

The Great Vigil of Easter
Eucharistic Propers
Cycle A RCL
Revised

Romans 6:3-11

Against his opponents, Paul consistently interpreted Baptism in terms of the death of Jesus and presented it as the death of the believer to this present evil age. This interpretation accorded with Paul's beliefs about the end of the age; for if we have died with Christ (through Baptism), then we will also share in Christ's resurrection and thereby become fit for the life of the new age.

Psalm 114

Our Prayer Book Psalter follows the Greek Bible (Septuagint) in making the *Hallelujah* of Psalm 113:9 into the first word of Psalm 114. *Hymns* of praise ordinarily celebrate God's creation and providence. The present hymn, however, celebrates a historical event, God's saving of Israel from bondage in Egypt. For this reason, Jewish families sing Psalm 114 along with Psalm 113 just before the Passover meal.

Matthew 28:1-10

Although no Gospel describes the resurrection itself, Matthew's Gospel does recount the unsealing of the tomb by an angel. Jewish burials of the period in Jerusalem took place in cysts cut into the walls of limestone caverns (either natural or artificial). On the anniversary of one's death, after the body had decomposed, the skeleton would be disarticulated, placed in a bone-box (ossuary), and stored in the same cave. Large stones often sealed the entrance rather than doors or gratings so as to contain the smell of decomposition. Only Matthew tells us that both Marys who visited the tomb actually saw the risen Jesus. John alone, however, tells us of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus in the garden.

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