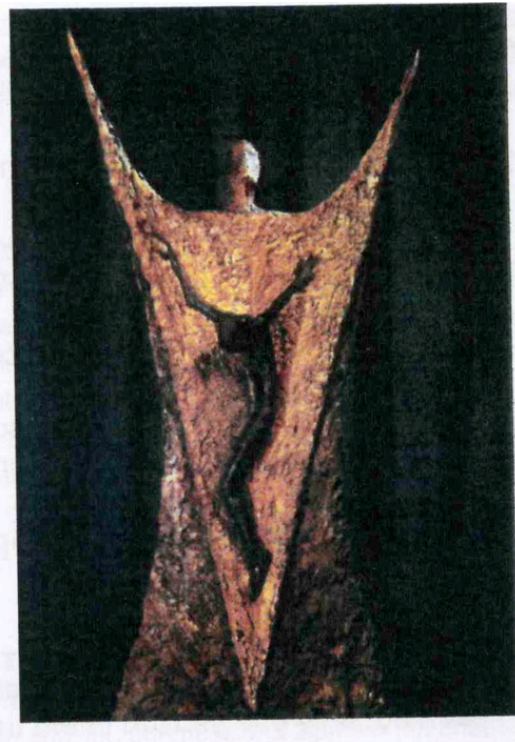


Stations of the Cross



Introduction

From the earliest times pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem to walk in Jesus' footsteps as he carried the cross from the spot where he was condemned, through the streets of the city, and out beyond the city wall to Calvary where he was crucified.

Pilgrimages were interrupted after the Moslem invasion of the Holy Land in the seventh century, but were restored as a result of the Crusades of the eleventh century. The defeat of the Crusader Kingdom in Jerusalem meant that from the thirteenth century it was no longer possible for Christians to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The practice arose of adorning the walls of churches with paintings and sculptures representing the Way of the Cross. The word 'Stations' means a stopping place. The faithful would walk from station to station meditating on Jesus' Passion and Death. The scenes chosen varied with local piety, some coming from the Gospel account and others from pious legend. Over time custom settled on the fourteen stations that can still be found in churches built before the Second Vatican Council. They begin with Jesus being condemned to death and end with his burial.

Consistent with the renewal of church life at the time of the Second Vatican Council, the Congregation for Sacred Rites in 1975 suggested that the Stations begin with the Last Supper, where we see Jesus giving his meaning to the sufferings he was to endure, and end with the Resurrection, where we see God thwarting the cruel designs of those who crucified Jesus by raising his Son to life, and embracing him in the communion in which life ultimately consists. It was his trust in his Father's love that sustained Jesus throughout his Passion and Death,

and it is this same love that sustains us as we make the Way of the Cross with Jesus. The Congregation also recommended that we focus on scenes that are explicitly narrated in the Gospel accounts.

We have followed both these recommendations, though, because of the long tradition of piety, we have retained a scene where Veronica wipes Jesus' face (Station Five), and another where Jesus meets his mother (Station Six), and a third where Jesus falls under the weight of the cross (Station Seven). The other twelve stations depict scenes from the Gospels.

Opening Prayer

Father, in sadness, but in hope, we come to walk with your Son, Jesus, the Way of the Cross. Under the weight of our indifference and sin, he stumbled and fell, his mouth filled with dust. Grant us the grace that now, like Simon of Cyrene, we may be able to carry his cross with him. Like Veronica, may we wipe his face to reveal to the world his radiant love and forgiveness. On this Way no one is excluded. He draws us sinners together by drawing us to himself. We need each other as each one helps the others to make a way for his sufferings to penetrate our weary minds and our cluttered hearts. Father draw us into his heart that we may know more fully the love that is ready to sacrifice all that we may live to the full by knowing and responding to your love.

The First Station: The Last Supper



Jesus wants to make of his death a final gift of himself to us.

