

David Haas has composed an appropriate refrain for our celebration today. “We come to share our story, we come to break the bread, we come to know our rising from the dead.”

How appropriate tonight that we started out in the dark around the new fire. Our earliest ancestors huddled around the blazing fire to ward off the cold and their fears of ferocious animals and the terrors of the night. They would tell stories of their great hunts and the best places to find fruits and plants to eat. They would remember those who had gone before and tell of their great deeds. And as the night grew long, they would wrestle with the deepest human questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? God was in the answers to those questions. God was in those stories.

People today sit around campfires and tell ghost stories to scare the children and sometimes themselves. They sing the traditional songs and roast hotdogs and make s'mores. They enjoy the dancing flames and are lulled into peace by the light and warmth of the fire. These gatherings form families and deepen friendships. And in the peace and quiet we still wrestle with those same questions. And God is in the answers. God is in the memories.

We might call this day, Holy Saturday, ‘reflection day.’ Luke is inviting us to remember, as in not-to-forget. Luke is inviting us to re-member as in to reconstruct,

to make whole, to hold together.

It is in the gospel of Luke alone that we hear the word, “remember.”

“Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.”

To those of you who are my age and older we often remember things about our parents and grandparents' homes. Often enough our grandparents' and parents homes would be filled with fascinating things, old things that we would hardly ever see anywhere else. Most often our Catholic grandparents or great-grandparents, especially those born early in the 20th century, had far more religious art decorating their homes than those born in the middle of the century. It was the rare bedroom that did not have a crucifix hanging over the beds, a tradition that has almost disappeared. Those of you who are much younger than me had parents of a later generation; their homes are decorated differently from those of your grandparents

As a young boy I remember there was always a holy water font hanging on the door frame of the front door and in my bedroom. I remember my mother always reminding me to bless myself with the holy water every time I went in or out of the house and when I got up in the morning and went to bed at night. "Holy things were never meant to be left in the church!"

Let's remember what has happened over the past few days. On Holy Thursday

evening stories were told from a time long past. We remove the Blessed Sacrament from our churches. The Light of the World was gone from our sanctuaries. No sacraments are celebrated from the end of the Holy Thursday Mass.

On Good Friday morning and afternoon, some came together to pray but not in the way we were accustomed to. In the evening we enter into darkness in order to prepare ourselves for the dawn. Our confirmation students lead us through the shadows and allowed us to follow the footsteps of our Lord's final journey to conquer death.

At the Vigil tonight, the Light is returned, and water is blessed so that we can enter that Light. The dawn of a new day, a new age, arrives!

During the Easter Vigil water is blessed to be used in Baptism. Though all the attributes of the water remain the same, the water is different after the blessing. We call it "holy water." Once blessed, holy water is used to baptize or for purification when blessing people or objects. Whenever we use the holy water for blessing people or things, we recall our connectedness to God through baptism.

Over the past few days we remember a time of mourning, of grieving, of celebrating, of commemorating, of being by ourselves throughout the dark night until the light of resurrection. We are invited to enter into the emptiness of the tomb, the silence of the darkness, the solitude of aloneness.

Today's readings taken from Hebrew Scripture invite us to remember, reflect on, be with, and hold significant events and faith stories upon which our faith is built: creation of universal harmony out of rampant chaos, the salvation of one family on behalf of all women and men and children, the parting of the Red Sea delivering the Israelites from death to freedom.

Today's readings taken from the New Testament invite us to remember, reflect on, and be with Jesus as he lives out a strong Hebrew tradition and turns it into a new way of being. Remember Jesus who lived and walked among us. Remember the generous Jesus who fed the hungry, the compassionate Jesus who clothed the naked, the comforting Jesus who healed the sick. Remember the innocent Jesus who was crucified and died.

Now on this day we rejoice bringing back the things we left behind 40 days ago. We sing the Glory of God's praises again, the bells that have been silent ring again and the Alleluia's that were held inside us are released like the new water flowing. The smells and sights of new life are all around us.

But let us not get lost in all the joy lest we forget the events that got us here today.

Remember...Remember...Remember... for today (Sung) "We come to share our story, we come to break the bread, we come to know our rising from the dead."

