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In a suitable place outside the Church, a "blazing fire" (*rogus ardens*) is to be prepared so that the people may gather around it and experience the flames dispelling the darkness and lighting up the night. Thus do the beauty of the fire, its warmth and its light, draw the liturgical assembly together. The rubrics, however, acknowledge that when this cannot be done adaptations may be made. The *Missale* also states that cross and candles are not to be carried in this procession (EV, no. 8).

Having reached the fire, the celebrant and faithful sign themselves with the sign of the cross while the priest says: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (EV, no. 9). After this new beginning, he greets the people and then gives the instruction (EV, no. 9). As the celebrant blesses the fire he says the prayer "with hands outstretched" (EV, no. 10).

The Paschal Candle is brought forward. This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. This description is developed in no. 94 of *Built of Living Stones* which reminds us that the Paschal Candle is the symbol of the "light of Christ, rising in glory," scattering the "darkness of our hearts and minds." "Above all, the Paschal Candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed..." (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* [1988], no 82).

The candle is then prepared in rites which are no longer optional. The celebrant cuts a cross into the candle with a stylus. Then he makes the Greek letter Alpha above the cross, the letter Omega below it, and the four numerals of the current year between the arms of the cross, saying the words indicated. After these rites, the priest lights the candle from the new fire and says: *May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.* (EV, no.14)

The organization of the procession is more clearly described in the new *Missale Romanum*. One of the ministers takes burning coals from the fire and places them in a censer (thurible) and the priest, in the usual way, places incense into it. The deacon, or in his absence another appropriate minister accepts the Easter candle from the celebrant and a procession is formed. The order of procession is the thurifer with smoking thurible, preceding the minister holding the candle, followed by the ministers and the priest and the people. All hold unlit candles (EV, no.15). Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by the pillar of fire, so Christians follow the risen Christ.

The places at which the proclamation, *Light of Christ*, are sung now differ from what was in the previous *Missale*. The new places are: at the door of the Church (after which the priest lights his candle), in the middle of the Church (after which all light their candles), and before the altar, facing the people. The *Missale* instructs the deacon to place the candle in a large candle stand prepared either next to the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary (EV, no. 17). The lights of the Church are then lit with the exception of the altar candles which are lit just before the intonation of the Gloria (EV, nos. 17 and 31).

Before the Easter Proclamation, the priest gives his candle to one of the ministers and blesses incense as at the Gospel during Mass. Having asked for and received the blessing, the deacon announces the Easter proclamation from the ambo or at a lectern. This poetic text captures the whole Easter mystery placed within the context of the economy of salvation. In the absence of a deacon the priest himself or another concelebrating priest may announce the Easter proclamation. If, however, a lay cantor announces the proclamation, the words, *My dearest friends*, up to the end of the invitation are omitted, along with the greeting, *The Lord be with you* (nos. 18-19). The reference to the Conference of Bishops adapting the text by inserting acclamations is no longer mentioned.

