

A Scriptural Way of the Cross



**St Mary's Catholic Church
Wellsford
New Zealand**

the Way of the Cross¹

The Way of the Cross (*via crucis*) is a devotion developed in the Middle Ages by the Franciscans as a way of allowing people who could not travel to the Holy Land, to walk where Christ walked on the day of his passion. By the end of the 17th century, many churches had stations, or stops, arranged at intervals along their walls – each with a cross and under each of the crosses was a presentation of an event in the passion narrative. Nine of the traditional fourteen stations were taken directly from scripture; the other five, (e.g. Jesus’ falls and Veronica wipes the face of Jesus) came out of the earliest traditions of the church.

In the early 1990’s St. John Paul II decided to alter the traditional fourteen stations, dropping out of the traditional stations ones that were not part of the Scriptural accounts and adding other portions that were.² Part of the simple introduction to this newer form of *the Way of the Cross*, stated:

“The following Stations of the Cross are based on those celebrated by Pope John Paul II on Good Friday 1991. They are present here as an alternative to the traditional stations and as a way of reflecting more deeply on the Scriptural accounts of Christ’s passion”.

This version of the *Way of the Cross* in the church of St Mary’s, Wellsford, have been written by sacred artist and iconographer, Michael Pervan of Auckland. They are written in the Byzantine style, a form of art that reveals an eternal and divine dimension, wisdom and strength and communion, using the sacred language of symbols. A minimum of text leads to silence, prayer and contemplation before the images:

“Icons are to the eye, what Holy Scripture is to the ear.”³

The Fifteenth Station on the Way – the Resurrection of Jesus, is one of these stations that was not traditionally part of *the Way of the Cross*, but Jesus gave his disciples a foretaste of his glory in *the mystery of his Transfiguration* (cf. *The synoptic Gospels for the 2nd Sunday of Lent – Years A, B, C.*). Its a reminder to us that *his passover (his death)*, won’t end his mission. We understand his death in the light of his resurrection. His radiant face and dazzling white clothes anticipate *the Passover light*. His suffering and death is not the triumph of darkness. The power of death has been overcome. He ascends to the Father in glory.

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- 1 Cover Image: Crucifix of San Damiano – *“The Crucifix that spoke to St Francis of Assisi”* (Michael Goonan, SSP). An icon written by the Studio of St John the Baptist, Takapuna Auckland. A reproduction of the crucifix stands at the back of the sanctuary at St Mary’s Catholic Church, Wellsford.
 - 2 The scriptural quotations are from the New Jerusalem Bible, published by Doubleday N.Y. (1990)
 - 3 Comment by the iconographer, Michael Pervan

the stations on the Way

1. Jesus prays in the Garden of Olives.
2. Jesus is betrayed by Judas.
3. Jesus is condemned to death by the Sanhedrin.
4. Jesus is denied by Peter.
5. Jesus is judged by Pilate.
6. Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns.
7. Jesus is made to carry his cross.
8. Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene.
9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
10. Jesus is crucified.
11. Jesus promises to share his reigning with the good criminal.
12. Jesus is on the cross with his mother and disciple below.
13. Jesus dies on the cross.
14. Jesus is placed in the tomb.
15. Jesus, no longer in the tomb, appears to Mary Magdelene.

Appendix Iconography

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Opening Prayer

presider: GOD of power and mercy,
in love You sent Your Son
that we might be cleansed of sin
and live with You forever.
Bless us as we gather
to reflect on his suffering and death,
that we may learn from his example
the way we should go.

all: Amen

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The First Station



*'Abba, Father, take this cup away from me.
Let it be as You, not I, would have it.'
Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep?
Could you not watch one hour with me?"
Mk.14:36-37*

The first station:

Jesus prays in the Garden of Olives

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Jesus then left to make his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, with the disciples following. When he reached the place he said to them, 'Pray not to be put to the test.' Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down and prayed. 'Father,' he said, 'if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Never-the-less, let your will be done, not mine.' . . . When he rose from prayer he went to the disciples and found them sleeping for sheer grief. And he said to them, 'Why are you asleep? Get up and pray not to be put to the test.'* (Lk.22:39-42)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: Prayers and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and our hearts have turned to stone.⁴ Jesus knew that *the hour for his departure*⁵ had arrived and he turned in prayer to his Father. If *the hour* and *the cup* could not pass, then he has to let be what his Father wills. He returns to find his disciples not much help. They're asleep *'in sorrow'*. Jesus tells them to pray not to be tested.

