



Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell

Alyssa Lyra Pitstick

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He descended into hell.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century, placed this affirmation of the Nicene Creed at the heart of his reflection on the world-altering events of Holy Week, asserting that this identification of God with the human experience is at the "absolute center" of the Christian faith. Yet is such a descent to suffering really the essence of Catholic belief about the mystery of Holy Saturday?

Alyssa Lyra Pitstick's *Light in Darkness* -- the first comprehensive treatment of Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday -- draws on the multiple yet unified resources of authoritative Catholic teaching on Christ's descent to challenge Balthasar's conclusions. Pitstick conducts a thorough investigation of Balthasar's position that Christ suffered in his descent into hell and asks whether that is compatible with traditional teaching about Christ.

Light in Darkness is a thorough argument for the existence and authority of a traditional Catholic doctrine of Christ's descent as manifested in creeds, statements of popes and councils, Scripture, and art from Eastern and Western traditions. Pitstick's carefully argued, contrarian work is sure to spur debate across the theological spectrum.

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