

HOLY SATURDAY REFLECTION



On Holy Saturday the Church waits at the Lord's tomb, meditating on his suffering and death. The altar is left bare, and the sacraments are not celebrated. Only after the solemn vigil during the night, held in anticipation of the resurrection, does the Easter celebration begin.

*O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.*

*O generous love! That he who smote in man for man the foe,
The double agony in man for man should undergo;*

*And in the garden secretly, and on the cross on high,
Should teach his brethren, and inspire to suffer and to die.*

*Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise,
In all his words most wonderful, most sure in all his ways.*

Psalm 150

Praise God in his holy place, praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his powerful deeds, praise his surpassing greatness.
O praise him with sound of trumpet, praise him with lute and harp.
Praise him with timbrel and dance, praise him with strings and pipes.
O praise him with resounding cymbals, praise him with clashing of cymbals.
Let everything that lives and that breathes give praise to the Lord.
Glory be to the Father...



Hosea 6: 1-3a

Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; he has struck us down, but he will bandage our wounds; after a day or two he will bring us back to life, on the third day he will raise us and we shall live in his presence.

Let us pray to our Redeemer, who suffered for us, was buried, and rose from the dead.
R/ Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, our Lord, you saw your mother standing by the cross; may we share your saving passion in our time of suffering. R/

Christ, our Saviour, you died like a grain of wheat falling into the ground; gather us to yourself in the harvest of redemption. R/

Christ, our Shepherd, lying in the tomb you were hidden from all; teach us to love our real life, which is hidden with you in God. R/

Christ, the new Adam, you went down into the world of the dead to free the just; may those who are dead in sin hear your voice and live. R/

Son of the living God, we were buried with you in baptism; let us rise with you, alive to God for ever. R/

Our Father

Almighty, ever-living God, whose Only-begotten Son descended to the realm of the dead, and rose from there to glory, grant that your faithful people, who were buried with him in baptism, may, by his resurrection, obtain eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



A reading from an ancient homily for Holy Saturday

What is happening? Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence, and stillness, a great silence because the King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled. Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam's son.

The Lord goes in to them holding his victorious weapon, his cross. When Adam, the first created man, sees him, he strikes his breast in terror and calls out to all: 'My Lord be with you all.' And Christ in reply says to Adam: 'And

with your spirit.' And grasping his hand he raises him up, saying: 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

'I am your God, who for your sake became your son, who for you and your descendants now speak and command with authority those in prison: Come forth, and those in darkness: Have light, and those who sleep: Rise.

'I command you: Awake, sleeper, I have not made you to be held a prisoner in the underworld. Arise from the dead; I am the life of the dead. Arise, O man, work of my hands, arise, you who were fashioned in my image. Rise, let us go hence; for you in me and I in you, together we are one undivided person.

'For you, I your God became your son; for you, I the Master took on your form, that of slave; for you, I who am above the heavens came on earth and under the earth; for you, man, I became as a man without help, free among the dead; for you, who left a garden, I was handed over to Jews from a garden and crucified in a garden.

'Look at the spittle on my face, which I received because of you, in order to restore you to that first divine inbreathing at creation. See the blows on my cheeks, which I accepted in order to refashion your distorted form to my own image.

'See the scourging of my back, which I accepted in order to disperse the load of your sins which was laid upon your back. See my hands nailed to the tree for a good purpose, for you, who stretched out your hand to the tree for an evil one.

'I slept on the cross and a sword pierced my side, for you, who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side healed the pain of your side; my sleep will release you from your sleep in Hades; my sword has checked the sword which was turned against you.

'But arise, let us go hence. The enemy brought you out of the land of paradise; I will reinstate you, no longer in paradise, but on the throne of heaven. I denied you the tree of life, which was a figure, but now I myself am united to you, I who am life. I posted the cherubim to guard you as they would slaves; now I make the cherubim worship you as they would God.

'The cherubim throne has been prepared, the bearers are ready and waiting, the bridal chamber is in order, the food is provided, the everlasting houses and rooms are in readiness, the treasures of good things have been opened; the kingdom of heaven has been prepared before the ages.'

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The Easter Vigil is celebrated tonight (Saturday) at St Wilfrid's 8.30pm.

Easter Sunday Masses are at:

9.15am – St Wilfrid's

10.00am – Our Lady's

10.45am – St Wilfrid's

11.00am – St Thomas Becket

11.15am – St Bede's

There is no Evening Mass on Easter Day