

Encounters ALONG THE WAY



Good Friday

Stations of the Cross – Walk where our Lord walked.

If you've recently walked inside a Church, you may recall seeing 14 paintings or sculptures representing Jesus' journey from the time he is sentenced to death until his body is laid in the tomb.

These Stations of the Cross (also known as the Way of the Cross) draw us closer to Jesus as we reflect If you've recently walked inside a Church, you may recall seeing 14 paintings or sculptures representing Jesus' journey from the time he is sentenced to death until his body is laid in the tomb.

These Stations of the Cross (also known as the Way of the Cross) draw us closer to Jesus as we reflect on the love he poured out for us in his suffering and dying.

Tradition traces this ancient form of prayer back to Mary, when she made her own journey retracing her Son's last steps. Mary's reflection on the events and encounters of Jesus on his way to Calvary is known as the Via Dolorosa, or the Sorrowful Way.

While this prayer has its roots that date back centuries, there is a depth and power to it that still resonates with us today. The movements of this prayer remind us that “[we are not bystanders to an historical event,](#)” but called to find ourselves in the story.

Can you see yourself as Simon? Do you relate to Veronica? Do you ever feel crushed by the weight of your own struggles? Wherever you see yourself, reflecting on the stations helps us understand that we are never alone. When we fall and when we feel like we are on the top of a mountain, Jesus is there — with a love so strong it endured the burden of the Cross.

Reflect with us this Holy Week. You can pray the entire Stations of the Cross at once, or set aside time each day this week to sit with the various experiences and encounters.

Whichever you choose, our advice is to just be you — come to the Cross, just as you are! There is no need to be perfect, no need to have your life figured out. You don't have to hide anything. Just be you. Jesus will meet you there. You don't have to fix yourself first or hide the

dark parts of your life — that’s the whole point of this prayer. It’s a way for us to walk with Jesus through the darkest moments he experienced.

The encounters you experience along his way will expand your heart, making room for his love to find a home in your life and give you the courage to make an impact in the lives of those who are experiencing their own darkness. As Pope Francis [said](#), the Cross of Christ teaches us to “look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer.” Have courage! Walk with us along the way through Grotto’s [Stations of the Cross](#).



