

Mary's strength

Frank has been sick with a terrible virus since Sunday night. He slept the better part of three days and refused to eat or drink, so his little body grew weak. His skin has become transparent and grayish. His eyes are as cold and shiny as faded blue marbles. The skin on his lips is so chapped that it is curling up into choppy bits. The only word he ever mumbles is, "water," but he'll barely take a sip. There are no tears when he cries.

Because of all of this, Frank became so dehydrated that he needed to be taken to the hospital to receive IV fluids and medication to control his nausea enough so that he would consider eating. It took three of us to hold him down while they swaddled him tightly in a sheet and pierced the crook of his elbow with a needle to draw blood and attach the tubes that would hopefully return him to a more stable state.

I felt helpless. I'd done everything I could for him at home, following the advice of my mother, the nurse, and my mother-in-law, the concerned grandmother. His medical care was out of my hands. All I could do was comfort him.

As I gazed upon him in my arms, listless and emaciated, I thought about how Mary must have felt when she watched her Son, Jesus suffer. She knew his fate when she agreed to carry him in her womb, but she agreed to be by His side for every day of His life, up until the tragic and brutal end.

How did she do it? I asked myself. My little boy is sick, but (I pray) he will get better. She watched as her Son was tortured slowly until He was violently murdered. She held His crucified body in her arms.

I pictured Michelangelo's "Pieta." I meditated upon it while I prayed.

During Holy Week, we find ourselves drawing closer to God through the Passion of his Son, Jesus Christ. Some of the world's greatest works of art have been created to commemorate the events leading up to Jesus' death (Da Vinci's "The Last Supper," is a prime example). I spend the time reading devotions and children's books about Jesus' death to the boys, but taking the time to reflect upon religious art opens our minds to deeper reflection.

My mental and spiritual engagement with the "Pieta" reinforced for me the themes of Holy Week and of Jesus' life as a whole. I found myself overwhelmed with for the woman who brought our Savior to Earth, knowing that He would die, but possessing tremendous faith that He would return on the third day. And as a mom holding her little boy in a hospital room, I felt comfort in knowing that God, Jesus, and Mary were present in my vigil over Frank.

Frank is still not his energetic, curious self. He's been curled up on the sofa all day, waking when I try to give him something to eat and drink. Collin and Leo had the

same virus, and were in pretty rough shape themselves, but now they're happily destroying the house. I'm not even mad. Hopefully, Frank will be joining them in their creation of chaos, soon. I'm praying that he's well enough to celebrate Easter. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers!