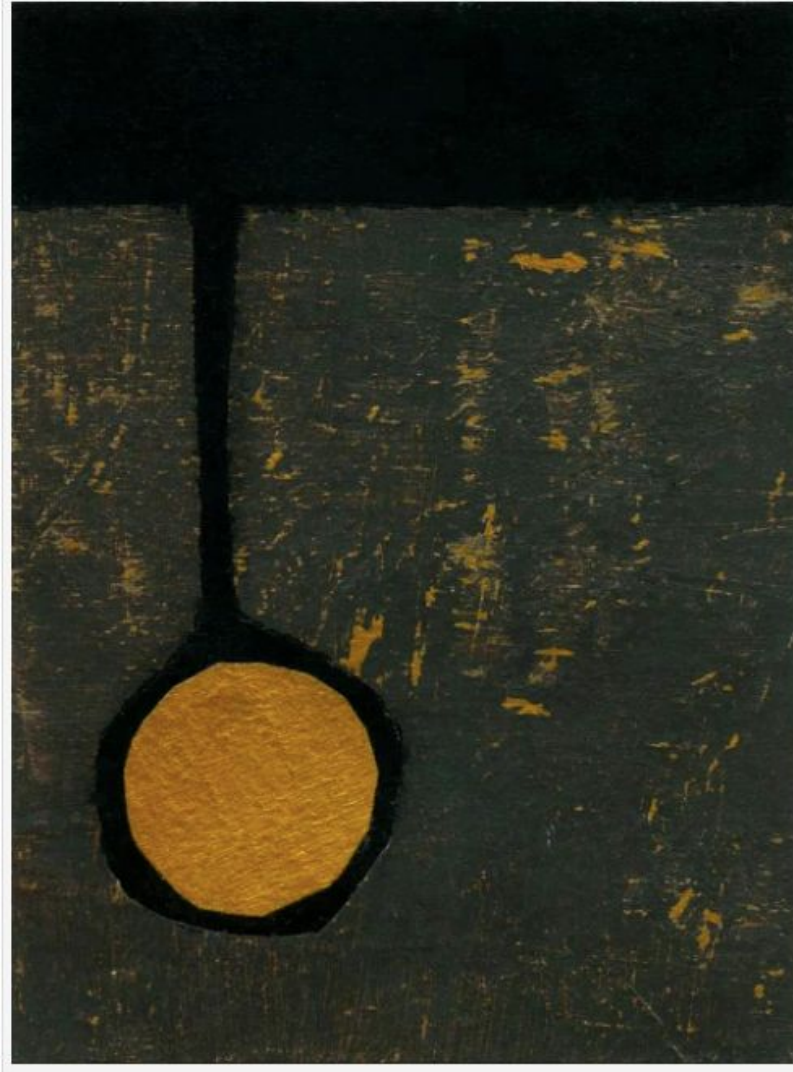


in stillness, the earth waits
an at-home day retreat guide for Holy Saturday



"Buried" by Jan Richardson | Copyright 2012 | All Rights Reserved

truly, truly,
i say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls
into the earth and dies, it remains alone;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
john 12:24

table of contents

plan

- **9am** - Morning Prayer on Zoom with this link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/188930420> (and/or dial in +1 778 907 2071 Meeting ID: 188 930 42)
- **9:30am** - Retreat opening (stay on or join Zoom call)
 - Intro to the day and blessing
 - Centering questions: *How do I come to this day? What's the state of my mind, heart, body? Anything I need to say or ask so I can be present to God, myself, and others today?*
- **9:30am-2:30pm** - Self-guided retreat day
- **3pm** - Communal reflection, back on Zoom (same link)
 - Reflection Questions:
 - *What was your experience like today?*
 - *Did anything surprise you?*
 - *How did you experience God in the midst of today?*
 - *What can we hold with you as you wait for tomorrow's Easter (and/or the final Easter)?*
 - Closing prayer and sending blessing (see page 10)

practices

1. Guided Meditation
2. Walking Meditation
3. Stilling Meditation
4. Silent Meditation
5. Planting Meditation
6. Writing Meditation

poetry & prayers

1. *Absolutely Clear* by Hafiz
2. *When Mary Wept* by Danusha Lameris
3. *Holds You* by Pdraig O Tuama
4. *A Blessing for Holy Saturday* by Jan Richardson
5. *Unholy Sonnets* by Mark Jarman
6. *When Death Comes* by Mary Oliver
7. *Holy Saturday* by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

practices

Invitation: Take a deep breath, and entrust your day to God. Look through these six meditations, and pick one (or a couple) to try. None of them are magic. (As Mary Oliver says: *This isn't a contest, but a doorway into thanks, and a silence in which another voice may speak.*) Let the exercise start a conversation with God (even if a silent one), and let it go where it goes. Resist taking your spiritual temperature or evaluating your performance, emotions or insights. However the day takes shape, let God look at you, let God walk with you, let God love you.