The First Station — Jesus is Condemned to Death

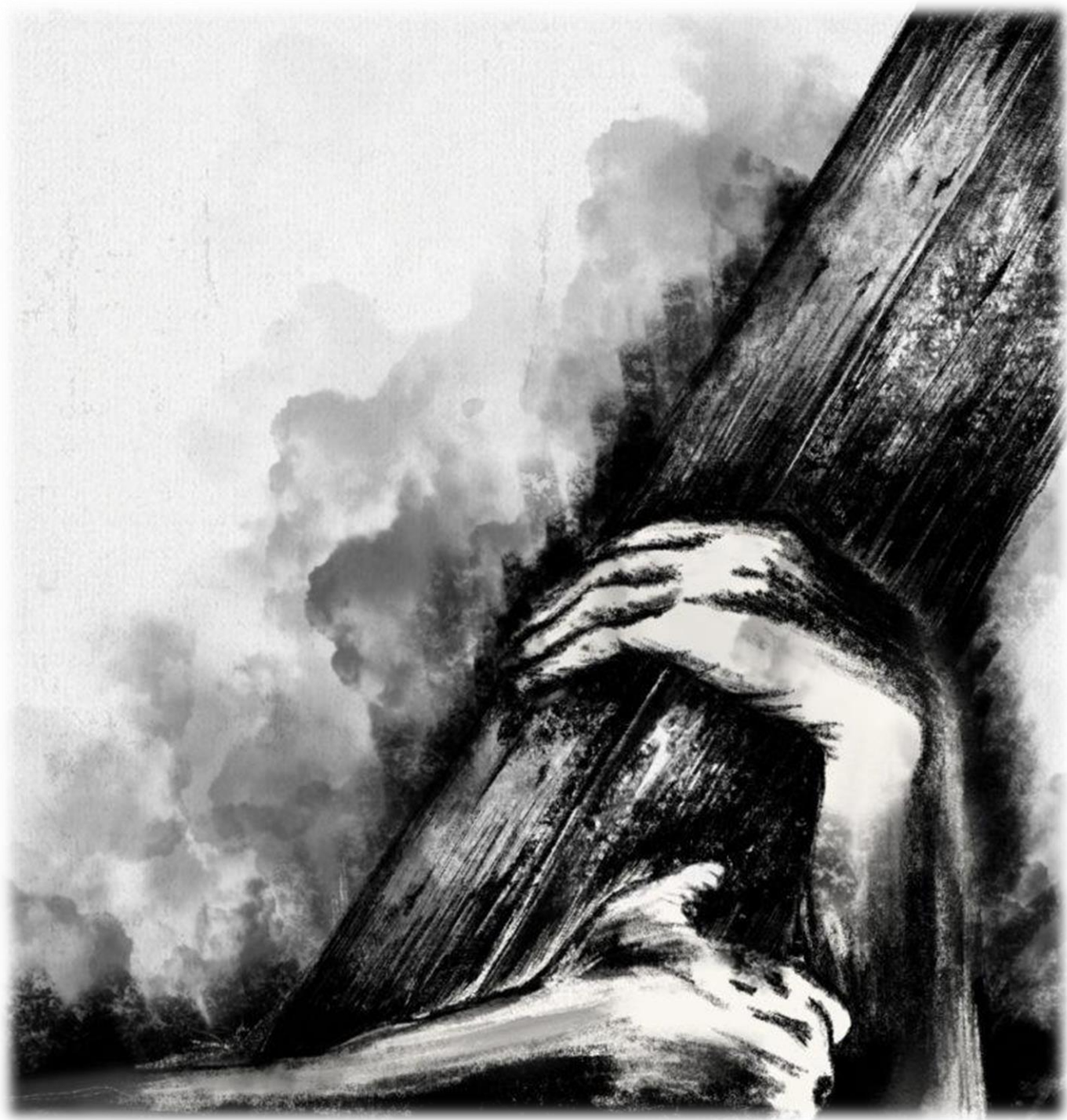
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: They shouted again, “Crucify him.” Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Crucify him.” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. —**Mark 15:13**

Reflection: By the time Jesus stood before Pilate for his sentencing, he had already experienced pain and suffering. He was betrayed by one of his closest friends, mocked and arrested for committing no crime, and forced to wear a crown of thorns. Yet, despite his innocence, Jesus freely accepted the judgment placed on him.

Do we, like Pontius Pilate, cave to the pressures of this world and fail to speak up for those who need our voice? We hear stories of our brothers and sisters killed in the Holy Land for practicing their faith, we see images of children dying from starvation, we watch as more lives are taken by senseless gun violence. Yet, we remain silent and wash our hands of responsibility.

Jesus, help us see that we belong to one another and grant us the courage to raise our voices and make your love known in this world. For the times we have failed to stand for truth, forgive us.



