



The Tomb was Sealed and Silent

Today, in tomb-like fashion, throughout the world, we find tabernacles empty ... sanctuary lamps extinguished ... altars stripped. All over the world, people gather in their church to enter the spirit of this unique day by reflecting and keeping vigil at the Lord's tomb.

During Holy Week, the significance of Holy Saturday can be overlooked finding itself wedged in between the somber liturgy of Good Friday and celebratory liturgy of Easter Sunday which take up the bulk of our attention. So, what shall we make of this quiet interlude? How do we immerse ourselves in this Saturday of Saturdays?

Having lived through the pandemic, we can more easily identify with the emotional rollercoaster ride experienced by Jesus' disciples and followers after witnessing the unthinkable, the ungraspable, the unspeakable events of Jesus' arrest, sentencing and crucifixion. Has the pandemic not allowed us to feel in our very hearts and bones similar unsettling emotions? Have we not all tangibly felt uncertainty? Have our own days not been frequently tinged with fear, as we found ourselves questioning 'what next?' Have not we too been held suspended by the pandemic in the in between times awaiting a dubious future?

The quietness of today invites us to ponder the enormity of the disciples' experience. They were stunned, just having witnessed their friend's crucifixion, and having come face to face with their own betrayal of him. They were numbed within the sadness and confusion of the moment into inactivity. I recall someone describing these moments as the world being still, tears being fresh, the grave sealed. Waiting in the darkness; hoping for a brighter morning.

Let us also wait and remain in the quiet and stillness of the tomb. Let us not hurry too soon to celebrate the Resurrection and thereby miss the spiritual benefits to be found in this day of waiting. May we open ourselves to receive these poignant moments between Good Friday and Easter Sunday as a gift to savour. Holy Saturday allows us time to consciously become immersed in the Pascal Mystery.

We have heard it said that in our lives we live out the pattern of the Pascal Mystery. Our individual lives do indeed include a mixture of ups and downs. If we look back over our lives, are we not able to cite examples from our own stories? The living out of the Pascal Mystery is the sequence of our deaths and rebirths. We see this pattern all around us. In nature, we see it in the annual rotation through the cycle of the seasons. We circle through the life and death pattern continuously as we encounter troubling and enriching things happening to us or to those around us.

We can keep this day holy by letting the sense of its mystery enter us. We should endeavour to keep Holy Saturday as one of the most deeply contemplative days of the Christian year. Today, let us hold still as we

inevitably shift our attention between the mystery of the cross and the mystery of the Resurrection and pause to reflect upon the part each of them plays in the pattern of our lives. The British Christian theologian and writer, Tina Beattie, asserts that, “there is a link which connects the tragedy of Good Friday to the promise of Easter Sunday. Th[is] link is - to dare to believe ... [I]t was surely the challenge which faced Mary and the faithful disciples throughout the long day when the tomb was sealed and silent.” Our life situations also at times challenge our own faith. Our fragile belief is fortified by our willingness to hope despite the circumstances. We too need to dare to believe.

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Guest Blogger

