamation of the resurrection founding the gospel reading. The Gospel reading describes the resurrection of Jesus and the Homily, which explains the readings and the meaning of Christ’ resurrection, assists those present to reflect on the meaning of Christ’s resurrection in their own lives. After the Liturgy of the Word, the third part of the vigil takes place. All elect and candidates for entrance into the church join with the congregation in invoking the saints by means of an ancient litany. The Bishop will then bless the water within the baptismal font in preparation for the baptisms. The group will then be asked by Bishop Vann to renounce sin and profess their faith in Christ. Once this portion of the ceremony is concluded the elect are initiated into the Church as they are baptized within the font. Baptism is a sacramental entry into Christian life and the beginning of a journey to God. The water identifies the believer with the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit– and the believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and is an act of obedience for the believer. After the Elect are baptized, Bishop Vann will sprinkle the attending parishioners with the recently blessed baptismal water. Following the baptismal ceremony is the Profession of Faith for those who have already been baptized and are converting from other Christian traditions. These candidates are asked if they reject sin, reject the glamour of evil and reject Satan and to express their belief in the Creed. Next, the newly-baptized and those who have made their profession of faith share in the Celebration of Confirmation, when Catholics completing the Sacraments of Initiation are con-firmed into the Roman Catholic Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit. All newly baptized and those who have made their profession of faith stand with their sponsors as Bishop Vann anoints them with Chrism, a fragrant oil that had been blessed earlier in the week at the Chrism Mass. The final part of the Easter Vigil is the Holy Eucharist. All of the evening’s

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sacraments and preparations culminate in the Holy Eucharist, the final sacrament of initiation. For the first time, candidates and the elect receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ through Holy Communion. This sacrament is considered to be an intimate encounter with Christ, in which people receive Christ into their bodies, under the species of consecrated bread and wine. This holy sacrament is the final step in their initiation into the Roman Catholic Church and the beginning of their journey with Christ. It is carried out in keeping with the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus, in which he asks that his disciples “do this in memory of me.”

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