

HOLY SATURDAY

On that first Holy Saturday, for the average citizen of Jerusalem, the world would have appeared largely as it had always been. They would have continued observing the Passover, while Jesus' body lay in the tomb, like countless others before him.

Meditating on the icon of Holy Saturday - 'The Shroud of Turin,' Pope Benedict XVI teaches that, "Holy Saturday is the day when God remains hidden," a day that is, "... a 'no man's land,' between the death and the Resurrection."

So, what did Jesus do on that first Holy Saturday? Did he remain in the tomb? Definitely not, for scripture teaches, "... he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps." (Psalm 121:4)

The Universal Catechism teaches that, "In his plan of salvation, God ordained that his Son should ... experience the condition of death, the separation of his soul from his body, between the time he expired on the cross and the time he was raised from the dead." (CCC. 624).

Following death therefore, the soul of Jesus, like the soul of every other person who ever lived, left his body. But where did his soul go?

The answer is, "... his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead." (CCC. 632).

Pope Benedict teaches that, "In this, "time-beyond-time," Jesus Christ ... passed beyond the door of this ultimate solitude (death) to lead us too to cross it with him."

Jesus, as the Saviour, entered 'Sheol'- the realm of the dead, and brought the good news to the peoples of the past. He brought the Gospel to the Holy Souls, who were bound by death, but yearning for their Saviour. In this way the Gospel message was brought to its completion (CCC. 632, 633, 634) and the words of the psalm are fulfilled:

Psalm 139:7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.