

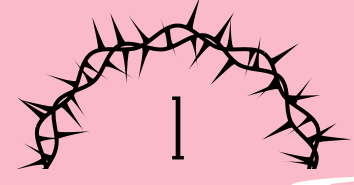


# VIA CRUCIS

*THE WAY OF THE CROSS*

**FOLLOWING JESUS  
ON THE WAY OF LOVE  
THROUGH THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

CHRIS ALTROCK, D.MIN.



## The Ways of Love

The way of Jesus is the way of love. In Christ we experience love and we learn to express love. “Walk in love,” is how Paul, one of Jesus' most passionate followers, summarizes life with Jesus (Eph. 5:1). Loving God and loving neighbor is how Jesus himself encapsulates the healthiest and most impactful spirituality (Mk. 12:30-31).

We learn much about living lives of love by accompanying Jesus at his birth, his childhood and into his public ministry. But nowhere do we learn more about the way of love than in the hours that led to Jesus' cross and in the days after his resurrection. These two signposts, a cross and a tomb, are two of the most vital in the journey of growing in love.

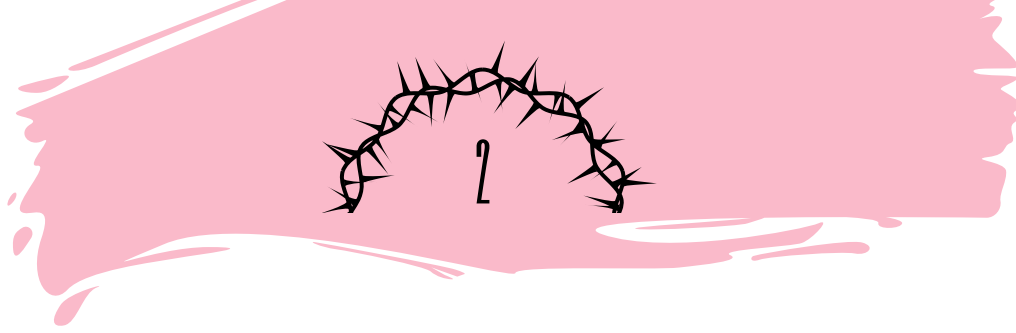
Traditionally called the *Via Crucis* (the Way of the Cross) and the *Via Lucis* (the Way of Light), these two seasons in the life of Jesus reveal the depth, cost and power of love like nothing else. Accompanying Jesus along them is transformative.

For centuries, followers of Jesus have desired to follow his journey to the cross. Those who could not make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to do so engaged in a contemplative and prayerful journey right where they lived, through the “stations of the cross,” also known as *Via Crucis*, the Way of the Cross, or the Way of Sorrows. Twelve devotionals are dedicated to this path in this book. It's immediately followed by six devotionals focused on the *Via Lucis*, the Way of Light--texts focused on the resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Each devotional invites us into a particular *prayer* inviting Christ to empower us to walk just as he did.

This is followed by a time to *ponder* a scene from the passion week, engaging in what Ignatius of Loyola called contemplation--immersing yourself in the experience of the text with all your senses, to hear God's invitation to you through it.

Each devotional ends with a *practice* that will create space for deeper reflection, application and engagement in your daily life.



# Via Crucis 1

## Pray

O Christ, help me pursue you along your path of love. I long not only to experience your passion for me, but also to express your passion for others. Truthfully, I do not want the cross that seems inescapable on this course. I wish I could cherish others better without being hurt so badly. Nevertheless, in order to love like you do I will live, and die, as you did.

## Ponder

Read this scene:

*39 And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Luke 22:39-46 ESV)*

The Via Crucis is our chance to accompany Jesus on his way to his cross. We do this now by envisioning ourselves in this text. Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Perhaps you're a bystander. Perhaps you're one of the disciples. You might even imagine yourself as Jesus.

Bring the scene to life:

- See the dark Garden of Gethsemane with its olive trees; the three disciples fighting sleep; and Jesus withdrawing to a solitary place, his sweat falling to the ground.
- *Hear* the night sounds in the garden; the sound of Jesus' prayer; and the sound of the disciples' sleep.
- *Smell* the night air.
- *Touch* the ground or the stones, cold from the night.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is:

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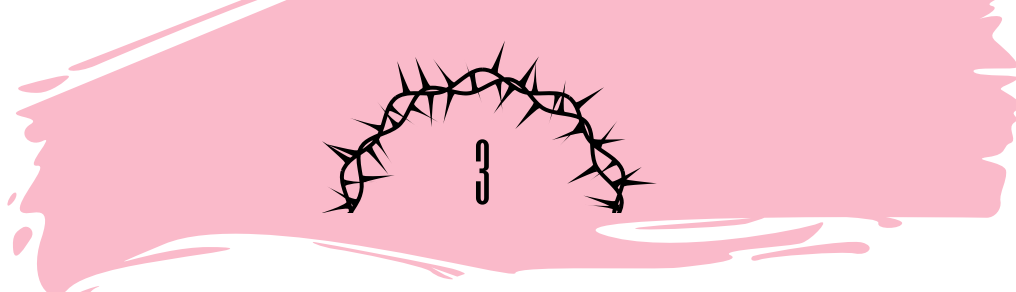
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2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to ...

