

## Feeling Blue on Holy Saturday in Covid Times

### *Matthew 27:45-56 Good News Translation (GNT) The Death of Jesus*

<sup>45</sup> At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. <sup>46</sup> At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?"

<sup>47</sup> Some of the people standing there heard him and said, "He is calling for Elijah!" <sup>48</sup> One of them ran up at once, took a sponge, soaked it in cheap wine, put it on the end of a stick, and tried to make him drink it.

<sup>49</sup> But the others said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah is coming to save him!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus again gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

<sup>51</sup> Then the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart, <sup>52</sup> the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were raised to life. <sup>53</sup> They left the graves, and after Jesus rose from death, they went into the Holy City, where many people saw them.

<sup>54</sup> When the army officer and the soldiers with him who were watching Jesus saw the earthquake and everything else that happened, they were terrified and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

<sup>55</sup> There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee and helped him. <sup>56</sup> Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the wife of Zebedee.

### *Covered with Darkness:*

We are living in strange times. Physical isolation causes increased stress and loneliness, for those isolated in couples or family situations, isolation can lead to rising tension and even violence.

This is in addition to our usual life events that darken our skies – bereavement (of people, of job prospects, of possibilities or hopes), disappointment, broken places in our lives all add to our gloom.

Where do you feel you are living in the dark right now? What is shading your mood or affecting your mental health? If you cannot pray about these things, can you just name them in front of God?

Sit with open hands and heart in the presence of God. Be open for the Spirit to bring comfort, peace and light into your darkness. If He does not today, be open for Him to come tomorrow or on another day; try to set aside 5 minutes a day to wait on Him.

### *Feeling Abandoned:*

Many of us are currently living alone. Some of us are living with others, but perhaps emotional closeness has been lost. Particularly if we have been bereaved, we may well feel abandoned.

What most affects you if you feel abandoned? Is it the loss of physical touch or emotional support that you most miss? Do you feel more fearful? As if no one cares any more? Put one hand over your heart and if you can, tell or write to God your inner feelings about being abandoned. Remind yourself of God's promises: I will never leave you. I cannot forget you. I have loved you with an everlasting love. Receive comfort and love from the Holy Spirit.

*Soaked in cheap wine:*

People tried to offer wine as a kind act – the wine would dull the pain. What pain are you living with now? Is it physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or a mix? What are you doing to try to dull the pain? Is it a healing thing, or just something that covers the pain, leaving the wound?

Isaiah tells us that it is through the wounds of Jesus that we are healed. Can you come to Jesus today, in your pain, and ask for healing? Can you perhaps find some oil (massage oil, essential oil, oil based bath stuff or even cooking oil and anoint your hands as a sign of being willing to receive from God?

*The earth shook:*

Covid 19 is shaking our society; education, employment, even shopping and leisure are all affected. Nothing is or will be as it was. We are marked by this time. The curtain was torn, rocks broke. There were both permanent and temporary outcomes.

What for you has been broken, but the breaking was good because it brought you liberty? What has been broken that was not good, because it has caused you damage?

Come to God to ask for wisdom and patience, to see how he might take broken pieces to make a beautiful mosaic in your life. Ask for the courage to keep going, even if every step seems impossible.

*Watching and looking:*

Some were watching because it was their job. Some were looking because they loved Jesus. When you think about the Easter events, how do you see them? Are you watching prosaically, or with love?

Confess when you have taken God and your salvation for granted. Seek forgiveness, knowing it is offered freely, because God himself has paid the price. Ask God to help you grasp how much he loves you and for the Spirit to work in you so you can aspire to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

*Use the sections that are helpful. Nothing is obligatory. If none of it helps, sit quietly and just acknowledge your pain, loss, fear and confusion.*