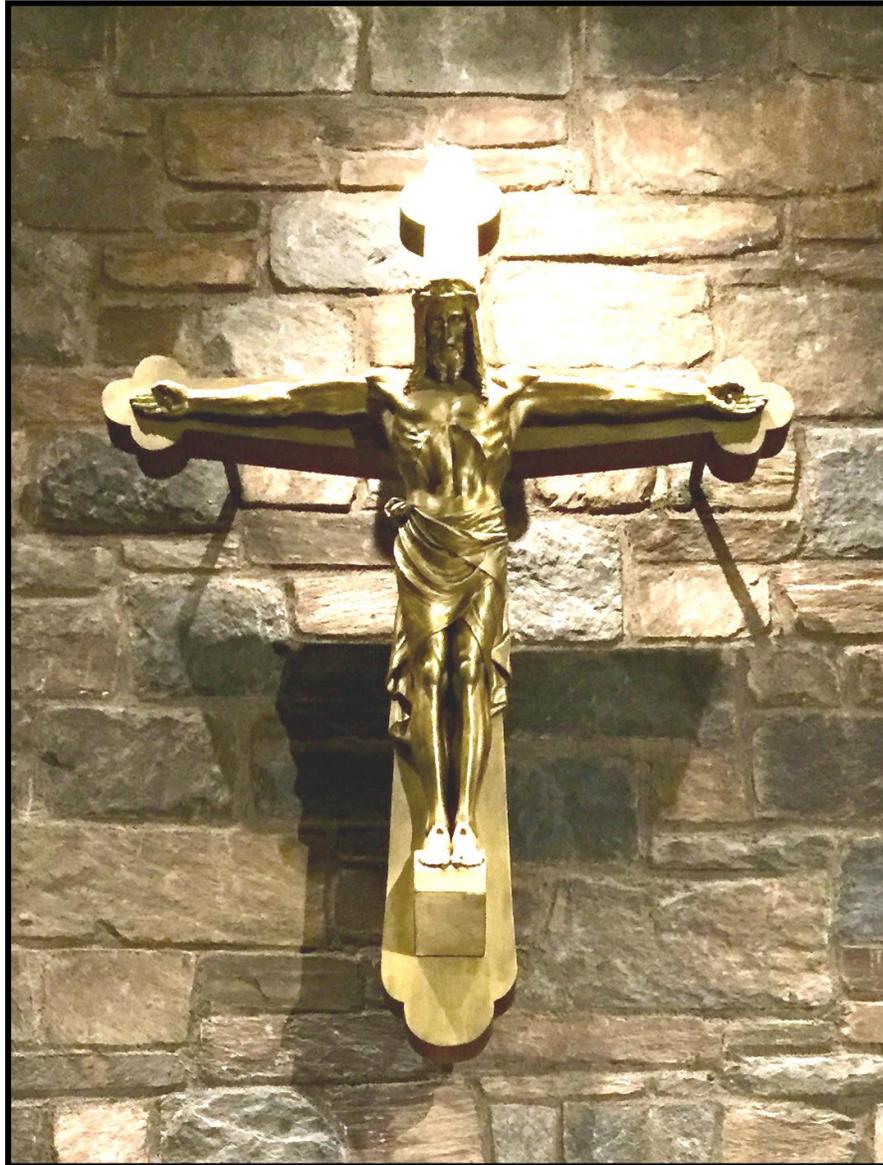


Grace Episcopal Church

Alexandria, Virginia



Meditations on the Stations of the Cross

Good Friday

April 2, 2021 – 12:00 PM

MEDITATIONS ON THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 2, 2021

The people stand.

OPENING DEVOTIONS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Officiant Lord, have mercy.
People **Christ, have mercy.**
Officiant Lord, have mercy.

Officiant and People

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
Who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.**

Versicle We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:
Response **In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.**

Officiant Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The procession goes to the First Station.