all: Father, save us from the time of testing
and deliver us from all evil. Amen.

hymn: *(Chant -- Taize)*

***Stay with me, remain here with me;
watch and pray, watch and pray.***

(repeat as desired)

4 Thomas Merton -- quoted by Megan McKenna in The New Stations of the Cross: The Way of the Cross according to Scripture Image Books, Doubleday the publisher (2003)

5 Luke's account of the transfiguration has, "... they were speaking of His passing" (cf. Lk.9:30). Luke says that they were talking about Jesus' "departure." In Greek, departure is called, "exodus" and this is the word that Luke used.

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The Second Station



"Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?"
Lk.22:47

The second station:

Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Jesus came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. Look, the hour has come when the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! Look, my betrayer is not far away.' And suddenly while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them saying, 'The one I kiss; he is the man. Arrest him.' So he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi,' and kissed him.*

(Mt.26:45-49)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: GOD does not require of us the martyrdom of the body; GOD requires only the martyrdom of the heart and will.⁶ One of Jesus' trusted inner-circle of disciples,⁷ as happens when we neglect to pray, grows impatient with Jesus' talk of suffering and powerlessness and acts to force the issue.

all: O LORD, we face in prayer, the betrayer in ourselves.
May Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Amen.

hymn: *(Chant -- Taize)*

***O LORD, hear my prayer; O LORD, hear my prayer;
when I call, answer me.***

(repeat as desired)

⁶ John Vianney – quoted by Megan McKenna. Ibid

⁷ Judas' nickname, "Iscaiot" could have meant 'Zealot' or 'terrorist fighter'. He was probably associated with the movement that believed in armed struggle but which had the same religious beliefs as the Pharisees.

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The Third Station



*"You have heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict?"
... "He deserves to die."*

Mk.14:64

**The third station:
Jesus is condemned to death by the
Sanhedrin**

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus in order to have him executed. But they could not find any. Several indeed, brought false witness against him, but their evidence was conflicting . . . The high priest then rose before the whole assembly and put this question to Jesus. 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?' But he was silent and made no answer at all. The high priest put a second question to him saying, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' "I am," said Jesus, 'and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' The high priest tore his robes and said, 'What need of witnesses have we now? You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?' Their verdict was unanimous: 'He deserved to die.'* (Mk.14:55-56,60-64)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: Jesus is accused of trying to destroy the temple.⁸ He spoke the truth like the ancient prophets.⁹ The religious leaders couldn't condemn him for cleaning the temple of corrupt practises and for him being on the side of the poor. So they invent the charge.

all: O LORD, grant us to judge as Jesus and Your prophets judge;
not as the world judges. Amen.

hymn: *(Were you there? -- Traditional spiritual)*

***Were you there, when they judged the Son of GOD?
Were you there, when they judged the Son of GOD?
Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble,
tremble tremble;
were you there, when they judged the Son of GOD?***

8 Mt.26:61

9 Mk.14:62 Jesus affirms, "I am," and explains that He is not only the anointed Davidic figure expected to establish God's reigning; He is the Human one (Son of man) who at the end of time will come from God's presence, to judge the world. The religious authorities see only blasphemy in this claim, "to sit at the right hand of the Power." He is condemned by the religious judges, as deserving death and no voice is raised in His defence inside the Sanhedrin.

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The Fourth Station



*"You, were with Him."
... "I do not know the man."
Mt.26:69,72*

The fourth station: Jesus is denied by Peter

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Peter sat down among the people in the courtyard of the High Priest's house and as he was sitting there by the blaze a servant-girl saw him, peered at him, and said, 'This man was with him too.' But he denied it, 'Woman, I do not know him,' he said. Shortly afterwards someone else saw him and said, 'You are one of them too.' But Peter replied, 'I am not, my friend.' About an hour later another man insisted, saying, 'This fellow was certainly with him. Why, he is a Galilean.' Peter said, 'My friend, I do not know what you are talking about.' At that instant, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed, and the LORD turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered the LORD's words when he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will have disowned me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Lk.22:56-62)*

