



WHY IS IT **GOOD** FRIDAY?

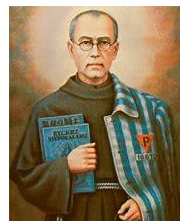
We call today “Good Friday” because the cross is proof of the powerful love that God has for each of us. No one, not even God, would give up his life for us unless He truly loved us. Here we see a love that was prepared to endure the ultimate suffering in order to rescue us. We have known love to do some very powerful and strange things.

You may have heard the story of a Polish Catholic priest, St. Maximilian Kolbe, who offered his life in place of a married man in Nazi Germany. It was February 1941, Auschwitz, Poland. Maximilian Kolbe was a Franciscan priest who was imprisoned in the infamous death camp for helping Jews escape Nazi terrorism. Months went by and in desperation, one of his fellow prisoners escaped from the camp. The camp rule was enforced. Ten people would be rounded up randomly and herded into a cell where they would die of starvation and a final exposure to lethal gas, as a lesson against future escape attempts. Names were called. A Polish Jew Frandishek Gasovnachek was called. He cried, “Please spare me, I have a wife and children!” Kolbe stepped forward and said, “I will take his place.” Kolbe was marched into the starvation cell with nine others to whom he ministered. He died on August 14.

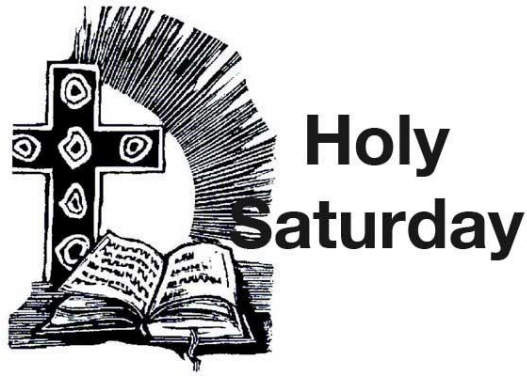
This story was chronicled in a special program on NBC news several years ago. Gasovnachek, by this time aged 82, was shown telling this story, tears streaming down his cheeks. A mobile camera followed him around his little white house to a marble monument carefully tended with flowers. The inscription read:

IN MEMORY OF MAXIMILIAN KOLBE HE DIED IN MY PLACE

Every day since August 1941, Gasovnachek lived with the knowledge that, he was alive “because someone died for me.” Every year on August 14 he travelled to Auschwitz in memory of Kolbe.



“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Come to the cross, Jesus says today. Come to the cross and give it all to me. I am here on the cross for you. I want to take it all upon myself. I want to die for you so you can live for me. The tree of the cross, that symbol of death, is the Tree of Life, Hope and Love.

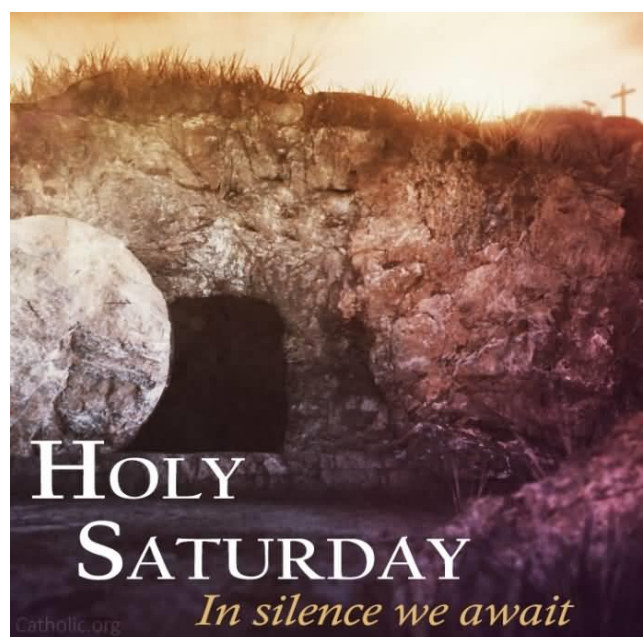


GRAVE SIN?

"In baptism you were not only buried with Him but also raised to life with Him because you believed in the power of God Who raised Him from the dead."
(Colossians 2:12)

Traditionally, in our Catholic community, we have no Mass and no Holy Communion until we celebrate the Easter Vigil. It is a most peculiar day during which we reflect on Christ's death and burial. We identify with Jesus buried in the tomb. "Through baptism into His death we were buried with Him" (Rm 6:4).

To be buried with Christ means that our old fallen nature is "six feet under." We must keep it that way by refusing to return to our sins. If we refuse to dig up the old nature buried in the waters of Baptism, we will continue to live the risen life. Then, on the last day, we will have our bodies risen and glorified. Don't disturb your old nature's grave.





"Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away."

(John 20:1)

Peace and Joy! The Lord is Risen! Alleluia!

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it" (Ps 118:24).

Easter often begins when it is dark. Possibly you are still in the night of a broken heart, painful marriage, shattered family, severe sickness, worried about the corona virus and all its implications. However, without the darkness of night, we would never see the sun rise. Without Jesus' death on Calvary, He would not have risen. The Resurrection of Jesus is a mission for us. His Resurrection is a powerful call for us to bring to the world the light of Christ. We often see great joy in the middle of huge poverty: often the poor can live for the present moment and enjoy it to the full. Sometimes in the middle of darkness we find an inner peace. We often don't know from where that peace comes. The grace of the risen Jesus can touch our lives at any time and in mysterious ways.

Let us live the lives of "Resurrection people." Easter gives us the joyful message that we are a "Resurrection people." This means that we are not supposed to lie buried in the tomb of our sins, evil habits, dangerous addictions, despair, discouragement or doubts and fear. Instead, we are expected to live a joyful and peaceful life, constantly experiencing the living presence of the Risen Lord in all the events of our lives and amid the boredom, suffering, pain, and tensions of our day to day life. Let us not be like Christians 'whose lives seem like Lent without Easter' (Pope Francis). Despite the circumstances and the difficult times we are especially facing today, and having lived through the joyful season of Lent, our hearts are wholly lifted now in joy and joy given.

I wish all of you and your families Easter blessings! Blessed are you who believe in his Resurrection!

