

Easter Vigil Homily 2022

You would have thought with the invention of electricity
there would be no need of candles in our world.

But not so, we see candles everywhere...especially in the church.

In the church you see candles at the altar, ambo, baptisms, weddings,
and most importantly the Easter Candle, the great paschal candle that was lit this evening.

A candle is not only a source of light, it is also a symbol.

You see a candle is entirely comprised of fuel.

Every bit of wax in a candle is there to be transformed into light.

This is the perfect symbol of Christ.

Every bit of his flesh was transformed into light, for our salvation.

This is why the women were terrified.

They could not have understood that Jesus had undergone that transformation.

They were still operating on the physical level

and did not understand that a transformation of this sort,

doesn't happen on the physical level, it happens on the spiritual level.

This is also why Peter was amazed when he saw the linen wrappings by themselves.

Something had happened that was beyond the physical,

and it was only after he experienced the risen Christ that he would begin to make sense of it all.

Jesus starts them on the journey of discovery when he asks them.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? Hold that thought for a moment.

A candle is comprised of fuel, and every bit of wax is transformed into light.

Every bit of Jesus' flesh has been transformed into light for our salvation.

And all of this is fine and dandy,

but the part that we need to be reminded of, is that like Christ,

we are entirely comprised of fuel.

We are called to be salt of the world and light of the nations.

Like candles, like Christ, we can expect to be entirely consumed...lighting the way for people,
all around us.

And this is where it gets to be difficult.

We are comfortable being passive Christians...watching from a distance...

letting other people light the way.

But that is not the nature of our faith...the Church exists to evangelize.

As disciples we are called to evangelize...

to bring the light of Christ into a world darkened by sin...

to be the fuel that lights the way for others.

Let me tell you a story, it is a little long so bear with me.

There was a very wise and holy abbot.

Now it was well known that his monastery was the best and greatest monastery in all Christendom.

People came from all over to seek his counsel.

Well one night the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a dream, and told him

I want you to sit at my left hand in the kingdom of heaven.

Now the Abbot knew he was a wise and holy monk,
so he asked the Lord Jesus. If I am sitting at your left hand, who will be sitting at your right.
Jesus simply said, "Fred the Monk."

Now since there was no Fred in his monastery, the abbot set out to find out who this Fred was.
After all, to sit at the left was an honor, but to sit at the right hand of Jesus, nothing is better than that.
So he bid his monastery farewell, and set out to find Fred the monk.

He traveled from monastery to monastery always checking them out,
always seeing that his monastery was indeed the best,
but never coming across a monk named Fred.

Eventually after a long, long time he came to a small out of the way village,
with a dilapidated church, and no priest to be found.

When he asked if there was a monastery nearby, he was told no,
but there was an holy priest named Fred who lived at the edge of town.
Immediately the Abbot was encouraged, finally after years of seeking,
he would find the person who was to sit at the right hand of God.
So you can be sure he was a little intimidated when he knocked on the door.

To his surprise the person who opened the door was the biggest man he had ever seen,
Huge--well over 600 pounds. That's over 300 kilo's for those of you who are metric.
He was dressed in rags and was absolutely filthy.

The Abbot was so surprised that he thought this could not possibly be the right person,
so he asked if Fred the monk was around.
The huge man before him said gruffly, "I'm Fred the monk."
The abbot was so surprised that he thought, "Maybe I have the wrong man."

It was late at night, and Fred the monk, saw that it was nearing night
and asked the Abbot if he wanted to spend the night.
The abbot looked in the house, saw that it was dirty,
and was about to say no, but realized that he had nowhere else to go.
Fred the monk prepared a huge meal, of which the abbot ate only a small portion,
but Fred the monk proceeded to polish off everything.
They talked late into the evening and the more they talked
the more disgusted the Abbot became with Fred the monk.
In the morning the Abbot awoke to the smell of a wonderful breakfast,
but again it was a breakfast for twenty and there was only two of them.
But again Fred the monk ate everything.
In the end the abbot could no longer restrain himself.
Look you're supposed to be a holy man, what is with you.

Fred the monk got tears in his eyes. And told the abbot his story.

You see this village is on the fringe of civilization,
every so often the infidels come and destroy everything,
that is why hardly anyone lives around here.

The last time they came, I was just a small boy, and I ran from them and hid.

I watched them tie up the parish priest and attempted to force him to renounce his faith.
With his last ounce of strength the priest professed his faith in Jesus,
and so they poured oil on him and lit him on fire.
But he was a little wisp of a man, and the fire consumed him in just a few minutes.

When the infidels come again, and they will,
I want to be so big, so that when they ask me to renounce my faith
and I say I believe in Jesus Christ and my Lord and Savior,
and they light me on fire,
I want to burn so bright and so long that all those present, for miles around,
will remember forever that the light of Christ cannot be extinguished.
And then Fred the monk began his prayers. "Oh Lord when will we stop killing one another."

The Abbot slowly backed out of the Fred's home
and wondered for the first time whether he was worthy enough to sit with Fred
at the same table as Jesus.

(pause) Are we ready to burn with the light of Christ?