Reading (1Corinthians 11:23-25):

‘I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Reflection:

Jesus is with his friends for a final meal. They are remembering God’s redeeming action when God freed his people from slavery in Egypt and led them across the wilderness to the Promised Land. Jesus knows that his mission from God is to so love the world that everyone will be moved to leave behind whatever is enslaving their souls, and journey with him into his Father’s embrace. There is no Paschal Lamb at this

meal, for it is Jesus himself whose life is about to be brutally taken from him by those who are determined to resist the freedom into which his love is calling them. It is his body that is about to be broken; his blood that is about to be poured out. He wants his disciples to know that, while he is about to become the victim of the malice of his enemies, he knows his Father's love and entrusts himself into his Father's hands as he prepares to make of his death a final gift of himself to the world in love. As we begin our Stations let us remember that throughout his sufferings, his heart is filled with love for each of us. He is consoled to see us journeying with him to Calvary and to the Resurrection.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, you give yourself to us because you want to be with us. You want us to know in our heart the tender love of your Father and the consoling presence of your Spirit. You know that without you we cannot love as you ask us to love. Thank you for inviting us to walk with you. May our communion with you stimulate our longing to see you one day face to face. Amen.

The Second Station: Jesus' Agony in the Garden



Even his closest friends are unable to support Jesus as he faces the terrible struggle alone

Reading (Matthew 26:36-44)

Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

Reflection

All his life Jesus had wanted only to do the will of his Father. Now, because of the refusal of those in power to listen to God's revelation of love, the obedience is bringing Jesus up against their sinful determination to have him killed. Jesus knows God's own revulsion at human cruelty and sin. His heart reaches out to those he has not yet been able to reach during his all too short ministry. His whole being trembles at the meaninglessness of what he is about to endure, and God seems silent in this lonely garden, where the cold light of the full moon is filtered by the leaves of the ancient olive trees. God has asked Jesus to love, to give his life in love, so that is what Jesus is resolved to do, whatever the outcome for himself. His soul finds peace in this trust and he rises to face the kiss of betrayal from the one he still calls 'friend'. They are drawing near, the dark lit by the menacing torches of the temple guard.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together)

Jesus, in your loneliness and agony, you continue to place your trust in your Father. Your deepest longing is to do his will. Please strengthen us when we are tempted to despair. Though we fail at times to be with you, may we never doubt that you know our pain and are with us, binding us by your grace to trust in the loving will of God. Amen.

The Third Station: The People reject their Messiah



Rejected by his own people, Jesus is condemned to be crucified.

Reading (Matthew 26:57-66)

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered ... [They levelled accusations against Jesus] But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.”

Reflection

Jesus is the Son of God, but in a way beyond the comprehension of the Jewish leaders. He calls himself the 'Son of Man', because he stands there in solidarity with all the ordinary people who, down through the ages, have been unjustly condemned by the powerful. God hears the cry of the poor, and Jesus has embraced their cause. There is a terrible irony in this scene, as in the scene before Pilate. The high priest and the other members of the Jewish court think that they are judging Jesus. In reality they stand condemned by the way they are abusing their power.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, please forgive us for the ways we judge others, and for the ways in which we oppress the poor because of our ignorance, our bigotry, our prejudice, and our selfish self-interest. When we find ourselves suffering through the unjust judgments of others, may we learn from you to speak the truth in love while bearing pain patiently. Amen.

The Fourth Station: Jesus accepts the Cross



Jesus accepts to suffer with the oppressed. Others have the power to force the cross onto him. He has the freedom to embrace it.

Reading (Matthew 27:26-31)

After having Jesus flogged, Pilate handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Reflection:

One does not take the cross upon oneself. It strikes from behind, catching you off balance, grasping for support that isn't there. So it was with Jesus. He, however, embraced it, and in so doing he embraced those who thrust it upon him. He embraces us, too, in our folly, for his broken heart cannot stop loving us with all the love of the God who wants us to know that suffering need not destroy us. Accepted in love it can purify our heart and open it more fully to grace.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, every time we sin, every time we say No to love, every time we neglect the yearning of our soul and give in to our surface needs and the seductive pleasures that leave us so empty, every time we hurt those you love, we add to the weight of the cross. Thank you for being so patient with us. May our walking the road with you today help us to break with sin. Amen.

The Fifth Station: Veronica wipes Jesus' face



This scene is not found in the Gospel records.

