



*“The noble Joseph taking the Immaculate Body down from the tree,  
and having wrapped it in pure linen and spices, laid it for burial in a new tomb.”*

## HOLY SATURDAY

MARCH 30, 2024

10:00 AM



**ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**WOODHAVEN, NEW YORK**



## Commemoration of Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday (known as “Great Saturday” in the Orthodox Church), the Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord’s descent into Hades, the place of the dead. Death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated from within. “He (Christ) gave Himself as a ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the Cross ... He loosed the bonds of death” (Liturgy of St. Basil).

On Holy Saturday our focus is on the Tomb of Christ. This is no ordinary grave. It is not a place of corruption, decay and defeat. It is life-giving, a source of power, victory and liberation. Great Saturday is the day between Jesus’ death and His resurrection. It is the day of watchful expectation, in which mourning is being transformed into joy. The day embodies in the fullest possible sense of joyful sadness, which has dominated the celebrations of Holy Week.

Holy Saturday is the day of the pre-eminent rest. Christ observes a Sabbath rest in the tomb. His rest, however, is not inactivity but the fulfillment of the divine will and plan for the salvation of humankind and the cosmos. He who brought all things into being, makes all things new. The re-creation of the world has been accomplished once and for all. Through His incarnation, life and death Christ has filled all things with Himself. He has opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead, since it was not possible that the author of life would be dominated by corruption. Saint Paul tells us that: “God was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Hence, eternal life - real and self-generating - penetrated the depths of Hades. Christ who is the life of all destroyed death by His death. That is why the Church sings joyously “Things now are filled with light, the heaven and the earth and all that is beneath the earth” (Canon of Pascha [Orthodox Easter Liturgy]). The Church knows herself to be “the place, the eternal reality, where the presence of Christ vanquishes Satan, hell and death itself.”

The solemn observance of Holy Saturday helps us to recall and celebrate the great truth that “despite the daily vicissitudes and contradictions of history and the abiding presence of hell within the human heart and human society,” life has been liberated! Christ has broken the power of death.

*Adapted from the website of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, <https://www.goarch.org/holysaturday>*

### Icon of the Commemoration of Holy Saturday –*The Epitaphios* (front cover)

Stricken with grief, Mary Magdalene (hands lifted in prayer), Mary the Mother of God, John the beloved disciple, and Joseph of Arimathea are shown preparing Christ’s body for the tomb. Nicodemus and others are depicted standing in the background.

*The mission of All Saints Church is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord by our participation in the Eucharist, our fellowship in oneness and diversity, by respect for each other, and through outreach into the community.*

## Holy Saturday Liturgy

¶ *Please stand as the liturgy begins, without salutation.*

Collect for Holy Saturday

Let us pray. O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of thy dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Please be seated.*

The Lesson

Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

A Reading from the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah

I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

℣. The Word of the Lord.

℟. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16

- 1 In thee, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 Incline thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me.
- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for thou art my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of thy Name, lead me and guide me.

*In te, Domine, speravi*

- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for thou art my tower of strength.
- 15 “My times are in thy hand; rescue me from the hand of mine enemies, and from those who persecute me.
- 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant, and in thy loving-kindness save me.”

The Epistle

1 Peter 4:1-8

A Reading from the First Letter of Peter

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. But they will have to give an account to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does. The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

✠. The Word of the Lord.

✠. *Thanks be to God.*

¶ *Please stand.*

Tract

*De profundis*

Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O LORD; LORD, hear my voice; let thine ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

*Psalm 130:1*

¶ *Please be seated.*

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

✠. The Word of the Lord.

℟. *Thanks be to God.*

¶ *Please be seated and remain in brief silence.*

A Meditation on Holy Saturday

*Adapted from Good Friday and Holy Saturday offices of the Eastern Orthodox Church*

A fearful and marvelous mystery is today beheld being accomplished: The Incorporeal is conquered; he who freeth Adam from the curse is bound; he who trieth the hearts and reins of people is unjustly tried by them; he who shutteth the abyss is shut up in prison. He before whom the powers of heaven standeth with trembling, standeth before Pilate; the Fashioner is smitten by the hand of him whom he fashioned; he is adjudged to the Tree of the Cross, who judgeth the quick and the dead. He is shut up in the tomb, who is the purger of Hell. O thou, who with compassion didst endure all things, and hast saved all from the curse, most patient Lord, glory to thee.

