

retreat @home

*They laid
Jesus there...*

DAY 6: SATURDAY

They laid Jesus there...

PREPARE: Go to your chosen prayer place, settle down and become still. Take some deep breaths and slow your breathing. Relax and come to rest. God is here to meet with you.

OPEN: *I open my hands and say, "here I am God..."*
I open my ears and say, "I am listening God..."
I open my imagination and ask, "lead me God..."

ASK: Become aware of how you are feeling today, name those feelings out loud to God. Ask God for whatever you sense that you need in this time of prayer today.
Be bold to ask - God loves to give.

GOSPEL READING: John: 19:38-42

Read today's Gospel passage through slowly two or three times until you have a clear sense of its flow.

MEDITATION: The streets of Jerusalem lie still. It is the Sabbath, and the air is cold and heavy.

He is dead. How could this have happened? He healed people!

Was he not all that we had believed?

Yesterday, before dusk, two men took the body down from the cross. They groaned under the dead weight. It took them so long to wash off all his dried blood, gently, gingerly, silently. Then they covered the body with spices and wrapped it up. It could be smelt some way away.

Watch them. Notice their body language.
Listen to their breathing. What do their faces convey?

Now, the linen-wrapped body lies in someone else's tomb, lifeless and limp in the darkness. His closest friends and followers don't know what to do with themselves. They cannot eat. They have not slept since it happened. They sob and shudder; some shout - but nobody finds any comfort. The emptiness presses in on all sides, and the questions threaten to crush them.

We don't even know who we are any more.

Lost. Isolated beyond imagination.

Everything is meaningless now. Our Saviour, our Healer, our Redeemer, our Master, our Lord - is dead.

Sit with them for a while. Feel the shock, the fear, the bewilderment... the utter hopelessness.

Be still, holding their questions, not offering any answers just yet.

CONVERSATION: Coming out of your own imagining of the story, take a few moments to talk it over with God as if you were telling a friend about what just happened. What did you notice? What were the feelings that arose in you? Did anything surprise you? Was there anything uncomfortable? Do you sense yourself wanting to make any particular response?

ENDING: End your prayer, perhaps shaping one sentence that captures what you want to say to God. Move to somewhere different - make a hot drink - take a few moments to jot down your thoughts.

REVIEW & RELISH: If you are able to find another slot in your day, return to your prayer place, read the story and take the journey in your imagination once again. New things may emerge or you may simply find yourself relishing the earlier insights more deeply.

THREE KEY QUESTIONS:

HIS STORY - What is it like when Jesus feels absent or distant?

OUR STORY - How does the despair of Easter Saturday meet us in the coronavirus crisis?

MY STORY - What part of my life is Jesus absent from? Where to I need to cry out to Him today?

CREATIVE IDEAS: The story is full of strong emotions. What colours come to mind as you sit with those feelings? Paint or draw what emerges, perhaps in an abstract style using the colours, shapes, images or even words that arise. What is God saying to you as you paint, draw or create?

RETREAT ON THE MOVE: In your daily tasks, grieve for those who are suffering alone, feeling the isolation the worst. Grieve for the mums alone with newborns, with nobody to help them. Grieve for the sick, with nobody to comfort them. Grieve for those unable to say goodbye to loved ones. Grieve for those recently bereaved. Grieve like those disciples on that first Easter Saturday, for those to whom God is ever distant, who feel that he has left them for good. Bring those feelings to God, and cry out to him - on your knees, if you can get there, and would find that posture helpful.

EXPLORE FURTHER: Search 'Grief Art' on Google Images. Which picture resonates with you?



THE COMMUNITY OF THE
TREE OF LIFE

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Leicester
Shaped by God