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## Via Crucis 1 (cont.)

Now, consider the following: we cannot get to the sacrificial and serene surrender (“your will be done”) without going through the disturbing and disquieting despair (“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me”). We cannot hear Jesus’ statement of trust without first hearing his statement of lament.

Rather than counterfeiting a smile, cleaning up his emotions, or cloaking his anxiety, Jesus lifts it all up messily to God in prayer. Not once, but three times. These loud cries and tears were not the result of a lack of faith. They were the fruit of deep faith. Jesus’ appeal for altered circumstances flows not from the fact that he is unspiritual or unhealthy. Just the opposite—it flows from the fact that he has never been more spiritual or more healthy.

Jesus deeply dislikes his circumstances and desperately begs God to change them. He does not piously pretend nothing is wrong. Instead, he is honest with the Father about his feelings. He puts the trouble into words.

Jesus' prayer, "remove this cup from me," is his invitation into freedom from fearing that you can't be honest with God about the pain paralyzing you or the trauma terrorizing you. With this single line Jesus creates a radical new space where faithfulness is not measured by the absence of despair but rather by our honesty about our despair. In prayer, it's OK not to be OK.

While transparently confessing his wish (“let this cup pass”), Jesus is also humbly surrendering to God’s will (“not as I will, but as you will”). For Jesus, prayer is not either “I seek my wish” or “I seek your will.” It is both. Jesus finds a way of praying which permits him to ask for exactly what he wants yet also enables him to honestly leave the final decision up to God.

When it came to Jesus’ Way of the Cross, that long passage began with a lone petition: “Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” When it comes to our own Via Crucis, we’ll never proceed without this same prayer. Every course of costly love starts with a step of submission. Every day, our capacity to walk the way of love relies on our readiness to first entrust ourselves into the Father’s love. Jesus died at Gethsemane before He died at Golgotha. So must we.

### Practice

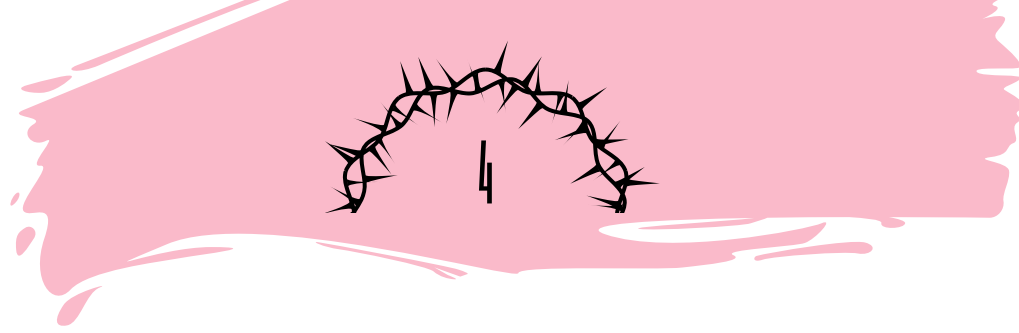
Jesus envisions the Way of Love as a cup whose contents he must consume, contents he does not desire because of their cost. If you pictured the Way of Love as a cup, what fears, concerns and worries would fill it? That is, if you took an honest assessment of what it would mean for you to walk the Way of Love in this season of your life, what costs, real or imagined, would be involved? Fill in the blanks. Then, blank by blank pray, "Father, let this cup of \_\_\_\_\_ pass. Nevertheless, your will be done."

*My fears/ concerns/ worries/ costs related to walking the way of love:*



← \_\_\_\_\_  
← \_\_\_\_\_  
← \_\_\_\_\_  
← \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Via Crucis 2



### Pray

Jesus, help me walk the Way of Love even if the act only attracts people who wish to attack, even if the way only scares away people I wish would stay. Make me daring enough to do what love demands.

### Ponder

Read this scene:

*47 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. 50 Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" 55 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. (Matt. 26:47-56 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See the mob with swords and clubs, with Judas in the lead; the kiss given to Jesus by Judas; the man defending Jesus with a sword and slicing off the ear of the servant of the high priest; and the fleeing disciples.
- Hear the sounds of the mob; the rattle of swords; the word "Rabbi!" from Judas' mouth; the cry of pain from the servant of the high priest; and the words of Jesus.
- Smell the night air.
- Touch the bloody ear; the sharp swords; and the clubs.
- Notice what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you an invisible bystander? Part of the mob? Judas? The disciple defending Jesus? The disciple abandoning Jesus? Jesus?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is:

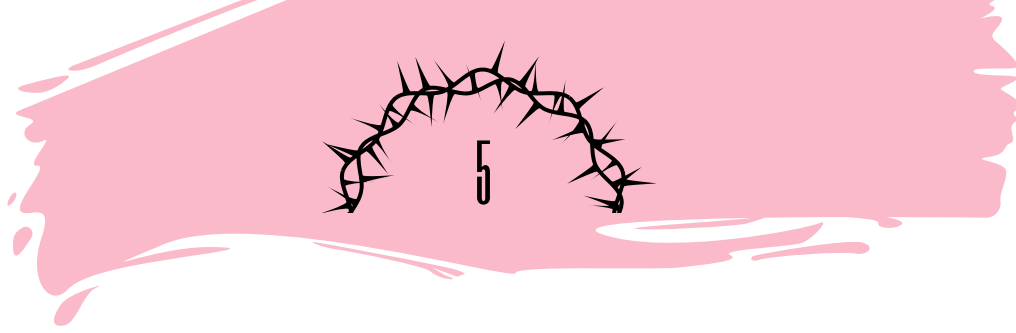
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2- Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to ...

