

Four tornados were sighted in our vicinity last Saturday night. A lot of us were here at church, gathered for what I keep saying is the most important mass of the year, the Easter Vigil. But when the town sirens went off in the middle of the service, we walked out of the church building, across the street, and down to the cafeteria in St. Rita's. There we continued the service until we got an all-clear. We came back into St. Munchin and said prayers of thanksgiving while we celebrated baptism, confirmation and first communion. Those tornados caused some regional damage and injuries that night, but we were spared a disaster. The Easter Vigil is supposed to be the most dramatic celebration of the year, but it's not supposed to be that dramatic. I want to commend everyone who was here for your spirit of cooperation and concern. We experienced an Easter Vigil we will remember for a long, long time.

In a way, it was appropriate. One of the stories we read from the bible that night is the exodus from Egypt. The people got up to the Red Sea, and then the waters parted for them; they walked toward the Promised Land behind a pillar of fire. We Christians pass through the waters of baptism, and we walk toward the Promised Land of heaven behind Christ our light. Last Saturday night as a parish we passed through the danger of tornados and followed the Easter candle of light and promise.

This weekend at our two parishes, we celebrate more baptisms and first communions. The Catholic Church celebrates the Sunday after Easter as if it is still Easter day. It's like a great honeymoon when the happiness is so strong, it takes more than one day to experience it, and you wish it would never end. Easter is so important and so big it takes weeks to celebrate – it takes more than one night and four tornados.

So our responsorial psalm today is the same one we sang on Easter. It carries a message we can't get enough of. It includes this verse, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it." This day is still Easter Day – we are still in the glow.

As we celebrate baptism and communion with our children this weekend, we hope their joy lasts forever. As Catholics the most joyful thing we do is to gather on Sundays, hear God's word, give thanks and share communion. We repeat our celebration of Easter every week. We gather on Sundays because this is the day on which Jesus rose. While we're here, sometimes we kneel, sometimes we sit, and sometimes we stand. The first Christians chose standing as their posture for prayer, partly because to them standing up symbolized resurrection, and when they talked to God standing, they affirmed their faith in Easter. So even today we stand for the opening prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and the communion prayer. When receiving communion we stand to say Amen, yes to the body and blood of Christ, who died for us, rose for us and left us this communion to steady our faith in the resurrection. Let us recommit ourselves this Easter to a faith that does not end. Let us keep holy each Sunday, this day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it.