



Grace Episcopal Church

3601 Russell Rd. Alexandria, Virginia 22305

www.gracealex.org 703.549.1980

Good Friday
March 29, 2024 - Noon
Stations of the Cross



WELCOME TO GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We are pleased to welcome you to Grace Church. If you are joining us for the first time, please send us a message at welcome@gracealex.org, so we can get to know you. We can also add you to our mailing list by request. We're glad to have you join with us in worshipping God in the beauty of holiness, something which is central to our identity at Grace. We hope you will join with us in sharing the love of God with this world that needs healing.

Assisted listening devices are available for use during worship. Please see an usher if you'd like to use one.



Please silence your cell phones during worship.

Our Mission Statement

To Love, Proclaim, and Serve God

Through + life-giving liturgical worship + joyful community + empowering others

Contacting Grace

Please feel free to contact our staff.

Our regular office hours are Monday to Thursday, 9 am - 3 pm and Fridays 9 am - 12 noon.

(Mother Emma is out of the office on Mondays and Father Santi is out of the office on Fridays.

Mother Jenny holds office hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, and half-day on Wednesdays.)

Staff

Noah Aukerman

Seminarian

naukerman@vts.edu

Betsy Bamford

Jane Avery

Nursery Worker (part-time)

The Rev. Emma Brice

Assistant Rector & School Chaplain

emma.brice@gracealex.org

Patti Culbreth

Head of Grace Episcopal School

pculbreth@graceschoolalex.org

Mary Cyrus

Financial Administrator (part-time)

financial.admin@gracealex.org

The Rev. Deacon Ignacio Solano Gómez

Seminarian

isolanogomez@vts.edu

Kevin Hamilton

Director of Operations and Communication

director.of.operations@gracealex.org

Pedro Hernández

Amorita Quintanilla

Sextons

The Rev. Deacon Durango Jenkins

Seminarian

djenkins@vts.edu

Madeline Manaker

Finance Assistant (part-time)

madeline.manaker@gracealex.org

The Rev. Dr. Jenny Montgomery

Priest Locum Tenens

jenny.montgomery@gracealex.org

The Rev. Santiago "Santi" Rodriguez

Associate Rector

santiago.rodriguez@gracealex.org

Addie Tapp

Communications Support

Announcement requests - announcements@gracealex.org

Dr. Alain Truche

Director of Music

alain.truche@gracealex.org

IN NEED OF PASTORAL CARE?

Clergy and staff are available for pastoral care. Please call the church office at (703) 549-1980 if you're ill or need pastoral care. For emergencies after hours, please call the **After-hours Emergency Number: (703) 261-9079**, and the priest on call will assist you.

HOME COMMUNION

Home Communion is available upon request for parishioners who desire this service by Eucharistic Visitors every Sunday. Home Communion will be in one form, Bread only. To request Home Communion, parishioners are asked to contact the Parish Office by telephone at 703-549-1980 no later than 12 pm on the Wednesday prior to the Sunday on which they would like to receive Home Communion.

MEDITATIONS ON THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

GOOD FRIDAY

NOON, MARCH 29, 2024

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's question "what is truth" has long bewildered me. It comes in the context of the Roman governor's questioning of Jesus on the morning of Good Friday when the leaders of the Jewish community bring him to Pilate's headquarters demanding the governor order Jesus to be crucified. Pilate repeatedly tells them that he finds no case against Jesus under Roman law, but their demand remains the same – "crucify him."

Why does Pilate acquiesce? If the goal of his interrogation of Jesus was to assess the facts of the case, why act in contravention of those facts and, in the end, order the prisoner's execution?

But the reality is that Pilate's paramount responsibility as governor is not the administration of justice, but the maintenance of public order. He's been sent to this restive outpost of the Empire to ensure there is no disruption, no rebellion. His mission is a difficult one, never more so than during Passover, when Jews from all over Palestine flocked to Jerusalem to commemorate God's direct intervention in human affairs to liberate their ancestors from foreign oppression. So fraught is the season that Pilate travels annually from the relative comfort of his seaside administrative center at Caesarea Maritima to the Jews' austere and alien religious capital on the edge of the Judean desert. So, when Pilate encounters Jesus that fateful morning, the governor is a man on a mission.

What Pilate cannot conceive is that the apparently powerless prisoner standing before him is also on a mission, one entrusted to him by his heavenly Father.

