Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord -

 The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

**First Part:**

**The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil:**

**The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Candle**

At the Paschal Fire:

*Commentary*

The only light in the night is the new fire which the priest will now bless. This shows us that with the victory of Jesus over the darkness of sin and death, everything in our lives is renewed.

So we shall now pray that the fire which represents Christ, the Light, may burn strongly and purely in our hearts.

Fire gives us light and gives us warmth, Christ gives us all this and more. He gives us life.

Let us pray the source of LIFE-GIVER to light up our lives with this fire.

***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.***

**Dear brothers and sisters,**

**on this most sacred night,**

**in which our Lord Jesus Christ**

**passed over from death to life,**

**the Church calls upon her sons and daughters,**

**scattered throughout the world,**

**to come together to watch and pray.**

**If we keep the memorial**

**of the Lord’s paschal solemnity in this way,**

**listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries,**

**then we shall have the sure hope**

**of sharing his triumph over death and living with him in God.**

* ***Then the Priest blesses the fire, saying with hands extended:***

**Let us pray.**

**O God, who through your Son**

**bestowed upon the faithful the fire of your glory,**

**sanctify (+) this new fire, we pray,**

**and grant that,**

**by these paschal celebrations,**

**we may be so inflamed with heavenly desires,**

**that with minds made pure**

**we may attain festivities of unending splendour.**

**Through Christ our Lord.**

**R. Amen.**

*Commentary*

The priest will now engrave on the candle some signs.

The Alpha and the Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet, together with the year we live in to show that Christ is the Lord of all things.

The five grains of incense represent the five wounds of Christ.

***Then the priest traces the following in the candle, saying meanwhile:***

**1. Christ yesterday and today**

***(he cuts a vertical line);***

**2. the Beginning and the End**

***(he cuts a horizontal line);***

**3. the Alpha**

***(he cuts the letter Alpha above the vertical line);***

**4. and the Omega**

***(he cuts the letter Omega below the vertical line).***

**5. All time belongs to him**

***(he cuts the first numeral in the upper left corner of the cross);***

**6. and all the ages**

***(he cuts the second numeral in the upper right corner of the cross).***

**7. To him be glory and power**

***(he cuts the third numeral in the lower left corner of the cross);***

**8. through every age and for ever. Amen.**

***(he cuts the fourth numeral in the lower right corner of the cross).***

* *When the cutting of the cross and of the other signs has been completed, the Priest inserts five grains of incense into the candle in the form of a cross, meanwhile saying:*

1. **By his holy 1 4 2 5**

 **3**

2. **and glorious wounds,**

3. **may Christ the Lord**

4. **guard us**

5. **and protect us. Amen.**

***The Priest lights the paschal candle from the new fire, saying:***

**May the light of Christ rising in glory**

**dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.**

* *When the candle has been lit, the M.C. takes burning coals from the fire and places them in the thurible, and the Priest puts incense into it in the usual way.*
* *The thurifer with the smoking thurible precedes the priest who*

*carries the paschal candle. Before them the people enter church.*

***At the door of the church the Priest, standing and raising up the candle, sings:***

**The Light of Christ.**

***And all reply:***

**Thanks be to God.**

***Then the Priest moves forward to the middle of the church and, standing and raising up the candle, sings a second time:***

**The Light of Christ.**

***And all reply:***

**Thanks be to God.**

***When the Priest arrives before the altar, he stands facing the people, raises up the candle and sings a third time:***

**The Light of Christ.**

***And all reply:***

**Thanks be to God.**

* *Then the Priest places the paschal candle on a large candlestand prepared next to the ambo.*