



HOLY SATURDAY

Office of Readings

Introduction

Lord, + open our lips.

And we shall praise your name.

Invitatory Psalm

Psalm 94 (95)

Ant. Christ the Lord suffered for us and was buried. **Come, let us adore him.**

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the God who saves us.

Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

**A mighty God is the Lord,
a great king above all gods.**

**In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his.**

**To him belongs the sea, for he made it
and the dry land shaped by his hands.**

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us:
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.

**O that today you would listen to his voice!
‘Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.**

For forty years I was wearied of these people
and I said: “Their hearts are astray,
these people do not know my ways.”

Then I took an oath in my anger:
“Never shall they enter my rest.”

**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.

Ant. **Christ the Lord suffered for us and was buried.
Come, let us adore him.**

Hymn

His cross stands empty in a world grown silent
Through hours of anguish and of dread;
In stillness, earth awaits the resurrection,
While Christ goes down to wake the dead

He summons Adam and his generations,
Brings light where darkness endless seemed;
He frees and claims His own, so long held captive,
Who, with the living, are redeemed.

With God the Father and the Holy Spirit,
Give praise to Christ the crucified,
Who, through the ages, seeks to save his lost ones:
The sinful men for whom he died.

Psalm 4

Ant. Now I will lie down in peace **and sleep comes at once.**

When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me!

**O men, how long will your hearts be closed,
will you love what is futile and seek what is false?**

It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.

**Fear him; do not sin: ponder on your bed and be still
Make justice your sacrifice, and trust in the Lord.**

‘What can bring us happiness?’ many say.
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.

**You have put into my heart a greater joy
than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.**

I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

**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.

Ant. **Now I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once.**

Psalm 15 (16)

Ant. My body shall rest in hope.

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: ‘You are my God.
My happiness lies in you alone.’

**He has put into my heart a marvellous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.**

**Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
Never will I offer their offerings of blood.
Never will I take their name upon my lips.**

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!

**I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.**

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

**You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.**

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.**

Ant. **My body shall rest in hope.**

Psalm 23 (24)

Ant. Grow higher, eternal doors: **let the King of glory enter.**

The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm.

**Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things,
who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbour.**

He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob.

**O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!**

Who is the king of glory?

The Lord, the mighty, the valiant,
the Lord, the valiant in war.

**O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!**

Who is he, the king of glory?

He, the Lord of armies,
he is the king of glory.

**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.

Ant. **Grow higher, eternal doors: let the King of glory enter.**

Uphold my cause and defend me.

By your promise, give me life.

First Reading

Hebrews 4:1-13

Be careful: the promise of reaching the place of rest he had for them still holds good, and none of you must think that he has come too late for it. We received the Good News exactly as they did; but hearing the message did them no good because they did not share the faith of those who listened. We, however, who have faith, shall reach a place of rest, as in the text: And so, in anger, I swore that not one would reach the place of rest I had for them. God's work was undoubtedly all finished at the beginning of the world; as one text says, referring to the seventh day: After all his work God rested on the seventh day. The text we are considering says: They shall not reach the place of rest I had for them. It is established, then, that there would be some people who would reach it, and since those who first heard the Good News failed to reach it through their disobedience, God fixed another day when, much later, he said 'today' through David in the text already quoted: If only you would listen to him today; do not harden your hearts. If Joshua had led them into this place of rest, God would not

later on have spoken so much of another day. There must still be, therefore, a place of rest reserved for God's people, the seventh-day rest, since to reach the place of rest is to rest after your work, as God did after his. We must therefore do everything we can to reach this place of rest, or some of you might copy this example of disobedience and be lost.

The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

Responsory

cf. Mt 27:66,60,62

They buried the Lord, made the tomb secure and rolled a stone across the entrance,* and they placed soldiers there to guard the body.

The chief priests went to Pilate and asked for a guard,* and they placed soldiers there to guard the body.

Second 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."

Responsory

Our shepherd, the source of living water, has departed. At his passing the sun was darkened, for he who held the first man captive is now taken captive himself.* Today the Saviour has shattered the bars and burst the gates of death. **He has torn down the barricades of hell and overthrown the power of Satan.* Today the Saviour has shattered the bars and burst the gates of death.**

Let us pray.

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.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

There follows a short period of silent prayer.

Morning Prayer

Introduction

○ God, + come to our aid.

○ 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.

Hymn

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.

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

○ wisest love! that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail;

And that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.

○ 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 63 (64)

Ant. 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, ○ 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.**

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.**

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

Canticle

Isaiah 38

Ant. **Save my soul from the gates of hell, Lord.**

I said, In the noontide of my days I must depart;
I am consigned to the gates of Sheol
for the rest of my years.

**I said, I shall not see the Lord
in the land of the living;
I shall look upon man no more
among the inhabitants of the world.**

My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me
like a shepherd's tent;
like a weaver I have rolled up my life;
he cuts me off from the loom.

**From day to night you bring me to an end;
I cry for help until morning;
like a lion he breaks all my bones;
from day to night you bring me to an end.**

Like a swallow or a crane I clamour,
I moan like a dove.
My eyes are weary with looking upward.
O Lord, I am oppressed; be my security.

**Lo, it was for my welfare
that I had great bitterness;
but you have held back my life
from the pit of destruction,
for you have cast all my sins
behind your back.**

For Sheol cannot thank you,
death cannot praise you;
those who go down to the pit
cannot hope for your faithfulness.

**The living, the living, he thanks you,
as I do this day;
the father makes known to the children your faithfulness.**

The Lord will save me,
and we will sing to stringed instruments
all the days of our life,
at the house of the Lord.

**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.**

Ant. **Save my soul from the gates of hell, Lord.**

Psalm 150

Ant. **I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of
death and of hell.**

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 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.

Ant. **I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever,
and I hold the keys of death and of hell.**

Short Reading

Hosea 5:15-6:2

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.

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.

Benedictus

Ant. Save us, Saviour of the world. **By your cross and the shedding of your blood you have redeemed us. Come to help us, Lord, our God.**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has visited his people and redeemed them.

**He has raised up for us a mighty saviour
in the house of David his servant,
as he promised by the lips of holy men,
those who were his prophets from of old.**

A saviour who would free us from our foes,
from the hands of all who hate us.
So his love for our fathers is fulfilled
and his holy covenant remembered.

**He swore to Abraham our father to grant us,
that free from fear, and saved from the hands of our foes,
we might serve him in holiness and justice
all the days of our life in his presence.**

As for you, little child,
you shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.
You shall go ahead of the Lord
to prepare his ways before him,

**To make known to his people their salvation
through forgiveness of all their sins,
the loving-kindness of the heart of our God
who visits us like the dawn from on high.**

He will give light to those in darkness,
those who dwell in the shadow of death,
and guide us into the way of peace.

**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.

Ant. **Save us, Saviour of the world. By your cross and the shedding of your blood you have redeemed us. Come to help us, Lord, our God.**

Prayers and intercessions

Let us pray to our Redeemer, who suffered for us, was buried, and rose from the dead.

– 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.

– Lord, have mercy on us.

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

– Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, our shepherd, lying in the tomb you were hidden from men;
teach us to love our real life, which is hidden with you in God.

– Lord, have mercy on us.

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.

– Lord, have mercy on us.

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

– Lord, have mercy on us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

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.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, † and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.