

Saturday Easter Eve

Readings: Job 14:1–14, I Peter 4:1–8
John 19:38– end

Jesus' body is taken from the cross and laid to rest in a new tomb nearby, outside the city walls, as required following a criminal's execution. The tomb belongs to Joseph of Arimathea, described as a 'secret' disciple, one who was afraid of the Jews. It's only after Jesus' death that his courage shows; the family were permitted to request possession of the body, but others, including the elite, were not.

Joseph risks being linked with Jesus' alleged acts of treason, so he isn't just being kind; he puts his life in danger. Joseph is helped by Nicodemus, who once visited Jesus under cover of darkness to ask him questions (John 3), –he's another man afraid of the repercussions of being associated with Christ in life. Christ crucified has such a profound impact on the men that their actions will be remembered for many generations to come. How many others saw and had their lives changed as a result?



The voice of Mary

“It's impossible to describe. Seeing my son, my child, and my Lord, broken and taken...he left us with such dignity. The men lifted him down with infinite compassion and promises of many pounds of spices and aloes so we can anoint him as befits the Son of God. They provide for him in death as one honours a King; yet I, heartbroken, will anoint him as my firstborn, precious child.”

We can only guess what went through Mary's mind as she witnessed the end of her son's earthly life. How much did Jesus tell her, warn her, or prepare her? We may not have heard their conversations, but we can trust that Jesus spoke to her with infinite love and compassion. When we are distressed, it is the same voice that calmed Mary that will speak to us, if only we listen.



◆ In the depths of my being, I become quiet and still; I wait for you, my God, source of salvation. Amen.¹⁰

¹⁰ Jim Cotter in Angela Ashwin (ed), *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*: Zondervan (1996), p.259