

Prayer Vigil 2020



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This booklet provides resources to help prompt, encourage and support your prayers.



Thank you for joining us in the Good Friday/Holy Saturday Prayer vigil. This year brings new perspective and priorities as we enter into prayer in times of sickness, isolation and working together as a community for the safety of our neighbors and selves. Perhaps we are connecting to Jesus' walk to the cross in new ways.

Jesus prayed through the night before his arrest and invited his disciples to join him in praying. As we know all too well, they fell asleep. And in the end Jesus had to journey to the cross alone, but we are not alone. We join with Jesus, we follow his footsteps on this path. Even in our isolation during this time, we are accompanied by God's comforting and powerful Spirit.

God will meet us here as we cover our church, our members, new visitors and our community in prayer. We pray with confidence, knowing that God welcomes and hears our prayers and the Spirit intercedes on our behalf. 1 John 5:15 says, "we know that he hears us--whatever we ask..." Thanks be to God for this promise!

Song of the Winding Sheet by Jan Richardson
For Good Friday

We never
would have wished it
to come to this,
yet we call
these moments holy
as we hold you.

Holy the tending,
holy the winding,
holy the leaving,
as in the living.

Holy the silence,
holy the stillness,
holy the turning
and returning to earth.

Blessed is the One
who came in the name,

blessed is the One
who laid
himself down,

blessed is the One
emptied for us,

blessed is the One
wearing the shroud.

Holy the waiting,
holy the grieving,
holy the shadows
and gathering night

Holy the darkness,
holy the hours,
holy the hope
turning toward light.

Reflections on the Suffering Servant

*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
Stuart K. Hine*

This third verse of *How Great Thou Art* has always stirred so much emotion inside me. The origin of this verse comes from a little village in Ukraine where Stuart K. Hine was doing some mission work. The people Hine was with were reading about Jesus' crucifixion in the Gospel of John and were amazed and couldn't believe that Jesus would die for their own sins. Hine wrote down the phrases he heard, and this became the beginning of the third verse. How amazing it is to see that God sent his Son Jesus to take on such immense pain to the point of death, that he did not deserve, so our sins could be wiped clean. Jesus, in his righteousness; gladly took on the cross for my wrongdoing, your wrongdoing, the world's wrongdoing so that we could be made righteous. I scarce can take it in!

Isaiah 53 talks about this *Suffering Servant* who is mentioned in Hine's verse above.

*He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised,
and we held him in low esteem.
Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed...
... Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life
an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.
After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.
- Isaiah 53:3-5, 10*

Take some time to reflect on these verses above. How do they make you feel? What stands out to you? Think about yourself and our FPCH community who

might be carrying grief and suffering right now. Bring these to the Lord, for He too endured them.

Lord, we come today to reflect on what you have done for us on the cross. Like the villagers in Ukraine, we are filled with wonder. Thank you for sending your son Jesus who was with no fault to die, so that we can be with no fault in your eyes. Thank you, Jesus, for bearing my burdens with gladness on the cross. Amen.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

by Brooke Coxon

Still by Jan Richardson

This day
let all stand still
in silence,
in sorrow.

Sun and moon
be still.

Earth
be still.

Still
the waters.

Still
the wind.

Let the ground
gape in stunned
lamentation.

Let it weep
as it receives
what it thinks
it will not
give up.

Let it groan
as it gathers
the One
who was thought
forever stilled.

Time
be still.

Watch
and wait.

Still.

Dear Man of Sorrows, so acquainted with grief,

Help me not to recoil from your wounds, not to fear touching them or to be touched by them.

Help me to understand that in my suffering I am not only nearest to you, but nearest to becoming like you.

It's a sobering thought, and I shudder when I think of it. Help me to understand that many of the sorrows I experience in this life belong to the nature of the world I live in, ... and will not pass away until this world passes away. Thank you for being in the midst of those sorrows, transforming them into blessings and filling them with meaning.

For other sorrows that seem not of this world, senseless suffering that seems not from the hand of a heavenly Father, but from a hostile hand bent on destroying me, I ask that you would pray for me, Lord Jesus, as you did for Peter. Keep the hands you have allowed to strike me from shattering me, and use them instead in shaping me.

Amen.

Excerpts from *Shaped by the Cross: Meditations on the Sufferings of Jesus*, by Ken Gire

A liturgy of the night

On the first night God said: 'Let there be darkness.' And God separated light from dark; and in the dark, the land rested, the people slept, and the plants breathed, the world retreated. The first night.

