

# HOMILIES FROM THE HERMITAGE

## CORONA 15: THE SILENT DAY

God created everything on six days and on the seventh day He rested.

Jesus created everything anew and on the Sabbath day He rested in the tomb.

‘Luke 23/56 ‘And on the seventh day they rested according to the commandments’

## THE EASTER VIGIL

**This is the great night of the Church’s year: we celebrate Jesus risen from the tomb.  
HE IS ALIVE. ALLELUIA**

This celebration takes place after nightfall: in some places it happens in the early morning.

The rite takes us from night to light—with ‘everything new’

1. The new fire is lit and the Easter candle lit and proclaimed ‘Lumen Christi’
2. The congregation processes into Church following the Candle. There praise for the Easter candle as the symbol of Christ alive and triumphant.
3. There are Readings from the Old Testament: these look to the New Covenant and are read under the light of the Candle: the Old making illuminated by the new. Central to these readings is that of the Exodus when God’s people escape from slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea. Songs are prayers are interspersed.
4. The Gloria is sung and the New Testament is read Romans 6/3-11.
5. The Alleluia, which has been still during Lent, is sung thrice and the Gospel of the resurrection is proclaimed—the year according to St. Matthew.
6. The new water for Baptism is blessed and catechumens are baptized.
7. The Eucharist is celebrated.

The silent day with deepest sorrow and apparent total failure moves to the early morning on the first day of the week. Gradually the fullness of the triumph and victory explode in front of us. From the sparks of the **new** fire (kindled with flints?) to the **new** Easter Candle is lit. Through the dark Church with ever-growing candlelight moves the ‘LIGHT OF CHRIST’ When all are lit the Deacon proclaims the song of the ‘Exsultet’, which extols the candle as light of Christ’s victory and a new creation, and the creation is praised in the song of the bees and the wax. The Old Testament Scriptures are read and given new and extra insight as we heard the lessons of old are renewed and explained in the Light of Christ They include the story of Creation—new renewed in Jesus: we hear the story of the Exodus, with the old covenant now superseded in the new Covenant in Jesus. The Alleluia reads us to the Gospel and the life of Jesus back from the dead. It is puzzling and amazing for the disciples. We know/believe what had happened: but the disciples had to learn—and it took some time sink in. Finally the **new** water is blessed for the use in Baptism. The whole ambience is of freshness and renewal—fire, candle, water: and then we celebrate Jesus’ Sacrifice which we last celebrated at the feast of the Last Supper. Let us simply immerse ourselves into the vastness of the Paschal Mystery: the new day is born. Jesus is alive: Jesus has saved us: we are asked to follow Him and proclaim:

**JESUS IS LORD: ALLELUIA**