

**I know. That was a lot of scripture to hear, especially during the Final Four. But one of the symbols of the Easter Vigil is its length. The church asks us to gather on the night that Jesus rose from dead. This greatest mystery of our faith needs the greatest amount of time to unfold. We come to stay as if we had no better place to be. Think of an experience with someone you love; you are together for a happy evening that you wish could go on forever. The church aims to make the Easter Vigil that kind of night, a night that draws us so completely into its mystery, that there is no other place we would rather be than here, with the people who share our faith, in the glow of the Easter candle, the symbol of the risen Christ, who has forever shattered the darkness of sin and death.**

**All those readings build up to the proclamation of the gospel, the good news of the resurrection. They show from the genesis of the world to the promise of rebirth this one great truth: God had it all planned. To look back at all these scriptures is to look back at the footprints of God, leading through human history.**

**There are times it looks like there is no plan. Enron collapses, making people question the morals of the corporate world. The INS sends out form letters to dead hijackers, telling them they're welcome to stay in our country. The Catholic priesthood continues to be rocked by scandals of impropriety. There are times we wonder, who is in charge here? Why didn't people have it planned out better?**

**I'm sure when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb after Jesus died, they wondered the same thing. Who is in charge here? Why didn't Jesus have this planned out better? But then they see an angel sitting above an empty tomb, and they hear this news: "Jesus is not here, for he has been raised just as he said." Yes, just as he said. There was a plan, and the plan includes some disaster along the way.**

**When our families undergo crisis, when our country is in peril, when our church is ashamed, when our basketball team loses, when somebody we love ever so tenderly dies, there is a plan. The disaster is part of the plan. There will yet come a day of glory, just as Jesus said.**