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## Via Crucis 2 (cont.)

As Jesus steps along his Via Crucis, the Way of the Cross, and the Way of Love, he is surrounded. And that's not a good thing. He is abandoned by his disciples and accosted by a mob. Judas pretends to love him, even kiss him, while selling him out. The phrase "they all left him and fled" feels like one of the loneliest sentences in Scripture. And yet, that's how it is on the Way of Love. Abandoned and arrested. People who wash their hands of you and people who take you in their hands.

If you, like Christ, choose the Way of Love, you'll rarely be alone. But sometimes that means being abandoned by people you wish would accompany you, while being followed by people you wish would forget you; losing a circle of friends and gaining a crowd of foes; being kissed by those whose love is false and seized by those whose hate is fact. Yet solo or surrounded, you, like Christ, walk on, knowing that the Way of Love is the one true path to transformation.

### Practice

A maddened mob mobilizes against Jesus. A follower of Jesus responds by swinging a sword at one of the assailants. But Jesus responds by stopping the violence and healing the one who was hurt. The disciple punishes the enemy while Jesus protects the enemy. The disciple hates the antagonist. Jesus heals the antagonist.

#### MOB:

Write the names of those who may stand against you in your attempts to walk the Way of Love:

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#### WORD:

Then, chronicle the ways you do (or at least desire to do) harm to them:

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#### HEAL:

Finally, write a prayer asking for God to do good to one of them:

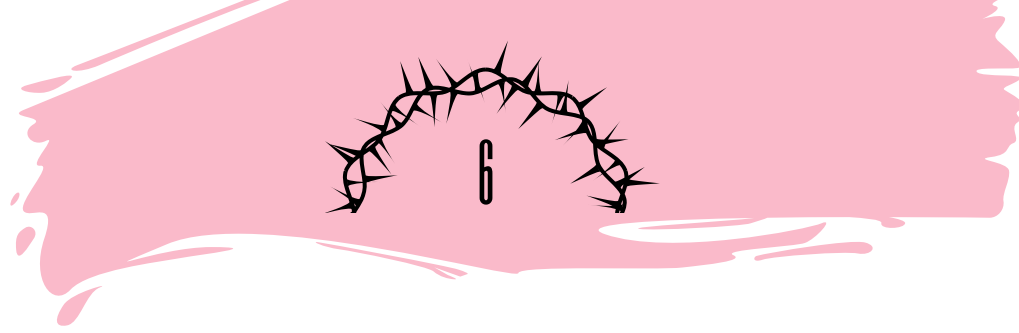
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## Via Crucis 3



### Pray

Christ, may no word spoken against me and no wound inflicted upon me arrest my advance along your Way of Love.

### Ponder

Read this scene:

*55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. 56 For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. 57 And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” 59 Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” 61 But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. 65 And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows. (Mk. 14:55-65 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See the council and the witnesses testifying against Jesus; the look on Jesus' face as he takes this all in; the face of the high priest when he hears Jesus' words; and the people spitting on Jesus and striking him.
- *Hear* the sounds of the witnesses; the cry of the high priest and the ripping of his garments; and the thud of the blows against Jesus.
- *Touch* the torn garment; and the bruises on Jesus' skin.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you an invisible bystander? Part of the witnesses? Jesus? The high priest? Those striking Jesus?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is:

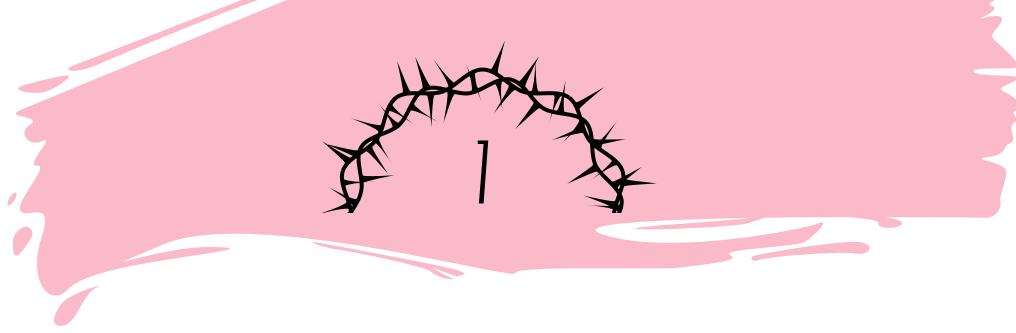
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2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to ...

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## Via Crucis 3 (cont.)

