



# AT HOME IN HOLY WEEK RETREAT

## Spending time with the God Who Speaks

### HOLY SATURDAY

If you have a prayer focus, keep it very simple today. You may want to have an unlit "Easter candle" ready and waiting for this evening.

FROM MORNING PRAYER – PSALM 50(51)

"This psalm in particular invites u to think about the passion of the Lord." (St Augustine).

*They will mourn for him as for an only son, since it is the innocent one of the Lord who has been slain.*

Hear my voice, O God, as I complain,  
guard my life from dread of the foe.  
Hide me from the band of the wicked,  
from the throng of those who do evil.

They sharpen their tongues like swords;  
they aim bitter words like arrows  
to shoot at the innocent from ambush,  
shooting suddenly and recklessly.

They scheme their evil course;  
they conspire to lay secret snares.  
They say: "Who will see us?  
Who can search out our crimes?"

He will search who searches the mind  
and knows the depths of the heart.  
God has shot them with his arrow  
and dealt them sudden wounds.  
Their own tongue has brought them to ruin  
and all who see them mock.

Then will all men fear;  
they will tell what God has done.  
They will understand God's deeds.  
The just will rejoice in the Lord  
and fly to him for refuge.  
All the upright hearts will glory.

*They will mourn for him as for an only son, since it is the innocent one of the Lord who has been slain.*

Intercessions – praying for those in need today.

Our Father...

## SUGGESTED READING FOR THE DAY FROM AN ANCIENT HOMILY FOR HOLY SATURDAY

There is no Mass today – until this evening when we celebrate the Easter Vigil. In normal years, today would probably have been spent shopping and being busy in preparation for Easter. But this year – all is much quieter – much more in keeping with the emptiness of Holy Saturday.

Rather than resent the isolation and restrictions, reflect on how it offers a suitable backdrop to today.

This Reading is from the Office of Readings for today and is a beautiful and powerful account of Jesus' power to liberate all who dwell in the shadow of death.

### **The Lord's descent into hell**

"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

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."

### Prayer

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.

(We make our prayer) through our Christ our Lord.

Amen

- Read the passage slowly – and notice which words or images speak to you...
- What hope do you find in this Reading?
- What hope does it offer those who are close to death or recently dead? What hope for their families and friends?

### NOON – THE ANGELUS



The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,  
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

*Hail Mary...*

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,  
Be it done unto me according to your word.

*Hail Mary...*

And the Word was made flesh,  
and dwelt amongst us.

*Hail Mary...*

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Through the same Christ our Lord, Amen

Intercessions – praying for those in need today.

Our Father

## CELEBRATING LIGHT – STRONGER THAN DARKNESS!

A suggestion has been made that there be a “Dispersed Liturgy of Light” tonight as it will be impossible for everyone who would like to attend the Easter Vigil. The idea is very simple – as the sun sets and darkness falls, simply light a candle as a reminder that Christ is our Light – a light that no darkness can overcome. If it is safe, put your candle in the window; if not, put it where it is easy to see. If you are feeling more ambitious or have a family, create your own Easter candle and make a little ceremony of lighting it. Light your candle for a short time each day – at least for the First Week of Easter but, ideally, until the world experiences its own “resurrection”.

This prayer is based on Prayers from the Vigil.

Father, we share in the light of your glory through your Son, the light of the world.  
Make our candle holy and inflame us – and the whole world – with new hope.  
Purify our minds by our Easter celebration,  
and bring us one day to the feast of eternal light.

*Light your candle (and those of your family if appropriate).*

Heavenly Father, in the joy of this night,  
receive our evening sacrifice of praise –  
one of thousands around our darkened world.  
Accept our Easter candle.  
May it dispel the darkness of this night!  
May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning:  
Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,  
and shed his peaceful light on all mankind,  
your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## NIGHT PRAYER OF THE CHURCH - COMPLINE

O God, come to our aid.

*O Lord, make haste to help us.*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.

### **Psalm 90 (91) The protection of the Most High**

“Behold, I have given you power to tread under foot both serpents and scorpions.” (Lk 10: 19)

*He will conceal you with his wings; you will not fear the terror of the night.*

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
and abides in the shade of the Almighty  
says to the Lord: "My refuge,  
my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!"

It is he who will free you from the snare  
of the fowler who seeks to destroy you;  
he will conceal you with his pinions  
and under his wings you will find refuge.

You will not fear the terror of the night  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the plague that prowls in the darkness  
nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand fall at your right,  
you, it will never approach;  
his faithfulness is buckler and shield.

Your eyes have only to look  
to see how the wicked are repaid,  
you who have said: "Lord, my refuge!"  
and have made the Most High your dwelling.

Upon you no evil shall fall,  
no plague approach where you dwell.  
For you has he commanded his angels,  
to keep you in all your ways.

They shall bear you upon their hands  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.  
On the lion and the viper you will tread  
and trample the young lion and the dragon.

Since he clings to me in love, I will free him;  
protect him for he knows my name.  
When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you."  
I will save him in distress and give him glory.

With length of life I will content him;  
I shall let him see my saving power.  
*He will conceal you with his wings; you will not fear the terror of the night.*

#### **Short Reading – Apocalypse 22: 4-5**

They will see the Lord face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign for ever and ever.

#### **Short Responsory**

Christ humbled himself for us and, in obedience, accepted death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God raised him to the heights and gave him the name which is above all other names.

#### **Canticle - Nunc Dimittis**

*Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.*

At last, all-powerful Master,  
you give leave to your servant go in peace.  
according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations,  
the light to enlighten the Gentiles  
and give glory to Israel, your people.  
Glory be ...

*Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.*

**Let us pray.**

Visit his house, we pray you, Lord:  
drive far away from it all the snares of the enemy.  
May your holy angels stay here and guard us in peace.  
and let your blessing be always upon us.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Marian Anthem****Ave Regina Caelorum**

Hail, Queen of the heavens,  
hail, Lady of the angels.  
Root of our salvation  
and our gateway to heaven,  
the light of the world was born to you.  
Be joyful, Virgin of glory,  
most beautiful of all in heaven.  
We greet you now, true beauty –  
pray for us to Christ.

Ave, Regína cælórum,  
ave, Dómina angelórum,  
salve, radix, salve, porta,  
ex qua mundo lux est orta.  
Gaude, Virgo gloriósa,  
super omnes speciósa;  
vale, o valde decóra,  
et pro nobis Christum exóra.

**Intercessions** – placing those for whom you wish to pray into the hands and heart of God.

*Prayer of St Augustine*

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,  
or watch, or weep tonight,  
and give your angels and saints  
charge over those who sleep.  
Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ.  
Rest your weary ones.  
Bless your dying ones.  
Soothe your suffering ones.  
Pity your afflicted ones.  
Shield your joyous ones,  
and all for your love's sake. Amen.

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