Reading (Isaiah 53:2-3 and Psalm 27:8-9):

He grew up before God like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Reflection:

Jesus identifies with all the ‘faceless’ people in the world who suffer without any recognition, who are desired, but without love, who are used, but without being treated as persons. A woman of the crowd moved with tenderness and compassion sees beyond the blood, the

sweat and the spittle to the beauty of Jesus' person. She runs to him and wipes his face. The image of his radiant countenance is imprinted on the cloth.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

O God, you have revealed your face to us in the disfigured face of your suffering Son. He identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the imprisoned, the marginalised. May we, like Veronica, be able to look beyond the disfigurement to see the beauty of your face in every person we meet. May we respond to him as he gazes upon us with eyes of love. Inflammé our hearts with a burning desire to do your will, so that one day we will see him face to face and gaze upon his beauty.

The Sixth Station: Jesus meets his Mother



This scene is not recorded in the Gospel accounts

Reading (Luke 2:34-35, 51 and Jeremiah 31:16):

Simeon blessed Jesus' parents and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." ... His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Thus says the Lord: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your suffering.

Reflection:

God is love. He does not force his gifts upon us. It was Mary's consent that made it possible for God's Word to be conceived as man. The Spirit came down upon her and she conceived from the embrace of

God. The future was hidden from her eyes as it is hidden from us all. She knew to be faithful to grace, by saying Yes to love in the ups and downs of daily life, taking each experience into her heart and searching for God's will, knowing that God is found wherever there is love. No doubt there were moments when joy flooded her mother's heart, but not as she watched helplessly as her son was dragged through the streets to his death. As her eyes met those of her son she saw love there and knew that God was with her. It was the same for him. Her pure and loving eyes reassured him that God was with him. Encouraged by the love between them, he continued on his way to Calvary, and she walked with him.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus, pray to him for us when the many crosses of our human journey are a sword that pierces our heart. May he look into our eyes as he looked into yours, and give us the courage to continue loving as we journey. May we, like you, see the beauty in the disfigured faces of those who suffer and may your love touch their hearts through us.

The Seventh Station: Jesus falls under the weight of the Cross



This scene is not recorded explicitly in the Gospels.

Reading (Isaiah 53:4-6):

He has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and all our sin was laid on him.

Reflection:

Jesus has already been so maltreated by the Roman soldiers that the weight of the cross proves too much for him. His heart, too, is crushed under the weight of disappointment: the crowd that looked to him as a saviour turned on him and called for him to be crucified; one of his closest disciples has betrayed him, another has denied any knowledge

of him, and the rest have scattered, leaving him alone. He knows he is not alone, for his Father is with him, but the heavy burden of human sin is still too much to bear, and he falls beneath its weight.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, you understand when we fall under the weight of the cross. Teach us to trust your Father as you continued to trust him. Forgive us for the burden we are to your heart, by our indifference and by our sin. You welcomed those who are overburdened to come to you and find rest for their souls. Come to us, we pray, for we cannot carry the cross unless you carry it with us. Only the assurance of your love can enable us to embrace the cross of our daily living, and to walk with you to Calvary and the Resurrection.

The Eighth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry the Cross



None of us is alone in carrying the cross

Readings (Mark 15:21):

The soldiers compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Reflection

Jesus said once: 'If you want to be my disciple, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me'(Matthew 16:24). Simon was reluctant but it seems that he became a disciple, for Paul, in his letter to the Christian community in Rome, writes: 'Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also.' The gratitude and love shown him by Jesus must have changed his heart so

that he came to see his task as a privilege. If Jesus needed someone to help him carry his cross, we should not be surprised if we find it too hard to carry our cross alone. In our case, some of our crosses are the result of our own foolishness and sin. Sometimes, however, like Jesus, we find ourselves weighed down with crosses that have been laid upon us unjustly by others who may or may not know what they are doing. If the cross must be borne, let us bear it with patience and trust, and let us accept the love of others who are helping us to carry it. Knowing that Jesus is carrying our cross with us may even help us embrace it with love.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, like Simon we find ourselves bewildered when we are compelled to carry a cross of which we have no understanding. Stay close to us. May your presence and your trust give us strength when the burden is too great. When we fall send us the help we need to get up and continue the journey with you. Teach us the lessons of love that can be learned only in the school of suffering. Amen.