Few things halt headway down the Way of Love like the innocent sounding question, “But what will people say?” Simply put, Jesus didn’t care. To his final breath, people declared all kinds of disparaging things about Jesus. But exclusion by the few in need of power never stopped Jesus from including the many in need of his passion. Never permit the fear of something someone somewhere might say to stop you from throwing yourself headlong, with reckless abandon, toward the one thing Jesus did say: love, period.

At the sham of a trial conducted by his religious peers, Jesus is condemned for speaking the truth about himself. His execution is not gained by the inaccuracy of what others share. It is given because of the veracity of what Jesus shares. A sentence is passed because Jesus will not pretend to be the kind of person they tolerate. Jesus is convicted because he refuses to be anyone other than who he is. Walking the Way of Love involves the risk and reward of declining to be who others wish you to be and deciding to be who you truly are.

### Practice

Take a few moments to imagine three scenarios of testimony about yourself. In the first scenario, imagine the worst. What are some hurtful things others might say about you if you threw yourself wholly and unreservedly into walking the Way of Love in this season of your life? Write down some of those here:

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Second, imagine the best. At the end of your life, what are some encouraging and affirming things others might say about you because you threw yourself wholly and unreservedly into walking the Way of Love? Write down some of those answers here:

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Finally, listen now for the voice of God. What is God saying about who you are as you wrestle with these realities? Write down some of those answers here:

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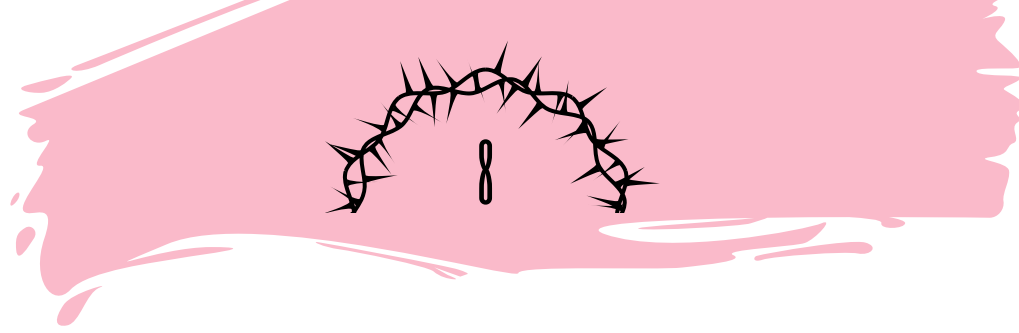
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## Via Crucis 4



### Pray

Jesus, turn and look upon me this day. If I can just be seen, truly seen, by you, I won't need to be seen by any other. Even in my messiest moments, grant me your look of love. And then empower me to offer this same gift to others. May all who are unseen and misseen know they are seen by me.

### Ponder

Read this scene:

*54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. 56 Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." 58 And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." 59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly. (Lk. 22:54-62)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See the high priest's house from a distance; Peter in the courtyard around a fire; Jesus looking at Peter; and Peter looking at Jesus.
- *Hear* the sounds of the crackling fire; the voice of the servant girl; the voice of Peter; the voice of the anonymous accuser; the voice of Peter again; the voice of the third accuser; the voice of Peter again; the sound of the rooster; and the sound of Peter weeping.
- *Feel* the cool of the air; and the heat of the fire.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.
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Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Peter? One of the three accusers of Peter? Jesus? The high priest? An invisible bystander?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is:

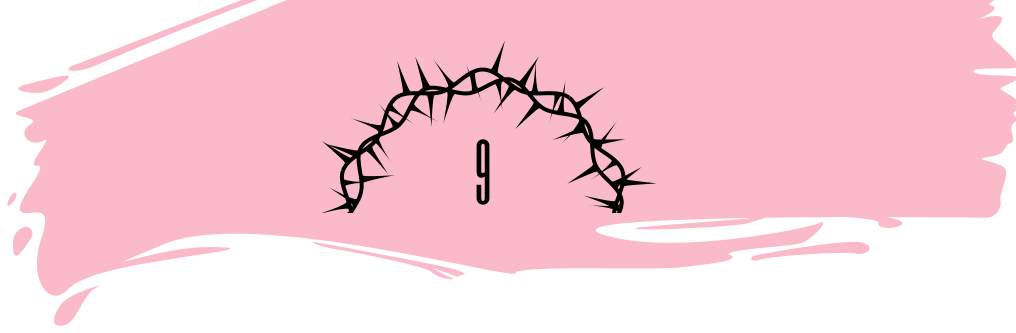
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2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to ...

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## Via Crucis 4 (cont.)

When we stumble on the Way of Love, Jesus looks at us. This look reawakens us to something that had become obscured. Once blind (again), we now see (again) that this is what love looks like ... because this is not a look of loathing. It is a look of love. Love for what Jesus sees in us propels him forward on this path of love. Love for what we see in him propels us forward as well.

When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, it wasn't frustration or fury in his eyes. Had this been the case, Jesus could have just stopped walking this path of passion. But he continued. All the way to the end. Why? Because this was a look of love.

