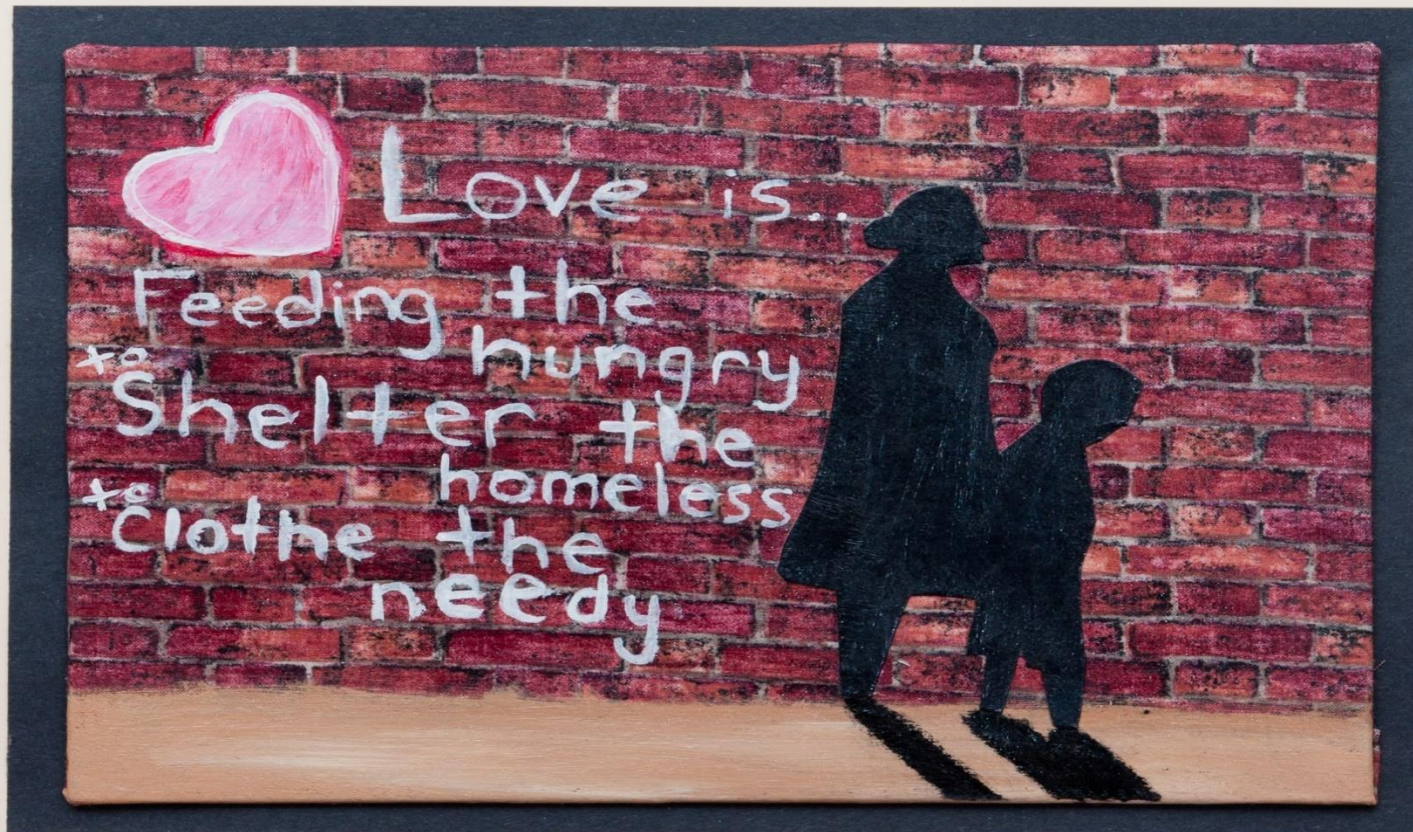


A Scriptural Way of the Cross for Lent



JUSTICE,
PEACE AND
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

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Reflections adapted for specific use. Reflections from Sr. Joan Chittister, Henri Nouwin, and the Vatican website also used.



"The Church
service of
than she can
and the Word"

community

cannot neglect the
charity any more
neglect the Sacraments
- Pope Benedict XVI

1st Station: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO FACE AGONY AS A RESULT OF VIOLENCE

Scripture: Matthew 26: 36-46

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!” Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

Reflection:

When Jesus felt sadness and agony he sought out a place where he found comfort and turned to God for strength and guidance. Jesus’s place of comfort was the Garden of Gethsemane, in the Holy Land. Today in the Holy Land and throughout the world too many of our brothers and sisters feel just as Jesus did. They face the everyday realities of war and conflict. It can be far too easy to be like Jesus’ disciples and fall asleep in the face of these realities on the other side of the world. Instead, Jesus calls us to stay awake – to stay with him and our brothers and sisters around the world and support them in their struggle for peace. He calls us to keep watch with him and pray, to be persistent in our calls and prayers for peace as a way to live in solidarity with our brothers and sisters experiencing the sorrow and devastation of war.