And God said that it was Good.

On the second night God said: 'There will be conversations that happen in the dark that can't happen in the day.' The second night.

And God said that it was Good.

And on the third night, God said: 'Let there be things that can only be seen by night.' And God created stars and insects and luminescence. The third night.

And God said that it was Good.

And on the fourth night, God said: 'Some things that happen in the harsh light of day will be troubled. Let there be a time of rest to escape the raw light.' The fourth night.

And God said that it was Good.

And on the fifth night, God said: 'There will be people who will work by night, whose light will be silver, whose sleep will be by day and whose labour will be late.' And God put a softness at the heart of the darkness. The fifth night.

And God said that it was Good.

And on the sixth night, God listened. And there were people working, and people crying, and people seeking shadow, and people telling secrets and people aching for company. There were people aching for space and people aching for solace. And God hoped that they'd survive. And God made twilight, and shafts of green to hang from the dark skies, small comforts to accompany the lonely, the joyous, the needy and the needed. The sixth night.

And God said that it was Good.

And on the last night, God rested. And the rest was good. The rest was very good.

And God said that it was very Good.

Excerpts from *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community*, by Pádraig Ó Tuama

Matthew 6:25 NRSV says, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

The context for this verse is that Jesus is speaking to a large crowd after speaking the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5. Then Jesus speaks to this crowd the words of “do not worry.” For a long time, I did not understand what this meant when my personal life has never reflected that reality. I have suffered with depression and anxiety in a place of trauma and abuse for a lot of my childhood. But then I realized that if the crowd of people were listening to Jesus, why did I always assume His audience was the non-traumatized? I realized that even if there was one person in that place that was going through a really rough time, remember that in Jesus’s day for a lot of them Jesus had just arrived! When Jesus speaks to the audience, he speaks to all people including the traumatized. I know in this season of isolation, some people are experiencing forms of trauma but I want to remind you that God speaks “do not worry” not just to us but to our traumatized bodies that are exhausted, weak, and weary. The body that is addicted and ashamed. Yet there is assurance in forgiveness with restoration and power in God’s words for hope is found where only God can restore us. Thankfully for us, God’s words transcend time as Jesus is the living God which means for in this passage when Jesus speaks to His audience that the same grace of speaking “do not worry” can be extended unto you and me. I am worried about the future and whether or not we will be mentally okay but we believe in a God who gives us the space to lament our anger and frustration unto God without condemnation. Let us lament together because we will get through this together. "Do not worry" does not just mean to stop worrying but that even when we are incapable to stop worrying, it doesn’t change God’s voice speaking peace to your heart, mind, and body. Let God be your anchor today as our one trusting place of mercy and love! Jesus, we place our trust in you knowingly that you will meet us in sacred space with you. Amen.

by Dean Choi

Dear Lord Jesus,

Help me to realize that I am part of a body of people that has been placed here to represent you. Help me to understand what it means to be the body of Christ and then to be it. Thank you ... for all those who in some way have shown me through their face, your face.

Who have shown me through their eyes, your eyes, through their hands, your hands, through their heart, your heart, and through their sacrifice, your sacrifice.

Bless them, Lord, for all they have done to help liberate you in my life.

Please know that all they have done for me will serve as a reminder of all you have done for me. I will never forget the body you gave for me or the blood you poured out for me. For something so beautiful to remember, I thank you, Lord Jesus. And I thank you for the deliverance that comes through this remembrance.

Amen.

Excerpts from *Shaped by the Cross: Meditations on the Sufferings of Jesus*, by Ken Gire

Jesus placed in the tomb

Jesus of the unexpected,
for at least some of your life
this was not how you imagined its end.
Yet even at the end,
you kept steady in your conviction.
Jesus, keep us steady.
Jesus, keep us steady.
Because, Jesus, keep us steady.
Amen.

Excerpts from *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community*, by Pádraig O Tuama

Circle of Grace, by Jan Richardson

Therefore I Will Hope

For Holy Saturday

I have no cause
to linger beside
this place of death,

no reason
to keep vigil
where life has left,

and yet I cannot go,
cannot bring myself
to cleave myself
from here,

can only pray
that this waiting
might yet be a blessing
and this grieving
yet a blessing
and this stone
yet a blessing
and this silence
yet a blessing
still.

