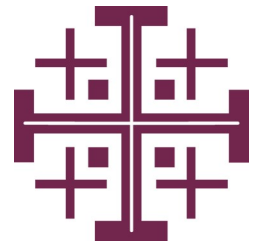




Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

Episcopal/Anglican

Alexandria, Virginia



Good Friday

Stations of the Cross

April 2, 2020

7:00 p.m.

First Station: Jesus Is Condemned to Death

MARK 15:15

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Jesus had been arrested the previous evening in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. He could not be sentenced to capital punishment under Jewish law. The community leaders brought him to Pontius Pilate, a Roman representative, for judgment. The crowds are unruly and controlled by mob thought, shouting “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate does not protect Jesus, but sentences him to Crucifixion.

PSALM 31: 13, 15

**I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
They put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.
My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.**

Pray for—

- all those in authority, that they may see the common good and work for peace, equity, and justice.
- for those who judge and uphold the law, that they may act with true mercy.
- those in every occasion who face the choice of using human power to hurt and kill.
- those condemned in prison, to death, to long sentences.
- those who are imprisoned justly and for those wrongfully imprisoned.
- yourself, for grace when you judge others, that you might know the humility of Christ.

Second Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

JOHN 19:17

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

Jesus is forced to take the journey that every condemned man must; he must carry his own cross through the streets. Some suggest that this helped fatigue the condemned men to bring about a hastier death. Some say it was to humiliate those about to die. Having just been flogged, the cross would be intensely painful upon his torn back.

PSALM 86:6-7

**Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer,
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
In the time of my trouble I will call upon you,
for you will answer me.**

Pray for—

- all police officers, deputies, prison officers, and those required to carry out sentences and inflict pain in the execution of their duties.
- those who mock and torment others, and for those who are bullied.
- all victims of violence and those who commit violent acts against others.
- yourself: when you mock or hurt others, and when you experience hurts, that your suffering may be fruitful, and that you may be preserved from indifference to the sufferings of others.

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

ISAIAH 53:4

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we account him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.

The Cross is heavy and Jesus is exhausted. Jesus walks an uneven road. As the crowd looks on, Jesus stumbles and drops his burden. He knows he must undertake this journey, but his physical body is cracking under the strain.

PSALM 70:1-2

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me;

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Let those who seek my life be ashamed and altogether dismayed;

Let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

Pray for—

- those who are experiencing illness and infirmity; for the exhausted, for the hungry, for the aged, and for those experiencing failures of body, mind, and spirit.
- those who care for the physically infirm, for doctors and nurses, social workers, counselors, chaplains, hospital workers, and emergency medical care providers.
- yourself for your own exhaustions and illnesses, that you know the power of our Savior having come through his own infirmity.

Fourth Station:

Jesus Meets His Sorrowing Mother

LUKE 2:34B-35

This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

Jesus' mother was the first human to love him, bringing him into the world under extraordinary circumstances. Now they meet face to face, at the moment when she can do nothing to ease her child's pain. As a mother, she loved him and nurtured him, and set him free as an adult. Now, she must watch him endure suffering.

PSALM 86:16-17

**Turn to me and have mercy upon me;
Give your strength to your servant; and save the child of your handmaid.
Show me a sign of your favor,
So that those who hate me may see it,
and be ashamed;
Because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.
Giving thanks for the life and example of Mary, mother of Jesus.**

Pray for—

- your own parents, and for those who have been like mothers and fathers to you, transcending the bonds of blood. Give thanks for all the love and joy they have brought you, and grieve for any way you have injured your parents.
- those whose relationship with their parents is broken, and for those parents who have been unable to parent their children because of need or illness.
- those for whom you father or mother physically, spiritually, by adoption, or personally, that they may grow in wisdom and favor with God.
- yourself, that as a child and a parent you may know the love and commitment of Mary.

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Takes the Cross

LUKE 23:26

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and made him carry the cross behind Jesus.

We know only that an African helped carry the cross, as Jesus' physical body failed under the strain. Simon is the man who helps others when called upon, the quiet man in the crowd who does what is right and kind. The soldiers compelled his action, but he willingly lifted up the heavy crossbeam.

PSALM 18:6-7

**I called upon the Lord in my distress
And cried out to my God for help.
He heard my voice from his heavenly dwelling;
My cry of anguish came to his ears.
Give thanks for the man from Africa who helped Jesus.**

Give thanks for those who accept responsibilities when called upon, and who carry out their task with kindness.