'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison and you visited me, I was hungry and you gave me food to eat.' 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:34-40)



2nd Station: Jesus is betrayed by Judas and is arrested

We Pray For Restorative Justice For All Prisoners

Scripture Reflection: John 18:1-9

When he had said this, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." He said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me."

Reflection:

Betrayal hurts all of us. Crime is a betrayal of a communities' desire to live in safety. Our Christian faith tells us that no matter what awful things we do in our lives, we can always *reconcile* our relationships with God.

"Forgiveness, is a spiritual act, which means that, ultimately, I rely on God's grace to accomplish it." We are always able to seek forgiveness from God and we should extend forgiveness to others.

With that said, our faith calls us to more than forgiveness. We are called to reconciliation; restorative justice. Restorative justice is commitment, from the community and all its parts, to repair and enhance the richness of relationships damaged by sin. The approach involves forgiveness but moves beyond to focus on the community. Viewing the wrongdoing as a violation against the people and relationships—not just a violation of the law.



3rd Station: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

We Pray For All Those Unjustly Accused

Scripture Reflection: Luke 22: 66-71

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

Reflection:

There are times in every person's life where we have been wrongly accused of behaving unjustly. What happens though, when the unjustly accused are sent to prison, or even sentenced to death? We know this happened to Jesus, our Lord and Savior.



4th Station: Jesus is denied by Peter

We Pray For All Immigrants and Refugees

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 26: 69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about!”

As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!” A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.

Reflection:

Peter denied being a follower of Jesus; he denied knowing Jesus. Despite the years Peter spent with Jesus following his teachings, in the moment when his support was most needed and when it was most challenging to give, he denied Jesus. Just like Peter, we can too easily deny our connections, our shared humanity, with those who are most in need of our support. In the United States, our society regularly rejects refugees who flee for their lives and are hoping to build a new life here with us. Instead of offering support, acceptance and an emphasis on our connection as one human family, we deny them.

When we deny our brothers and sisters in Christ, when we fail to welcome them in their time of suffering and to offer them equal rights as children of God,
we deny Jesus.



5th Station: Jesus is judged by Pilate.

WE PRAY FOR ELECTED LEADERS WHO SHOW INDIFFERENCE TO SUFFERING

Scripture Reflection: Mark 15:1-5

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Reflection:

"Pressured by public opinion, Pilate embodies an attitude which appears common enough in our own times: indifference, lack of concern, personal convenience. To avoid trouble and to get ahead, we are ready to trample on truth and justice. Obvious immorality generates at least a shock or some reaction, but this approach is *pure* immorality; it paralyzes the conscience, stifles remorse, and diminishes the mind.

Indifference is the lingering death of authentic humanity.

The outcome is found in Pilate's final choice. Jesus, one of the little ones of the earth, powerless to utter a word, is smothered by this web. And as we ourselves so often do, Pilate looks on from afar and washes his hands of the blood of Jesus."-

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2007/via_crucis/en/station_05.html#top



6th Station: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

We Pray For The Care And Protection Of God's Creation.

Scripture Reflection: John 19:1-5

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them,

"Behold, the man!"

Reflection:

Pilate and the soldiers demonstrate a lack of concern in the care of Jesus. The mistreatment is evident as Jesus is mocked and struck repeatedly. Just as Jesus was mistreated, those who are poor and vulnerable are also abused as a result of a lack of concern for them and for God's creation. As seen through the environmental justice work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, those who are poor and vulnerable often live in areas with greater pollution and are disproportionately impacted by others' choices that harm the environment. Our own neighborhood statistics confirm this reality. Cully, racially diverse and with lower than average incomes, has one of the worst air qualities of any Portland neighborhood.

Environmental laws applied by the city in other neighborhoods are not applied in Cully.

Respecting God also means respecting and protecting all of God's creation and children.



7th Station: Jesus takes up his cross

We Pray For Those Who Are Unemployed, Underemployed And Not Paid A Living Wage

Scripture Reflection: John 19:16-17

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

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

Reflection:

Jesus, the son of a carpenter, the son of God, labored to build the reign of God here on Earth. He willingly took up the cross because he knew his final labor would bring him closer to God and grant salvation for all. Jesus is our teacher and model in understanding the inherent dignity of our own labor, and recognizing that dignified work brings us closer to God and Jesus. Our labor calls us to participate in the ongoing work of creation. Right here in Portland people are not paid a living wage for their work and many are denied even minimum wage. Some companies exploit children and also have slaves working for them.