Prayer Outline

Praise and Adoration

Address God with affirmations of His character and actions, such as Creator, Provider, Light of the world, Rock Redeemer, Comfort, Deliverer.

Confession

Acknowledge those things we have done or not done that are not within His will. Ask the Lord to reveal any sin or unforgiveness in your heart.

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to God for the blessings and gifts that surround you. Even in this season of uncertainty and isolation, there are ways we can be grateful. Pour them out to Him.

Intercession

Hold each concern and bring it before the Lord. Honestly surrender the needs you have for yourself and your loved ones. Take a few moments to present them to Him. Lay them all at the feet of Jesus.

Prayer Suggestions for FPCH

Our Staff

- Praise God for their faithful love and service
- Thank God for their extra time and efforts in this season of Covid-19

- Ask the Lord to protect them, keep them healthy and give them creativity and energy to persevere in these unusual times
- Pray that our God will raise up a new head of staff, a pastor to serve for many years to come

Our Children, youth and Families

- Pray for encouragement, wisdom for parents, family, our youth staff, our young people as they spend time at home during this Covid-19 season. They are missing their friends. Pray for parents, for patience and perseverance.
- Pray for our Nick, Natalie and youth volunteers as they work to stay connected with our young people.
- Pray for Courtney and Jenni as they find new and creative ways to reach the families who attend and worship at FPCH
- Pray for our children and youth to grow in their faith. Ask God to move in their hearts today and in this time of sheltering in place. Ask the Lord to give peace, joy and hope and courage to ask for help if they are experiencing anxiety and fear.

Our Elders, Deacons and Ministry teams

- Pray for wisdom, discernment as they make decisions that impact our FPCH community
- Pray for our FPCH family as they serve, pray, lead and minister

PRAY for our Seniors. Pray they will be protected from discouragement as they may be isolated from friends and family. Ask the Lord to protect them from illness.

PRAY for our friends who are experiencing homelessness. Pray they won't feel abandoned or afraid. Ask the Lord to protect them from illness and to surround them with a hedge of protection from violence, discouragement, addiction.

PRAY for our Mission partners who are blessing people here in Hollywood and around the globe.

PRAY that each member of FPCH- for each of us to be a loving, caring courageous witness to our neighbors. Pray that we will be willing to serve and seek opportunities to offer care and support as we all experience the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic.

PRAY FOR THE UNITED STATES

- PRAY for the Lord to surround this country with protection from Covid-19. To heal the sick and those who remain at risk here in the USA and around the world.
- PRAY for every healthcare worker across the country who is on the front lines fighting this disease. Pray for more equipment to be provided and for all people to have access to testing and medical care.
- Pray over those who serve us daily- first responders, mail carriers, grocery store employees, food service, delivery services, waste management, teachers.
- Pray for our leaders in Washington, for our Governors, our elected officials and for those medical leaders who are making daily decisions for this country and every state and county. Ask God to intervene and give an abundance of wisdom.
- PRAY we will be delivered from fear
- PRAY God will bring unity to this country

- PRAY that the Lord will have mercy on those who are sick, those who mourn, those who are lonely
- PRAY for those who have lost jobs, who are applying for assistance, who are about to be furloughed.
- PRAY that WE will all persevere and be faithful to staying home, staying safe for our sake and the sake of others.
- PRAY for unity, faith and trust in God's sovereignty and hope

May the Universal church, be called to renewed obedience and faithfulness to our risen and reigning Lord.

“These prayers, O Christ, I make in the company with all those who have committed to pray from home this Easter weekend. Hear our prayers, Lord. Amen”

Blessing for a Broken Vessel by Jan Richardson
For Holy Saturday

Do not despair.
You hold the memory
of what it was
to be whole.

It lives deep
in your bones.
It abides
in your heart
that has been torn
and mended
a hundred times.
It persists
in your lungs
that know the mystery
of what it means
to be full,
to be empty,
to be full again.

I am not asking you
to give up your grip
on the shards you clasp
so close to you

but to wonder
what it would be like
for those jagged edges
to meet each other
in some new pattern
that you have never imagined,
that you have never dared
to dream.

Underlying Stuff

Just stepping outside for a while can be an antidote for cabin fever. And a few weeks ago it was especially nice when the door opened to a crisp and clean morning, a gift after a pounding overnight rain.

