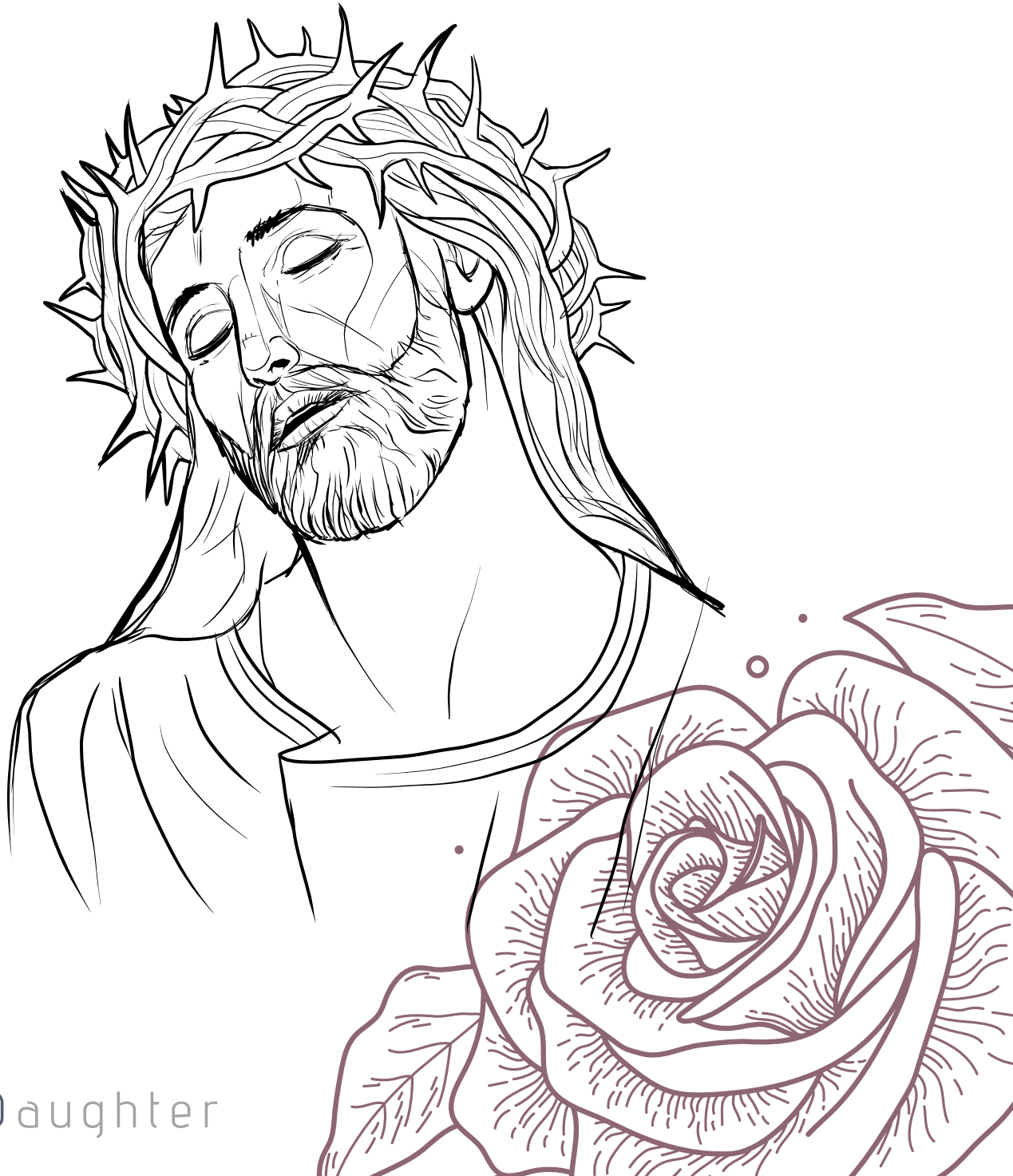


"IT IS FINISHED." JOHN 19: 30

Good Friday

Stations of the Cross



Station Example

* Stop & Gather *

S **tation Number: It's Title**
From the Perspective of - Name of the Woman

Scripture Reference to Jesus' Initial
Encounter with that Woman

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

* In reverence for Christ's saving work on the cross,
participants are invited to take a knee while praying the above response. *

Reader: A passage from Scripture is read, reflecting on the particular (Scriptural) Station of the Cross.