The Second Station — Jesus Takes Up His Cross

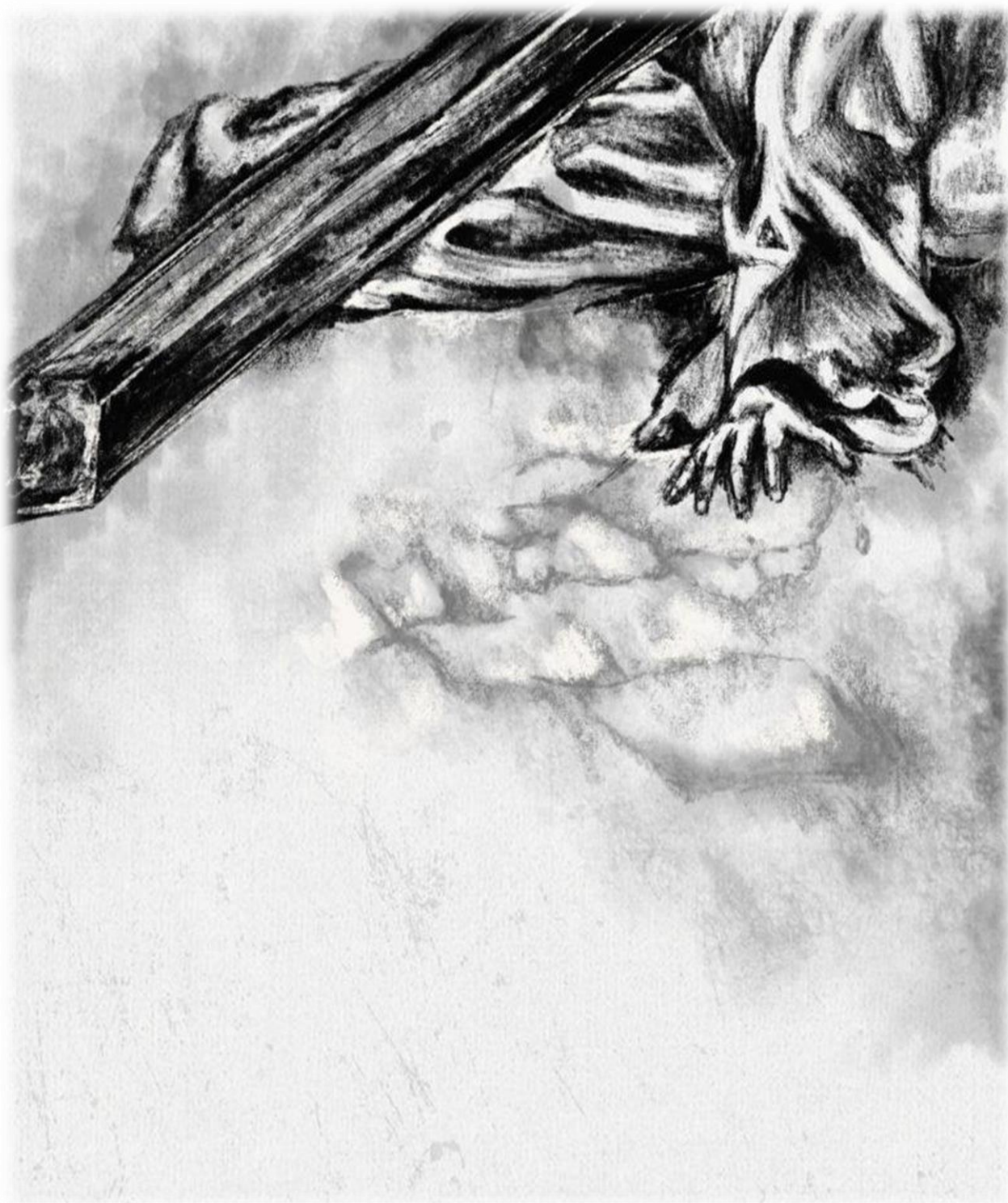
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Reading: Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” —[Matt 16:24](#)

Reflection: After beating Jesus, and pressing the crown of thorns further into his head, the soldiers placed a heavy wooden beam on Jesus’ shoulder. In freely accepting his Cross, Jesus teaches us that the cross is a sign of love without limits.

Sometimes the weight of our struggles paralyze us and keep us from moving forward. Sometimes the crippling pain and fear of the unknown beg us to drop our crosses and run away. But the longer we allow ourselves to sit under its weight or the farther we run from our cross, the heavier it becomes.

Jesus, help us to see that we do not bear our crosses alone. Open our hearts to see your presence alive in our lives. For the times we have failed to trust in you, forgive us.



The Third Station – Jesus Falls the First Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.” **Matt 11:28-29**

Reflection: Under the immense weight of the Cross, Jesus is brought to his knees. The crowd is watching, laughing — and only a few have pity on him. Jesus does not remain crushed by the burden. With great difficulty, he stands up and continues his journey.