It is customary to genuflect as each station is announced. Parishioners will read the meditation for each station.

FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Versicle God did not spare his own Son:
Response **But delivered him up for us all.**

MEDITATION

Pilate fears sleep like a thief among thieves: ever wakeful, always watching.

His eyes are open when they come, / when the blackness outside the window has changed only to the darkest gray.

You are needed, they say, and he knows / today will be like so many days before it:

He will sign his name and another feckless Jew / will hang in a fetid field, rising into the sky like a beacon pointing to Rome.

This one stands before him silent and bleeding.

He would be their king, he is told, / as a guard strikes the man's head / as if to dislodge a crown.

He is like no king he has ever seen, this one, / assuming no throne, / proclaiming no authority, defying no one.

The king of the Jews, he mumbles, / as he scribbles his name.

My hands are clean, he thinks. / The blood of dead Jews never stains.

-Kemp Williams

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Versicle The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all:
Response **For the transgression of my people he was stricken.**

MEDITATION

We are reminded at this station that God will not give us more than we can handle, even if it feels that way sometimes. It helps to remember what has happened just before this event. Christ has been scorned by his people. Last night he was so fearful of what was to come that he sweated blood while praying on the Mount of Olives. Now he is wrongly accused in front of an angry crowd. I imagine him on trial, sweating from standing in the hot sun, physically tired and emotionally drained, with sand in his hair and dirt on his robes from being shoved around by the guards.

Now he is offered the heavy wooden cross. He knows exactly how the cross will be used. He hopes that he can handle it, but he is not sure. He raises his eyes to heaven, looks again at the cross... and takes a deep breath. He kneels, the guards rest the cross on his shoulder, and he stands up. He starts walking up the hill.

We all have our crosses to bear – pain, illness, difficult relationships, unpleasant tasks – I could go on and on. These days I often struggle with little things, such as getting started on a task that I volunteered for and have been procrastinating about for weeks, or remembering to smile at others despite the pain in my neck and shoulder that just will not go away. Sometimes, everything just feels like too much of a burden.

When I feel this way it helps to remind myself of tired, sweaty, uncertain Jesus. He knew he was going to suffer if he took that cross, but he took it anyway and struggled through it -- for our sake. If He can trust that his Father will see him through it, then I can go the extra mile. I can trust Him too.

Sometimes we are given a cross so heavy that we cannot possibly carry it all by ourselves, even after we have prayed for strength and courage. We try to lift it, we stumble, and we fall. Maybe we try more than once, but we cannot do it. That is when our faith gets the ultimate test. That is when we pray, "Dear Lord, I have tried and I have failed. I cannot do this alone. But I still believe that with your help anything is possible. I surrender all control and put this in your hands." And that is when God puts his shoulder under the cross next to ours, and helps us to bear it.

- June Huber

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Almighty God, whose most dear Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is the Lord our God.

Versicle Surely he has borne our griefs:
Response **And carried our sorrows.**

MEDITATION

Jesus has been whipped, crowned with thorns, and carries a heavy wooden beam along a Roman road with uneven stones. He is exhausted, filled with despair and hears the crowd's taunts and jeers along the way to Golgotha.

On the way to his most important destination, he faces death in complete obedience to his Father. As he stumbles on a step and falls under the huge weight pushing into his scarred back, we can feel the shock, the tensing of muscles, the searing pain. Weak and isolated, he reaches inward for the will to rise and continue. He feels his Father's love and support and his own resilience. He will complete this final journey and fulfill his faith promise to us all.

Our life contains multiple journeys, each with peaks and valleys, times when we stumble, and times when we soar. We have fallen physically, when we tense up, hold our breath, and brace ourselves for the pain and jarring of limbs. We lay there, feeling the weight of the fall, as our minds catch up. During this last year unlike any other, we have also fallen emotionally, depressed, grieving, feeling frustrated and angry, or scared and out of control.