The Ninth Station: Jesus is stripped and nailed to the Cross



They nail his arms to the wood, but they cannot prevent him from reaching out to embrace the world.

Reading (Matthew 27:33-44)

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull – ‘Calvary’), ... they nailed him to a cross. Then they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; and they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him ... as did the chief priests, along with the scribes and elders. The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him.

Reflection:

How can we be so blind and so callous as to nail to a cross hands that have only ever been raised in blessing, hands that have touched our eyes to bring sight, arms that have embraced in order to bring healing and comfort. How could we ever think of nailing to a cross feet that have walked with us on our journey, encouraging us, and bringing us hope by liberating us from the fears that can so easily trap us. ‘What *this* body makes visible is the twisted shape of hearts, created for love, chosen for love, that yet offer every insult to love, attempt every abuse of its secret and holy nakedness ... His whole body shouts shame, has become the utter shame of mankind’(Hans Urs Von Balthasar).

Song (‘A Friend Broken’ by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers ‘Come, have no fear.’

I see a friend’s blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I’ll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, we ask forgiveness for the times when we have caused pain to those whom you identify as parts of your ‘body’, by our callous response to their cry, and by our repeated rejection of the grace you give us to turn from our sinful ways. Take away our hearts of stone and give us a heart of flesh, more tender and more vulnerable. Give us your heart that we may be more compassionate to others in their pain.

The Tenth Station: A Criminal is Moved to Pray



Jesus sought out the company of sinners during his life. He dies as he lived.

Reading (Luke 23:39-43)

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Reflection:

The man we have come to know as ‘The Good Thief’ is the only one in Luke’s Gospel to address Jesus simply as ‘Jesus’. He knows no theology. Titles are not part of his world. He knows only what he sees: a man dying like him, but in prayer and in love. In his own desperate final moments he wants what he sees Jesus has, and pleads with Jesus to share his life beyond death. Jesus’ gracious reply tells us a lot about the response of God’s heart to a sinner who cries out to God.

Song (‘A Friend Broken’ by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers ‘Come, have no fear.’

I see a friend’s blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I’ll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, as you remember me today, may I remember the promise that you made to me when I was baptised. May I remember the Spirit that has so often filled my soul, in Confirmation and Communion and in the healing of Reconciliation. When I come to die, be there beside me and welcome me and all the world into the embrace of your Father. Amen.

The Eleventh Station: Mary and the Beloved Disciple



Reading (John 19:25-27):

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Reflection:

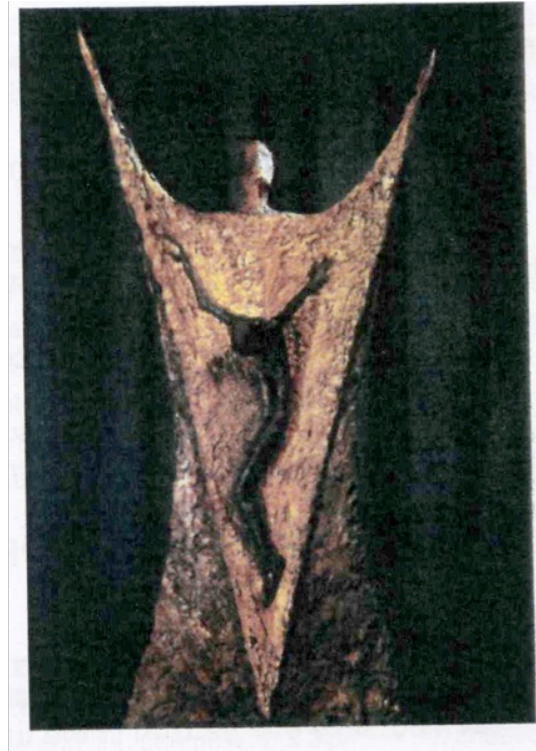
When Mary was a young woman, God told her of his desire to embrace her and to pour his Spirit into her so that she would conceive his Son. In her simplicity and faith she said Yes – 'Let it be done to me as you have said.' Again and again through her life she had said Yes to God's providence in her life, to the joys and the sorrows that she experienced.

