

## Holy Saturday in Holy Week

### **Mary, the Mother of Jesus: John 19:25-27**

*Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.*

### **Reflection by Joanne Comstock:**

An angel appeared to me and announced that I would bear a child. I had become pregnant. I was betrothed, but my marriage had not been consummated and it had left me in a precarious situation. I felt a mixture of emotions: humiliation and fear as well as excitement and joy. The new life within me was cause for celebration, but the mystery that surrounded the inception of the child and the role of the Holy Spirit had created such anxiety. I did not understand why I had been chosen in this way and I knew my child could be perceived as illegitimate. I could be punished, even put to death. I called on my faith to quell my fear and ease my mind. I did not understand that I would give birth to a child who was destined to be part of salvation history initiated by God.

The angel visited my betrothed, Joseph, a good man. Joseph adopted my son ensuring his birthright and protecting me. My child became a son of David ensuring his lineage. In some ways I realized that I am a vessel, part of God's promise to God's people.

Though the beginning of my child's life was hardly typical, my feelings toward my child were what it is hoped every mother feels- love, concern, and protection. Everything about his life was different, including his birth. My role in his life was different as well. From the time he was old enough to be independent, he was. He was precocious as a child and stayed in the Temple instead of returning home after Passover. I did not understand then. But, soon he had the reputation as a great teacher. I was a witness to the fact that he turned water into wine at a wedding in Cana, at my request. Later he performed miracles and healed the sick, even raising the dead. I was in the background, but my feelings never changed for my beloved son. I knew he must fulfill his destiny but at times the separation from him caused me great pain and angst. I feared for him, as there were people who were angered by his teachings. My son responded to the suffering of others, he did not strictly

obey the law and he succeeded in debating his opponents. They did not see him as God's own.

As I stand near the cross there is no comfort. The enemies are surrounding my son and he will not know justice. I know that the end is near for my beloved son. He is a young man and has not walked the earth for very long, but he has accomplished much. Every bone in my body cries out, "Do not do this". But, I cannot stop it. No mother should ever witness this or bury a child. Then Jesus turns to me and says, "Woman, here is your son." Then he turns to his beloved disciple and says, "Here is your mother". I am to be cared for by his beloved disciple and I know that he means well, but I am heart sick as one who has been given over to another. I am "woman" not "mother" and though I understand this is necessary; it is a harsh reality to accept. In this act, Jesus has assured that I have standing in society as a woman. I must be attached to a male who will care for me. Without this I would be lost as a woman with no way to earn a living or care for myself, but my grief is overwhelming. I cannot bear what is to be.