Sometimes we are the *unseen*, painfully ignored and forgotten. Even more, we are the *mis-seen*, wrongly labeled or caricatured. But even in our worst moments, with Jesus, we become the *truly-seen*, fully known and loved.

And we take what we've experienced from Jesus so that we might live like Jesus. As we experience pain in the world from others, we turn and look. We offer even our betrayers the gift of being seen. We offer those who've misstepped our look of love. We offer those who are unseen and misseen the gift of truly being seen.

### Practice

Consider a window.

Through this window Jesus sees you. When Jesus looks and sees you, what does he see (fill in the blanks)? \_\_\_\_\_

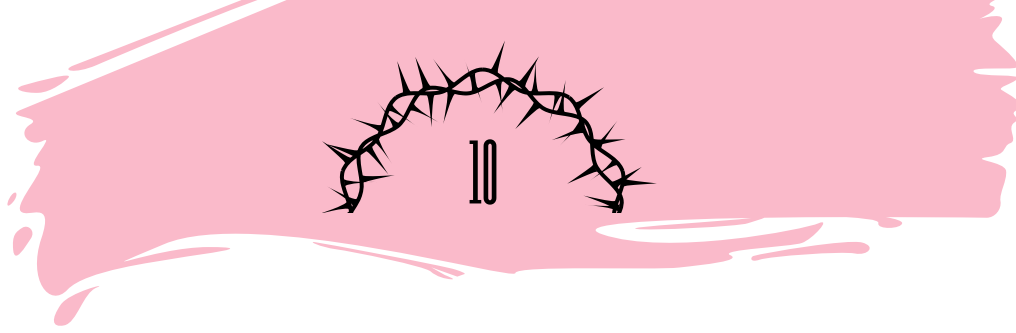
Through this same window you see Jesus. When you look and see Jesus, what do you see (fill in the blanks)? \_\_\_\_\_

And, through this same window you see others. Who is a person or a group that has been unseen or mis-seen by you (fill in the blanks)? \_\_\_\_\_

As you look, again, and truly see that person or group, what do you see (fill in the blanks)? \_\_\_\_\_

Finish by praying for Jesus to help you see yourself and others in the way he does.

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## Via Crucis 5

### Pray

Jesus, calm and quiet my soul. May I not add the words of hate, hurt and horror within me as fuel for the flames others have ignited around me. Instead, let my words be few. May my silence reflect a heart truly centered in and surrendered to you.

### Ponder

Read this scene:

*15 And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." 5 But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. 6 Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. 7 And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. 8 And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. 9 And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. 12 And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" 13 And they cried out again, "Crucify him." 14 And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. (Mk. 15:1-15 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

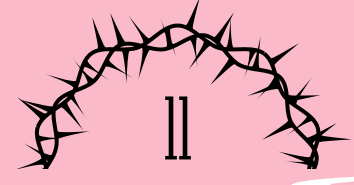
- See the strips binding Jesus as he's led to Pilate; the faces of Pilate and Jesus as the conversation takes place; and the crowd gathered outside.
- Hear the stillness of Jesus' silence; the frustration of Pilate's questions; the passion of the chief priest's accusations; and the roar of the crowd calling "Crucify him!"
- Touch the wounds of Christ as he is scourged.
- Notice what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? Pilate? The chief priest? Are you in the crowd? Are you Barabbas?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_



## Via Crucis 5 (cont.)

Sometimes love speaks up. Sometimes love shuts up. Sometimes love's voice rises above the noise. Sometimes love's voice remains silent within the noise. In order to be heard, there are moments when love must be the loudest voice in the room. In order to be heard, there are moments when love must be the quietest voice in the room.

At his trial, Jesus remains silent. He offers no answer to their accusations. In the turmoil of evil swirling around him, Jesus' silence shows his centeredness. He remains the one asleep in the boat while the storm around him rages. "Here," Jesus silently says, "is what it looks like to find calm in the chaos, peace in the pandemonium."

Pilate questions. The chief priests accuse. The crowd demands. But Jesus, alone, is silent. "Jesus made no further answer." Despite all that is raging around him, there is a calm haven within him. Jesus rests in stillness, confident that he remains in his Father's hands and at the center of the Father's plans. The Way of Love leads through the path of many storms. When they come, be still, and know that our God is still God.

### Practice

What has been stressful or challenging as you've moved more and more into the Way of Love in your own life? What storms have you faced? What storms do you anticipate facing?

Find a quiet space right now and meditate on these words from Psalm 46:10. Say each phrase aloud, quietly, and then spend a couple of minutes in silence before moving on to the next phrase.

"Be still and know that I am God."

Silence.

"Be still and know that I am."

Silence.

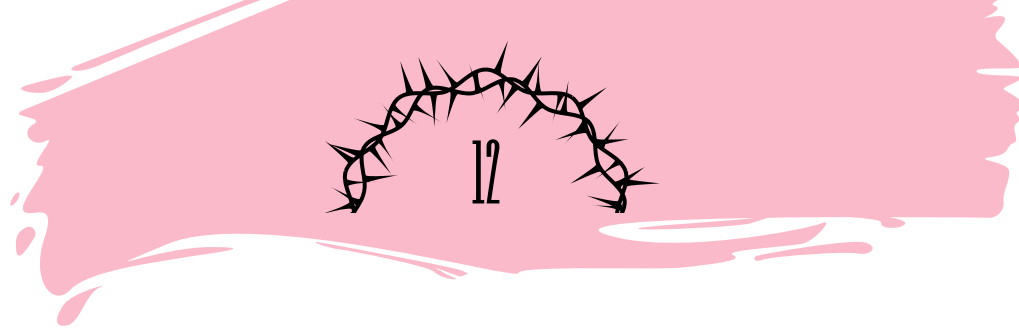
"Be still and know."

Silence.

"Be still."

Silence.

"Be."



## Via Crucis 6

### Pray

Jesus, may all people experience love from me even if it means some people place labels on me. May their little or large labels never limit my love.

### Ponder

Spend some time in this text:

*19 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. 3 They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. 4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" (Jn. 19:1-5 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See the wounds in Jesus from the flogging; the bleeding fingers of the soldiers as they twist a crown of thorns; the bleeding head of Jesus as the crown is fixed on his head; Pilate as he appears before the crowd; Jesus as he stands before the crowd.
- *Hear* the sounds of the soldiers mocking Jesus with "Hail, King of the Jews!"; their fists striking Jesus.
- *Touch* the wounds of Christ; the cloth robe of Christ; the thorns on the crown of Christ.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? Pilate? One of the soldiers? Someone in the crowd?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



## Via Crucis 6 (cont.)

Love long. Love strong. Even when they call you wrong. Nowhere is persistent passion displayed more clearly than at Jesus' coronation. With thorny crown, borrowed robe, jabs and jokes, those around Jesus ridicule Jesus. Still, Jesus walks on. Their painful parody becomes yet another chance for Jesus to love in a way so immeasurable it seems to others unreasonable.

Of all that's done to Jesus by the soldiers at Pilate's, perhaps the worst is the label. With a label they intentionally limit. "King of the Jews" is a moniker meant to mock. Its design is to dehumanize. To them the Christ is just a caricature. Labels always limit. Don't trust them when others place them on you (or others). Don't let yourself place them on others.

You can base your daily decision to walk Jesus' way of love on two things: the insults of those who will look on, or the impact of those you will love on. Focus on the former and you'll never even start. Focus on the latter and you'll never ever stop. Even in Pilate's house, where the compensation for Jesus' life of compassion was humiliation, Jesus walked on. So must we.

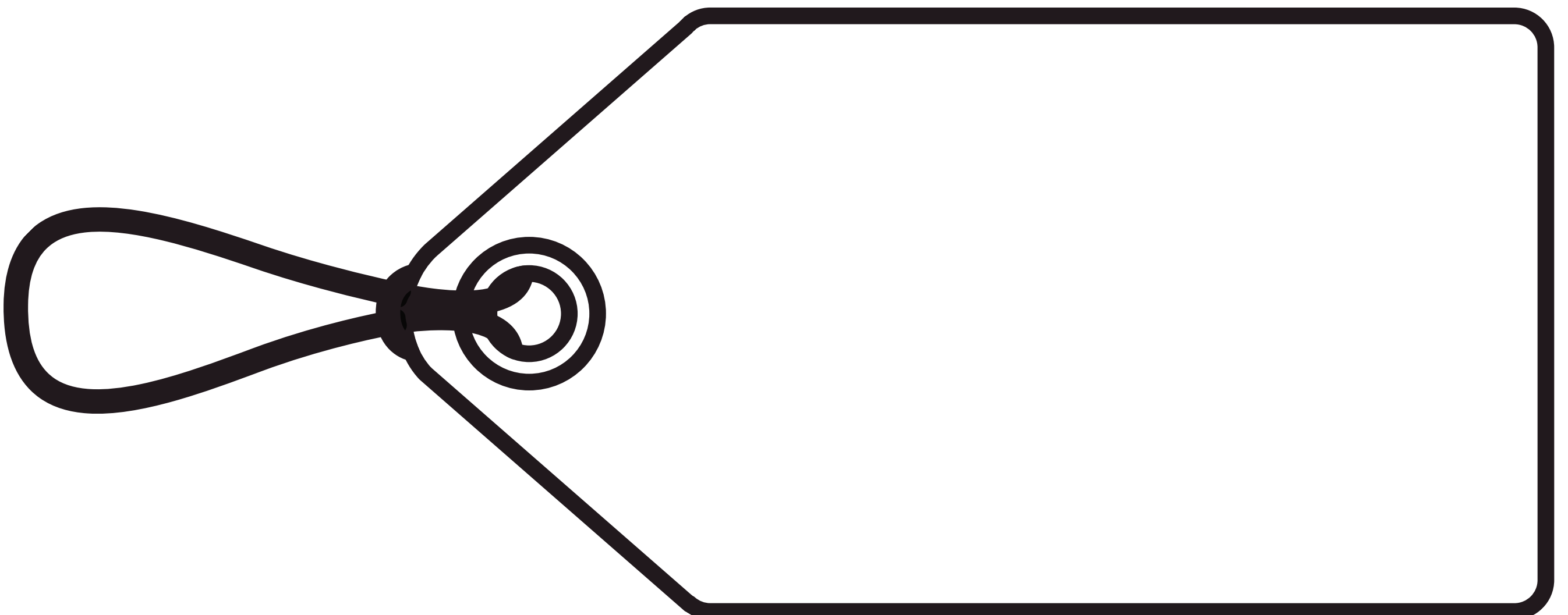
### Practice

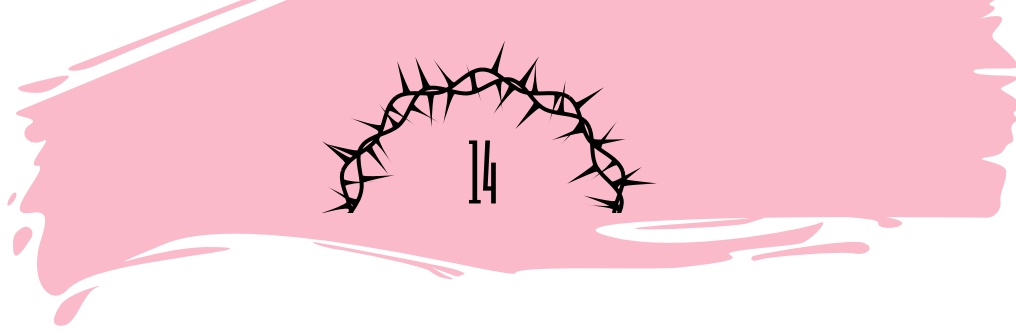
Picture a label. What labels have others put on you, labels that hurt and wounded you (write those words on the label)?

Cross those words out. Now, what labels have you put on others, labels that hurt and wounded others (write those words on the label)?

Cross those words out. Finally, what label is God inviting you to put on yourself (write it on the label and circle it)?

And, what label is God inviting you to put on others (write it on the label and circle it)?





## Via Crucis 7

### Pray

Jesus, I behold much that is hard to hold. From the disquieting news in the headlines, to the discouraging voices in my head to the disappointments held in my heart, I behold much that is hard to hold. I beg you to let me behold you, and in so doing, to see more clearly all else that I behold.

### Ponder

Spend some time in this text:

*14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" 15 They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." 16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, 17 and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. (John 19:14-17 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See Pilate standing before the Jews; Pilate turning Jesus over to the soldiers; and Jesus bearing his own cross.
- Hear Pilate proclaim, "Behold your king!"; the crowd reply "Crucify him!"; and the chief priest answering, "We have no king but Caesar."
- Feel the rough surface of the cross Jesus now bears.
- Notice what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? In Pilate's place? Near the crowd? With the chief priest? With Jesus?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_

Voiced amidst ancient trouble and tumult, Pilate's plea, spoken about Jesus, remains sound advice in every current crisis and chaos: "Behold your king!" Though uttered in ridicule or at least in doubt, the words nonetheless carry undeniable truth. While we walk the way of love, there are many sights, good and bad, that cry for our attention. There are many troubles and triumphs clamoring for our focus. But, with each step, we must, above all, behold our king. With eyes planted surely and squarely upon him, we find the strength and the reason to continue.

## Via Crucis 7 (cont.)

Notice also that in the Christian story, the declaration “We have no king but Caesar” is not the cry of pagans trying to eradicate the faith. It’s the cry of the pious charged with keeping the faith. It’s the voice of people so thirsty for power that will do absolutely anything to defend the faith--even if it means denying the faith. They, too, will find their place upon our path. But even then, especially then, we must continue to behold our king.

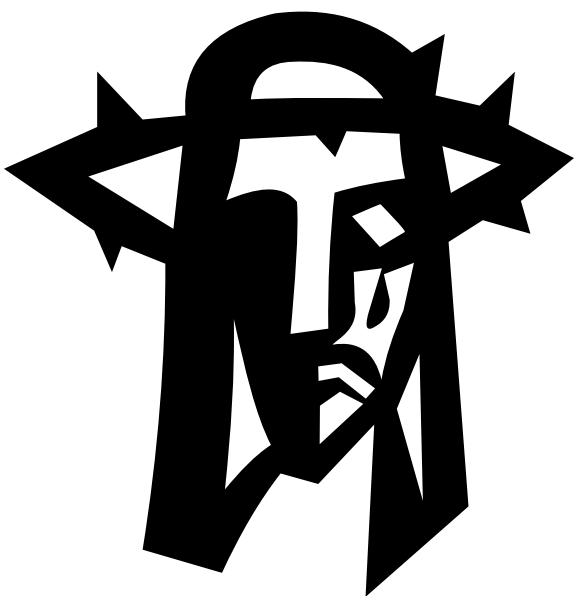
The Via Crucis presents a challenging choice: Caesar or Christ. I can behold Caesar, considering how my loyalty to those temporarily in power may benefit me in the short-term, solidifying my own privilege and place. I can behold Caesar, choosing the certain but short-sighted gains that will be mine by echoing the pride and prejudice of those with the megaphones, microphones, platforms and positions.