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: There is one kind of friend, who won't stand by you in your day of trouble.¹⁰ After Jesus had been condemned and led away, he catches sight of Peter in the courtyard. One glance and its painfully clear that Peter misses the opportunity to show a disciple's loyalty and leadership in doing GOD's will – the cock crows!

all: O LORD, grant us the gift of loyalty to You,
that we may speak the truth even when its difficult. Amen

hymn: *(Were You There? – Traditional spiritual)*

***Were you there, when Peter denied our LORD?
Were you there, when Peter denied our LORD?
Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;
tremble, tremble;
were you there, when Peter denied our LORD?***

¹⁰ Sirach 6:10

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The Fifth Station



*"Are you the king of the Jews?"
... "It is you who say it."
Mk.15:2*

The fifth station:

Jesus is judged by Pilate

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *The Sanhedren handed Jesus over to Pilate. Pilate put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. Pilate questioned him again, 'Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you!' But, to Pilate's surprise, Jesus made no further reply. At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, any one they asked for. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the uprising. When the crowd went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, Pilate answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?' For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. Then Pilate spoke again. 'But in that case what am I to do with the man you call, king of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him.' So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, after having Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.* (Mk.15:2-15)

(period of silence - kneel or sit)

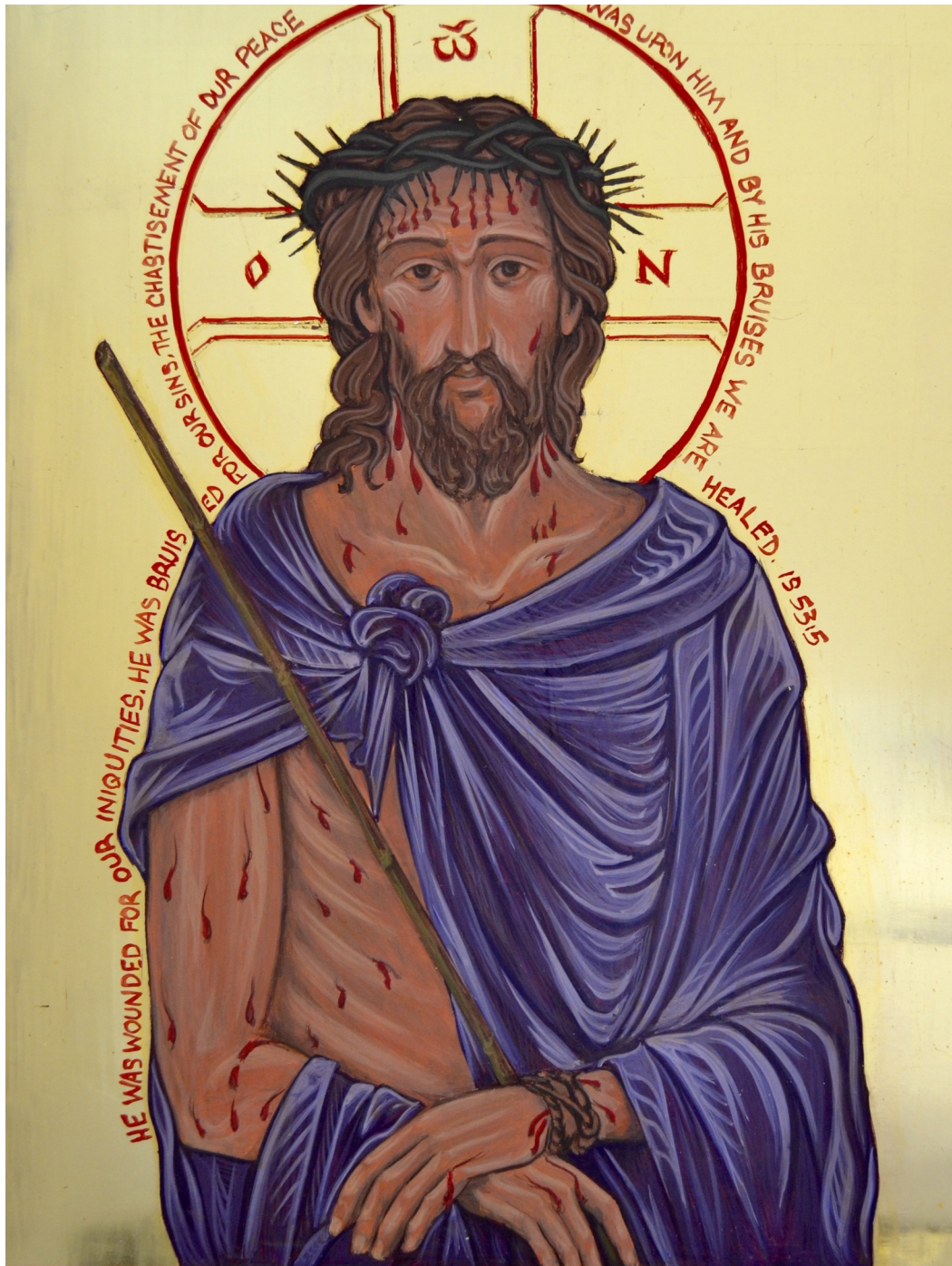
presider: The chief priests successfully persuade the crowd to ask the death penalty for Jesus. Pilate deems it wise to yield to their demands, to avoid civil disruption. The irony is, that the representative of mightiest military power on Earth at that time, stands under judgement himself, from the powerless, vulnerable One who stands in front of him.