Now, in her early fifties, her Son is being cruelly taken from her. She cannot say Yes to the evil that brought about his death. But her Son has taught her to look beyond and beneath the surface folly of human decision and indecision, and to see the presence and action of God's love. God is calling her Son to say Yes to Love whatever might befall him. She cannot prevent his death. She is being asked to accept it, and to embrace her Son as he offers his life to his Father and to the world. She is being asked to trust, like her Son, in God's power to save. Knowing her faith, Jesus is able to entrust to her the poor bewildered community of his disciples, represented by the Beloved Disciple who is standing there with her. She is to hold them together in prayer as they await the Spirit of the Risen Jesus to fill them with courage to carry on Jesus' mission, so tragically cut short on Calvary (see Acts 1:14). She is given to us all to take into our home. She will help us, so that, like Jesus, we will say Yes to God's will in our regard.

Hymn Prayer (Tom Luby msc)

Woman this is your son. Son this is your mother. Mary, love-gift from the heart of Christ our brother. Handmaiden of the Lord, God's Word forever heeding, Mary speak your mother-words with his heart pleading. You heard an old man's word, anguish of soul foretelling. Sweet the heart-price that was paid, our love compelling. Woman, the hour is here, have us within your keeping. Fill our hearts with promised peace, and still our weeping.

Twelfth Station: Jesus offers up his life



Jesus' final breath forms into a cry that rises from the depths of human loneliness and abandonment. Yet it rises in hope and bursts into the light as Jesus is caught up into God's loving embrace.

Reading (Matthew 27:45-54):

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ... Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice ['Father into your hands I commit my spirit', Luke 23:46], and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom ... When the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Reflection (from Hans Urs Von Balthasar):

The one who embraces the cross is always alone, looking up at one who is not looking down, but who is in turn looking up towards the God who seems to have forsaken them both. He shares our feeling of being abandoned, and offers us with himself to the Father. Those words he spoke – that the Father should forgive them; that his soul is commended to God; that his companion in death should share paradise with him; that our mother is his mother; that he thirsts; that, truly, all has been accomplished – those words have meaning only because he knows what it feels like to be abandoned and to continue to trust. Many stand around; some with magnificent gesture, some alert, waiting, speculating, all sensing that something may happen yet which concerns them. Because there *is* one unanswered question here: Is God ultimately revealed? If *Yes*, it must be God's love which makes him cry out with us to the one he cannot see, '*But why? Why have you forsaken me?*' Let that be God's question to you!

Hymn Prayer:

Hail true cross of beauty rarest, king of all the forest trees. Leaf and flower and fruit thou bearest, healing for a world's disease. Fairest wood and iron the fairest, yet more fair who hung on these.

Bend thy branches down to greet him, bend that stubborn heart of thine. Let the native force to greet him all its ruggedness resign. Gently let thy wood entreat him, royal sufferer and divine.

Honour, glory, might and merit, to the eternal Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one in Godhead coequally. All that may the world inherit praise one God in persons three.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus' heart is pierced



We look upon the one we have pierced

Reading (John 19:31-37):

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

Reflection:

We recall Jesus' words: 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."' John adds, 'Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified'(7:37-39). Jesus' mission is just completed (John 19:30). He has 'poured himself out in death'(Isaiah 53:12) in giving his life for the world. Now he can draw everyone to himself (John 12:32). Just as healing and life-giving water flows from the right side of the temple (Ezekiel 47:1-12), so now from Jesus' pierced side the healing and life-giving Spirit flows out upon the world. With the water comes blood. The price of our redemption was high. Nothing less than Jesus' complete gift of himself could persuade us of his love. In giving us the Spirit, it is his own life of communion with the Father that he is pouring out upon us.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

I am sorry for the times I have pierced your heart. Thank you for still loving me. When my heart is broken may it be love that comes forth, even for my enemies.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus' body is laid in the tomb



Reading (Luke 23:50-56):

There was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Reflection:

Joseph is willing to stand apart from the other members of the Jewish Council. In burying Jesus' body he incurs ritual defilement, and will not be able to celebrate the Passover. He has waited expectantly for the kingdom of God, and he has seen it in the self-giving love of the Servant-Messiah. He chooses to risk everything to go with Jesus, and so is a symbol for all those of Jesus' own people who would recognise Jesus as their Messiah. The Sabbath is beginning, the day on which God rests, having completed his creating. We have a foretaste of the new creation in Jesus' preaching and in his healing ministry. Now, as the women prepare the spices for a proper ritual burial, we wait in silence, wondering what the dawning of a new day will reveal.