Guided Meditation | Embracing Transformation in the Cave

- Find a quiet place, grab a journal and pen
- Read [John 11:1-44](#)
- Listen to this guided meditation - Part 1 (<https://youtu.be/3w3j6v-mD-0>) and Part 2 (<https://youtu.be/iyWpLXcC-bE>) (found in Sharon Moon's book, *The Healing Oasis: Guided Meditations for Mind, Body, and Spirit*)
- Journal about your experience.
 - What was new to you about experiencing this story in this way?
 - What thoughts/memories/emotions were evoked?
 - What happened in your body as you meditated on this story?
 - Did you sense an invitation from the Holy Spirit? If so, describe it.

Walking Meditation | Looking for the Liminal

Holy Saturday is a space and time that is in between. It is the “dead zone” where nothing appears to be happening and yet so much activity is happening in the hidden and unseen places. It is a liminal space. Liminal literally means “threshold.” It is a door-way where the entrance becomes the exit. It is a moment between ebbing and flowing, the twilight between sleeping and waking, the “bowl of hush held lifted to the bird's first trilling”. Ultimately, it is where death births forth to new life. (Text adapted from Dan Miller at *The Sacred Braid* and the poem “Easter Eve: A Fantasy” by Vassar Miller)

- Begin by praying to be available to God's presence as you take a walk around the block, along the ocean, or through the woods
- Slow down your pace. Stay alert to what's around you rather than mulling over things in your head.
- Practice the spiritual discipline of noticing. Pay attention to shapes, colors and textures. Notice the relationship of things to one another.
- Look for edges, border places, spaces-in-between, fault lines, thresholds.
- What attracts your attention? Spend some time exploring this.
- If you're outside, you may want to take something with you - stone or twig or branch - as a reminder of what you experience.
- Reflect/Journal:
 - What were you aware of as you walked?
 - What did you understand in a new or deeper way--both within and around you?
 - Where and how did you hear God in the world? Does this walk stir any action or response in you?
 - Make a note to yourself or in a journal about the one phrase, image, idea, or action that you want to remember from this walk.

Stilling Meditation | Sitting with the tensions

Much of our lives are spent in Holy Saturday places but we spend so much energy resisting, longing for resolution and closure. Our practice this day is to really enter into the liminal zone, to be present to it with every cell of our being. Consider these questions, and bring yourself as fully present as you can to the discomfort of the experience:

<p>What losses am I living with?</p> <p>Where am I grieving?</p> <p>Is there a question I've been living with or returning to repeatedly?</p> <p>How or where am I living with uncertainty?</p> <p>What are my "what next" questions?</p>	
---	--

- Rest in the space of waiting and unknowing and resist trying to come up with neat answers or resolutions.
- Imagine yourself on a wild border or standing on a threshold, knowing that you cannot fully embrace what is on the other side until you have let this place shape and form your heart.
- When you notice your attention drifting or your mind starting to analyze, return to your breath and the present moment.
- Allow yourself to feel whatever arises in this space. Honor the mystery. Commend your spirit into God's hands.

*adapted from Christine Valters Paintner, Ph.D via [Abbey of the Arts](#)

Silent Meditation | Centering Prayer

The Lord will fight for you; you have only to keep still.
- Exodus 14:14

*I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother,
like a weaned child is my soul within me.*
- Psalm 131:2

Suggested Steps:

- Choose a word as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
 - Some examples: Jesus, Christ, God, Return, Peace, Thank You, etc.
- Set a timer (can start at 5, 10, or 15 minutes) and slowly read Psalm 131:1-2.
- Sit comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce your prayer word as a symbol of your consent to God's presence and action.
- When you become aware of thoughts, return ever so gently to the word.
- At the end of the prayer time, remain in silence with eyes closed for another minute, and then close with the Lord's prayer.

(Summary: Be with God within → use a word to stay → use the word to return)

Planting Meditation | Kid Friendly!