all: LORD, grant us courage to do the right thing;
neither over-aggressively nor timidly.
Prepare us to suffer patiently when necessary. Amen.

hymn: ***Were you there, when Pilate asked about the truth?
Were you there, when Pilate asked about the truth?
Oh-oh-sometimes it causes me to tremble,
tremble, tremble;
were you there, when Pilate asked about the truth?***

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The Sixth Station



*He was wounded for our iniquities,
He was bruised for our sins;
The chastisement of our peace was upon him
and by his bruises we are healed.*

Is.53:5

The sixth station:

Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged; and after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into crown and put it on his head and dressed him in a purple robe. (Jn.19:1-2)*

They began saluting him, 'Hail king of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed and spat on him, and they went down on their knees to do him homage. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own clothes. They led him out to crucify him.

(Mk.15:18-

20)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: The problem, is how to live in a damaged body in a world where pain is meant to be gagged uncured, ungrieved over . . . to connect without hysteria, the pain of anyone's body, with the pain of the world's body.¹¹ Jesus is demeaned by his torturers. Abuse in families, children dying as a result of parental rage and impatience, spousal abuse, abuse of the elderly; all are bred of the same callousness of the torturer.

all: O LORD, in accepting one another we accept Jesus.
Our being is in Your being; our spirit is rooted in Jesus' spirit.
Fill us with love which makes You present in our world
and in Jesus, a witness to the ultimate reality --
that love wins! Amen.

hymn: *(The Power of Your Love – Don Moen)*

***LORD, you come to me,
and as my heart is changed, released;
this miracle of grace gently sets me free
and LORD I've come to know
the weaknesses I see in me,
will be stripped away
by the power of Your love.***

11 Adrienne Rich – quoted in Megan McKenna's The New Stations of the Cross Ibid

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The Seventh Station



*They led him out to crucify him . . .
to the place called, Golgotha.
Mk.15:20b & 22a*

The seventh station: Jesus bears the cross

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *They took charge of Jesus and carrying his own cross, he went out to the Place of the Skull, or as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.* (Jn.19:17)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: The cross is a crisis point for all systems of violence; systems which are bound to lead to the reproduction of Calvaries great and small; a crisis point for all who despise the weak and the small people and in so doing despise Christ.¹² Jesus told his disciples to take up their cross each day and follow him.¹³ That implies that if we don't take up our crosses, we can't really follow him. There is good evidence that GOD sends plenty of crosses to those who love GOD most.

all: O LORD, grant us strength of purpose
to faithfully bear our crosses each day. Amen

hymn: *(Were you there? Traditional spiritual)*

***Were you there, when he took the cross for you?
Were you there, when he took the cross for you?
Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;
tremble, tremble;
were you there when he took the cross for you?***

12 Kenneth Leech, We Preach Christ Crucified: the Proclamation of the Cross in a Dark Age. Publisher: Darton Longman and Todd (1994) p.51