Jesus calls us to stand up to those companies and say that this is not right. One way we do this is by supporting Fair Trade products or Local products that ensure children are not making the goods, that the workers are paid a living wage, and that the work environment is safe. We also answer the call Jesus by supporting the efforts of workers who fight for proper working conditions and compensation.



8th Station: Jesus is helped by Simon to carry his cross

We Pray For Those Who Are Victims Of Human Trafficking and Slavery

Scripture Reflection: Mark 15: 21

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

Reflection:

The cross was heavy and Jesus was weakened because of the torture he endured from the soldiers. He needed help. Simon was forced from the crowd by the soldiers to help Jesus. One piece of the cross that people bear today is human trafficking or slavery. Slavery was a part of human history in Jesus' day and it continues into our world today. Twenty million people in our world today are being forced into slavery and are victims of human trafficking. According to officials Portland OR is a hub of human trafficking particularly when it comes to prostitution of minors. Sex slavery is run by gangs who find it "easier" to deal people than drugs.



9th Station: Jesus meets the Women of Jerusalem

We pray that the dignity of all women will be upheld.

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:27-31

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’” At that time people will say to the mountains, “Fall upon us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?”

Reflection:

The women in the crowd showed deep concern and support for Jesus in his suffering. It’s likely these women were able to empathize with Jesus’s pain because of the ways they had been mistreated by society. In today’s world, women and girls are disproportionately affected by war and conflict. Just like the women who reached out to Jesus, women who suffer because of war and conflict can also offer us a sign of hope with examples of how they’ve turned their own suffering into something life-giving. Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo know the reality of rape being used as a weapon of war. Many women who have been victims of sexual violence have proven they are more than victims. They have begun to heal, empower themselves and better their society by participating in programs of trauma healing, learning new skills to support their families and taking leadership roles in grassroots peace movements.

Put Two
Feet of
Love
in
Action



To give light to them that
sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death, to guide our
feet into the way of
peace. Luke 1:9



10th Station: Jesus is crucified.

We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.

Scripture Reflection: Mark 15: 22-32

They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross."

Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

Reflection:

Jesus was put to death. Both society and the state judged that his words and actions didn't fit with their belief system and they sentenced him to death because of it. It's shocking that in today's world people are still persecuted and even killed because of their faith. In fact, restrictions on religion around the world have been on the rise in recent years. "Muslim Bans" in the United States, Blasphemy laws in Pakistan, mob violence in Indonesia and sectarian violence in Burma offer just a few devastating examples of how restrictions on religious freedom can take a deadly toll. Jesus's suffering and death offers us reminder that we must continue to promote religious freedom for all.



11th Station: Jesus promises his kingdom to the repentant thief

We pray for those who are seeking forgiveness from others and God.

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:39-43

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Reflection:

"The call of the eleventh station is to faith, to believe that a loving God is also present in darkness so deep that nothing can possibly lessen its intensity." The criminals call of remember me is "a call of faith to the God of Timelessness in a time of total defeat." Jesus's reply of the promise of paradise confirms our "trust that the God that created us and loves us will hold us up through this moment so that the darkness does not break our hearts"

-Joan Chittister. The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life.



12th Station: Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

We pray for those who suffer from the loss of a child, parent, or brother or sister.

Scripture Reflection: John 19: 25-27

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.

