

**Easter Vigil**  
**Cycle B**  
**April 7-8, 2012 7:30pm**  
**Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air**

**God's Story**

Tonight, we hear God's story – or maybe we should say God's story about God and us.

**The Story of Goodness**

First, the Word of God tells us the story of *"the beginning, when God creates the heavens and the earth."*

God brings forth the light and the sky, tames the waters and separates them from the land, and on it goes. Finally, God creates man and woman.

The story goes that as each part of creation is brought into being, *"God saw how good it was."* *"God saw how good it was."*

We keep hearing this refrain. These words are intended to grab our attention.

They call us to approach creation positively and to see the goodness that is here. For example, one Catholic author speaks of the need to affirm human flourishing – human flourishing.

His point is that wherever we see accomplishments that enable human beings to flourish – in technology, in medicine, in food distribution, in the provision of potable water – wherever we see human flourishing, we are to acknowledge its goodness. It may not be done explicitly in the name of God or of Jesus.

But if it reverences and promotes human flourishing, we ought to see and affirm it as good. The story about creation calls us to this.

**The Story of Our Response – 1**

God's story then tells us that, unfortunately, we have sometimes not acted as God wants.

Sin has entered our world. The second reading gives a glaring example of this in the oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians.

Thankfully, the story goes that God frees the Israelites from slavery through the Exodus. God has tamed the water in the act of creation, and here God tames the water again and allows his people to pass through it safely.

And in doing this, God wants us to remember the past – the social injustice in Egypt. One reason God calls his people then and now to remember the slavery in Egypt is that this social or systemic sin can still happen.

We see it, for example, in ethnic cleansing, in racism, and in the allowing of poverty. Positively, God calls us to be agents for justice and peace and human flourishing, and not cooperators in social or systemic sin.

### **The Story of Our Response – 2**

God's story goes on to remind us of personal sin.

The prophet Ezekiel in our third reading tells God's people that they cannot just blame others all the time. They too, personally and individually, have disregarded God's ways.

Ezekiel promises that God will sprinkle clean water upon them to cleanse them. So once again, water is at work in God's action.

Here, God expects his people to accept responsibility for their behavior. It might be the neglect of our parents or our children or not praying and making God the center of our lives.

God expects us to admit and repent of personal sin. Positively, he expects us as individuals to do what we can for the human flourishing of ourselves and of those who are in our personal lives.

### **The Story of Resurrection**

Ezekiel's promise of salvation and new life finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

God's story in tonight's gospel passage announces Jesus' resurrection. It begins with the words, *"Very early, on the first day of the week..."*

This first day hearkens back to the first day of creation in Genesis. It tells us that a new creation is happening here.

We even see this newness when the angel proclaims the resurrection to women and tells them to go and tell others. This happens in a culture where the testimony of women did not count – so something dramatically new is happening here.

And, of course, this something new is Jesus risen from the dead. This is what Paul proclaims in the passage we heard from him.

Paul hearkens back to the waters of Genesis and Exodus and Ezekiel. He tells us that now we are given the transforming water of baptism.

Through baptism, we are attached to Jesus Christ and this attachment brings us a new and risen life. In a sense, this is both the end and the beginning.

It is the end or fulfillment of all of God's promises through the ages. And it is the beginning of living the journey of human life with the One who is our life and our resurrection.

That is tonight's story: God's story about God and us. We recall it and now we resolve to live it with faith and hope and love.