I wasn't defying the "safer-at-home" order; it allows a person to get to an essential job or to run essential errands. To a dog owner, few things seem more essential than going out to manage biological functions. The dog's, that is.

It was such a nice day, my canine companion Karl Bark decided to take me for a longer-than-usual walk through the neighborhood. There was little passing traffic and many fewer people than we would usually see.

Down one street, we did see someone familiar to us. For the purposes of this writing, I'll call her Leah. Leah is one of my favorite baristas, or was until the week before. She was laid off from the coffee place on the corner. The very next day, she said, she was one of 80,000 people in California who applied for unemployment benefits.

Leah is a bright woman, an avid reader whose college major was Latin, and who I'm guessing could kick your butt across a chessboard. She also adores Karl Bark, and his tail wags nonstop whenever he sees her. I never saw Leah unhappy except for the time she had to scold me for lifting the cover on the pastries display and knocking over another customer's coffee drink.

On this particular day, Leah's usual cheerful countenance had an underlying sadness about it, and given the circumstances of this season, I wasn't surprised. Like millions of us, and billions globally, we simply don't know what our next steps will look like. In many places today, chances of contracting this "novel virus" are greater than avoiding it. And so our steps are cautious ones. Lord have mercy.

Last Sunday we shouted Hosanna! More than a praise, in Hebrew it literally means "save us!" Our mortal steps may be uncertain, but on that dark Friday, the One Who would answer our prayer to save us took steps that were deliberate, obedient. The prophet declared Him a man of sorrows. He was then and is today familiar with what we're going through, and on the cross He contracted our virus of sin so we could be healed.

To step beyond the underlying stuff that causes our smiles to flatten, you and I and Leah and all those we love and meet along the way need to take a walk. Let's go to the cross and see where He died. Then on Sunday, let's find the empty tomb and know with certainty that our Redeemer lives.

By Maurice Heald

The Art of Enduring by Jan Richardson
For Holy Saturday

This blessing
can wait as long
as you can.

Longer.

This blessing
began eons ago
and knows the art
of enduring.

This blessing
has passed
through ages
and generations,
witnessed the turning
of centuries,
weathered the spiraling
of history.

This blessing
is in no rush.

This blessing
will plant itself
by your door.

This blessing
will keep vigil
and chant prayers.

This blessing
will bring a friend
for company.

This blessing
will pack a lunch
and a thermos
of coffee.

This blessing
will bide
its sweet time

until it hears
the beginning
of breath,
the stirring
of limbs,
the stretching,
reaching,
rising

of what had lain
dead within you
and is ready
to return.

I don't know how to pray.

I feel crushed
by the weight of it all
by the blood and the tears
by the fear
by the isolation
by that 5-ton stone rolled in front of
my only hope.

I don't know how to pray.

Will it count if I
scream into a pillow
punch the couch cushions in rage
cry uncontrollably for the loss of life
hide in my room and sit in silence
write
draw
read
sing
make content that speaks out the hope
that I long to feel?

I don't know how to pray.

The Lord is my Shepherd and I lack
the ability to really make a difference
my faith community in a physical sense
less than others
nothing.

I don't know how to pray.

I should have been
a doctor
a nurse
a chaplain
a sanitation worker
a grocery employee
a police officer
a fire fighter
able to pray with my actions and my
body.

I don't know how to pray.

So I will just sit and become
a shrine
a vessel
a more precise image bearer
a moving, breathing place where the
love of God can dwell.

I will wait for God
to answer my cries
to heal the world
to fill us with God's presence
to move the stone.

I don't know how to pray.

By Courtney Rominger

Lord, thank you for bringing us safely through this day. We confess that we have not done that which you have called us to do. We have looked out for our own interests and regarded ourselves as better than our neighbors. We have disregarded humility, and instead fed our prideful desires. We have reduced you to an idol that we are able to control. Out of the fear of your infinite mystery, we have prescribed finite answers in an attempt to limit your power.

But even though we fail miserably in our attempts to follow you, we confess that it is our deepest desire to be united to you and your people. As St. Teresa of Avila said, "Oh God, I do not love you. I do not even want to love you. But God I want to want to love you!" Help us, O Lord, to follow this deep and intimate desire. Teach us to follow you; leaving behind all of our comforts that insulate us from seeing you. Teach us to seek humility; to regard others as better than ourselves so that we might be united through Christ. Teach us to repent; to suffer that humiliation that kills our prideful flesh in order that we might be resurrected with you. Teach us to love; to love others in a way that puts aside our emotions and instead seeks to serve the needs of our neighbor.