Seeds offer a clear message to children and adults of the power of new life and of something emerging from the darkness of soil.

If you have the supplies at home,* take a pot of soil plant seeds in the pot. On your own or with your children:

- Pause and observe the seeds you have chosen for this activity.
- What do you notice about them? What do they feel like?
- Turn your attention to the soil.
- What do you observe about the soil?
- As you place the seed within the soil, what do you notice?
- What can this activity teach us about faith? What can it teach us about Holy Saturday?

*another option if you don't have the supplies would be to take a walk outside and find seeds in the natural world, and try this same activity outside.

Writing Meditation | Drafting an imprecatory or lament psalm

There are 29 imprecatory psalms in the Bible (i.e. the angry, cursing ones), and Holy Saturday, of all days, may be a good day to try our hand at one. Although it can be counterintuitive to merge “prayer” with (what feels like) complaining/raging/accusing/fighting, what’s compelling about these particular psalms is that they do not pretend that violence doesn’t exist or wreak havoc on our souls, on creation, and on our relationships. If you’re up for it, use this general template for drafting your own imprecatory psalm - about the current pandemic, a particular tension you inhabit, or how we live in “between” time.

Movements	Your first draft here	An Example
<p>1. Address - Identify God (through any name for God) as the person to whom this protest is addressed.</p>		<p>O God who overestimates us, Damage has already been done - and more will be done. If we - your human experiment - came out of love, for love, and in love, what kind of lover are you?</p>
<p>2. Protest - Articulate the problem, grief, question, protest or complaint (what is painful, what is lost, unfair, confusing, wrong)</p>		<p>Yes, we are awake, now - for how long, who knows - but does waking us up have to come with so much collateral, irreversible, carnage? Yes, there are stories of good, but I don’t believe in the good cancelling out the bad. We cannot unknow it - our bodies keep the score. The disequilibrium, the impossible choices some are facing, the layers of loss - these make me feel like you have abandoned us to sea during a storm, that you have lost touch with how sensitive and small we really are.</p>
<p>3. Request - Tell God how it makes you feel and what you want God to do about it, or how God could intervene or respond based on what you know of God</p>		<p>Listen to my fear God, and look in your biggest mirror: remember your Parenthood. Do not throw our hearts to hell in a handbasket, but retrieve, heal, and soothe us. I am the child, and You are the Parent, and I will honor you and go with you, even though I’m angry. Prove me wrong, I pray, (And thank you for listening.) Amen.</p>
<p>4. Confess trust - Verbalize (perhaps in faith) your trust in God</p>		
<p>5. Praise - Thank God for something.</p>		

poems & prayers

Invitation: Glance over these poems and prayers and pick one to pray with. Treat it like a lectio divina - reading it several times slowly, meditatively, circling the word or phrase that catches your attention, and using that to usher you into conversation and contemplation with God. If a cool insight or feeling comes, rest with that. If nothing does, cool, rest with God just the same.

Absolutely Clear

By Hafiz

Don't surrender your loneliness so quickly.
Let it cut more deep.
Let it ferment and season you as few human
Or even divine ingredients can.
Something missing in my heart tonight
Has made my eyes so soft,
My voice so tender,
My need of God
Absolutely clear.

When Mary Wept

By Danusha Lameris

She would sink down
into the dirt
behind the house
wetness streaking
her face.
No other child like hers.
He ran wild,
always opening his mouth
before strangers.
Sometimes, at the well,
filling earthen jugs with water
she thought of the night
she birthed him
the dark smell of hay
filling her lungs
the swirl of stars.
How she had died, then,
disappeared into blackness,
and was born with him,
his crown breaching
the tight seal of her flesh.
What light!
For a moment, she was sunrise
breaking over the horizon.
She was mountains, rivers
a quiet swath of forest
the quick movements of birds.
But now, there was only the crack
of Joseph's hammer
hitting dull nails
into a plank of wood
crows circling the carcass of a ewe,
dead that morning
the air hot and still
as held breath.
The child, where was he?

A Blessing for Holy Saturday

By Jan Richardson

I have no cause to linger beside this place of
 death
no reason to keep vigil
where life has left
and yet I cannot go,
cannot bring myself
to cleave myself
from here
can only pray
that this waiting
might yet be a blessing
and this grieving
yet a blessing
and this stone
yet a blessing
and this silence
yet a blessing
Still.

