



Holy Saturday Office of Readings

O God, come to our aid.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

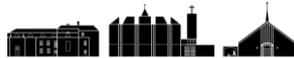
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle,
sing the last, the dread affray;
o'er the cross, the victor's trophy,
sound the high triumphal lay,
how, the pains of death enduring,
earth's Redeemer won the day.

When at length the appointed fullness
of the sacred time was come,
he was sent, the world's Creator,
from the Father's heavenly home,
and was found in human fashion,
offspring of the virgin's womb.

Now the thirty years are ended
which on earth he willed to see.
Willingly he meets his passion,
born to set his people free:
on the cross the Lamb is lifted,
there the sacrifice to be.

There the nails and spear he suffers,
vinegar and gall and reed.
From his sacred body piercèd
blood and water both proceed:
precious flood, which all creation
from the stain of sin hath freed.



Faithful Cross, above all other,
one and only noble Tree.
none in foliage, none in blossom,
none in fruit thy peer may be.
Sweet the wood and sweet the iron,
and thy load, most sweet is he.

Bend, O lofty Tree, thy branches,
thy too rigid sinews bend;
and awhile the stubborn harshness,
which thy birth bestowed, suspend;
and the limbs of heaven's high Monarch
gently on thine arms extend.

Thou alone wast counted worthy
this world's ransom to sustain,
that a shipwrecked race for ever
might a port of refuge gain,
with the sacred Blood anointed
of the Lamb for sinners slain.

Praise and honour to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three and ever One:
One in might and One in glory,
while eternal ages run.

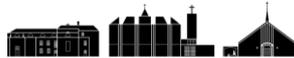
Psalm 4

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.

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

Psalm 15 (16)

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.

My body shall rest in hope.

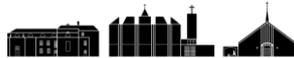
Psalm 23 (24)

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.

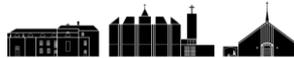
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

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

Versicle: Judge my case and redeem me.

Response: **Give me life according to your promises.**



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

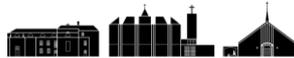
**Wait for the Lord, his day is near,
wait for the Lord keep watch take heart.**

Second Reading

From an ancient homily for Holy Saturday

Something strange is happening – there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has



gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: "My Lord be with you all." Christ answered him: "And with your spirit." He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated. For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

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 has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in hell. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.



Responsory

**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!**

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

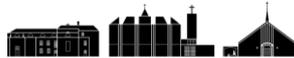
**O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive, and should prevail;**

**and that the highest gift of grace
should flesh and blood refine:
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.**

**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!**



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.**