



A Liturgical Guide for Pastors, Parish Staff, Liturgy Planners, and Directors of  
Music and Liturgy in the Diocese of Dallas

DETERMINING THE TIME TO CELEBRATE THE VIGIL OF  
EASTER 2017 (SATURDAY, APRIL 15)

*The Easter Vigil may begin no sooner than nightfall. "The Easter Vigil, during the holy night when Christ rose from the dead, ranks as the 'mother of all vigils.' Keeping watch, the Church awaits Christ's resurrection and celebrates it in the sacraments. Accordingly, **the entire celebration of this vigil should take place at night**, that is, it should either begin after nightfall or end before the dawn of Sunday. (from the **General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar [DOL 442]** )*

*Nightfall is characterized to be the time at which daylight is coming to an end, at dusk. Dusk (or nightfall) is considered to occur thirty minutes after sunset, using the civil twilight calendar as a basis for determining the time in the area of the Diocese of Dallas. (Civil Twilight is the brightest form of twilight, and there is enough natural sunlight that artificial light might not be needed.)*

***For the year 2017, the Vigil of Easter is celebrated on Saturday, April 15.** On that day, sunset is at 7:57 p.m. and nightfall is thirty minutes later at 8:27 p.m. This has been calculated to include the fact that the diocese will be using Daylight Savings Time (which begins on March 12, 2017).*

**Therefore, the Vigil of Easter should begin no sooner than 8:30 p.m. in the Diocese of Dallas.**

***The beginning of the Easter Vigil is the Lighting of the Easter Fire. Parishes must make certain that the Vigil is celebrated nocturnally as the Fire is blessed and the Paschal Candle is lighted to illumine the night.***

**A reminder to all pastors and priests: **The Easter Vigil must be celebrated in a parish church, and there is to be only one celebration of the Vigil of Easter in each parish. The Church allows for no dispensation to this rule.** If two or more parishes share a pastor, then it is suggested that the parishes alternate years and celebrate the Triduum together in one parish or another. Parishes must be sensitive to extending an invitation to area religious communities to join their parish celebration of the Vigil of Easter.**