When we are at that low point, isolated, uncertain, ill, lonely, we reach inside ourselves to find that Jesus is always with us, His faith infused with ours. Then we find the strength to get up and continue our journey, filled with his love.

-Lynn Rohrs

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Versicle A sword will pierce your own soul also:
Response **And fill your heart with bitter pain.**

MEDITATION

There was nothing Mary could do to change the worst thing that ever happened to her. Her son had been whipped within an inch of his life and would be publicly tortured to death. It is wrenchingly painful to watch those you love suffer, and harder still when there is nothing you can do to stop it, and hardest of all when it's your child who is suffering. Mary couldn't relieve his pain or stop what was happening. It was not how she wanted to spend her last time with her son. All she could do was be there, witnessing his pain.

I have not (thank God!) had to watch the death of my child, but like most parents, I have had to watch them, and others I love, suffer, without being able to relieve their pain. Sometimes all I could do was be there; and this last year, I usually couldn't even be there. I – we – have had to find new ways of being present to those we love. The cards, the phone calls, the Zooms, the waving from a distance, the no-contact gifts, are not how I wanted to show my love, but it's usually been all I could do without making things worse. As we slowly (I hope) regain our freedom, I pray that I can, like Mary, be as willing to be present to those in pain as to those in joy, even when I am helpless to prevent the pain.

-Anne Clift Boris

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother: Mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

FIFTH STATION: THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Versicle Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me:

Response **Cannot be my disciple.**

MEDITATION

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the opportunity to walk behind you and help carry your cross.

As you know all too well, some days the weight feels heavier than others—particularly over the last year for so many of us. Sometimes we may feel that we’ll collapse under it all or that we can’t take another step.

But then there you are in those challenging and often dark moments to remind us of the beauty and wonder of your creation—and of our inextricable connectivity to it and to each other. We are not alone. You did not design it that way. United in this patchwork we stand.

Likely not by chance that Simon, a black man from the coastal city of Cyrene, is chosen to assist you. Just as he graciously carried your cross, so too do you call on us to use our unique talents, abilities, and strengths to speak truth to power and demand the equality and equal protection of our brothers and sisters of color.

Thank you for your radical son and for the many ways you have connected and sustained us. May we never forget that the crosses you ask us to bear are part and parcel of the indelible fabric and eternal compact that is life.

-Kelley Miller

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Heavenly Father whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

SIXTH STATION: A WOMAN WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

We have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of men. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

Versicle Restore us, O Lord God of hosts:
Response **Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

MEDITATION

Early Christians gave us the legend of St. Veronica, Latin for “true icon,” in the story of the woman who offered a towel to Jesus on the Way of the Cross. After Jesus wiped his face, his image remained. In addition to revering the mystery of his image, they considered St. Veronica brave to help Jesus despite the fact that he was “despised and rejected by men.” A belief that developed from this story is that the “true icons” among us are those who devote themselves to others.

This is our second Easter experiencing the suffering and loss of the pandemic. We are struggling, concerned, and worried. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming. Yet, as we celebrate together that “he was wounded for our transgressions...and with his stripes we are healed,” we also can see opportunities to live the lesson of this Sixth Station of the Cross.

As we pray and meditate on the meaning of St. Veronica’s humble service, it becomes clear that *each* of us can follow her example. Some of us fulfill that mission directly as essential workers, healthcare heroes or through ministries such as the Grace Food Pantry. Others offer our acts of kindness in indirect ways. In whatever ways we are able, we honor Jesus’ suffering and St. Veronica’s gesture of love by using our gifts to be a “true icon” to others.

-Jennifer Long

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Versicle But as for me, I am a worm and no man:
Response **Scorned by all and despised by the people.**

MEDITATION

I have considered the Stations of the Cross where Jesus falls in the past as a lesson of resilience, of being tested three times and yet rising. But today when I reflect on this station, I am moved by what precedes this second fall. He sees his mother, Simon takes up the cross, a bystander wipes his face. Those around him love him, share his burden, give him comfort, and yet he *still* falls again.