Jesus, of course, is fully aware of the agonizing death facing him. He prayed only the previous evening that he be spared, but after three years of public ministry, he now knows that his hour has indeed come. Jesus tells Pilate that he has come into the world "to testify to the truth," and he is about to make manifest God's ultimate truth, that God's love for the world he created knows no limit. Through his suffering and death, Jesus will bring redemption and the promise of eternal life to all of humanity for all time. In the end, the seemingly supremely powerful Pilate is only an instrument of God's divine purpose. But to accomplish that purpose, to fulfill his mission, Jesus will pay a terrible price.

– Ann Korky (read by Anne Boris)

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

After being sentenced to death, Jesus was ordered to carry his cross to the hill outside Jerusalem where he was to be crucified. At the time, this was standard practice for criminals condemned to death. Christ probably carried the heavy cross-beam, rather than the entire cross. The beam would then have been fixed onto an upright stake that was already in place at the place of crucifixion.

Christ's journey from the Roman headquarters to outside the walls of Jerusalem gets only the briefest of factual mention in Scripture (John 19:16-17). It describes how the soldiers made him carry his cross to a skull-shaped hill outside the city, which was called Golgotha (meaning 'skull' in Aramaic). In English this is known as Calvary, from the Latin word used in this verse, *Calvariæ*.

During Lent, we've traced the path of Jesus carrying the cross through the streets of Jerusalem during the devotions of the Stations of the Cross. We walked with Jesus on his journey on Fridays during Lent, followed him during the Triumphal Entry and the Passion Gospel on Palm Sunday, met with him in the Upper Room on Maundy Thursday, and now meet again with him this Good Friday, as we lift His Cross on the journey to Calvary and his Passion.

- Jean Reed

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

I've been thinking and reading and talking a lot lately trying to understand the reason why Jesus had to suffer and die the particularly terrible way that he did in order to save us.

While I may not fully understand why it had to happen that way, I do understand why Jesus did it. Of these two questions that have been circling my heart, why it happened the way it did and why Jesus did it at all, the why Jesus did it is the more important to me.

And the answer to that question is so simple and at the same time so profoundly powerful. Jesus loves us. Jesus loves us in such a complete and total and all-consuming way that I don't have the words to describe it. He loves us and He saved us. He loves us and He made it possible for us to be transformed.

He made it possible for me to be transformed, no matter what happens and no matter how many times I make choices that lead to my own stumbling and my own falling.

When I think of Jesus falling for the first time, I realize that before He even took up the cross, He had been beaten to such a degree that any more would have killed Him. In this state, He chose not only to keep moving forward, but to take on the weight of the cross. Something that had extreme physical weight and also immeasurable spiritual weight. The weight of all the sin, pain and suffering of every person who ever lived and was to live. All my sin and pain and suffering, too.

Jesus staggered under this and fell. Yet he did not stop. He got up. He once again put himself into the hands of His Father. He carried on. God gave Him the strength to continue to do the work of putting one foot in front of the other with the literal weight of humanity on His shoulders. He moved forward on a journey that would ultimately end in beauty and salvation for all of us, but that would be paved with more suffering, and an ongoing need to surrender to the Father's will time and again. And one that would also have moments of love and peace from those who loved Jesus.

I think often of Jesus carrying the cross and falling this first time. I am reminded to try to follow the path of Jesus by surrendering myself to Him. To put my will in God's hands. Knowing that God will give me the strength to keep moving forward. To keep putting one foot in front of the other. On the path that God chose for me, whatever that journey may look like and whatever His will for me is to be.

God, thy will be done. Please give me the strength so that I may do the work You have asked of me. Thank You for loving me, for never leaving my side, and for continuing to call me back through love.

- Steven Zatta

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

Whoever loses his/her parents is an orphan, but how do you call someone who loses a child? Perhaps there is no word that defines that reality because the pain of losing a child is indescribable.

In a small funeral procession, a widowed woman mourns inconsolably over the death of her son. Without him, any hope of escaping poverty was gone, any hope of experiencing the joy that grandchildren bring is gone forever. This woman knew that after burying the boy, she would begin a race not to quickly use up the last pound of flour and the last bit of oil that she had left. Why did her son die? Did this woman spend everything she had to live on to allow her son to live? Surely, we all know the sacrifices that mothers are capable of making for their beloved children. So here is the image of desolation: a widow who loses her only son and spirals into a dizzying path, falling into the abyss of human oblivion, into misery, begging and death... But at that moment, a man from Galilee stops the funeral procession... It's Jesus! And Jesus, seeing this mother's pain, perhaps thinking of his beloved Mother, decides to bring this boy back to life and return him to his mother. What a joyful moment! Jesus stopped a story of pain; Jesus reunited a mother with her beloved son. "Thank you, Rabbi, may God reward you for so much goodness! -said the woman surely- May your holy mother always find comfort and may men bless you for being so good!