Leader: A reflection is read to help us try and gain the perspective of someone who lived through the first Good Friday or Holy Saturday. *The questions mentioned here don't have to be rhetorical; they can be incorporated into the reflection discussion (or journal) time.*

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

The Leader (or another reader) can offer the reflection questions to help us process what that experience still means 2,000 years later.

* Time should be made available for immediate sharing, but the meat of the conversation will likely occur in twos or threes as the group walks to the next station. *

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, grant us the faith and hope to remember that you hear and answer every prayer we make.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Or, Jesus, please rise again in our lives.

* Proceed to the next station *



Opening Prayer

*This will be prayed as a call and response style prayer.
Split the group into two halves.*

Leader: Remembering our faith, remembering Our Lord, remembering his Sacrifice that we desire to honor today, we begin with the Sign of the Cross:

All: + In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Side A:

God of power and mercy, in love you sent
your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live
with you forever.

Side B:

Guide us as we reflect on his suffering and death.
Send forth your Spirit of Truth so that we may
learn the way that we should go.

We desire to walk in the peace
Christ made between us and you.

Help us enter into the mood of the first Good
Friday, so that we may more fully understand
the great love you have for each of us.

May your unimaginable love and mercy
transform our hearts so that we may respond
with humility and generosity.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary,
Our Mother, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and
through Christ, Our Lord,

All: Amen.

First Station: Jesus in Condemned to Death

From the Perspective of Pontius Pilate's Wife
Matthew 25: 19

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called [Jesus] Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, [Jesus] Barabbas, or Jesus called Messiah?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They answered, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" But he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Let him be crucified!" When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves." And the whole people said in reply, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified. (Matthew 27: 17-26)

Leader: For days, she's been hearing talk of this man, Jesus, and not just from her husband. Then this dream; it had been most unsettling. *Was it meant to be a warning? A prophecy?* She couldn't shake the anxious feeling. *By speaking to her husband, had she done anything other than ease her troubled mind? Would it make a difference?*

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

When I speak to or about others, do my words bring life or death? Am I quick to participate in gossip or quick to walk away? How can I focus more on praising God than speaking ill?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to use my words and my mind to bless others and glorify you.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Second Station: Jesus is Made to Carry His Cross

From the Perspective of Woman from Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5-7

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. (Matthew 27: 27-31)

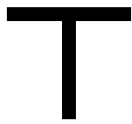
Leader: This crowd of strangers surrounding her were a stark contrast to the ones she'd sat beside on the mountain the day Jesus had spoken. No longer restful or peaceful, this crowd was raucous and hostile. The words Jesus had spoken had changed her life and the lives of others, and now? He's silent. Why won't he speak up? Certainly one word from him would silence all of them.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

Think about Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). How well am I living these out? Or do I find myself, more often than not, giving into the noise of the world?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to follow your teachings more closely in my call of discipleship.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.



Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

From the Perspective of the Woman from the Feeding of the Five Thousand

Matthew 14: 13-21

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: He's only been walking a short time, but his body is tired from the lack of sleep the night and the scourging at the Praetorium, not to mention the weight of the cross and the jeers and mockery of the crowd and soldiers. All of it begins to press upon him and he falls to the ground, barely able to keep the cross from crushing him under its weight.

Through the crowd, he hears the voice of the Father calling him onward. The voice of love and blessed assurance. And so he gets to his feet and continues.

