Easter Vigil Homily  
Rev. Robert Schramm, OSFS

We just listened to stories about this intimate relationship  
the Creator of this vast universe we live in  
wants to have with the likes of us.  
Despite the fact of our own fickleness—  
as well as our own betrayals and treacheries.  
Tonight we ritualize the fact that it is God’s longing, God’s deepest desire,  
to bury all of that we call sin, in and among us  
and to create a spark of something wonderfully, miraculously new.  
David Wilder and his wife Jackie are both in their 80s.  
They come before us as witnesses of that for those who are open to it,

   God doesn’t do this salvation thing, the miracle of new life,  
according to human standards or timelines.  
St. Paul says it so well:
   “Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of God,  
we too might live in newness of life.”

The Good News story tonight says that  
“the women went away quickly from the tomb,  
fearful yet overjoyed,  
and ran to announce this to his disciples.”

As we participate in initiating these new members into  
what Dr. King called “the Community of the Beloved,”  
may David, and Jackie and all the rest of us  
be released from the grip of our fears, be overcome with joy  
and go to find our own ways to announce this to the disciples  
and to a world that needs that good news so badly.

There is an ancient custom in the Russian Orthodox community  
where the priest tells jokes on Easter,  
in a sense laughing in the face of the devil.  
Here’s my Easter story—

   A little girl was sitting on her grandfather’s lap as he read her a bedtime story.
From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his weathered, wrinkled cheek. She would alternately stroke her own cheek and then touch his again. Finally she spoke up: "Grandpa, did God make you?"
"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago."
"Oh," she paused,
"Grandpa, did God make me too?"
"Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago."
Stroking their faces again, she observed, "God’s getting better at it, isn’t he?"