

11th April 2020

Black

**“Black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart.”**

John Milton, Paradise Lost

What is a Saturday? Not just the day between Friday and Sunday, for, usually, it's the start of the weekend, a break from work or school, when routines differ, TV programmes change, sporting activities take place and leisure pursuits are followed. In *normal* times, Saturdays are different.

The Romans named Saturday *Sāturni diēs* after the planet Saturn. For Jews, Seventh-day-Adventists, and many others, it's *Shabbat*, the Sabbath, a day of rest and of worship. In the context of the Christian Holy Week, today is known as “Holy Saturday”, the day between Good Friday and Easter morning. It's had other names too – The Great Sabbath, Black Saturday, Easter Eve, the Saturday of the Light. One way or another, it's the last day of Holy Week in which we prepare for Easter, commemorating, as it does, the day that Jesus' body lay in the tomb.

In some churches, all the symbols of colour and light – font, altar, icons, images of saints, crosses, bible – will have been covered in black or purple, because of the mourning of this day. Everything covered over till tomorrow – the better to know the effect of the Light of Easter morning.

This is not just another Saturday. This is a black day, for these are black times. Indeed, many days are like black Saturdays, little different from yesterday or tomorrow. But so it has to be, till all the covers are removed, and the light shines again, and we find that all the things that are precious to us are still there, waiting to be revealed once more.

A prayer for today

*God, in the hell of our blackness, remind us that your Light will come.
In the dreadfulness of the night, may we still believe in the dawning of the day. Amen*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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