

Silence is a part of Holy Week, a quiet that intensifies as the week progresses, interrupted on Friday by the violent confrontation between Jesus and His contemporaries, but becoming deafening following His death around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and continuing throughout all of Saturday. It is the silence of the human family as we recall again the historic death of God in our midst. We lower our eyes and our head. The silence is everywhere.

The betrayal of His friends bothers us; the brutality of His foes alarms us; the tears of Mary sadden us. The awareness of our own participation in this event frightens us. We want to flee, to withdraw, to cover the silence with distraction. But we know this is wrong. We need to stand fast, to watch, to enter into His suffering and death and find its meaning in our lives.

May the example of Peter be our guide and hope. Like Peter, we have many times proclaimed our absolute love for the Lord, that we would die for Him. Like Peter, we have chosen or been



overwhelmed by our own weakness and fear. Like Peter, may the eyes of the Lord seek us out this Holy Week, and look upon us with love. May we have the grace to weep bitterly like Peter, to repent with a sorrow so deep that our lives are forever changed.

Guercino (1647) offers us in this painting an insightful solution to the tears. Mary will help us. Let us turn to her, whose sorrow was a martyrdom of love, and ask her help that our sorrow might put to death the old Adam of sin within us and grant us life in the New Adam forever.