℟. *Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

When thou, the Redeemer of all, hadst been laid for all in the new tomb, Hell, the respecter of none, saw thee, and crouched in fear. The bars broke, the gates were shattered, the graves were opened, the dead arose. Then Adam, thankfully rejoicing, cried out to thee: "Glory to thy humiliation, O merciful Master."

℟. *Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

When thou, the deathless Life, didst come down to Death, then didst thou destroy Hell through the dazzling brightness of the Godhead; and when thou didst raise up the dead from the abyss, all the powers of heaven cried aloud: “Christ our God, Giver of life, glory to thee!”

*R̄. Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

Creation was moved with intense astonishment, when it beheld thee hung in Golgotha, thou who didst hang all the earth free in the midst of the waters; wherefore it cried: “None is holy except thee, O Lord.” He who closed up the abyss is seen as dead, and wrapped in linen and spices; he the Immortal, as mortal is laid in the tomb. O Lord, Creator of the world, and Conqueror of death, glory to thee.

*R̄. Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

Today the grave holdeth him who holdeth creation in the hollow of his hand. A stone covereth him who covereth the heavens with virtue. Life sleepeth, and Hell trembleth, and Adam is set free from his bonds. Glory to thy dispensation, O Lord, through which, when all things were accomplished, thou hast presented to us an eternal rest, even thy most holy Resurrection from the dead.

*R̄. Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

The great Moses mystically foreshadowed this day, saying: “And God blessed the seventh day.” This is the blessed Sabbath; it is the day of rest, and on it the only-begotten Son of God rested from all his works; through the dispensation of death, in the flesh he rested. Joseph begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb, for it behooved him to pass from the grave as from a bridal chamber. O thou who hast destroyed the power of death, and to humankind hast opened the gates of Paradise, glory to thee.

*R̄. Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Mother of God, for through him who was incarnate from thee, Hell was made captive, the curse was annulled, Eve was set free, Death was put to death, and we are endued with life. Wherefore we cry, “Blessed art thou, O Christ our God, who did so will; glory to thee.”

*R̄. Glory be to thy cross, O Christ, and to thy Resurrection.*

*℣. Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.*

*R̄. Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.*

*All. Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.*

He who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Today Hell cried out, groaning: “Would that I had not received him who was born of Mary, for he came to me and broke my power; he shattered the gates of brass, and as God, raised up the souls which before I had held.”

*R. O praise the Lord, all ye heathen; praise him, all ye nations.*

Today Hell cried out, groaning: “My authority hath been broken down; I received one dead, as one of the mortals; but against this one I prevailed not. I perish with him and with those I had ruled. From eternity I had held the dead, but behold, he raiseth all.”

*R. For his merciful kindness is ever more and more toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.*

Today Hell cried out, groaning: “My power hath been trampled on; the Shepherd hath been crucified, and he raised up Adam; I have been deprived of those over whom I ruled, and all those I swallowed in my strength I have disgorged. He who was crucified hath emptied the tombs, and the power of death availeth not.”

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

*V. Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*R. Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*V. Christ, have mercy upon us.*

*R. Christ, have mercy upon us.*

*V. Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*R. Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*V. The Lord be with you.*

*R. And also with you.*

Let us pray. O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, on this day thou didst rest in the tomb, and thereby sanctified the grave to be a bed of hope for thy people: Make us so to abound in sorrow for our sins, that when our mortal natures rest in dust, we may put on the immortality of thy glorious Resurrection; for thou livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

In the midst of life we are in death;  
of whom may we seek for succor,  
    but of thee, O Lord,  
who for our sins art justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty,  
O holy and most merciful Savior,  
deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.  
Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts;  
shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer;  
but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty,  
O holy and merciful Savior,  
thou most worthy Judge eternal.  
Suffer us not, at our last hour,  
through any pains of death, to fall from thee.

The Lord's Prayer

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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Grace

✠ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.* *2 Corinthians 13:14*

¶ *Please depart in silence.*