13 Lk.9:23

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The Eighth Station



*They enlisted a man, Simon of Cyrene,
who was coming from the country
to carry the cross.*

Mk.15:21

The eighth station:

Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *As they led Jesus out to crucify him, they enlisted a passer-by Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. (Mk.15:20-21)*

(pause for silence – kneel or sit)

presider: We have the names, Simon of Cyrene and his sons, Rufus and Alexander.¹⁴ We remember Simon for what he did for Jesus, but perhaps Simon's name is remembered in the early Christian community because his sons are Christian -- and they are so -- because of what their father did for Jesus! We wonder; will our children be Christian, because of what we do today?

all: O LORD, grant we accept willingly
the crosses that are pressed upon us.
May we extend a hand to all who need our help,
by reaching across the boundaries of language,
race, religion and economics. Amen

hymn: *(Were You There? - Adapted traditional spiritual)*

***Were you there, when Simon helped with Jesus' cross?
Were you there, when Simon helped with Jesus' cross?
Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;
tremble, tremble;
were you there, when Simon helped with Jesus' cross?***

¹⁴ Traditionally, if you're named in the New Testament, you're actually a known and trusted member of the Christian community.

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The Ninth Station



*"Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me,
but for yourselves and for your children."
Lk.23:28*

The ninth station:

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For look, the days are surely coming when people will say, "Blessed are those who never suckled!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"; to the hills, "Cover us!" For if this is what is done to green wood, what will be done when the wood is dry.'* (Lk.23:27-31)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: These women of Jerusalem are strong-minded and radical. They got involved and supported Jesus. Among them was Jesus' own mother, the most radical of them all.¹⁵ The ideas that Mary received, came from the prophets. Jesus would have sucked in those ideas with Mary's milk. In speaking to the women, Jesus foresees the suffering the Romans would bring down on Jerusalem. Many of these mothers' sons and daughters would rise and suffer the same sentence as Jesus.¹⁶

all: O LORD, grant us a gentle spirit
that we may comfort those who mourn. Amen.

hymn: *(Stabat Mater)*

***At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.***

***Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?***

***Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?***

¹⁵ Lk.1:46-55

¹⁶ The Wailing Wall still exists where the Jews go to bewail the ruin of Jerusalem

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The Tenth Station



*"Father, forgive them;
for they know not what they do."
Lk.23:34*

The tenth station: Jesus is crucified

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the readings)

reader: *Now they were also leading out two others, criminals to be executed with him. When they reached the place called, 'The Skull', there they crucified him and the two criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.' Then they cast lots to share out his clothing.*

(Lk.23:32-34)

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: 'Love him totally who gave himself totally for your love.'¹⁷ Jesus' death is the way people opposed to the system die.¹⁸ Crucifixion was the Roman punishment for political crimes. In the account of Jesus' passion in John, it is Jesus who is in control. The other characters are the ones on trial. In spite of Jesus' apparent powerlessness it is the so-called, '*powers-that-be*', who are being judged.¹⁹

all: O LORD, grant us merciful hearts
to bring Your reconciliation to all
as we contemplate Jesus' crucifixion. Amen

hymn: *(Were you there? - Traditional spiritual)*

***Were you there, when they crucified the LORD?
Were you there, when they crucified the LORD?
Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;
tremble, tremble;
were you there, when they crucified the LORD?***

17 St. Claire of Assisi – quoted in Megan McKenna's [The New Stations of the Cross](#) Ibid

18 When Jesus was a child, Galilee was the centre of a great rebellion which was viciously suppressed by the Romans, crucifying two thousand revolutionaries

19 *Jn.19:19ff*

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The Eleventh Station



*"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom"
"This day you shall be with me in Paradise."*

Lk.23:42-43

The eleventh station:
**Jesus promises to share his reigning
with the good criminal**

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *One of the criminals hanging there abused him; 'Are you not the Christ?' Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said, 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it; we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'In truth I tell you today you will be with me in paradise.'*

(Lk.23:39-43)

(pause for silent prayer)

presider: 'Are you willing to believe that even though they are guilty of a diabolical act, they will continue to be children of GOD, not monsters, not demons, but those with the capacity to change?'²⁰ One of the criminals rebukes the other, accepting his part in serious evil-doing. He declares that Jesus is innocent and affirms the truth of who Jesus is. He's remembered and held up as hope for change for us all, no matter what we've done.

all: O LORD, grant us the grace
to stand beside those who are victims;
the accused; the public sinners; the criminals
and the despised in our society. Amen.

hymn: *(Chant – Taize)*

***Jesus, remember me,
when you come into your kingdom.***

(repeat as desired)

²⁰ Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. To merit Roman crucifixion, the crimes were either murder, sedition, treason against the state, or terrorism. These are the crimes of the criminals who share Jesus' dying.

