

Fr. Danny Murphy – Easter Vigil – April 15, 2017

Before we reflect upon the three Old testament readings that we heard tonight, please allow me please to thank our musicians and especially, Dan Kroger, our music director for all the hard work they put into Holy Week well done! By the way, I don't know if you are aware of a story about Dan. Some years ago, on one weekend, our pastor, Fr. Murphy was going to give an appeal for money at all of our Masses, he spoke to Dan and said: "At the conclusion of my appeal, sing a song, any song that you want, but a song that people know, that will put people in a good mood so that they would contribute more generously." Fr. Murphy concluded his appeal with these words: "Anyone who is going to pledge ten thousand dollars or more, please stand!" Immediately, Dan starts to sing the Star Spangled Banner, everyone stood and the parish raised a fortune! Dan told me that the other day he was visiting our Museum of Art and he couldn't help overhearing a haughty woman ask the procurator: "Is this monstrosity that I am looking at 'MODERN ART?'" With great dignity, the procurator replied, "No ma'am, that monstrosity you're looking at is called a MIRROR!" No more foolin' around, this is a very solemn night – in fact the most solemn night of the year, we better get started reflecting on the three Old Testament readings: the first reading is from the book of Genesis, it's the beginning of the story of Creation. God said: "Let there be light," there was light and God saw that the light was good. How I love the lighting of the

new fire and the lighting of the paschal candle that began our service tonight.

Christ the light penetrating the darkness and there is a lot of darkness, isn't there?

There's darkness within us, there's darkness around us. But Christ is the light that no darkness can ever overcome, no matter how dark it gets. We – you and I – we are little candles. If we plug our little candle into his big candle – because without him we can do nothing. If we plug our little candle into his big candle, then you and I can help penetrate the darkness. Jesus says to each of us: “You are the light of the world – let your light shine.” Isn't it true that when you see some people, you immediately feel good, just by seeing them? The reason for that, I think, is that you can sense the goodness that is within them. Dear Jesus, please fill me with your goodness, please enflame me with your love so that I can be a light in the darkness. The second reading, also from the book of Genesis begins with these words: God put Abraham to the test. We're put to the test sometimes, too, aren't we? It seems that God doesn't prevent our pain, our hurt, our tears, our tragedies. But that's not totally true. Our word prevent comes from two Latin words: pre, which means “before” and venire, which means “to come”. So God comes before us in our hurts and pains, our tears and tragedies. God comes before us and empowers us with hope so that we can cope with any test, with anything – with him! And our third reading from the book of Exodus. We hear that Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and so it became dry land. The way we hear this story is

that Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the waters split in two and the Israelites safely passed through. Here's another interpretation, an interpretation that I love – same story, different slant. Moses asked the Israelites to trust in God, to totally trust in God. And then he asked them to walk through the waters trusting in God and only when they were walking through the waters with trust in God, then and only then did Moses stretch out his hand, causing the waters to split in two and the Israelites pass safely through, but the TRUST CAME FIRST! The trust ALWAYS comes first! How totally do I trust in God? Do I trust the words of the psalmist: “I know nothing of tomorrow, except the love of God will rise before the sun!” Do I trust the words of St. Julian of Norwich: “All will be well, all manner of being will be well.” Do I trust the words of St. Paul: “Everything works for the good!” How totally do I trust God? Well, the sacred triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday concludes tonight. It seems to me that a single theme was woven throughout the three days and that single theme can be summarized in a single sentence: Jesus saying to each of us: “All I ask of you if forever to remember me as loving you!”