We’ve all experienced moments of weakness and failure. Sometimes we learn from our mistakes. Sometimes shame creeps in and robs us from seeing the hope before us. Despite our human weakness, we must try to remember that falling is not the end.

Jesus, help us to see that no matter the difficulty, you are always walking with us. For the times we have failed to rely on your strength, forgive us.



The Fourth Station — Jesus Meets His Mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierced) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’” —[Luke 2:34](#)

Reflection: As Jesus continues his journey, his eyes meet his Mother’s. Mary moves toward her Son, but due to the Cross, their embrace is restricted. No words are spoken. No words are necessary — their connection communicates compassion and love. Despite her immense suffering, Mary remains.

The pain of watching a loved one suffer can be unbearable. Sometimes we lack the patience to walk with them in their suffering. Sometimes we turn away because the burden is too heavy. Even though the challenge to love may at times feel overwhelming, we are invited to put ourselves aside and be present to those before us.

Jesus help us to see the places in need of your healing, and give us the grace to make your Mother’s compassion known in this world. For the times we have failed to surrender to your love, forgive us.



The Fifth Station — Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. —[Luke 23:26](#)

Reflection: Full of wounds and covered in bruises, Jesus made his way to his death without the support of his friends. Those closest to Jesus — those who once walked with him — were now hiding in fear. He was alone in his suffering and the soldiers saw his strength weakening. They pulled Simon of Cyrene from the crowd. Jesus accepted his help, and together they carried the Cross.

We can't make it through life without the support of others. Sometimes our friends abandon us in our darkest time. Sometimes we are afraid to ask for help. Even though it may feel scary to lay our needs before others, we are called to be vulnerable and allow others to walk with us.

Jesus, help me to embrace my cross, and give me the freedom to receive support from others. For the times we have failed to accept help and allowed pride to get in our way, forgive us.



The Sixth Station — Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” —**Matt 25:40**

Reflection: Envision the scene. The crowds mock Jesus and the soldiers laugh as they continuously whip his blood-stained body. With courage fuelled by the desire to bring hope to a moment of darkness, Veronica pushes her way through the crowd. Unsure of what might happen to her, she gently touches Jesus’ face. What remains from her compassionate act is the imprint of Jesus’ face — the face of love.

The weight of injustice may see unredeemable. Sometimes problems are so vast that we don’t know where to begin. Sometimes we turn away from doing what we can because we believe it won’t make a difference. No matter how small the action, we are called to do what we can to make this world a better place. In doing so, we reflect God’s love.

Jesus, help us realize that with every kind deed and gesture of authentic love, we participate in your love for our world. For the times we have failed to reach out with compassion, forgive us.



The Seventh Station — Jesus Falls the Second Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” —2 Cor 12:9

Reflection: Under the weight of the Cross, Jesus falls a second time. His body shakes from the trauma it is enduring. Jesus presses his hands against the dust and dirt of the road, and finds the strength to stand again. It is love that gives Jesus strength — a love for each one of us.

Love is stronger than any pain — this is a truth we must pass on. Sometimes we lack the confidence to tell others of the Lord’s goodness. Sometimes our sin gets in the way and pushes us away from God’s love.

Jesus, help us discover that in all circumstances, you are waiting to pick us up and draw us closer to God, our Father. For the times we have failed to seek your grace, forgive us.



The Eighth Station

— Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.’” —**Luke 23:28**

Reflection: The women Jesus met along the way wept for him. In his suffering, they saw his innocence, which moved them to tears. But they don’t see that the forces that carried Jesus to the cross — selfishness, fear, greed, pride — are also at work in their own hearts. Jesus calls them to transform their pity into a change of heart.

Sin clouds our vision and distances us from God. Sometimes we become selfish and don’t see how our actions impact others. Sometimes our sins feel so great that we don’t trust that God could ever forgive us. Despite our failings, God’s mercy runs deep — but to find that mercy, we must face ourselves with honesty and bring to light what is hidden in darkness

Jesus, draw us closer to you. May your suffering move us to seek integrity and humility.. Help us to be honest with ourselves so that we can see the truth of our lives. For the times we have failed to live fully in your love, forgive us.