For those of us who care for someone who is hurting or stumbling, the second fall is harder to watch than the first. At first, we can rush to aid, rally to solve...but then we see another fall and our own strength ebbs. Why can't I fix this? How long will my loved one suffer?

And I know how much harder it is for me to fail, to fall, to stumble *again* when those who love me can see me and have already shared my burden or wiped my tears. I fear they are as disappointed in me as I am in myself, feel guilty for the hurt they share, embarrassed to again need comfort.

In the second fall, I now see that Jesus shows us that we walk this difficult path together, accepting that we share the pain of those we love. Jesus falls again, aware of how those who care for him hurt, but also knowing that God's love endures fall after fall after fall. And he knows God's love, and the love we each give each other, will be there all along the journey, no matter how hard.

Officiant Let us pray.

-Mary Stewart

Silence

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

There followed after Jesus a great multitude of people, and among them were women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Versicle Those who sowed with tears:
Response **Will reap with songs of joy.**

MEDITATION

Jesus understood the poor and the disenfranchised. He respected them and loved them. He gave them worth and filled them with purpose. He understood that there would always be those that had no power.

To the enslaved, the maimed, the disabled, the poor, the outcasts, the women, he gave the dignity of recognizing their worth. In response, they recognized his power, the power the men in charge did not recognize. When he was condemned to death by men who did not understand his message, the women of the city came out to weep and to honor the man who had seen them for what they were, children of God. They thought they wept for him, but he understood that they wept for themselves.

We will weep as he passes by, but like the women of Jerusalem, we weep for ourselves and for our children. The love he brought to us was not valued then and is not valued today. The dignity he gave was not deemed to be important, because he gave it to those who were unimportant.

Can we, in this life, recognize that those who wept are weeping still? Can we learn to value those the powerful do not value? Can we bring into our lives the rejected to make them the cornerstone of a new church built on love? Can we open our hearts and minds to those Jesus loves? Can we?

-Lorna Worley

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has besieged me and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in the darkness like the dead of long ago. Though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. "Remember, O Lord, my affliction and bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!"

Versicle He was led like a lamb to the slaughter:
Response **And like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth.**

MEDITATION

Lent is a season of penance and reflection. We remember the words of our Lord, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The Lenten season reminds us not to get too comfortable in our faith. This past year has given us a chance to carry that cross. A pandemic has killed more than half a million Americans - almost everyone knows someone who has died. Jesus falls a first time. A closed economy has destroyed countless jobs and businesses creating financial insecurity for millions. Jesus falls the second time. Political and racial unrest has broken out in our streets, creating division among communities, friends, and families. Jesus falls a third time. We look to our Lord for solace, yet there He is in the distance, carrying his cross before us, falling under the weight of our sins, our hurt, our anger. What is the message for us this Lent? We must do our part as the Church, to bear these burdens of a broken world, and shed light into its darkness. This is the cross we bear as a community. This Lenten season we feel this sacrifice more than ever because, we all feel as if we have made sacrifices. For me, this entire past year has felt like Lent. Isolation, loneliness, praying for friends and extended family members who have had health issues, feeling imprisoned in my own home. We crave to come out into the light and reconnect with others as Christ did when He left the tomb. Let us remember this Lenten season the passion and pain our Lord went through for us and rejoice that we, as the Church, can share this burden of a broken world with him. May His grace give us the light we need to shine in this present darkness.

-Stephen Lovell

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing."

Versicle They gave me gall to eat:
Response **And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.**

MEDITATION

Much of today is based on outer appearances and how one's social media feed looks. I am guilty of making sure that I have nice-looking social media feeds. While there is nothing wrong with wanting things to look nice and have what society may deem as having the "right" look, there is a hidden danger. The danger lies when we become bound by material things and keeping up with the Joneses. It's easier to rely on external validation factors. The likes, the heart emojis, and the positive comments give us validation that we are doing it "right." But what happens when those external factors are suddenly gone? Are we able to find that validation within ourselves? Is what we're presenting to the world just masking things that we don't like about ourselves?

