



HOLY SATURDAY

Keep Silent and Stand in Fear

April 23

THE HYMN

Vespertal Liturgy on Holy Saturday Morning

“Let all mortal flesh keep silent and stand in fear and trembling, giving no thought to things of the earth. For the King of kings and the Lord of lords is coming forth to be sacrificed and given as food to the faithful. Before Him go the Choir of Angels, with all the Principalities and Powers.”

“The many eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, covering their faces and chanting their hymn: Alleluia.”

THE SERMON

Creation Stands Still Today

Today, all of Creation stands still. The King of Glory lies dead in a tomb made of rock. He Who is Lord over life and death is without breath. There is dead silence. Does God die? How can God be dead?

To better understand what is happening, we need to recall God’s plan for the salvation of the world. God was incarnated, that is, He became man. He did so to take upon Himself all the sin in the world and re-unite fallen humanity with Him. Jesus comes as the new Adam, seeking to correct the mistake of the old Adam. In order to accomplish His Mission, He had to die as a man, not as God. He had to descend into Hades, the place

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where the souls of the dead have been waiting for God to fulfill His promise of salvation. Jesus enters Hades and preaches His Gospel to both the righteous and the unrighteous who had previously died.

Those who receive Him as the Messiah join in His Resurrection. Resurrected with Him are Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, the Kings, the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and all the righteous of the Old Testament. It was not God who died on the Cross, but Jesus as man. But even in the tomb, Christ cannot, as in His earthly life, be split into God and man. He remains the God-man even after His earthly death. He dies as a man and is Resurrected as God. He dies as a man for Adam's sin to die with Him. He is Resurrected as God for all of humanity to be resurrected with Him. The descent into Hades and the three-day death of Christ is a means to an end, a means to enable our salvation.

All of Creation stands still today. Before the mystery of salvation, fallen humanity and the angels stand in fear and trepidation, in silence and awe. They are unable to fathom the infinite love the God-man shows to them. They are amazed to come across Jesus Christ not only once but at every Divine Liturgy. The Lord comes to be slaughtered and offer His Body and Blood for us to consume for our sanctification and salvation, for the forgiveness of sins and union with Him, in peace and love.

Sisters and brothers, let us take some time from our lives today to spiritually kneel before the tomb of Christ, to weep for our own sins and mistakes, to rejoice in the gift of our salvation. Let us also remain silent today, let us stand in awe and faith before the tomb of Christ. Let us approach our Savior Jesus Christ with faith, with peace in our hearts, and with love. Let us partake of His Body and Blood in Holy Communion. With the angels, let us cry out to our Lord for our deliverance: "*Hosanna.*"