

The Glorious Mysteries of Death

The Resurrection

And taking him down, he wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid.

I am a stranger and sojourner among you: give me the right of a burying place with you. *Luke 23:53, Genesis 23:4*

Cold stone welcomed the Savior. A cemetery can be a very cold place. One of the most chilling sites is the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. Seemingly endless rows of white crosses mark the places of burial. The cold hard ground of a cemetery or sepulcher appear welcome and swallow up the bodies of my loved ones. But as I walk through the cemetery paying respect and remembering my loved ones, I must remember that they are merely sleeping. Eventually on that great and terrible day, the graves will open and the rocks will cry out. They and I will be awakened from the sleep of death. For Christ said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live." On that day the cemeteries which are places now of mourning will be fields of rejoicing as the souls of the just are brought forth into the light of eternal day and they will hear Our Lord say, "Behold, I make all things new." "Come my beloved enter into my rest."

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who rose from the dead.

The Ascension

This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven.

The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice: the Lord is among them in Sina, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts in men.

-Acts of the Apostles 1:11, Psalm 67:18-19

All too often the last time I may see a deceased loved one is at the funeral home in his or her casket. I sometimes hate to even go and see them this way because this is not the memory of them I want burned into my mind. This still image is merely a shadow of the person I knew and loved. Jesus too was placed in a tomb and for many this was the last image they had of Him. However, He rose again and the last time many laid eyes on Him He was gloriously ascending into heaven. Many of His followers stood on the Mount of Olives staring into the sky hoping to catch one more glimpse. I must keep in mind the Ascension when I am faced with the loss of a loved one. I must remember that when I see them resting peacefully in the casket that they are merely sleeping and this is the last time I will see them in this world. Yet in the world to come I will see them as God sees them. When I stand watch in the funeral home, I must hear the voices of those angels saying to me, "Why are you looking down. This dear one who is taken from you will return to you more glorious than you can imagine."

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who will come again in glory.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth; it is better for you that I go; for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you but if I go I will send him to you.

the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.

-John 16:6-7, Job 1:21

As I write this meditation our community faces the loss of two young men in their early twenties. Two thousand years removed, it is easy for me to see the necessity of Christ's death. However, when death hits closer to home I have a hard time finding God's reasons for the loss I suffer. I ask "Why?" I wonder what good could possibly come from these seemingly pointless deaths. No matter who is taken from me, I must always search for God's will and pray for the strength to accept it. As hard as death can be to accept, I must remember God has plans for me that are good and never evil. Everything He does is designed to draw me closer to Himself. Jesus had to leave so the Holy Spirit would come and God could be closer to man, in fact dwell within him. Maybe God takes those who are dear to me so that they, like St. Therese of Lisieux, may spend their heaven doing good on earth.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who sends His Spirit
in our time of need.

The Assumption of Mary

And there were given to the woman two wings of a great eagle that she might fly...unto her place.

He that feareth the Lord, honoureth his parents, and will serve them as his masters that brought him into the world.

- Revelation 12:14, Sirach 3:8

The loss of a parent can be crippling to a child no matter what the child's age. To watch an elderly parent slowly deteriorate in mind and body is a difficult thing. The strong hands of a father now shake and tremble. The beautiful voice of a mother who long ago sang me to sleep now grows weak and tired. As the end of their journey here on earth draws closer, I seem to cling even tighter to their words, their wisdom, and their very presence. I can imagine too that the followers of Christ did not want Mary to be taken from them. They wanted to hear her song proclaiming the greatness of the Lord one more time. They needed her to stay and tell them stories about Jesus and the funny things He did growing up. The followers of Christ did not want to lose the woman they called Mother. I need to make time for my parents while they are still with me. I should go for a walk with my father and take my mother to breakfast. I must try to learn from their lives and listen to every story they tell for they too will one day be taken from me. When my parents have passed on, I will remember them daily in my prayers. I will relive in my mind every good time and forget and forgive every bad time. I will entrust them to the Mother of God until we meet again in heaven.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who brought His Mother to Himself

The Coronation of Mary

A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

And the king said to me, and the queen that sat by him: For how long shall thy journey be, and when wilt thou return? And it pleased the king, and he sent me.
- Nehemiah 2:6, Revelation 12:1

In the crowning of Mary I find the reward that awaits all those who follow Christ. Mary shows me what awaits those followers of Jesus who persevere to the end. Mary was not only the Mother of Jesus but also the perfect follower of Him. She *is* the imitation of Christ. To imitate Mary is to imitate Christ. After Mary's death she was awakened by her Son and He brought her into the heavenly kingdom. I must trust that after my death, Jesus will come to me also and lead me to the heavenly kingdom. There I shall stand before the King of Kings and His Queen Mother for eternity singing the praises of God and receiving a crown for running the race to the end. "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will save it." I must not fear death but seek to lose my life for Christ so that I may inherit the Kingdom like Mary. I must seek to spend my life for Christ so that I might, in the end, receive the crown of victory.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who sits
with His Mother by His side.

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