CHAPTER 3 PRAYER SERVICE

*Note: If possible, consider dimming the lights for this prayer service.*

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader: A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men.

Then the angel said to the women in reply, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ Behold, I have told you.”

Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage.

Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: During the Easter Vigil, each parish blesses and lights their new Paschal candle for the coming year. This candle remains lit throughout the Easter season and at every funeral and baptism, reminding Christians that Jesus defeated the darkness of sin and death once for all and now calls his disciples to be the light of the world.

*The leader lights a candle.*

Leader: As we light this small candle, let us praise God for the gift of his Son, who saved us and calls us his own. Let us pray . . .

Group 1: It is truly right and just, with ardent love of mind and heart

and with devoted service of our voice,

to acclaim our God invisible, the almighty Father,

and Jesus Christ, our Lord, his Son, his Only Begotten.

Who for our sake paid Adam’s debt to the eternal Father,

and, pouring out his own dear Blood,

wiped clean the record of our ancient sinfulness.

Group 2: Our birth would have been no gain,

had we not been redeemed.

O wonder of your humble care for us!

O love, O charity beyond all telling,

to ransom a slave you gave away your Son!

O truly necessary sin of Adam,

destroyed completely by the Death of Christ!

O happy fault

that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!

Group 3: Therefore, O Lord,

we pray you that this candle,

hallowed to the honor of your name,

may persevere undimmed,

to overcome the darkness of this night.

Receive it as a pleasing fragrance,

and let it mingle with the lights of heaven.

Amen.

Leader: As we listen to this song, I invite you to think of one way that God has brought light into your life and reflect on that memory. If there is a current situation in your life that needs God’s light, consider inviting Jesus to bring his light into that place.

*Play “Christ is Risen” by Matt Maher, available for free on YouTube.*

Leader: Let us pray. Lord Jesus, by your glorious resurrection you dispelled the darkness of sin and death and brought light into the world. We praise you for the gifts of your healing and hope in the past, and we ask you to bring that same healing and hope into our hearts, homes, and communities now. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.