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The Twelfth Station



*"Mother, behold thy son." ... "Son, behold thy mother."
Jn.19:26...27*

**The twelfth station:
Jesus is on the cross
with his mother and the disciple below**

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *Near the cross of Jesus, stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

(Jn.19:25-27)

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Look, he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel; destined to be a sign that is opposed -- and a sword will pierce your soul too -- so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare."

(Lk.2:34-35)

(pause for silent prayer)

presider: Jesus, in His dying moment, was still putting the needs of others before His own, committing the care of His mother to his beloved disciple, John. His entire life showed he subjected everything to the will of his Father.²¹

all: Holy Mary, Mother of GOD, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

hymn: *(Stabat Mater)*

***Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.***

***Let me share with thee his pain,
who for all my sins was slain;
who for me in torments died.***

21 At the bottom of the Cross is an open cave with a skull. Victory over death and hell is symbolized by a cavern, which opens at the foot of the cross, below the rocky summit of Golgotha, the rock that was rent, at the moment of Christ's death, to allow a skull to appear. It is the skull of Adam who, "according to the belief of some," says St. John Chrysostom, "would have been buried under Golgotha - the place of a skull" (cf. Jn. 19:17). This brings out the dogmatic meaning of the icon of the Crucifixion: the redemption of the first Adam by the blood of Christ, the New Adam, Who made Himself human, to save the human race.

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The Thirteenth Station



*"Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit." [Lk.23:46](#)
"It is finished." [Jn.19:30](#)*

The thirteenth station: **Jesus dies on the cross**

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My GOD, my GOD, why have you forsaken me?' When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah.' Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying, 'Wait! And see if Elijah will come to take him down.' But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (Mk.15:33-37)*

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: "He who possesses in truth the Word of Jesus, can hear even in silence".²² Now is *the hour* of death. Time is stilled – and after the final cry of the Crucified One – silence. Time to listen to the silence in the darkness of loss:

all: O LORD, Jesus willingly handed over his life to You.
May we honour all life and join with Jesus,
to give back to You all that You have given us.
"Father into Your hands I give my Spirit".
Take us, O loving Father, and hold us in Your heart.

hymn: *(Stabat Mater)*

***At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.***

***Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.***

22 St Ignatius of Antioch

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The Fourteenth Station



“Look and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow?”
Lamentations 1:12b

The fourteenth station: Jesus is placed in the tomb

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the readings)

reader: *When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre. (Mt.27:57-61)*

All you who pass this way, look and see: is any sorrow like the sorrow inflicted on me, with which YHWH GOD struck me on the day of his burning anger? (Lamentations 1:12)

(pause for silent prayer kneel or sit)

presider: The world is GOD's body, GOD draws it ever upwards.²³ There is a silence to this station. The silence seems to pervade and seep through the air, into our bones. Its the silence of afterwards. It is the silence of the Earth; of ages of rock formations; of glacial valleys; and the rings in ancient trees. It is the silence of underground; of waterways and layers of sediment; and cores of minerals; the strata of creation. And then night and darkness descends. Jesus earlier assured his disciples, 'Unless the grain of wheat falls to the Earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit'.²⁴

all: O LORD, grant us the to be as careful with Earth as we are commanded to be with the bodies of all Your children as we would be with Jesus' own body. Amen

hymn: *(Were you there? Traditional spiritual)*

Were you there, when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there, when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;

tremble, tremble;

were you there, when they laid him in the tomb?

²³ Pierre Teilhard De Chardin

²⁴ Jn.12:23-24

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The Fifteenth Station



“Do not touch me for I am not yet ascended to my Fathers house.”

