**I Love to Tell the Story**

**Day 206 The Road to Golgotha Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26-32**

Guided reflection:

In today’s passages, only Matt and Mark mention Simon, who was forced to carry the cross for Jesus, but Luke, the compassionate physician, notices how it affects everyone – the women wailed and lamented him. Jesus even speaks to the women of that generation and changes their focus from himself to cry for their lost generation. On these next few days, for your reflection, place yourself in the scenes. What are you thinking? With whom do you identify?

Guided prayer:

Use the words to an old hymn *Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?*

*No, there’s a cross for everyone one, and there’s a cross for me.”*

**Day 207 The Crucifixion Matt 27:33-44; Mark 15:22-32; Luke 23: 44-43**

Guided reflection:

This is the most horrific scripture …the basis for “THE PASSION” movie a few years back. To read this I have to keep reminding myself this is not the whole story. People were confused about who this man was. Why didn’t he just whip up some miracle and save himself? Once again, stay in the story; be there at the cross; be one of the criminals. What are you thinking… feeling? They didn’t know!!! “Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing”

Guided Prayer:

*“O God, why? Why choose this route? Why does your story of love have to have such violence and horror? Your Word says this was for my sins. Forgive me…I do not know what I am doing either! Amen”*

**Day 208 The Death on the Cross Matt 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-49**

Guided reflection:

I have stood by the bed of someone dying many times, and if it has been a long, painful death, there is a point when I know the end is coming and all of the sudden I am glad that his/her struggle is almost over. That is how I feel when I get to this portion of the story. It is almost over. First, we have to hear the words “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” If Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine, he would need to enter into the whole of human experience. Have you ever asked “My God, where are you? Have you forsaken me?” Hold on, dear child, joy comes in the morning, weeping only lasts for the night. There has to be a death before there can be a resurrection! It is a spiritual cycle – after you

**Day 209 Burial of Jesus Matt 27: 57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23: 50-56**

Guided reflection:

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross told us that grief has stages: Shock, denial, anger, despair, and then renewal. Consider all the stages the disciples went through – the shock of it all, they even denied Jesus and could not believe it was happening. By the time we get to this time in the story, I would imagine they are feeling like robots. They are just going through the motions of what needs to be done. Clothes need to be selected; burial spices need to be prepared; the body will need to be washed. The women probably did not need to speak the words, their nods and their broken hearts knew what needed to be done. But it was the Sabbath so all needed to rest first, then, early on Sunday, they would meet and do what was necessary. But oh, the waiting hours must have been filled with despair.

Guided prayer:

“*O God, I do not like the waiting times. I have too much time to think and try to figure things out. In the dark of the night I feel despair all around me but I do what needs to be done. When those dark nights come in my life, be my strength, be my guide, be my hope. Amen”*

**Day 210 Guarding the Tomb Matthew 27:62-66**

Guided reflection:

Even on the Sabbath, the conniving minds of the temple folks wanted to make sure no one would trick people. They knew that Jesus had predicted his own resurrection. They did not believe Him, but thought his disciples might try to make it look like a resurrection. They requested the tomb be sealed. To this day, many believe that is what happened. I wonder what went through that guards mind as he guarded that tomb. What happened in the night? What did he see? What was he thinking? Did he even know he was walking on holy ground?

Guided Prayer:

*“Sometimes I try to figure things out and make up my own stories of what happened. I finally have to give in and just trust your heart. Help me to believe in miracles. Help my unbelief. Help me to know that you are more powerful than any force trying to resist you. That gives me peace – thank you! I stand on tiptoe, breathless because I know what comes next!!!*

*Amen!”*

surrender, you give up, you let go and then comes the answer. Does it feel like Good Friday in your life? This is not the whole of your story either. Sunday, resurrection is coming! Hold on!!! Reflect over your life – when has new life come after a dying time?

Guided Prayer:

*“Thank you, God that after dying times comes the resurrection. Thank you that Jesus was able to surrender his spirit to you. Even in Jesus’ death, people were able to see that Jesus was your Son. Thank you for the times you have been with me when I thought you had forsaken me. The next time life throws me a time that feels like it is over, help me hold on and remember that it is out of brokenness that you create new life and that out of deaths come resurrections! Amen!”*