

A visit to the cemetery

John and I did not take our boys to their cousin Georgie's burial two weeks ago, but I have been wanting to show them where he is buried.

So one day last week Daniel and I went. We found two sticks and made a cross on Georgie's grave, which isn't marked yet. Then we gathered the prettiest leaves we could find to leave there.

We said a Hail Mary—Daniel's choice—and talked to Georgie. Then Daniel leaned against me and said, "Mama, I'm sad that Georgie died." And I was struck again by how much Georgie has touched—and is still touching—our sons' lives.

When I told Leo we were going to go to the cemetery on our way to school one day this week, he told me we needed to buy flowers. He has gone several times to visit my grandparents' grave with my mother, and he knows what to do. So we stopped at the store, where he picked out a flag and the prettiest bouquet of pink roses he could find.

As we drove through the cemetery, Leo started asking why we bury people when they die, and what is a soul, and why is a soul separate from a body. Then he asked about his baby cousin.

"Is Georgie in heaven?"

"Yes," I said. "We know Georgie is in heaven."

"Mama! He's in heaven!" Leo asked. "Does that mean Georgie is a *saint*?"

And I explained that yes, we are sure he is a saint, and that the priest at Georgie's burial said so, too. I told Leo that he will never be reading a book and come to a Saint Georgie who is his cousin, but that there are many, many saints who aren't in books.

"Yes, and only bank robbers don't go to heaven, right?" he asked.

"Um, yes, something like that," I said. "We're not really sure about that part because we don't know whether the bank robbers are sorry when they die or how exactly God decides who goes to heaven."

We found Georgie's grave easily. I hammered the flag into the ground with a rock we found nearby, and Leo arranged the roses in an arc.



As we stood there, I said, "What prayer would you like to say?"

"Mama, we should say the Glory Be," Leo said, "because that is the right size for a baby."

And it was.

Then we said goodbye to Georgie, and we promised to come back to visit. And on the way out of the cemetery, Leo said, "And next time we will bring purple flowers—or

pink *and* purple flowers.”

So we will.