Lord, we thank you because you not only perfectly modeled the way in which we are to live, but you offer us grace when we continually fail to do so. We thank you for providing us daily with what we need. We thank you for the gift of fellowship with our neighbors. We ask that in all that we do, you would give us the wisdom to seek your will above our own. We pray these things in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

By Nelson Steinert

Prayer Vigil
Holy Saturday

Stations of the Cross

One of the most powerful ways to enter into the passion and death of Jesus is to pray the “Stations of the Cross.” In praying the Stations of the Cross take time to reflect upon one’s state of heart, soul, and mind in relation to Jesus Christ. Take time to be alone with God as Jesus was alone in the night in which He was betrayed.

In your time of prayer keep in mind Paul’s word to the Galatians: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,” (Galatians 2:20).

The following Stations of the Cross are a compilation of several resources ranging from the traditional 14 Stations of the Cross to the Scriptural Stations of the Cross.

Resources:

- Creighton University Online Ministries
- [http://www.provpresri.org/docs/GoodFri2013StationsCross%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.provpresri.org/docs/GoodFri2013StationsCross%20(1).pdf)
- Images
from: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/527343437593673324/?nic_v1=1aFohYTIAFZD2OkJebK5rBB3ckApxyElsGBD%2FPkJEsMYpjXVxyT3nsfbr6u5KPPofl
- <https://www.presentationministries.com/publications/ScripStat.asp>
- <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/station.php>
- Hymn “Were You there?” <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/398/were-you-there>
- <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-were-you-there>

Opening prayer

Gracious Lord God, my Redeemer, here I stand at Your feet. Unto You all hearts and souls are open, all desires known, and no secrets can be hid from You. I speak to you from the depths of my soul; the depths of my heart, I am sorry for all my sins, because I have offended You, I seek You, my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I will would rather die than offend You again. Amen



First Station — Jesus is condemned to death

O Lord, Jesus Christ, here you stand before Pilate. No one speaks for you. No one defends you. No one is present for you. You spent your life preaching, teaching, listening, and healing others from the smallest child to the eldest adult caring for those who were ignored by others. Here you stand and their memories are lost as you are prepared for death.

66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, 67 “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, 68 and if I ask you, you will not answer. 69 But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” 70 So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” 71 Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.” (Luke 22:66-71).

As a child, I feel (insert your own thoughts and prayer).

As an adult, I feel (insert your own thoughts and prayer).

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Second Station — Jesus carries His cross

My Lord Jesus Christ, by Your cross you have redeemed the world. In accepting your cross you knew you would carry it to your death on Calvary. Sometimes problems, events, or life in general is not easy, we like Jesus the Christ, must pick-up our crosses and carry them knowing it is not easy.

"Jesus said to all: 'Whoever wishes to be My follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in My steps.'" —Luke 9:23

6 When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.”

15 They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.” 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. — John 19:6, 15-17

So they took Jesus; 17 and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

I pick-up my cross knowing that sometimes I try and get others to take care of my problems and solve for me. There are times I get upset and am in a foul mood when asked to do the smallest task to help others. There are times when I do not feel appreciated. Times when I take on more responsibility than I need to. In these times say “whoa is me”, even as there are those who carry larger crosses than myself. I my own self-pity I do not reach out for help to others or to God.

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Third Station — Jesus falls the first time

The cross you carry my Lord Jesus, is heavy. Its weight increases with each step you take as your physical strength is drained from you as you suffer from the previous day of trial and tribulation. In your increasing weakness, consciousness begins to wane, under the weight of the cross you stumble and fall. Those around you have their own interests. Some want the parade that you are in to pass quickly so they can get on with their lives, soldiers who accompany you want to complete the task and get home, while others mourn as they walk with you to Calvary.

The First Sin

"The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." —Genesis 3:6

The First Sin in the New Testament

"Once Herod realized that he had been deceived by the astrologers, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys two years old and under in Bethlehem." —Matthew 2:16

The First Sin against Jesus in His public ministry

"At these words the whole audience in the synagogue was filled with indignation. They rose up and expelled Him from the town, leading Him to the brow of the hill on which it was built and intending to hurl Him over the edge." —Luke 4:28-29

Th heavy burden of my sins is found in the manner in which I go about my labor. There are days when I start a task and tire of it quickly and hurry to finish it, not doing it well at all. I do not pay attention to what I am doing, I hurry, I give up at times when life becomes difficult.