Most of us have the choice when to remove our masks and often choose not to. We make that choice so the world doesn't see something they don't like. Jesus did not have that choice. He was stripped. But the purpose in life doesn't need outer trappings like clothes. The removal of his clothes was meant to humiliate, belittle, and degrade him. But Jesus had complete trust and confidence and believed nothing was impossible for God. Mark 4:40 reads, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" When you have faith and know your true purpose, you can't be humiliated when material possessions are taken from you.

-Heather Hurley

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, and the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

Versicle They pierce my hands and my feet:
Response **They stare and gloat over me.**

MEDITATION

Thick nails are pounded into his wrists against the cross beam he has carried through the streets of Jerusalem and to Golgotha. Another nail is driven into his feet. The full weight of his body is hanging from his wrists. His body is bloody, beaten, almost completely broken. The images are harsh, painful, excruciating.

As we reflect on these last agonizing moments Jesus suffered this day, we often reflect on these moments from others' perspectives: of the soldiers, who nailed Jesus to the cross; of the disciples, who were frightened and confused of the unfolding events; of Mary, helplessly watching her son.

Imagine for a moment, being present, being there, at the crucifixion of Jesus. The spiritual hymn, "Were You There," has been on my mind for the past few weeks. "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" "Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?" Would the crucifixion become more real and personal to us than it is today? Or would we be as scared and confused as Jesus' disciples, not really understanding what is happening? How many of those who were there could comprehend the enormous significance and lasting impact that Jesus' actions would have on us all?

Today, we know the crucifixion isn't just for the world as a whole, but for each of us individually. Jesus dies on the cross in our place, forgiving us for all our sins. Dying so we each might live. Jesus' love for us, and his continued promise, is as real and present to each of us today as it was to those who were there 2,000 years ago. In that sense, we were all there when our Lord was crucified, and are with him still. Especially today. Amen.

Officiant Let us pray.

-Kelly Gable

Silence

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished!” And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” And he bowed his head, and handed over his spirit.

Versicle Christ for us became obedient unto death:

Response **Even on a cross.**

MEDITATION

Waiting for death is slow, indeterminate and agonizing. It can drag on for hours, days, even weeks and months. It can be a matter of moments, quick, sudden, with no time to prepare. Death will come. In the world of modern medicine, before the pandemic, we almost don't feel like death is real or close. Not until we are facing it ourselves, or with a loved one. With the pandemic, it's everywhere, but nowhere. We read about death in numbers, in statistics, from a distance.

Take a moment and sit with death. Take in the knowledge of approaching death, the moment of death. There is peace in the end of suffering, the end of waiting for the inevitable. It can feel so humble, so helpless. Death seems so final. It's the end. All life has ceased. What happens next? Grief. The love that is left behind in the hearts of the living, for the one who has gone.

There are unanswered questions, unfinished details, and loose ends that need to be dealt with. The details of a life that need to be wrapped up. But all that can wait, because first, there is grief. A time of waiting. A time of preparing. A time to love and mourn. A time to let go of the worry of When, and embrace the moment of Now. Embrace the waves of emotion, the remembrances of joy, the loneliness of loss. Grief forces you to feel in the moment. Grief leaves you raw, aching, hurt, drained. Grief is love for what is lost. What will come next? We are vulnerable, scared, uncertain.

The coming rituals of grieving fill the space in-between the physical death, and the unknown of what comes next. The rituals help give directions to hold space for the pain, to prepare for the finality, to embrace the loss.

-Reba Winstead

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

THIRTEENTH STATION: THE BODY OF JESUS IS PLACED IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is in tumult; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi (which means Pleasant), call me Mara (which means Bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

Versicle Her tears run down her cheeks:

Response **And she has none to comfort her.**

MEDITATION

When does a person become a body, instead of themselves? And what becomes of the relationship between the person and their body after death?

