

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

This is the night when the earth is formless and void;
and darkness is over the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters.
Then God says,
“**Let there be light**” (Gen 1:3);
and there is light—
casting away the darkness of fear and chaos.

This is the night when Noah’s ark moves upon the face of the waters;
and death and destruction have raged against the earth—
but we, along with Noah and his family, 8 souls in all,
float safely upon this Baptismal Ark of Salvation,
landing on dry ground and offering sacrifices of praise.

This is the night when Abraham straps wood onto his son’s back,
preparing the promised Son for sacrifice.
Then the Lord sends His angel with an outstretched arm,
offering a Ram instead—
even a perfect Lamb without blemish in our place.

This is the night when Israel is led into the jaws of death,
trapped between the waters of the Red Sea and the chariots and horsemen of the
Egyptians;
then the waters split,
and His Church passes through on dry ground,
toward the land of the living.

This is the night when the hungry and thirsty, the poor and the needy,
do not die, but live!
When all are invited to come and drink and eat and buy without money—
when we come freely, apart from our works or merits,
and taste the goodness of the Lord!

This is the night when the valley of dry bones begins to shake and rattle,
when sinews attach and flesh comes back and the spirit of life is breathed into them,
when we also rise with all the dead,
and Christ being the firstborn from the grave!

This is the night when the fires of hell cannot win,
when the three men cast into the furnace live and do not die,
and when that fourth man, Jesus Christ, gathers them out of the flames and into
His glorious resurrection!

This is the night unlike any other night—
 for this is the night when death loses,
 when wrath is spent,
 when hatred ceases,
 and when sin is no more!

This is the night when the tomb of the grave is shown too weak for this Christ,
 when Satan's grasp is loosened,
 and death is no more.

This is the night, when you, O sinner, are spared.
 You will not be lost in the chaos of the darkness.
 You will not drown in the flood.
 You will not be killed by Abraham's knife.
 You will not be swept away by the Red Sea.
 You will not thirst or hunger anymore, nor will your poverty keep you from eating.
 You will not rot with the bones, long dead.
 You will not burn in the fiery furnace of hell.

You live!
 You live because Christ lives.
 You rise, because Christ rises.
 And now you will rejoice!

You are saved, O Sinner!
 No grave and tomb for you,
 No death or hell either!

For *this is the night* when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the bondage of their sin.
 Sin's penalty was paid,
 death lashed out with its sting,
 the tomb was sealed and the deed was done.
 But none of that can stand in the way of Christ's love for you.

Don't go to the tomb,
 He is not there, He is risen!

Now go!
 Don't be like Salome and the two Marys,
 don't flee with fear or silence—
 but go!

Tell His disciples, tell your neighbors, tell your family, tell the world—
 He is risen and risen for you!
 Alleluia! Alleluia!

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