Leader: The man who multiplied enough food to feed a crowd of more than five thousand, looks battered and bruised as he falls. How does a miracle worker -- for that's what the multiplication had been, a miracle -- end up here? Certainly if Jesus could feed a huge crowd, he had the power to end this humiliation and suffering. So, why didn't he? Was there some other miracle he was waiting to work?

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

When I fall, when challenges arise, when I face suffering, do I look to find the quickest distraction and way out, or am I willing to face the difficulties? Do I go to Jesus with my suffering and challenges and give him space to perform a miracle, to transform something bad into something for my good?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, when it's difficult to see your work in the midst of challenges and suffering, allow me to still know that you are close and are still working for my good.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother

From the Perspective of the Virgin Mary

Luke 1: 38

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: On the way to Calvary, Jesus meets his Mother. She runs to his side. For a moment, their eyes meet. His eyes, say "yes" to the suffering he is enduring. His eyes assure his mother that this is the way... he must walk it. So she allows herself to be moved back by the guard and she follows behind Jesus.

Leader: In that moment when their eyes met, Mary's mind flooded with a thousand memories; the first time he walked, the first time he fell, his first smile... That baby boy whom she raised was now before her suffering. She deeply suffers with him. She longs to ease his pain with a kiss and a hug, like she did when he was injured as a little boy. Yet, upon looking into his eyes, she is reminded of his mission. She knows that he must keep walking on this road. She is his mother, but she is also his daughter. He must keep walking to redeem every son and daughter of the Father. So once again, her soul says to the Father, "Let it be done according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal): Is my "yes" to Father's will only when it feels good? Do I have faith enough to say "yes" even in the midst of suffering?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Father, help me to say "yes" to your will for my life and to trust that any suffering I endure can become a pathway to holiness and eternal life.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross

From the Perspective of Simon's Mother-in-Law
Mark 1:29-31

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Jesus' steps are beginning to slow. The soldiers must be getting impatient because they stop the procession and search the crowd. For the moment, it's a reprieve not to have to walk. A man is thrown forward and directed to help with the cross. Jesus' eyes meet his. Mercy and pity are exchanged between the two men. A silent understanding. The moment ends as the man is directed behind him, and some of the weight is relieved as the man lifts the end of the cross. The relief is short. A shout and the crack of the whip echos. The procession continues.

Leader: She can hardly believe the scene. This is the teacher that her son-in-law has been following for the past three years. The man who came into her home and healed her of her infirmity. He ate meals with them, laughed with them, and prayed with them. Dozens came to their home to be healed by him. *Does he not have the power to stop this evil and heal himself the way he drove out demons and healed others?*

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

In moments of suffering or pain, have I doubted God's ability to heal me? Have I inadvertently caused someone else pain or suffering? In what ways have I helped to alleviate the pain and suffering of others?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to trust your healing power in my life and in the lives of others.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

From the Perspective of Veronica

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: As the crowds press in on the procession, it gets harder to push them back. A woman manages to sneak through the crowd and get close enough to Jesus. She wipes his face. The action does not go unnoticed by the soldiers and they are quick to push her aside. The procession continues on leaving the woman alone in the dust, the crowd swallowing her up once again.

Leader: She slips through an opening in the crowd eager and finds herself face to face with Jesus. Her interaction with him throughout his ministry had been limited, but in this moment, she is certain of one thing: he is love. That can be the only explanation for the mercy held in his eyes. It pierces her heart and without thinking, she tenderly wipes away the dust, blood, and sweat that continues to drip down his face. Only days ago he was speaking in the Temple and surrounding areas. Now, everything has changed. While those around Jesus look at him with contempt and hate, he continues to look upon everyone with unrelenting love.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

Who are the people in your life that comfort you in difficult times? When have you demonstrated compassion and gentleness toward another in need?