The Ninth Station — Jesus Falls the Third Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “For nothing will be impossible with God.” [Luke 1:37](#)

Reflection: Jesus falls a third and final time. With his energy almost completely depleted and the weight of the Cross crushing his body, the crowd believes there is no way he can stand back up. Yet, Jesus summons every ounce of strength, rises up, and drags his Cross to the place where he will be killed.

Sin, guilt, shame often force us down. Sometimes the weight of our struggles burden us so heavily that we don’t believe there is any hope left. Sometimes we fail to see how our greed, selfishness, impatience, or anger cause hurt in others’ lives. In rising this third time, Jesus teaches us that despite our weakness, we can always be made new.

Jesus, rescue us from despair and help us to see that no sin is greater than your love. For the times we have tried to rely on our own strength instead of crying out to you, forgive us.



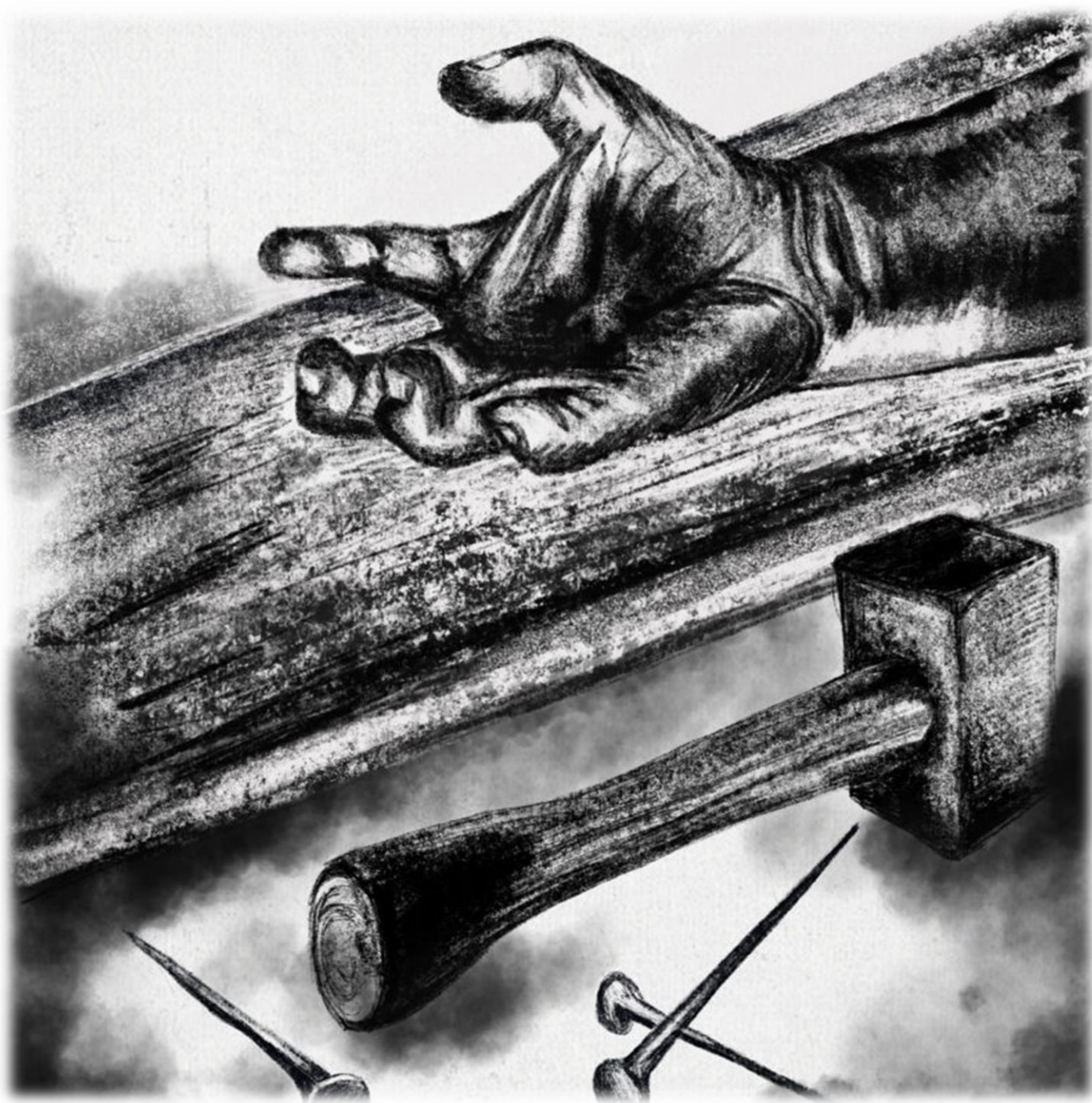
The Tenth Station — Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: “I can count all my bones. They stare at me and gloat; they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots.” —**Psalm 22: 18-19**

