



Diocese of Orange to baptize nearly 1,000 people in annual Easter vigil

Description

The great Easter vigil is the most momentous liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church.

Garden Grove, Calif. (April 4, 2022) — The Most Rev. Timothy Freyer, Auxiliary 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 Catholic Church in Orange on April 16, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. Across the Diocese of Orange, nearly 650 people will be baptized and more than 480 baptized candidates will be received into full communion during these sacred rites.

The celebrations include one unique to Orange County: the annual Blessing of the Streets, which began in 1993 in response to a surge in violence and gang-related shootings in Santa Ana near the St. Joseph parish on North Minter Street. At the time, several teens and a 2-year-old child were shot in the neighborhood.

The 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 represents 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 or deacon will carry the lit Paschal candle at the head of a procession into 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 found in the gospel reading. The Gospel reading describes the resurrection of Jesus and the Homily, which explains the readings and the meaning of Christ's resurrection, assisting 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. Bishop Freyer will then bless the water within the baptismal font in preparation for the baptisms. The group will then be asked by Bishop Freyer 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 Freyer 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 confirmed 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 Freyer 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 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."

Media outlets that wish to cover the Blessing of the Streets and/or other Holy Week celebrations, whether at Christ Cathedral or another Diocese of Orange parish, are asked to contact Bradley Zint (bzint@rcbo.org, 714-282-6052) and Christina Montes (cmontes@rcbo.org, 714-282-6035).

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About the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange

With 1.3 million Catholics, 57 parishes, five Catholic centers and 35 schools, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange is one of the largest and most diverse faith communities in the United States. The Diocese empowers Catholics across Orange County to have an active life of faith that is integrated and woven into the fabric of their daily lives through the community and sacramental life of the Church. Under the leadership of Bishop Kevin Vann, the Diocese works to establish and support dynamic,

vibrant parishes and schools welcoming all to live the Gospel with faith, joy, charity and unity. Christ Cathedral, the spiritual home of the Bishop of Orange, was dedicated in July 2019.

Learn more about the Diocese of Orange at www.rcbo.org.

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