Take some time to close your eyes and picture gazing into the eyes of Jesus, the eyes of love. What do they look like? How does his gaze make you feel? What comfort and solace can you offer him?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to be more attentive to those around me that are in need, and to give me the courage to respond with love and mercy.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

From the Perspective of the Mother of the Man Born Blind
John 9

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Even with the assistance of Simon the Cyrenian, the weight of the cross, the lack of sleep and nourishment are taking an even greater toll. And Jesus falls the second time. There is a comfort in being on the ground. It is solid. It is steady. It is sure. It feels as though he could stop and rest awhile, but the guards make sure that doesn't happen. They shout and crack their whips, 'encouraging' the procession onward. Asking the Father for the strength, Jesus pushes himself up off the ground and finds the will to carry on.

Leader: It pains her to watch this procession. The man who returned her son to her is now walking, nearly blind by his hair, sweat, and blood, staggering along the crowded streets. *How had things gotten to this point? Were the Jewish leaders so threatened by this man that they thought the only option was to see him die?* She offers a prayer for him, wishing now she'd been able to thank him for returning her son to her. Then she slips away from the scene.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

When have you turned a blind eye to someone in need? Why? What convicted you afterward that perhaps you should have stopped to help? Who has helped you up after you've fallen (time and time again)?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to lift others up and alleviate their burdens so that they might see you and your love.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

From the Perspective of the Women of Jerusalem
Luke 23: 37-31

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23: 27-31)

Leader: She stood in the crowd with her sister. His words cut to her heart. He reminds her that the feminine body and heart are made for bearing life. They should weep if they forget... they should weep if they fail to remember their dignity and identity as beloved daughters. They are called to become a gift in the world, to bear life through their unique feminine hearts. As Jesus walks the road to Calvary, she will see that the road to bearing life is marked by both joy and suffering. To bring forth love, truth, and beauty, one must be willing to make sacrifices. Jesus' words challenge her to turn away from sin and to become who she was created to be, a gift.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

How can I bring forth spiritual life in my current vocation? What sacrifice can I make to love someone today? How can I be a gift to those around me?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to embrace my femininity and bear forth fruit for you in the world. Let me be a gift to those around me.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

From the Perspective of the Canaanite Woman
Matthew 15: 21-28

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: One step ahead and then another... his legs shake under the weight of the cross. He focuses on one movement at a time. One step... one more step... his feet seem to hit the ground harder each time. Then, as he picks up his right foot, he loses balance and falls once again. His shoulder braces his fall. The dirt flies up and lands on the sweat on his face. He feels completely depleted of strength, but he must go on. He pushes himself back up with his arm and lifts the cross again. One step... and then another...

Leader: She gasps as she watches Jesus fall again. How can it be that this man who has been so powerful, returning her daughter to her from spiritual torment, would be weakened to the point of lying in the dirt? She remembered his words to her on that wonderful day, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." If he could heal her daughter that day then why does he not save himself from this suffering today? Why? She reached for the hand of her daughter, gave it a big squeeze, and held on to hope that something good would come out of this day, too.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

When life isn't going the way you think it should, do you hold on to hope? Hope is the virtue that moves our hearts to be at peace in any circumstance. Hope always looks for and sees the possibility of resurrection.

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, when I don't understand why things are the way that they are, help me to hold on to hope that you can bring about resurrection from any suffering.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

From the Perspective of the Woman Caught in Adultery
John 8

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: They divided his garments by casting lots. The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God." Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." (Luke 23: 34-37)

Leader: As they strip Jesus of his garments, she has a flash back to the day that forever changed her life. She had been thrown down in front of Jesus, naked and ashamed. She couldn't bring herself to look up at him. He bent down and looked her in the eyes. He saw her. He really saw her. She was vulnerable that day and Jesus protected her. Today he was vulnerable. As they stripped him, they treated him like the men had treated her. For a moment her eyes and Jesus' met again. She heard a quiet voice speak to her soul, "My Daughter, there is nothing you've endured that I haven't endured with you."

