



## Holy Saturday At-Home Vigil

*At Oak Hill, we have a tradition where individuals take turns on Holy Saturday holding vigil, alone, in the sanctuary of the church. This year, because of coronavirus, we've closed off the building, but we wanted to create a vigil-like experience for you to have in your own home, or outside, or wherever you can create space to stop, read, pray, and process.*

*You are welcome to hold vigil in your own way. Here are some possibilities: Find a candle, a blanket, a bible, and a journal. Or maybe grab a copy of the newspaper, or use your twitter feed, something as a resource for your prayers for the world. Maybe you focus well while knitting, or while vacuuming, or while working on your car. Maybe sitting outside in nature, or walking in the park, in the living room after kids have gone to bed, or maybe it's the quiet of your bedroom at the very start of the day. You are welcome to work your way through this packet, or to pick and choose just pieces and parts that interest you. However and wherever you have time and space to spend with God, to watch and listen, to rest and wait, to grieve and pray, is a great place to hold vigil this Saturday.*

*Some resources for your Holy Saturday prayer and reflection:*

### **Prayer: A prayer to open your vigil holding**

God of Life and God of Death, we find ourselves in this in-between. The horrors of the week are still fresh, and the hope of Easter morning is not yet here. In this Holy, Horrible Saturday we remain. In that time, when all seems lost, all feels wrong, and all fear is tangible. How could this be? How did we get here? How do we go on?

Meet us here. On this Saturday. Bear our grief, wear our confusion, notice our pain. And do not leave us alone in it. As we make time to lament, to bear down, to cry out, remember us still. And know how much we love you.

Amen.

## **Reading: Matthew 27:45-66**

### **The Death of Jesus**

<sup>45</sup>From noon on, darkness came over the whole land<sup>[a]</sup> until three in the afternoon. <sup>46</sup>And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>47</sup>When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." <sup>48</sup>At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. <sup>49</sup>But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>50</sup>Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>51</sup>At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. <sup>53</sup>After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup>Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"<sup>[s]</sup>

<sup>55</sup>Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. <sup>56</sup>Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

### **The Burial of Jesus**

<sup>57</sup>When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup>He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup>So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth <sup>60</sup>and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup>Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

### **The Guard at the Tomb**

<sup>62</sup>The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup>and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' <sup>64</sup>Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup>Pilate said to them, "You have a guard<sup>[a]</sup> of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>66</sup>So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

## Reflection in Art and Poem: by Jan Richardson



*Image: Vigil © Jan Richardson*

*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

—Matthew 27.61

*And now? we asked yesterday. What do we do now?*

We wait. We watch. We keep vigil. We remind ourselves to breathe.

And if, still reeling from the rending, we hardly know what we keep vigil for, it is no matter.

And if, in our aching, we hardly know how to hope, it is no cause for despair.

On this day, all we need to know is this:

We do not wait alone.

**The Art of Enduring  
For Holy Saturday**

This blessing  
can wait as long  
as you can.

Longer.

This blessing  
began eons ago  
and knows the art  
of enduring.

This blessing  
has passed  
through ages  
and generations,  
witnessed the turning  
of centuries,  
weathered the spiraling  
of history.

This blessing  
is in no rush.

This blessing  
will plant itself  
by your door.

This blessing  
will keep vigil  
and chant prayers.

This blessing  
will bring a friend  
for company.

This blessing  
will pack a lunch  
and a thermos  
of coffee.

This blessing  
will bide  
its sweet time

until it hears  
the beginning  
of breath,  
the stirring  
of limbs,  
the stretching,  
reaching,  
rising

of what had lain  
dead within you  
and is ready  
to return.

—Jan Richardson

from *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*

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## **Activity: Praying the Newspaper (or Praying Your Twitter Feed)**



Prayer is an act of worship. In praying, we recognize that God is listening, that God has power to act, that God cares about the things that break our hearts, and that God's love will make a difference in this world.

Take a moment, and glance through your newspaper, or your twitter feed, or your text messages. Notice those places where people are hurting, are grieving, and are struggling. Add them to your vigil. Pray for their wounds, pray for those fears, pray for all who are suffering. Ask God to help where there is confusion, where there is disappointment, where there is death. Pray that God's love might show up, and spark something new. Hold close to these hurts, and invite God in.....

## **Visual Meditation: Online Video**

Click here to watch the 2 ½ minute video: <https://vimeo.com/404687105>

### **The Night Weeps—Meditation on Jesus' Death**

Take a few deep breaths then watch, listen, and receive this moving meditation on Jesus' crucifixion. Pay close attention as the imagery slowly evolves. This short film includes the poem, "the night weeps," by Slat's Toole, which is one of many poems featured in our "Singing Through the Wilderness" liturgy for Holy Week. The film also features, the painting, "Why Have You Forsaken Me?" by Hannah Garrity. (From *A Sanctified Art*)

## **Listen: A few songs for reflection**

*He Never Said A Mumblin Word* performed by Tesfa Wondemagegehu:

[https://youtu.be/KM8SULN\\_G\\_w](https://youtu.be/KM8SULN_G_w)

*Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* Performed by Vigil:

<https://vimeo.com/159001893>

*Storm Comin* performed by the Wailin Jennys:

<https://youtu.be/OguVb3uSZTs>

*Dear Refuge of My Weary Soul* performed by Indelible Grace:

<https://youtu.be/cZ-DrYW9eg4>

*House of God Forever* performed by Jon Foreman:

<https://youtu.be/LtDXHgTi-5s>

## **Activity: Personal Prayer**

First, make a list. On a piece of paper that no one else will ever see, or on your phone in the notes section, or just on your fingers by counting one and two and three... Make a list of your own hurts. What is breaking your heart? What are you still grieving? What is it that makes you want to rip your hair out and rend your garments and just scream? What is the hurt that you don't mention to anyone? What is the one you've been carrying a long while? Which hurt is your newest and most fresh? What burden is overwhelming your shoulders? What pain feels too much to bear? Write it all down. Name every bit of it.

Now take a few breaths. Close your eyes. Breathe again.

Let's pray.....

God of all creation, God who claims me as beloved, God of the universe, God my friend,

Notice my pain. Do you see this list? Did you feel these tears? How long am I going to hurt this way? How deep will these wounds tug, how long will they rip open? Can you breathe in all of this sadness that I am holding? Can you embrace all of this sorrow? Can you sit next to me and let me just rant about it? Will you find some way to help me endure? Because I have been trying and I have been holding on and I have been struggling through it, and it has still been terrible. God, go ahead and pull me into that tomb for a bit. I can rest in there. I can be sad in there. I can weep and rock and rail and rage in there. But then, maybe then, help me find my way out, too. Pick me up, and hold my heart, and put your breath into my dry bones and walk me back into life. Take all of these hurts, this whole long list, and walk me back into life. On Easter morning, but also, every morning, too. Amen.

## **Closing Prayer: A Prayer for Jesus on Holy Saturday**

God, on this day, throughout this night, when we don't know how the story will really end, when we're lost in the loss, when we are trapped by fear, when we are laying in grief, we pray for our sibling, we pray for our friend, we pray for your child, we pray for The Christ. We pray for the One who moved us, who captured our attention, the One who called for us to follow. We pray for the one who knew our name and our whole, real story. We pray for the one who challenged broken systems, who restored people to community, who offered us all forgiveness and love. We pray for the one who spoke so freely of justice and passion, righteousness and reconciliation, grace and hope, healing and love, that he frightened the whole world. We pray for how we get caught up in the frenzy. We pray for how we deny and betray him, still. We pray for the hurt he must have felt- being alone, being attacked, being misunderstood, being beat down. We lament his agony. For all the suffering that Jesus endured, we pray to you, O God. And tonight, we commit to keeping a moment of watch, to holding a bit of vigil, to setting aside this time to notice the pain, to grieve the horrible loss, and to remember how your child must have hurt. We rest with you in the tomb, we embrace you in your grief, and we stay with you on this day, holding love. Lord, hear our prayers. Lord, feel our care. Amen.