

04/05/15..... Easter/Easter Vigil, 2015

We were buried with Christ in baptism...so we too might live in newness of life.

-- I'm convinced it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Months ago, I picked up a book in the Wauseon library by Sr. Margaret Funk—not a likely place to find this book. I'd known her through interreligious work in the Indianapolis area several years before.

-- But it was not about that. It was about an incident in her life I knew nothing about. In early 1984, as a 40 year old Benedictine sister, she visited a mission in Bolivia where a friend of hers was working. One evening she jumped in a jeep with five others headed to another village.

-- It started to storm as they travelled the rocky, winding roads. As they tried to cross a washout, the jeep was flooded. The priest driving it jumped out. And she got up on the hood of the jeep.

-- Soon she had to jump off and was washed down what was now a raging river. Eventually, beaten up by the waters, she made it on to ground. She and the priest were the only two of six who survived the flood.

-- This story may sound eerily similar to one many of you heard at our Parish Mission from Robert Rogers. However, Sr. Margaret didn't write her book until over 25 years after this took place. She needed that time to absorb fully its meaning for her life.

-- She experienced the Paschal Mystery in a way few of us will, nearly drowning in the process. But all of us experience dying and rising in one way or another in life.

-- We all experience disappointment, misunderstandings, sometimes even tragedies. Many of us have lost people dear to us, often people of great faith themselves.

-- I know there are times when we feel like the Israelites crossing the Red Sea (in the Vigil reading), with a wall of water to our right and to our left. We don't have to have a near-drowning experience to feel like that.

-- But today (tonight) we head to the tomb where Jesus was buried along with the women and the disciples. We discover that it is empty. And we hear from the messenger that Jesus is risen.

-- The question remains: What will we believe? Will we believe the words of the angel, or will we despair, figuring someone stole his body?

-- We rejoice that young Zack Davis has chosen of his own will to believe. He is being (was) buried in the waters of baptism in order to rise to new life.

-- We pray that he lives out his baptism and confirmation while facing the challenges of the life of a teenager.

-- We also pray that the risen Lord will strengthen our own faith, whether it now seems solid, or barely hanging on, or somewhere in between. For all of us have been raised up to new life with Christ in baptism.

-- In a few moments we will renew those promises we made in Baptism (or our parents made for us). We will promise to reject sin and its allurements. May we renew them with vigor, answering affirmatively the question posed to the women and the disciples at the empty tomb
Do you believe?

-- Yes, the Lord has delivered us from the power of sin and death. But like Sr. Margaret, like Robert Rogers and all who have been saved physically and spiritually, we must time and time again renew our faith in the One who saved us.

-- Jesus Christ is alive in our world today. Many things this past year have convinced me of this. May the risen Lord strengthen that faith in

all of us, and may you, your family and all you love experience the saving power of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead!