Holy Saturday is overshadowed by the visible drama of Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Sunday. What is the significance of this day, when all the world is holding its breath? How can we approach a mystery to which there were no living witnesses? Does it have continuing significance for our lives and, if so, what? Addressing these questions from the perspective of the ancient universal Christian tradition, we will find that Christ’s descent into hell is as rich and meaningful a mystery of faith as the other aspects of Jesus’ life and death. It has great potential to enrich our appreciation of what He has done for our salvation, to serve as material for meditation and prayer, and to strengthen our Christian hope and zeal in a world ever in need of the Gospel.

I. Introduction: Christ descended where?!
   a. Summary of the traditional Christian doctrine
   b. Scripture and Tradition on the Descent
      i. Relevance, relation
      ii. Examples
         1. In Scripture: So much to choose from!
         2. In Tradition
            a. Creeds
            b. Art of the Christian East and West
            c. Liturgy

II. The continuing significance of Christ’s descent
   a. Christ: True man and true God
      i. The Incarnation
      ii. The work of Christ
      iii. His love
         1. Fidelity
         2. Extravagance
         3. Eagerness
   b. Baptism as a participation in Christ’s descent
   c. The trans-temporal community of the Church
   d. The Christian situation in expectation of the Second Coming

III. Conclusion: The Descent as compact synopsis of the paschal mystery
   a. As historical fact
   b. As the continuing form of Christian life
   c. As good news for a world enslaved to death


