

I know I speak on behalf of Sandra, Phil, and Caitlin –
When I say they are all happy you are here with them tonight – as one part of their long road of formation comes to a close as they make a profession of faith tonight, are confirmed, and receive their first Eucharist – becoming full members of the Catholic faith.

I know they are excited and happy that this night has finally arrived!
If you are one of their guests – or one who is here at our parish for the first time – we welcome you and hope you are inspired and enthused by our celebration this evening – and will join us again sometime. . .

There is a song that is very popular at Italian wedding receptions in particular—but at one point or another – usually still gets played at most wedding receptions – in spite of its being almost 40 years old.

The song, appropriately sung by an artist who calls herself SISTER Sledge is: WE ARE FAMILY.

The lyrics go like this:

*We are family – get up everybody and sing.

*Everyone can you see we're together.

*And we fly just like birds of a feather.

*We are family, get up everybody and sing!

I think this song can easily be our theme song for the Easter Vigil. For, my dear elect, in some way – and at some point in the past – the voice of God spoke to you --- and you decided to turn to our Catholic FAMILY – to see if it was the right place for you.

For over six months now, you have heard about the mysteries of our faith – our FAMILY secrets.

You have explored the high points of our history – and have come to an understanding of our prayers, our worship, and our doctrines.

Along the way you have no doubt seen some of our low points also – our weaknesses, our mistakes, our struggles we have had and will always have – as a FAMILY. You have seen who we are – warts and all.

By the grace of God – you have persevered – and have reached the point where you say –YES – you do want to become a member of our **family**.

And so we have come together on this night – which is our most sacred night as a community – to welcome you as new members of our FAMILY.

And so we have told the FAMILY stories – how, from the very beginning – God created the heavens and the earth – and how God saved his world and his people.

These FAMILY stories included floods and trials, dreams and promises. And they included the very core story of our faith: **“Do not be afraid! I know you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said!”**

And we can't help but sing: *alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

YOU have proclaimed with us all – that Christ is our light – the light in glory which dispels the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Jesus Christ, our king -- is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation! Or as Sister Sledge would have it: get up everybody and sing!

Dear elect – before you make a profession of faith – which will be the easiest thing you do tonight – you simply say: I do believe! ---- we will do one more FAMILY thing. After you renew your baptismal promises with all of us, and as we all move to the baptismal font to use life-giving waters to remind us of who we are called to be ----- we will call upon our brothers and sisters of faith who have gone before us – the saints – to be with you, and to be with us – so that we CAN be renewed in

mind and body – so that we CAN give our whole-hearted service to our risen lord and savior --- just as they have.

The journey is over – but really just beginning. New life is yours.
Sound the trumpet of salvation!
Get up everybody and sing!
Welcome to the FAMILY!