(Holds You)

By Padraig O Tuama on Instagram

If you can't sleep, get up.
Make tea. Pray.
If you can't pray, pray anyway.
Light a candle. Kneel. Watch.
If you can't watch, watch anyway.
There are hares looking for food.
And there are sleeping robins beyond the dark
window.
There are burrowing things burrowing.
There is this posture, this story,
this practice that —
even if nothing else holds you —
holds you

Unholy sonnets

by Mark Jarman - On the reversal of religion.

I.

Hands folded to construct a church and steeple,
A roof of knuckles, outer walls of skin,
The thumbs as doors, the fingers bent within
To be revealed, wriggling, as "all the people,"
All eight of them, enmeshed, caught by surprise,
Turned upward blushing in the sudden light,
The nails like welders' masks, the fit so tight
Among them you can hear their half-choked
cries

To be released, to be pried from this mess
They're soldered into somehow—they don't
know.

But stuck now they are willing to confess,
If that will ease your grip and let them go,
Confess the terror they cannot withstand
Is being locked inside another hand.

II.

After the praying, after the hymn-singing,
After the sermon's trenchant commentary
On the world's ills, which make ours secondary,
After communion, after the hand-wringing,
And after peace descends upon us, bringing
Our eyes up to regard the sanctuary
And how the light swords through it, and how,
scary

In their sheer numbers, motes of dust ride,
clinging—

There is, as doctors say about some pain,
Discomfort knowing that despite your prayers,
Your listening and rejoicing, your small part
In this communal stab at coming clean,
There is one stubborn remnant of your cares
Intact. There is still murder in your heart.

III.

Two forces rule the universe of breath
And one is gravity and one is light.
And does their jurisdiction include death?
Does nothingness exist in its own right?
It's hard to say, lying awake at night,
Full of an inner weight, a glaring dread,
And feeling that Simone Weil must be right.
Two forces rule the universe, she said,
And they are light and gravity. And dead,
She knows, as you and I do not, if death
Is also ruled or if it rules instead,
And if it matters, after your last breath.
But she said truth was on the side of death
And thought God's grace filled emptiness, like
breath.

IV.

Time to admit my altar is a desk.
Time to confess the cross I bear a pen.
My soul, a little like a compact disc,
Slides into place, a laser plays upon
Its surface, and a sentimental mist,
Freaked with the colors of church window glass,
Rides down a shaft of light that smells of must
As music adds a layer of high gloss.
Time to say plainly when I am alone
And waiting for the coming of the ghost
Whose flame-tongue like a blow torch, sharp
and lean,
Writes things that no one ever could have
guessed,
I give in to my habit and my vice
And speak as soon as I can find a voice.

When Death Comes

By Mary Oliver

like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins
 from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox
when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door full of curiosity,
 wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of
 darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,
and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,
and each name a comfortable music in the
 mouth,
tending, as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my
 arms.
When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular,
 and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and
 frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this
 world.

Holy Saturday

By Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Poor Holy Saturday
hung out to dry between
Good Friday's drama
and Easter's miracle.
Not much going for it,
this empty day bereft of tradition,
just an in between time.
A day of waiting around,
a day of thinking we knew.

Welcome home.

This is the day we live most of our life in,
the wide space between tragedy and recovery,
the emptiness between the pain and the
 healing.

We don't always know we're waiting
for something not in our hands,
that has already happened,
unknowingly included in a procession
toward someone who's already here.
Only later, not on this day, do we know
we're not waiting for future;
we're watching God unfold.

That is enough.

That is why this day,
drab and ordinary,
is holy.



closing prayer

Together: Holy God, this day has been your gift to us. We take it Lord, from Your hand, and thank You for the wonder of it. Let the fruit be planted deep in our hearts that we may be strengthened in the waiting and in the bearing of your light into this world.

Sending

All that I am Lord,
I place into your hands
*All that I do Lord,
I place into your hands
*Everything I work for Lord,
I place into your hands
*Everything I hope for Lord,
I place into your hands
*The troubles that weary me Lord,
I place into your hands
*The thoughts that disturb me Lord,
I place into your hands
*All my dreams and visions Lord,
I place into your hands
*Each that I care for Lord,
I place into your hands
*Each that I pray for .Lord,
I place into your hands
*the darkness and the waiting
I place into your hands

Into your hands oh God we commend our day, our lives, our whole being.

Our Father

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Bell x 3