Sometime later another group of people marches, not with a dead boy, but with an emaciated man wounded all over his body, who carries his death (and that of all of us) on a cross. In that, it is not Jesus who stops the group's march, it is a woman who approaches, as some time ago, Jesus, compassionate, approached the funeral procession: It is Mary, his mother, who cannot tear her Son from the bonds of death and can only pray to God and try to kiss his son's cheek in what little healthy flesh he still has left. No one stops this barbarity, no one has compassion, no one brings this beloved Son back to life, no one blesses this good man, and no one consoles Mary... Desolation, meaninglessness, human injustice, coldness, cruelty and indifference.

It is not surprising that this happens. Today we see thousands of people dying on the news. Every day children die in Gaza from starvation, if not in a bombing or shooting, every day mothers mourn their children who die in armed revolts in Haiti, Kashmir, various parts of Africa and South America, mothers mourn their children who die in school shootings, we see victims of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism who see lives ended by irrational hatred, or, rather, hatred, which is always irrational. Mothers searching for their missing children in Mexico receive indifference from the authorities... The world continues to turn its face at the funeral procession that passes before us every day. And what do we do? We turn our faces, because that is Jesus today, the one before whom we turn our faces, that is Mary today, the widow who is about to lose her son, and no one cares.

So I ask you: If you saw Jesus and Mary before you today, would you recognize them?

- Father Ignacio Solano Gómez

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

Most of those gathered to watch the painful progression of the condemned to crucifixion – Jesus and the two thieves – were there to grieve, or to watch in horror, or to be consumers of the public shaming and torture the Romans put on display. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each tell us of another man there, one who was drawn in to the passion by circumstance. Simon, a traveler from Cyrene (the northern tip of modern Libya, was a passerby, “coming in from the country.” The Romans grabbed him from the crowds and forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. We don’t know more. Why did they pull *him*? Was Jesus so weak from the flogging that he couldn’t carry the cross? Did Simon carry it all the way to Golgotha and witness the crucifixion?

We are each pulled into the suffering of others, often in a seemingly random way. We walk among people who are hungry, who are homeless, who are ill, and who are our unknown neighbors. We get intertwined with strangers who are angry, hurt, or helpless even as we go about our daily business. We are bystanders to the victims of belligerence or bullying or racism. We are pulled into national traumas and international battles we only superficially understand. Each time, a cross is put on our shoulders without our consent. And yet we must walk forward.

As I wonder what Simon did and felt, I wonder too about how he saw himself in this unfolding scene. Did he fear being drawn in to this terrible display of violence, or did he sense the burden he was lifting from a suffering man? Was he, too, flogged or being crushed from the weight of the cross; or did he have the strength to take on this unfair, unexpected role? I have come to think of Simon as “the public,” the anonymous body of bystanders who bear the weight of oppression and who suffer almost as a side effect of intended actions. As we, who have the privilege of being bystanders, also have the opportunity – no, the call – to take up the cross and to help shoulder the journey.

– Mary Stewart

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

The story of the sixth station of the cross tells of a woman named Veronica who is so moved with compassion when she sees Jesus on the way to his crucifixion that she offers Him her veil to wipe his face. Caked with blood, sweat, and dirt, Jesus uses the veil to wipe his weary face, then hands it back to her with his image forever imprinted upon the veil. While there is no reference to Veronica in the Gospels, her act on the Via Dolorosa has lived on in legend for centuries.

The name Veronica is a blend of the Latin word for “truth” and the Greek word for “image.” If Veronica means “true image,” maybe she is an example of the true image of God. It has much less to do with physical appearance than with the actions we take for one another. Jesus tells us this in the Gospel of Matthew, where he says that our final judgment will be based on whether we saw the hungry, the thirsty, the imprisoned, the naked, and acted with compassion. It is this compassion that moves Veronica to offer her veil to wipe Jesus’ face.

It's easy to get caught up in the “big picture” issues that face our local, national, and worldwide communities. But we shouldn't forget that even a small act of compassion can make an enormous difference to another person. Here are a few questions you might ask yourself.