Pray for—

- those from all nations around the world, that they might be led to greater understanding and cooperation between nations. That they might respect the humanity and dignity of all those individuals, and that they might foster mutual respect and security between nations.
- the onlookers, for the simple citizens caught in the middle of violence, and for those thrust into public service.

Sixth Station:

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

ISAIAH 53:2-3

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hid their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Jesus' body is showing the extent of his exertion—our tradition tells us of the blood and sweat which mingled on his forehead. The story of Veronica is an extra-scriptural legend, telling how a woman moistened a towel and wiped his suffering face. It is the story of a compassionate and brave act on a terrible day.

PSALM 25:15-16, 19

**Turn to me and have pity on me,
For I am left alone and in misery. The sorrows of my heart have increased;
bring me out of my troubles. Protect my life and deliver me;
Let me not be put to shame, for I have trusted in you.**

Pray for—

- the bravery of those who help others in the midst of a distrustful political climate.
- for every act of compassion and caring.
- for those who see the presence of God in those who suffer.
- all those who suffer from any form of danger, violence, degradation, or suffering.
- yourself, that your eyes may perceive the beauty in each soul and that your heart may be opened for compassion, and your hands may be quick to console.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

1PETER 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Despite the help from Simon, the moral support of his mother, the small comfort from Veronica, no one can deny the immense toll the Via Dolorosa takes on Jesus' body. At the top, he falls again for the second time. The end of his death sentence is coming closer.

PSALM 6:2-4

**Have pity on me, O God, for I am weak;
Heal me, Lord, for my bones are wracked.
My spirit shakes with terror; how long, O Lord, how long?
Turn, O Lord, and deliver me;
Save me for your mercy's sake.**

Give thanks for God's mercy and forgiveness, counting Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, allowing mercy to always temper justice.

Pray for—

- those in leadership positions who pass judgment, that their deliberations may be tempered with mercy.
- those in pain and weakness, waiting for the next step of a painful journey.
- those who suffer from mental fatigue.
- the mentally ill, especially those who have suffered psychological injury, and for the anxious, the lonely, the distressed, the senile, and for all those who care for them and the unseen burdens they bear.
- yourself, that you may know mercy, and that you may show forgiveness to those who have hurt you.

Eighth Station:

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

LUKE 23:27-31

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

In every age, in every society, there are those who are filled with compassion for suffering, especially on behalf of the innocent. Jesus is followed by women from Jerusalem, who realize that no last minute pardon is coming. The pain of the cross will not be put away.

PSALM 80:5-7

**You have fed us with the bread of tears;
you have given us bowls of tears to drink.
You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
Restore us, O God of hosts; Show the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.**

Pray for—

- women, and for those everywhere who recognize with compassion the suffering of others and weep with the pain.
- those who must be separated from their loved ones by war, imprisonment, or other adversity.
- those who mourn their lost loves, and for those who have lost someone to violence not of their own making.
- the women of Jerusalem today—Jews, Christians, Muslims, Palestinians, Arabs, Israelis, Armenians, and others.
- the women standing in your own life today.
- yourself, that the Holy Spirit will give you Christ’s own heart and mind to respect and love those around you.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

HEBREWS 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The procession is about to enter Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. This unused quarry was turned by Herod the Great into a large avenue for crucifixions. It is not easy to see the suffering upon the cross. But it is easy to become indifferent as so many people pass by all the crucified. There is a lot to be done in the city for the coming Passover. Is there time to stop and consider the three men being crucified today?

PSALM 119:81-82

**My soul has longed for your salvation;
I have put my hope in your word.
My eyes have failed from watching for your promise,
And I say, "When will you comfort me?"**

Pray for—

- those who experience indifference and moral weakness.
- those who have lost their faith, and hope.
- those at the limits of their moral, mental, or physical endurance.
- those who notice the suffering of those around them.
- those who counsel, for the psychologists and social workers and chaplains who step in to help those suffering in the darkness.
- yourself, for your own moments of moral weakness, that you might remember Jesus' patience, presence, and resolve.

Tenth Station:

Jesus Is Stripped of His Clothes

JOHN 19:23-24

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

For anyone, being stripped is a terrible thing. A faithful Jew in the time of Jesus follows modesty laws and does not expose his or her body. To be naked in public is a terrible humiliation. For Jesus, the physical pain is only part of his torture. The absolute helplessness of being stretched on the cross, exposed to all while he is in agony, is yet to come on this appalling day.