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Fourth Station — Jesus meets his mother

In the midst of parade of which you participate, people are yelling and screaming at you. It is a hostile path you drag your weary body up and down the streets of Jerusalem. Oh, for the want of a friendly face in the crowd. Oh, for the want of love in the midst of one's toil and tribulation. Out of the corner of your eye you see a woman approaching you. It is your mother. She cannot make the pain and suffering stop, but it helps that she is on your side, she suffers with you. With her comes understanding and care.

"Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering." —Lamentations 1:12

"Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother: "This Child is destined to be the Downfall and the Rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed — and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword — so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare." —Luke 2:34-35

"Near the cross of Jesus there stood His mother." —John 19:25

In your world today where do you experience the trials and tribulations of life: anxiety, competition, health concerns, unknown future ... where do you seek a friendly face?

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Fifth Station — Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry His cross

Impatient is being to rule the day. The soldiers accompanying you dear Lord just want to get the task completed. The journey to Calvary is taking longer than they want it to. You are showing signs of increasing physical weakness and they fear you will not be able to complete the journey. As you grow weaker they seek a quicker way to get the job done. Out of the crowd they grab a man who was just watching the events of the day. All of a sudden he is enlisted to assist you in carrying

Your cross.

“And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.” — Mark 15:21

"As they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon the Cyrenean who was coming in from the fields. They put a crossbeam on Simon's shoulder for him to carry along behind Jesus." —Luke 23:26

Daily we are faced with carrying our cross. A cross that may too burdensome for us to carry alone. It is our cross. We become so enamored with our own cross that we fail to see others who may be struggling with their own crosses. We fail to acknowledge them and their crosses and shrink from assisting them. Where do you see others who need assistance in cross-bearing? How can you assist them with their cross?

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Sixth Station — Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Veronica, Bernice in the Greek tradition of the Church, embodies the yearning of women and men in the Old Testament, as all believers, to see the face of God. Jesus on his way to the cross meets her. She does nothing more than simple kindness. Holding out a cloth to wipe Jesus' face. Undeterred by the brutality of soldiers or the fear that gripped Jesus' followers, she performs an act of courage that does not allow her heart to be dismayed. In the midst of the events of that day we hear Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount

“Blessed are the pure in heart,” (Matthew 5:8).

8 You have said, v“Seek4 my face.”

My heart says to you,

“Your face, Lord, do I seek.”⁵

9 Hide not your face from me.

Turn not your servant away in anger,

O you who have been my help.

Cast me not off; forsake me not,

O God of my salvation! (Psalm 27:8-9)

How is your heart restless today?

My Lord Jesus Christ, grant my restless heart to seek your face. Keep me from seeing only the surface of things. Grant me purity to recognize your presence in the world. Grant me courage to be born in your image; an image of humility and goodness. May I encounter you along the way in my life's journey and in my encounter show your image to the world. Amen

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Seventh Station — Jesus falls the second time

Come on Jesus, you can get up! I know the cross is growing heavier and heavier making it more difficult to get up ... to walk. Please Lord do not give up.

"Later on, Jesus found him in the temple precincts and said to him: 'Remember, now, you have been cured. Give up your sins so that something worse may not overtake you.'" —John 5:14

"For when men have once been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and become sharers in the Holy Spirit, when they have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to make them repent again, since they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding Him up to contempt." —Hebrews 6:4-6

"If we sin willfully after receiving the truth, there remains for us no further sacrifice for sin — only a fearful expectation of judgment and a flaming fire to consume the adversaries of God." —Hebrews 10:26-27

There are days when life's events get me down. I feel like I am a failure. I become impatient with myself. I despair over the little things in life. I get tripped up in my living that I lose focus on what gives me strength and life.

What are the things in life that cause you to stumble?

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Eighth Station — Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Along the road to Calvary, Jesus, you pass by a group of women. You notice that they are in despair. You stop to offer encouragement. In the midst of Your own suffering and pain You offer consolation to them. Though you have been abandon by your friends and are in pain You reach out to others in pain.

27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. 28 But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” — Luke 23:27-31

There are times when I am so absorbed in my own stuff ... my own grief ... my own health ... my own needs or wants that I fail to see those around me who are suffering ... in pain ...

