

April 8, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH HOLY WEEK

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MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS

Holy Saturday

By Father David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day. Thus, the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.

GENESIS 1:31-2:1-2

The LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea, split the sea in two, that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.”

Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, my love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the Lord your God, who has mercy on you.

ISAIAH 54:10

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked man his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.

ISAIAH 55:6-9

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

ROMANS 6:3-4

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.'"

MATTHEW 28:1-3, 5-7

Reflection

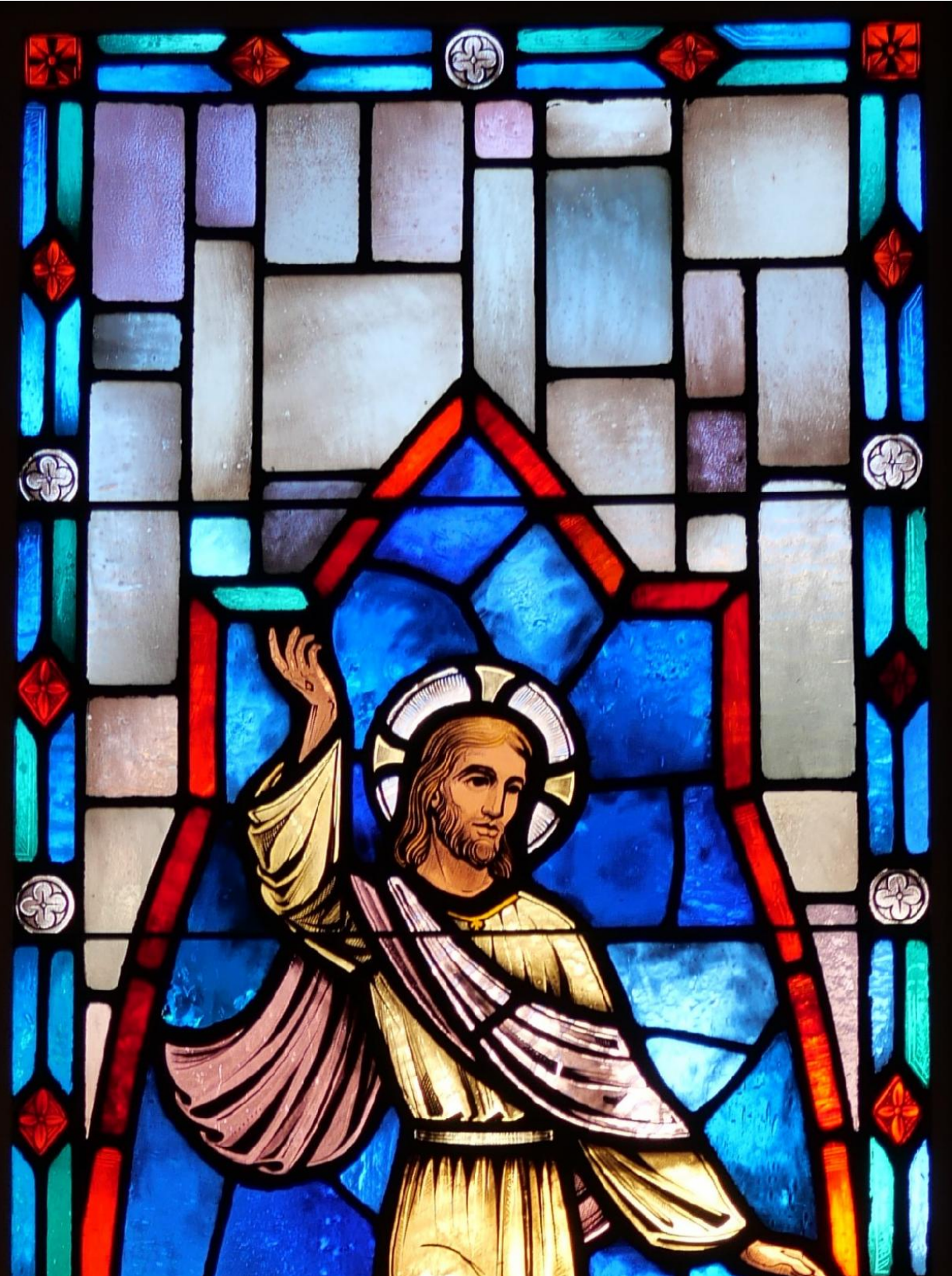
Holy Saturday, also called the Easter Vigil, has had a long and varied history since the early generations of the Church. It commemorates the last day of Jesus in the tomb, but also celebrates the imminent miracle of the resurrection.

For some 700 years, ceremonies were celebrated throughout the night. Other practices were added or deleted as the tradition evolved. The Feast was codified in its modern form by Pope Pius XII in 1956. Nine Scripture readings are recommended, to narrate the wonder of God's great works in salvation history. The selection from Genesis 2 celebrates the six days in which God moved amid a cosmos of chaos and brought forth the entirety of creation and life, culminating in humanity itself: **God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.** Exodus 14 recalls the liberating call of God to those enslaved in Egypt, as he empowered Moses to lead the Chosen People to freedom: **“Tell the Israelites to go forward. And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea, split the sea in two, that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.”** Once again, God's spirit breaks through to thwart the powers of chaos and violence.

The prophet Isaiah (54) speaks with power and passion about the abiding love of God that is witnessed as perennial mercy, grounding a covenant of peace: **“Though the mountains leave their place and the hills be shaken, my love shall never leave you nor my covenant of peace be shaken, says the Lord your God, who has mercy on you.”** The divine initiative that brought the world into being continues to animate new life. Isaiah 55 affirms that God's relationship to humankind is not one based only on a creator's power, but rather invites all who follow to continually seek growth in the compelling wisdom of God's love in all that is: **“my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts.”**

Paul, in Romans 8, extols the baptism in God that comes with a union of souls in the baptism of Christ's death, for a rebirth to God's salvation: **We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.** Matthew 28 narrates the grief and despair of the women who came to the tomb looking for their messiah who had been killed. God's angel exhorts them not to fear, because God's promise has been fulfilled, and Jesus will be with them along the way of salvation: **The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.’**

In the Easter Vigil, the rich history of God's universal creative spirit is brought to us as a testimony to the mystery of the world, birthed from the void into a miracle of endless life. This same God, with the 'bands of love,' has drawn us through the ages from the exile of politics, and war, and malice into the ever-new wonder of mercy, and compassion, and wisdom that lead us unceasingly into God's very life, fired with the desire to share that life with everyone in every place and time. Holy Saturday is our richest sacramental affirmation of the salvific path that is our eternal invitation and saving grace.





Resurrection - Sacred Heart Chapel, Orange, CA
Photo by Fr. David Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

- How have you experienced the 'gentle mercy' of God on your path to

freedom?

- What aspects of the 'salvation history' that has drawn us forward throughout history brings you the greatest consolation in your relationship with God and the Church?
- How could you best express your own journey to spiritual wisdom throughout your life?

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