Reflection: In the world’s eyes, Jesus has nothing left. He was beaten beyond comprehension. His clothes were ripped off his body. To many, Jesus appears poor and lowly. But he endures this suffering because he never loses his dignity as God’s Son. That is a primary relationship that no one can take away, and it is also ours, by virtue of our baptism. We are also God’s sons and daughters.

This dignity is under attack today through sexual exploitation and unjust treatment of immigrants, through the disregard we show the unborn and the elderly who need our care. Sometimes we take for granted the gift of creation and strip the earth of its resources. In all circumstances, we are called to protect and defend the weak.



The Eleventh Station — Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” —[Luke 23:33-34](#)

Reflection: The soldiers drive the nails into Jesus’ hands and feet. Jesus could have called on the powers of heaven to stop such torture. Yet, because his love is so great, Jesus accepted the agony of this pain and suffering. It is one thing to carry a cross, it is another to be nailed to it. This is infinite love — a love beyond all comprehension.

Jesus, sometimes we hurt you and those we love. Sometimes our selfishness is so strong that we are not even aware of the pain we are causing others. Your example on the Cross calls us to empty ourselves in love, to let go of our ego and defensiveness and pride. For your faithfulness to God the Father and to us through your humiliation, suffering, and death — thank you.



The Twelfth Station — Jesus Dies on the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. —[John 19:25-27](#)

Reflection: Before Jesus took his last breath, he looked down upon those who remained. In yet another act of love, Jesus gave us Mother to the disciple he loved — and to us who follow him. In his farewell greeting, he commissioned his Mother to extend her care to each of us. In turn, we were invited to become her devoted sons and daughters.

Jesus, even in your dying, you cared for us. Despite such deep love, we still fail to recognize the ways you reach out to us.. For dying on the Cross out of love for us, thank you.



The Thirteenth Station — Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. —[John 19:38](#)

Reflection: It is over. Jesus' lifeless corpse was taken down from the Cross and placed in his Mother's arms. What a contradiction she experienced. Mary had held Jesus when he was an infant, and now she holds her dead Son's body — all so that we might gain eternal life.

Saying goodbye to those we love is never easy. Sickness and death are inevitable. While we know this is a reality, our hearts never seem ready for the pain caused by death and the absence of a loved one. But because of the Way of the Cross, we know death does not have the final word. Jesus, thank you for the agony you experienced so that one day we might be united with you, with Mary, our Mother, and all those who have gone before us.



The Fourteenth Station — Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you — because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. —[John 12:24-26](#)

Reflection: While this 14th station concludes the Way of the Cross, we know this is not the end of the story. Through Jesus, God defeats the power of death. Love is victorious. Yet in order to claim the resurrection, we must also claim the Cross.

Jesus, I ask You to walk with me. Help me to pick up and carry the crosses that are placed before me and assist me in easing the burden of those who walk alongside me.

In You, we find strength. In You, we find light. In You, we find hope. Thank you for your great love for each one of us. Help us to always give witness to this love.