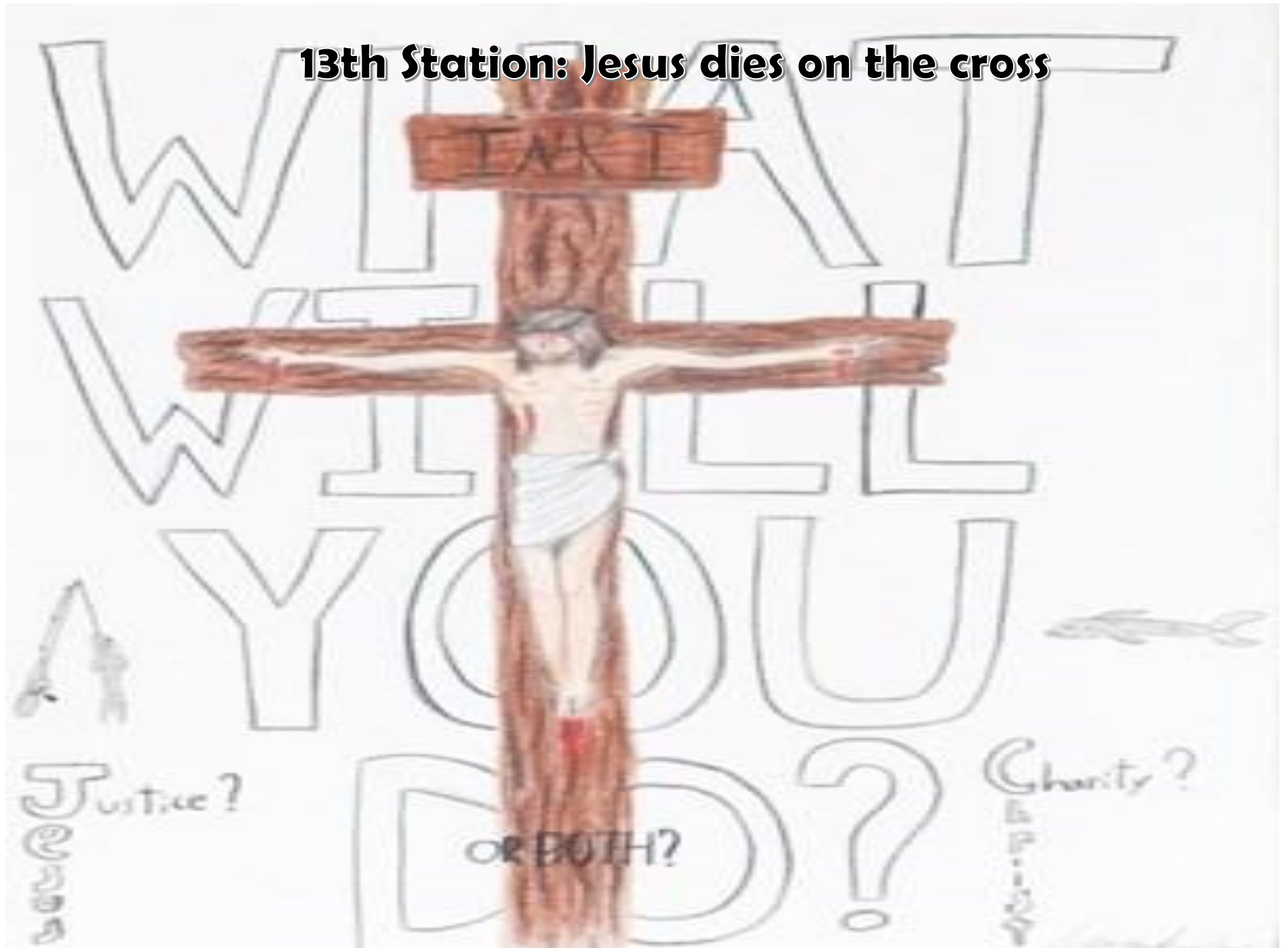
Reflection:

At the time of his death, those who loved Jesus were present to him in his suffering, "*standing by the cross.*"

By their participation in his death, Jesus continued to show his disciples how to persist in building a loving community that cares for each other. Faith and love were active, "*from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*"

Those who are poor and vulnerable are pushed to the fringes of society, isolated, and left out of decisions that affect them and their families. The Church understands that community is built on relationships, forming families with new brothers and sisters united not by law or blood but by the love and example of Christ and, ultimately, working together to end suffering, isolation and poverty.

13th Station: Jesus dies on the cross



13th Station: Jesus dies on the cross

We pray for those who will die today.

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 27:45-54

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "This one is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him." But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

Reflection:

"The twelfth station of the cross brings us face to face with the finality of defeat. Sometimes things don't have a happy ending in life. They just grind on until loss becomes the new normal. Sometimes we fail. There are things we are not suited to do, however much we want to do them. Then, valor lies in simply being willing to begin again, somewhere else. Sometimes we're beaten. Others are more talented, perhaps, or better prepared, or hungrier in their pursuit of the present grail than we are any longer able to be. Sometimes we're lost. Sometimes we're humiliated. Sometimes we're misunderstood. Sometimes we are abandoned by the very people we love most in life and who we thought loved us. At that point, without doubt, something in us dies. Then we learn that there's no going back to things that once were. But are no more. The old breath goes out of us and all we can do is to surrender to the dark. It is not a pretty moment. It can take all the energy we have". -Joan Chittister. *The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life*.



14th Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

We pray for those who are without shelter today.

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 27: 57-61

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over him. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

Reflection:

“Even though we are surrounded by the racket of our world’s preoccupations, we, like this woman, can rest in God’s silence and solitude and let it bear fruit in us. It is a rest that has nothing to do with not being busy, although that might be a sign of it. The rest of God is a deep rest of the heart that can endure even as we are surrounded by the forces of death. It is the rest that offers us the hope that our hidden, often invisible existence will become fruitful even though we cannot say how and when. It is the rest of faith that allows us to live on with a peaceful and joyful heart even when things are not getting better, even when painful situations are not resolved, even when revolutions and wars continue to disrupt the rhythm of our daily lives. This divine rest is known by all those who live their lives in the Spirit of Jesus. Their lives are not characterized by quietness, passivity, or resignation. On the contrary, they are marked by creative action for justice and peace. But that action comes forth from the rest of God in their hearts and is, therefore, free from obsession and compulsion, and rich in confidence and trust.” -Henry Nouwen. Stations of the Cross