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

To be vulnerable is to be susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm. It is also to be a person in need of care or protection. When you are spiritually vulnerable to the attacks/draws of sin, do you let Jesus be there with you? Do you look into his eyes and find protection and strength to turn away from the sin?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to turn to you when I am drawn to sin and give me help me to be a person who protects the vulnerable.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

From the Perspective of the Woman in the Crowd

Luke 11: 14-28

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."] Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews." Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 33-34, 38-43)

Leader: She watched him cast out a demon and now it seems as if Sheol is getting its revenge. Good versus evil. Even the two criminals beside him seem caught in the same battle: one repenting, one remaining obstinate. *How is it that a man of such love and mercy could face such evil and lose the fight?*

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

Take some time to stand before a crucifix, or picture it in your mind. How often do you see a crucifix or make the sign of the cross and really think about all that Jesus endured in His suffering and death? What are your thoughts and feelings? Are you uncomfortable? Grateful? Overwhelmed? Upset?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to remember your great love with tremendous gratitude, especially when I make the sign of the Cross or stand before a crucifix, the sign of our salvation.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies the Cross

From the Perspective of Mary of Magdala

Luke 8: 1-3

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. (John 19: 25-30)

Take a moment of silence and kneel.

Leader: The one whom her soul loves is gone. At each painful moment along the way she had hoped and prayed that he would end this. She was convinced it was within his power and ability, and yet, he remained silent and steady, unflinching at the harsh treatment he'd endured. As the long journey comes to an end, tears stream down her face, and her sobs ring in chorus with the other women nearby. Alongside them, the beloved disciple also cries, a silent and gentle protector to whom Jesus entrusted his mother. While Mary's heart breaks, she is certain that the world will never be the same again.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

What stands in the way of your receiving God's total and faithful love He has for you? Do you believe in your heart that Jesus' great sacrifice wasn't just "for everyone," but for YOU? How does that make you feel?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to receive and respond more fully to your love for me.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross *From the Perspective of the Crippled Woman*

Luke 13: 10-17

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may [come to] believe. For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken." And again another passage says: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced." After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. (John 19: 31-38)

Leader: This man being taken down from the cross, this beaten and bloody lifeless body, had not long ago stood erect before her. She however, did not stand erect... not for the past eighteen years, but that all changed. He had healed her that day, restoring her to health of body and soul. The leaders in the synagogue opposed such a healing on the Sabbath day. She had listened to their argument and was amazed at Jesus' stern voice as he rebuked them. She learned an important lesson that day, we should not put parameters on God's power to heal or restrictions on the good things he wants to do in our lives. So, as she watched the body of Jesus being taken down, she tried with all her strength to place no parameters on what God could do... even with this... She didn't understand, but she held out hope because the Sabbath was just two days away.

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

Are you patient and hopeful in times of waiting? What is the Lord inviting you to be patient and hopeful for today?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, help me to remember that the time between suffering and resurrection is an opportunity to grow in patience and hope.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

From the Perspective of Mary (& Martha)

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb. (Matthew 27: 57-61)

Leader: Neither sister could understand. It didn't make sense. Jesus had brought their brother, Lazarus, back from the dead and now he was gone, laid in a tomb, sealed behind a rock.

As Mary sat between her sister Martha, and her dear friend, Mary Magdalene, it felt like a very different experience of sitting and waiting upon the teacher. Gone were the times of sitting at his feet and listening to him teach or pray. Now, all seemed silent.

Yet, a strange sense of hope lingered. Jesus had brought Lazarus back from the dead. Surely, this couldn't be the end of her closest friend and teacher?

Reflect & Discuss (or Journal):

Where have you let hope die in your life? Where do you need Jesus to breathe new life?

Leader: Let us pray. (pause) Lord, when all seems hopeless and lost, let me be reminded that you will always breathe new life into my circumstances.

All: Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

losing Prayer

Leader: O God, who did not spare his only begotten Son for the salvation of the many, grant that through the participation and meditation on the passion and death of Jesus Christ, may lead me to a deeper understanding of your love for me and for the whole world. May this love grow in me so that it overflows to all those whom I encounter, and that they come to know you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.