Jn.20:16,17

**The fifteenth station:
Jesus, no longer in the tomb
appears to Mary**

(bow towards the sacred image)

presider: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
all: by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

(remain standing for the reading)

reader: *But Mary was standing outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, as she wept, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' They have taken my LORD away,' she replied, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him and I will go and remove him.' Jesus said, 'Mary!' She turned round then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' -- which means, Master. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my GOD and your GOD.' So Mary of Magdala told the disciples. 'I have seen the LORD,' and that he had said these things to her. (Jn.20:11-18)*

(period of silence – kneel or sit)

presider: The utterly unbelievable happened after Jesus was wrapped in his linen shroud and sealed in a tomb. Jesus was raised from the dead. The tomb is empty. There is no body!
We have pondered and probed this mystery of emptiness. Now we prepare to leave our tombs to meet the risen Crucified One, who is waiting for us to catch up with him, walking the roads in and out of Jerusalem -- and on all the roads of the world. Jesus' passion and death is the sacrifice that unites Earth and Heaven and reconciles all to GOD.

all: O LORD, may we seek Jesus' crucified face,
wherever He would be in our world.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the holy Spirit. Amen. Alleluia! He is Risen!

Closing Prayer

presider: May we, who have faithfully reflected
on these mysteries, follow in Jesus' steps
and so come to share Your glory in heaven,
where He lives and reigns with You, Father
and the holy Spirit, one GOD, now and always.

all: Amen.

hymn: (*Were you there? Traditional spiritual*)

Were you there, when GOD raised him from the tomb?

Were you there, when GOD raised him from the tomb?

Oh – oh – sometimes it causes me to tremble;

tremble, tremble;

were you there, when GOD raised him from the tomb?

-----oooOooo-----

Appendix

Iconography

The Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople as its political and religious centre forms the historical background for the development of icons from the 5th century onwards. (After the Turkish invasion in 1453 development shifted to Moscow). The Second Council of Nicea (787c.e.) affirmed that icons are legitimate because, if the Son of GOD became incarnate through Mary, it legitimises the depiction in art of the divine.

More than just a work of art, the icon calls for an art form permitting the transition from the visible to the invisible. It reveals an eternal and divine dimension, wisdom, strength and communion using the sacred language of symbols. Before writing an icon the writer engenders it with a heart of silence. One such prayer recited by iconographers is:

*O divine Master of all that exists,
enlighten and direct the soul,
the heart and the mind of your servant;
guide my hands so that I might portray
worthily and perfectly, Your Image,
that of Your Holy Mother and of all the Saints
for the glory, the joy and the beautification
of Your holy Church.²⁵*

Praying is necessary for the writer and is requested of the faithful standing before the icon, as it provides spiritual orientation for Christian life and prayer. To show that the icon refers to a divine dimension, inverse perspective is used. This is done by making the objects farthest away the largest, and the closest objects, smallest. The hierarchical perspective is also used, where the most important person holds the central position, and is exaggeratedly big.

As a holy object, the form of the icon is a receptacle for the content, which is determined by Scripture and the tradition of the Church. The work is marked by discipline. Icon writers are not free to incorporate their own subjective interpretation as the icon expresses the community's faith.

the iconographer

Michael Pervan is a sacred artist and iconographer, responsible for the writing of this series of icons. He wants to teach that we, . . . *"can see with the eyes of the soul, now, through the eyes of Faith. And icons are to the eye, what Holy Scripture is to the ear."* Since 2004 when he had a deep revelation that Our LORD had a simple message for him: *"Paint my portrait, Michael, and paint it often"*, he has been working full-time at this call.

Michael's workshop is located behind St Joseph's Centre, Takapuna, Auckland.

-----oooOooo-----

25 M. Quenot, *The Icon – Window on the Kingdom*. p.13

-----oooOooo-----

*Poor death,
where is your sting?
Poor hell,
where is your triumph?
Christ steps out of the tomb
and you are reduced to nothing.
Christ rises
and the angels are wild with delight.
Christ rises
and life is set free.
Christ rises
and the graves are emptied of the dead.
Oh, yes, for he broke from the tomb
like a flower,
a beautiful fruit;
the first fruit of those already gone.
All glory be his,
all success and power,
now and always.*²⁶

-----oooOooo-----

26 St. John Chrysostom – from Sermon for Easter