The crowd rejects him, now seeing him humiliated, as less than fully human. Meanwhile, the soldiers, engaged in a normal days work, take the spoils as is their right on the job.

PSALM 22:16-18

**Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me;
They pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them;
they cast lots for my clothing.
Be not far away, O Lord, you are my strength; hasten to help me.**

Pray for—

- those who are shamed and degraded, for battered spouses and beaten children, for the victims of rape, betrayal, and other humiliations.
- those who expose, shame, and humiliate others by word or action that they might have their eyes opened and their hearts exposed.
- yourself, for when you are shamed and abused, that you might remember Jesus during his worst humiliation and find healing, so that you might live without fear and without shame.

Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

MATTHEW 27:39-40

Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Jesus, after his psychological and physical humiliation, is nailed to the cross. Nails are put through his wrists, and the crossbeam hoisted up to its cross piece. Another nail is driven through his feet. The weight of his body hangs from the wrists, with the only way to relieve it being to push up with his feet. Every convict is labeled, and Jesus’ placard, King of the Jews, is affixed above him.

PSALM 22:7-8

**All who see me laugh me to scorn;
They curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
“He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him;
Let him rescue him, if he delights in him.”**

In gratitude and sorrow, stand before the cross. Know the love of God, which allows his own son to be subjected to this sort of death.

Pray for—

- those who would destroy the good, the sacred, the beautiful and true.
- all attempts to suppress the good news of Christ given for the world, and for all those who are persecuted and oppressed.
- yourself, whenever you are called to account for your faith, that you may understand and incorporate the way of the cross into your life, so that sin, suffering, and death may be broken on the rock which is love.

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

MARK 15:37-39

Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

As he hung on the cross, Jesus looked down at his mother and one of his disciples, and he gave them into each other’s care as mother and son. He finally gave voice to his physical distress, saying “I am thirsty”. His distress grows deeper as he prays to God: “My God, My God, why do you abandon me?” At this hour, he is totally, completely alone. He offers his spirit to his silent Father God. He surrenders. It is finished.

PSALM 99:2-3, 9

**The Lord is great in Zion; he is high above all people.
Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome;
He is the Holy One.
Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and worship him upon his holy hill;
For the Lord our God is the Holy One.**

Pray for—

- the dying, for those facing their last days and last hours, that because of Jesus enduring his total loneliness on the cross, they might never know abandonment.
- those who care for the dying: families, friends, medical staff, and all the communion of saints including those who have gone before.
- yourself, that when you face the destruction of your earthly body, you may know Jesus and share his risen and eternal life.

Thirteenth Station:

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

JOHN 19:38-42

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen clothes, according to the custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The experienced soldiers, watching the slow deaths on the cross, now break the legs of crucified men so they will die faster. But Jesus is dead already, confirmed as they thrust a spear into his side, piercing the pericardium around his heart. Joseph and Nicodemus arrive with the order from the governor allowing them to have the body. Jesus' body is lowered into Mary's arms, and she is able to hold him once more.

Jesus' body is laid in the tomb, a spot that was always meant to be temporary, until after the Sabbath was over and the work of burial could be completed. For him, the suffering is over.

PSALM 143:4, 6-7

My spirit faints within me; my heart within me is desolate.

I spread out my hands to you;

My soul gasps to you like a thirsty land.

O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me;

Do not hide your face from me or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

Pray for—

- the dead, those known and unknown to us.
- all those who mourn; who care for the bereaved; and for the feeling of pain and grief.
- yourself, that as you eat the bread and drink the cup during this Holy Week, you may give thanks that Jesus Christ gave his body to be broken for you, so that you may be made strong by his Spirit.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

MATTHEW 27:59-61

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there sitting opposite the tomb.

Women have been witness to all the pain this sad day has held. They have watched the sentencing amongst the crowd, followed his painful steps up the hill, watched as he languished in his suffering. Now, just a few women—both Mary—remain, watching at the tomb. They sit and watch, as twilight deepens to darkness, and their friend's body remains inside the tomb, sealed.

Now, it is all over.

It is finished. The tomb is full of a body broken for us.

PSALM 68:19-20

**Blessed be the Lord day by day,
The God of our salvation, who bears our burdens.
He is our God, the God of our salvation;
God is the Lord, by whom we escape death.**

Pray for—

- for the beloved Son who was laid in the tomb in the garden.
- all those who rest from their labors, and look to God in hope.
- yourself, that you who have been buried with Christ in your baptism may find perfect rest in his eternal kingdom.