- When have I received an act of compassion from another person?
- When have I acted with compassion towards another person?
- When was there an opportunity to act with compassion that I may have missed?
- What is one act of compassion that I can commit to doing regularly beyond this season of Lent?

- June Huber

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 worry about falling. Sometimes when my parents and I are going somewhere I say “Let’s all just stay on our feet!” I don’t want them to fall. I don’t want to fall. I also worry about failing, the mental equivalent of the physical fall. Failing at work, at church, in my personal life, with people’s projects, with people’s feelings. So many ways to fall and fail. I have spent so much time and mental energy worrying about not falling, and out of nowhere, without warning, a spectacular one, last Friday. I was in a hurry and I took a full out hard fall on a sidewalk in Shirlington. I had to sit there for a minute and figure out if I was ok and a nice couple, strangers to me, waited with me and then helped me up. I am bruised but ok, and all of my worrying hadn’t prevented that from happening.

Jesus falls because of the weight of the cross. In this verse from Isaiah we hear: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Is he carrying the cross of our sins from the past and the future? Does that make him fall? Because I don’t like that idea, but if he also is carrying the grief and sorrow that I cannot carry alone, I need that help. “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” No wonder he falls, when I think about the weight of the world’s sorrow, great and small. Hurt feelings, loved ones who are suffering, countries in crisis, lost lives, what a heavy burden! All of the sadness and tears that are in us are pressed into the cross. When I think of that saying, “Let go and let God,” I think of letting someone help me up when I fail, of not trying to carry my fear all alone. What a debt I owe to Jesus for carrying that.

The stations ask me to live through all the pain of Jesus' walk to the cross, and at the same time, remember that that sacrifice was for me. It is uncomfortable. Hey, all this sacrifice and suffering was for you! Isn't that great?

The stations ask me: can I believe God when he says, I love you that much? These three falls, ask me, again and again, "Do you believe it? Do you believe it? Do you believe it?"

- Eleanor Reed

Officiant Let us pray.

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

They call us the Women of Jerusalem.
As though we are all one, interchangeable.
As though every woman shares our grief.
As though Jesus, almost broken in pain, exhausted,
Came to speak to us deliberately.

Maybe they are not wrong.
Maybe Jesus did speak to us on purpose.
Maybe what they don't know is who we really are.

We are Jerusalem. We are Israel.
Our grief overflows our individual containers.
We gather to share our pain in public.
If we do not do this, our grief grows,
Our grief overflows; we cannot hold it in.

Jesus tells us to weep for ourselves and so we do.
Together. In public. At every opportunity.
We have too many opportunities.
Too many deaths from oppression. From power.
Too many of our babies dying.
Too many of our people killed.

We are every woman, we are every human.
We are interchangeable.
Look at our faces and see our grief.
We are Jerusalem. We are Israel.
What will we do when the wood is dry?

- Chrissie Crosby

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

Isaiah chapter 42 contains the first song of the suffering servant which is often believed to be referring to Jesus. In verse 4 God says: "He will not falter or be discouraged until he establishes justice on earth." This scripture seems to indicate that Jesus as the suffering servant of God, would never falter. And yet the tradition of the ninth Station of the Cross tells us that he has now fallen three times. He who possesses all power in heaven and on earth has fallen, not once, not twice but three times. The One who is the only begotten Son of God and Lord of the Universe has been brought to his knees or perhaps even onto his face into the dirt and mud of the common road, under the weight of the cross and our sins. He was subjected to public humiliation for our sake. Why is this important for us to consider?

First, Jesus did not accidentally fall, rather He chose to carry and submit to our burden, our sins. The King of Kings surrendered in complete humanness for our sake. Jesus does not pretend to be like us, He is in all manner exactly like us, yet sinless. And He experienced all that we experience even in this. We falter and fall under our sin daily - sometimes physically, but most often morally, emotionally, mentally, and relationally. Being fully human and choosing to take on our sin, Jesus knows what it like to be under that weight and knows what we experience when we fall. He is fully acquainted with the pain and the suffering we experience and is with us always, even in this, helping us, guiding us, loving us. He tells us, "And I will be with you always, even unto the end of the age." (Matthew chapter 28 verse 20.)

