

Holy Saturday

What is Holy Saturday?

Holy Saturday is also known as **Easter Even** and the **Great Sabbath**.

The term "Easter Even" was used by the 1549 Prayer Book. The 1979 BCP uses the title "Holy Saturday" for the Saturday before Easter (p. 283)



When is Holy Saturday?

It is the Saturday before Easter, the last day of Lent and is the day when Christ's body lay in His Tomb. In the early church Holy Saturday was a day of fasting and preparation for the Easter Vigil.

What happened on the day before Easter Sunday?

This day was the Sabbath and the day which Jesus rested in the grave.

What takes place on Holy Saturday?

Many churches hold services on this eve of Easter Day.

Easter Vigil

Easter Vigil, dating back to at least the Roman times, takes place on Holy Saturday. The Easter Vigil is a service held in many Christian churches as the official celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The service includes the first use of the word alleluia since the beginning of Lent as well as the first Eucharist of Easter.

The Easter Vigil is celebrated by the use of a wax candle which is inscribed with a cross. The letters alpha and omega are inscribed at the top and bottom and the four numbers representing the current year are inscribed above and below the cross arms. Five grains representing the wounds of Christ are sometimes pushed into the soft wax.

Baptism



In the early church this was always the time to baptise or 'christen' new Christian converts who had been learning about Christianity during **Lent**. They were then ready to take their first communion on Easter Sunday, the day of Resurrection. Christian baptisms symbolise death and resurrection and so it is very fitting for them to take place at this time of year.

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