

HOLY SATURDAY FAMILY PRAYER SERVICE

On Holy Saturday, we await the resurrection of Jesus with Mary and the disciples. In your prayer space, place a statue or image of Mary and a lit candle.

LEADER: In the name of the Father...

ALL: Amen

LEADER: Lord God, we find ourselves at a loss for words today as we remember the events of yesterday and anticipate the joy that tomorrow holds. Allow us to keep a prayerful attitude throughout this day as we remember how Mary and the disciples spent this day in mourning for the loss of their Son, Savior, and friend.

READER: *A reading from an ancient homily on Holy Saturday*

Something strange is happening—there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.

LEADER: When we profess in the Apostle's Creed that Jesus "descended into hell," it does not mean that he went to hell to visit the souls who had been condemned to an everlasting death. Rather, it means that he visited the souls who were righteous and brought them into Heaven with him. With Christ's death, Heaven was opened for everyone, including the souls that had died before he was born.

Imagine what it would have been like for the souls of the dead to see Jesus for the first time. This beautiful poem, *Limbo*, by Sr. Mary Ada, CSJ, helps us to hear and see what that moment may have been like.



READER:

The ancient greyness shifted suddenly and thinned like mist upon the moors before a wind.
An old, old prophet lifted a shining face and said:
"He will be coming soon. The Son of God is dead; He died this afternoon."
A murmurous excitement stirred all souls. They wondered if they dreamed,
save one old man who seemed not even to have heard.
And Moses, standing, hushed them all to ask if any had a welcome song prepared.
If not, would David take the task?
And if they cared could not the three young children sing the Benedicite,
the canticle of praise they made when God kept them from perishing in the fiery blaze?
A breath of spring surprised them, stilling Moses' words.
No one could speak, remembering the first fresh flowers, the little singing birds.
Still others thought of fields new ploughed or apple trees all blossom-boughed.
Or some, the way a dried bed fills with water laughing down green hills.



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The fisherfolk dreamed of the foam on bright blue seas.
 The one old man who had not stirred remembered home.
 And there He was, splendid as the morning sun and fair as only God is fair.
 And they, confused with joy, knelt to adore
 Seeing that He wore five crimson stars He never had before.
 No canticle at all was sung. None toned a psalm, or raised a greeting song,
 A silent man alone of all that throng found tongue — not any other.
 Close to His heart when the embrace was done, old Joseph said,
 “How is Your Mother, how is Your Mother, Son?”

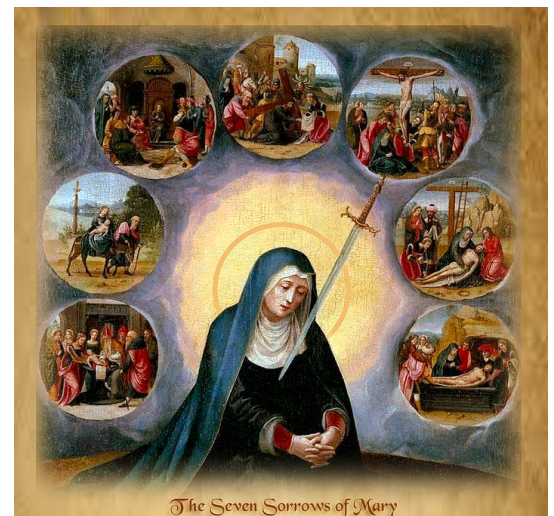
SHARE: What is your reaction to the poem? What images stand out to you the most? How do you envision Heaven? What do you think it will be like to meet Jesus face to face?

LEADER: We usually think of Advent as a time of waiting with Mary for the birth of her Son. But Holy Saturday is also a day to traditionally wait with Mary for her Son’s resurrection. Dating back to the 1500’s but popularized in the 1800’s, the *Via Matris*, or Way of the Sorrowful Mother, is a way to reflect on the sorrows that Mary endured during her life. Take turns reading the prayer for each sorrow and then pray a Hail Mary together after each one.

1. O sorrowful Virgin, who advanced in the pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in union with your Son unto the cross, by the sorrow you endured **at the prophecy of holy Simeon**, grant that we may live in faith. **Hail Mary...**

For each of the sorrows, say the same prayer and replace the words that are in bold and underlined with the following:

2. in your flight and exile in Egypt
3. in the loss of your Divine Son in the Temple
4. on meeting Jesus carrying his cross
5. when the lance pierced the side of Jesus and wounded His most loving heart
6. in receiving the dead body of Jesus
7. at the burial of Jesus



LEADER: Lord God, we thank you for the gift of Mary, your Mother and our Mother, too. Help us to wait with her in faith and hope for the joy of the resurrection. Let us not despair when we are faced with trials for we know that victory is coming and has indeed already come. Let us pray together the prayer St. John Bosco wrote to our Blessed Mother:

ALL: O Mary most powerful Virgin, great and illustrious defender of the Church, wonderful help of Christians, formidable as an army in battle array, you who alone have overcome every heresy in the world, in our anguish, in our combats, in our difficulties, defend us from the enemy and at the hour of our death, receive our souls into paradise. Amen.

LEADER: Mary, Help of Christians,

ALL: pray for us.

LEADER: In the name of the Father...



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