Second, Scripture also tells us that even before He took up the cross, Jesus had been in pain from being flogged, beaten and scourged. Yet each time He fell, even this final time, He got up and continued His journey. Often we feel bound by the grief of living under our sin, unable to rise up on our own. However, by the power of Jesus' sacrifice, when we fall, we are able to get up and continue on and ultimately to stand before the Father in the righteousness of Christ. "For God has raised us up with Christ Jesus and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians chapter 2 verse 6.)

As we walk each day and inevitably fall, we can be assured that Jesus is with us, knows completely our sorrows and failures and will raise us up by His loving hand to walk in His ways, live in His light and continue in His love, for His sake and His glory.

From "by Edward Jesus of the Scars" a poem Shillito, the last stanza:

"The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds did speak,
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone."

- Marsi Beschel (read by Alex Willson)

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

He remembers the story his mother told him:
how difficult the journey to Egypt had been,
how they'd had to leave quickly,
fleeing so fast that he had only the swaddling clothes
she had wrapped him in at birth.

How he wishes he could be swaddled now,
wrapped tightly and carried in his mother's arms,
taking nourishment from her breast
while looking up at the light bathing her smile.

But those were stories, not memories.

For him they are only imaginings, like fleeting drops of soothing rain
splashing on the ground around him as he stands there,
cold and naked, like a leper lost in this fetid field.

- Kemp Williams

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

Jesus died so young - still in his thirties. That's part of the horror of his death. Yet because of the
manner of his death by crucifixion, Jesus also suffered something that is more often suffered by
those who live into old age: the destruction of an ability that one has used for good.

When the nails went through his hands and feet, Jesus felt not only agonizing physical pain, but the knowledge that exactly those parts of himself that he had used in ministry to others were now destroyed and useless. The feet that had walked all over Galilee and Judea and Samaria and across the Jordan, the feet that a prostitute had bathed with her tears, the feet that Mary of Bethany had anointed, were destroyed. The hands that had healed the sick, opened blind eyes, fed the five thousand, and washed the disciples' feet, were destroyed. To lose abilities you have been using for good feels like a betrayal of all the good you did, as bitter as the betrayal of a friend. It must have been so terrible not only to bear the agonizing pain, but to know that he could not continue to walk with his disciples and to heal with his hands.

I wonder if he remembered, enduring this pain and loss, what he told his disciples on the night before he died that because of his coming death, they would do even greater things than he had done. No good is ever truly lost; but it can be hard to remember that, when you are in pain.

- Anne Boris

Officiant Let us pray.

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.

People genuflect and hold a period of silence.

Versicle Christ for us became obedient unto death:

Response **Even on a cross.**

MEDITATION

"Jesus dies"

To the people witnessing the historical event, it must have been a natural conclusion that they were wrong about Jesus-about who he was and what he means.

To us, today, the unavoidable conclusion is not that we have been wrong about Jesus. Rather, we have been wrong about what death is and what it means.

Jesus died. He did not *appear* to die, nor merely come close to dying.

By this we may come to understand that our life in Christ does not fit into the binary of life/death. On the one hand, our hope is that life does not end with death. On the other, we recognize that our lives are punctuated with death—the death we die in Baptism; the death we reenact during each new year's Holy Week; the death we embrace when we choose to live for Christ and not for ourselves alone. Life, for us, is not simply the thing that happens up until the moment we die, because our Life also died on the cross. To die is no small thing, but it is compassed in the person, the living and dying person, of Jesus—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

- Geoffrey Whitlock (read by Steven Zatta)

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

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art Thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

This prayer begins with Christmas Mary. Mary so serene and beautiful. Placid Mary, carried on a donkey while carrying the hope and joy for the world in her womb, just under her sacred heart. Call her Naomi, which means pleasant. But this is not the Mary we meet at the 13th station. Here we meet Easter Mary. Here we meet Mara.

When I am flattened by grief, tearful, bereaved and alone, there is only one who can comfort me. I want Mara. When a mother hears the words “We regret to inform you”, she needs Mara. When the news reports show the police bodycam of a grown man dying in the street, crying out for his mother with his last breath. We need Mara.

In her stirring “Ain’t I A Woman” speech, defending the humanity of enslaved black women, Sojourner Truth reminds us that Jesus was created by God, but born of a woman. There is a reason we call the birthing process “labor and delivery”. Mothers work hard during birth, we struggle, we suffer, and then we deliver a glittering gift to a bitter and brutal world. Sometimes, I need to pray to the one with whom the Lord has dealt bitterly, and yet, she labored and delivered to the world the means of our salvation. There was none to comfort her, yet she became the source of our comfort. We can bring her our rawest pain, our most savage grief, our ugly cry. We can pray that Mara will deliver us from our anger at God, or at least, keep us near the cross while we seethe and reconcile. That same cross where the body of Christ that Mary delivered into the world is laid in the arms of his mother, while his spirit is born into everlasting life with the Father.