If in Christ we see how God conquers death and makes good on his promise of eternal life, it seems like there are mysteries both created and revealed by the cross.

One thing we can say is that Jesus' death is not the moment of resurrection. Jesus does not immediately reappear, transformed and alive to his family and friends. It is a chapter unto itself in this story, and the question of his body makes clear that Jesus is truly dead. His family and friends have watched life leave him and must in this terrible moment make a plan for how to care for his body. As all people do with their loved ones, the body must be moved, protected. There are practical, even financial concerns now about an appropriate resting place.

I think Mary, his mother, and the others present must have felt hopeless. They did not yet know the end of this story. Just as we, having lost a father, mother, friend, spouse, or child cannot yet see into the next chapter.

But we do have the benefit of this, God's story. What he did for his son, and what he shall do for us, who in Christ are also his adopted children.

Oh Lord, help us to wait on your promises with faith and hope. Comfort us with the spirit of your beloved son.

-Bill Malone

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death; Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Officiant We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

People **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

Versicle You will not abandon me to the grave:

Response **Nor let your holy One see corruption.**

MEDITATION

The body is laid inside. The stone is rolled to seal the tomb. The story, to all appearances, is over.

A tomb is the symbol of an ending. While death is a great and terrible mystery, there is certainty that the life that was will not continue as before. We can perhaps visualize those who loved—and now mourned—Jesus as they stand before the tomb. Achingly sad, fearful, lost, empty. Their hopes have been crushed, their prayers seemingly denied. The path they had followed is now gone; the signpost ahead says “Road Closed.” This past year has been a time of many endings—lives lost, jobs vanished, plans turned to dust. We, too, feel empty, lost, and afraid. The pattern of

so many of our lives has been shattered. What lesson is there for those of us who stand before the tomb of what was and is no more?

We know this: whatever we go through—including death and the tomb—God, through his Son, has been through it, too. He knows our suffering, our grief, and our helplessness and He abides with us in those places. He is truly Emmanuel—God with us—in all the valleys and shadows of our life.

Almighty God, in thy mercy, be with us and uphold us as we stand before the tomb. And, by thy powerful hand, land us safe on Canaan's side.

-Barry Joyner

Officiant Let us pray.

Silence

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day; Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

The people kneel.

CONCLUDING COLLECTS

*Silent prayer and meditation will continue until the Solemn Liturgy of the
Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ begins at 1:30 p.m.*



2021 Holy Week Services and Programs at Grace Episcopal Church

Good Friday, April 2

- 12:00_{pm} – Stations of the Cross (LiveStream from the Nave)
- 1:00_{pm} – Outdoor Veneration of the Cross (Amphitheater)
- 1:30_{pm} – Liturgy of the Day (LiveStream from the Nave)
- 5:00_{pm} – Outdoor Family Service (Amphitheater)
- 6:00_{pm} – Family Service (via Zoom)
- 6:30_{pm} – Outdoor La Gracia Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 3

- 9:00_{am} – Morning Prayer (via Zoom)
- 6:00_{pm} – Great Vigil of Easter (LiveStream from the Nave)
- 8:00_{pm} – Outdoor Great Vigil of Easter & Holy Baptism (Amphitheater)

Easter Sunday, April 4

- 7:45_{am} – Outdoor Holy Eucharist (Amphitheater)
- 9:00_{am} – Choral Eucharist (via LiveStream from the Nave)
- 10:00_{am} – Fellowship Coffee Hour (via Zoom)
- 10:30_{am} – La Gracia Outdoor Holy Eucharist (Amphitheater)
- 12:00_{pm} – Outdoor Holy Eucharist (Amphitheater)

THOSE SERVING

Officiating

Lectors

Crucifer

Live Stream Crew

The Rev. Anne Turner

John & Anne Boris

Karlene Kelly

Jay Legere