Song ('A Friend Broken' by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.

His voice I hear whispers 'Come, have no fear.'

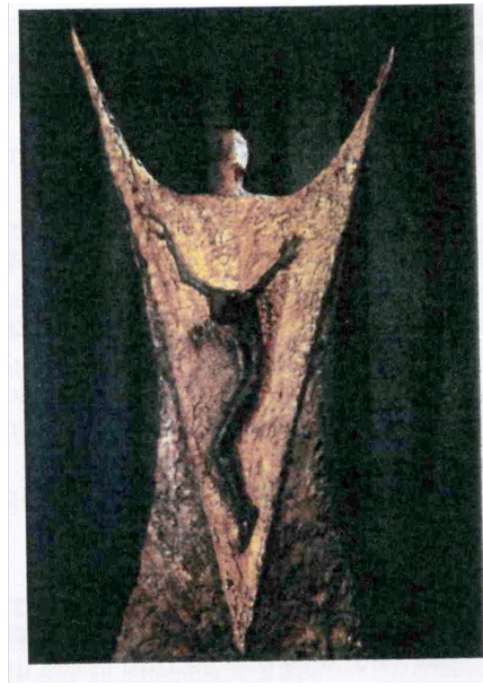
I see a friend's blood, poured out of love.

What can I do? I'll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together)

Jesus, like us you experienced physical death and burial, but you knew that life is really communion with God and that no one could take that from you. No stone, however heavy, could block out the light of your Father's radiant love. You promised us that if we believed with you we would die like you without ever experiencing the real death of separation from God, the source of life. Please give us the grace to die as beautifully as you did. Amen.

The Fifteenth Station: Jesus is raised to life by God



Death is overcome as Love triumphs in the explosion of glory which we call the Resurrection.

Reading (Matthew 28:1-10):

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his

disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Reflection (Patrick O’Carrigan msc):

The Resurrection expresses to the limit paeans of joy, exultations of triumph, the rainbow after sheets of blinding rain, golden sunshine after the gloom, the dance of dawn on the rim of darkness, and the glad sound of all creation singing together. It is the complete orchestration of happiness. Jesus is risen! The tomb could not hold him. He does not belong to the world of the dead. He is risen!

Song (‘A Friend Broken’ by Megan Donohue):

Before me I see a friend broken for me.
His voice I hear whispers ‘Come, have no fear.’
I see a friend’s blood, poured out of love.
What can I do? I’ll share in memory of you.

Prayer (together):

Jesus, your resurrection on the first day of the week was God’s first act in establishing a new creation in which the wounds of sin are healed, and love transforms all of creation as it wins our hearts. As we celebrate this moment each Sunday may we open our lives to the transforming power of grace and be your instruments in transforming our world, so that your kingdom will indeed come and your will be done on earth as in heaven, as your Son prayed that it would. We thank you for the privilege of carrying on his mission and for his Spirit that makes this possible.

Closing Reflection (Bede North msc):

We have followed Christ along the painful path to Calvary. We have watched him suffer and watched him die. Let us pause a moment longer to listen to him speak to us:

‘My friends – yes, that is what you are – my friends.

My life was not complete till I crowned it with my death.

You must complete my death with your life.

Accept each moment as it comes to you with faith and trust.

Do not look for me in empty tombs or far off places.

I am in you. I am in your neighbour.

I am in your home, your office, your factory, your schoolroom.

Wherever you are, I am there with you.

Go to your homes now. Take up your cross and follow me.

Complete the way of the cross we have walked together today.