Holy Mary, Mother of God
Pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

– Tracy Enger

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 Passion reading for Palm Sunday strikes me as one of the great traditions of the church. I’ve always found it a bit more engaging than the Gospel readings for other Sundays – it reminds me of a table reading of a play.

And the Passion covers a lot of ground! All of Holy Week, in one sitting. I appreciated the comprehensiveness of the Passion this year, as I am away from Grace for Holy Week for the first time in quite awhile.

The Passion ends here, when Jesus is laid in the tomb. I was struck this year by some of the details in Mark's description of Joseph of Arimathea. He went "boldly" to Pilate to ask for Jesus's body. Why was he bold?

Other Gospel accounts say that Joseph was a secret disciple. Mark tells us that he was "waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God." By identifying himself as a follower of Jesus in the moments following His death - and requesting that he be the one to bury His body with dignity - Joseph puts a target on his back. Will the religious authorities, or the mob who condemned Jesus, come after him next?

I see an example for us in Joseph's boldness. He undertook an important, and almost certainly excruciating, task, when no one else would. It seems clear that he was motivated by love and a sense of duty. He put his reputation, his standing in his community, and perhaps even his safety at risk - all in the service of Christ.

May we be inspired by Joseph of Arimathea's boldness.

- Robby Schrum (read by 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.*

SERVING @ GRACE TODAY

<i>Officiant</i>	Mother Emma Brice
<i>Crucifer</i>	Kristine Hesse
<i>Ushers</i>	John Boris, June Huber
<i>Meditations</i>	Anne Korcky, Jean Reed, Steven Zatta, Ignacio Solano Gómez, Mary Stewart, June Huber, Eleanor Reed, Chrissie Crosby, Marsi Beschel, Kemp Williams, Anne Boris, Geoffrey Whitlock, Tracy Enger, Robby Schrum, Barry Joyner
<i>Altar Guild Crew Leader</i>	Eleanor Reed

Holy Week & Easter Sunday @ Grace

*Nursery Care Provided

Palm Sunday, March 24

7:30 am - Holy Eucharist

8:45 am - La Santa Eucaristía con Procesión (*in Spanish*)*

9:00 am - Little Church with Eucharist*

9:30 am - Palm Cross Activity for all ages*

10:30 am - Festival Eucharist with Procession*
(Livestreamed)

No 5 pm Service on Palm Sunday

Maundy Thursday, March 28

7:00 pm - Maundy Thursday Festival Eucharist
with foot-washing and stripping of the altar
(Livestreamed)

Prayer Watch follows until Midnight

Good Friday, March 29

7:00 am - Liturgy of the Day (Livestreamed)

12:00 - 1:00 pm - Stations of the Cross (Livestreamed)

1:00 - 1:30 pm - Silence / Music (Livestreamed)

1:30 - 3:00 pm - Liturgy of the Day (Livestreamed)

5:00 pm - Children & Family Service

7:00 pm - Via Crucis (*in Spanish*)

Holy Eucharist, Monday March 25

7:00 pm - Contemplative Eucharist
from Enriching Our Worship

Holy Eucharist, Tuesday March 26

7:00 pm - Contemplative Eucharist
from Enriching Our Worship

Choral Tenebrae, Wednesday, March 27

7:00 pm - Choral Tenebrae lead by our choir
and Dr. Alain Truche, Director of Music
(Livestreamed)

Liturgy of the Day

Holy Saturday, March 30

9:00 am - Holy Saturday Liturgy of the Day



Easter Vigil with Bishop Shand Saturday, March 30

8:00 pm - Easter Vigil with Confirmations*
(Livestreamed)

Agape potluck meal will follow in the Auditorium

Easter Sunday, March 31

6:00 am - Sunrise Service

8:45 am - La Santa Eucaristía (*in Spanish*)*

9:00 am - Little Church with Eucharist*

9:45 am Easter Egg Hunt *

10:30 am - Festival Eucharist* (Livestreamed)

Festive prelude starts at 10 AM

No 5 pm Service on Easter

www.gracealex.org

3601 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22305

703.549.1980