In your life where are you encountering others? How do you respond?

Lord Jesus, help me to think more about others. Help me to remember that I am not alone in my problems, but there are others who have similar problems. Fill me with the Holy Spirit that I may respond to others in need even when I am preoccupied with myself. Amen

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Ninth Station — Jesus falls a third time

The longest-day proceeds and You my Lord at the end of Your physical strength. Your body weakens and you fall again for a third time. You struggle and struggle and struggle. Slowly you gather yourself and stand-up proceeding toward Your crucifixion.

There are days Lord when I struggle. I struggle in keeping faith in You ... in trusting You ... in walking with You. Hear my prayer Lord in my struggle ... filled with the Holy Spirit I have the physical and spiritual strength to get up to my feet and carry on. Help me to

confess you in good times and bad that You are my Lord and Savior.

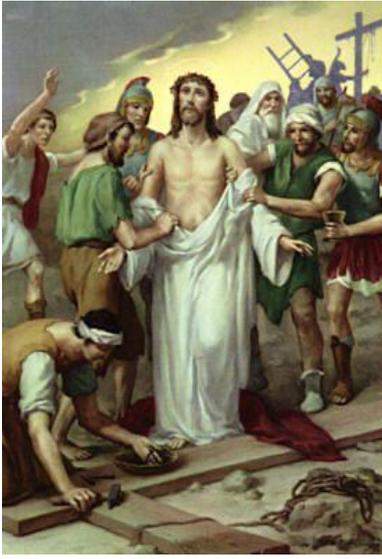
"A third time Jesus asked him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was hurt because He had asked a third time, 'Do you love Me?' so he said to Him: 'Lord, you know everything. You know well that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'" —John 21:17

"Those who accepted his message were baptized; some three thousand were added that day." —Acts 2:41

"He will revive us after two days; on the third day He will raise us up." —Hosea 6:2

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Tenth Station — Jesus' clothes are taken away

Here I stand Lord along side you; naked and alone.

"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves." —
Genesis 3:17

"She gave birth to her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger." —Luke 2:7

"There was a young man following Him who was covered by nothing but a linen cloth. As they seized him he left the cloth behind and ran off naked." —Mark 14:51-52

"Then the disciple Jesus loved cried out to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' on hearing it was the Lord, Simon Peter threw on some clothes — he was stripped— and jumped into the water." —John 21:7

"We groan while we are here, even as we yearn to have our heavenly habitation envelop us. This it will, provided we are found clothed and not naked. While we live in our present tent we groan; we are weighed down because we do not wish to be stripped naked but rather to have the heavenly dwelling envelop us, so that what is mortal may be absorbed by life."
—2 Corinthians 5:2-4

Here I stand Lord along side you; naked and alone.

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Eleven Station — Jesus is nailed to the cross

The origins of the African-American Spiritual are unknown, however, the notes in the companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship states it was first published in 1899 in William E. Barton's *Old Plantation Songs*. The song consists of a series of questions that calls one to remember. Calling the community of faith to remember the past to the present, to bring historic events to bear on the present and make them a part of our story.

How are the four questions for Were You There a part of your story? Your faith?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, "Father,

forgive them, for they know not what they do.”And they cast lots to divide his garments. — Luke 23:33-34

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.



Twelfth Station — Jesus dies on the cross

Be still. Be silent. Stand beneath the cross of Jesus.

33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”[a] And they cast lots to divide his garments. — Luke 23:34-36

Let God love you in Jesus Christ. Open your heart, mind, and soul let yourself be loved by God.

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. [Page Break](#)
Thirteenth Station — Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus is taken down from the cross. His suffering and pain are ended. He has emptied Himself for others ... for you.

"Rather, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that He humbled Himself." —Philippians 2:7-8

As Jesus humbled Himself for others, how do I humble myself for others?

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. [Page Break](#)
Fourteenth Station — Jesus is laid in the tomb

As Jesus is laid in the tomb reflect and pray on the following Scripture passages. What resonates with you in each reading?

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.
— Matthew 27:57-60

"Through baptism into His death we were buried with Him, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life." — Romans 6:4

"In baptism you were not only buried with Him but also raised to life with Him because you believed in the power of God Who raised Him from the dead." — Colossians 2:12

My Lord Jesus Christ, I have signed my own death warrant by my sin; hear my prayer; save me from through your death from the eternal death that awaits me because of my sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.