Or I can behold Christ, turning away from power and privilege and taking on the burden of living, and dying, for those who rarely, if ever, call the shots. I can behold Christ, choosing to emulate and imitate the one who chose to do what love demands even when doing so left him standing solo.

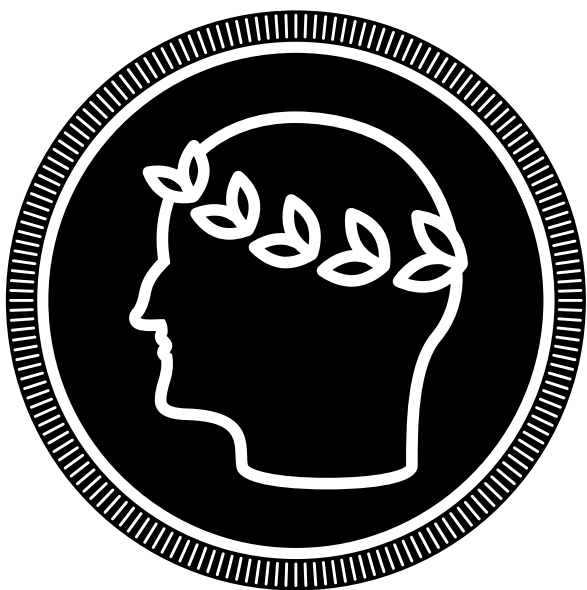
### Practice

How might you finish these statements?

- When I behold Christ, I see \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I behold Christ, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I behold Christ, I think \_\_\_\_\_.
- I behold Christ when I \_\_\_\_\_.



- When I behold Caesar, I see \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I behold Caesar, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- When I behold Caesar, I think \_\_\_\_\_.
- I behold Caesar when I \_\_\_\_\_.





## Via Crucis 8

### Pray

Savior,  
grant me compassion to weep  
for all the burdens others carry today  
along this road  
and courage to bear and share  
at least some of the burdens myself.

### Ponder

Spend some time in this text:

*26 And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.  
27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. (Lk. 23:26-27 ESV)*

- See the cross laid on Simon's shoulders; and the great multitude following Jesus.
- *Hear* the mourning and lamenting of the women.
- *Feel* the rough surface of the cross now carried by Simon.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what feelings emerge as you sit in this scene.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? In Simon's shoes? In the shoes of those following Jesus? In Jesus' shoes? In the shoes of those mourning and lamenting?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Soldiers. Simon. And the Sad.

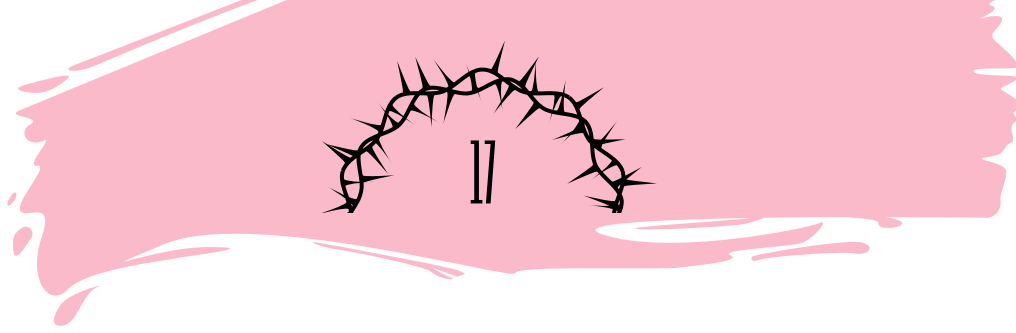
These are Jesus' companions at this point to Golgotha.

Soldiers.

Those accompanying Jesus to Golgotha included soldiers just waiting to nail someone to a cross and Simon, one willing to carry a cross. I've been the former. I'm striving to be the latter. How about you?

Simon.

When the journey to Golgotha begins, Jesus carries his cross. But soon, Simon of Cyrene is called upon to carry Jesus' cross. There are small parts of the journey when you must carry your own cross. But there are other parts when you must carry a cross that belongs to others or let others carry a cross that belongs to you. Not even Jesus could bear his cross alone. The road to Golgotha can only be traveled by a community of those committed to sharing the work of cross-carrying.



## Via Crucis 8 (cont.)

The Sad.

On this road some might be compelled to come and carry our cross for us. But others will be called to another task just as vital: lament. We need people on the road willing to feel for us and with us. The road is made bearable by the presence of people saying with their sighs and cries I see your pain and it matters to me and it moves me. We need to be people on the road who, rather than questioning the legitimacy of another's pain, or simply ignoring it, mourn and lament over it.

On his way to Golgotha, Jesus was accompanied by some who mourned and lamented over him. As we accompany Jesus, sometimes we, like he, also need the Sad. There are times when we need a Simon to carry our cross for us, to take the burdens off our shoulders. But there are other times when we simply need the Sad to cry with us and for us when the cross remains ours to bear alone. We need people who see our pain, allies who acknowledge our aches and companions unafraid to cry. Seek the Sad for yourself. Be the Sad for someone else.

### Practice

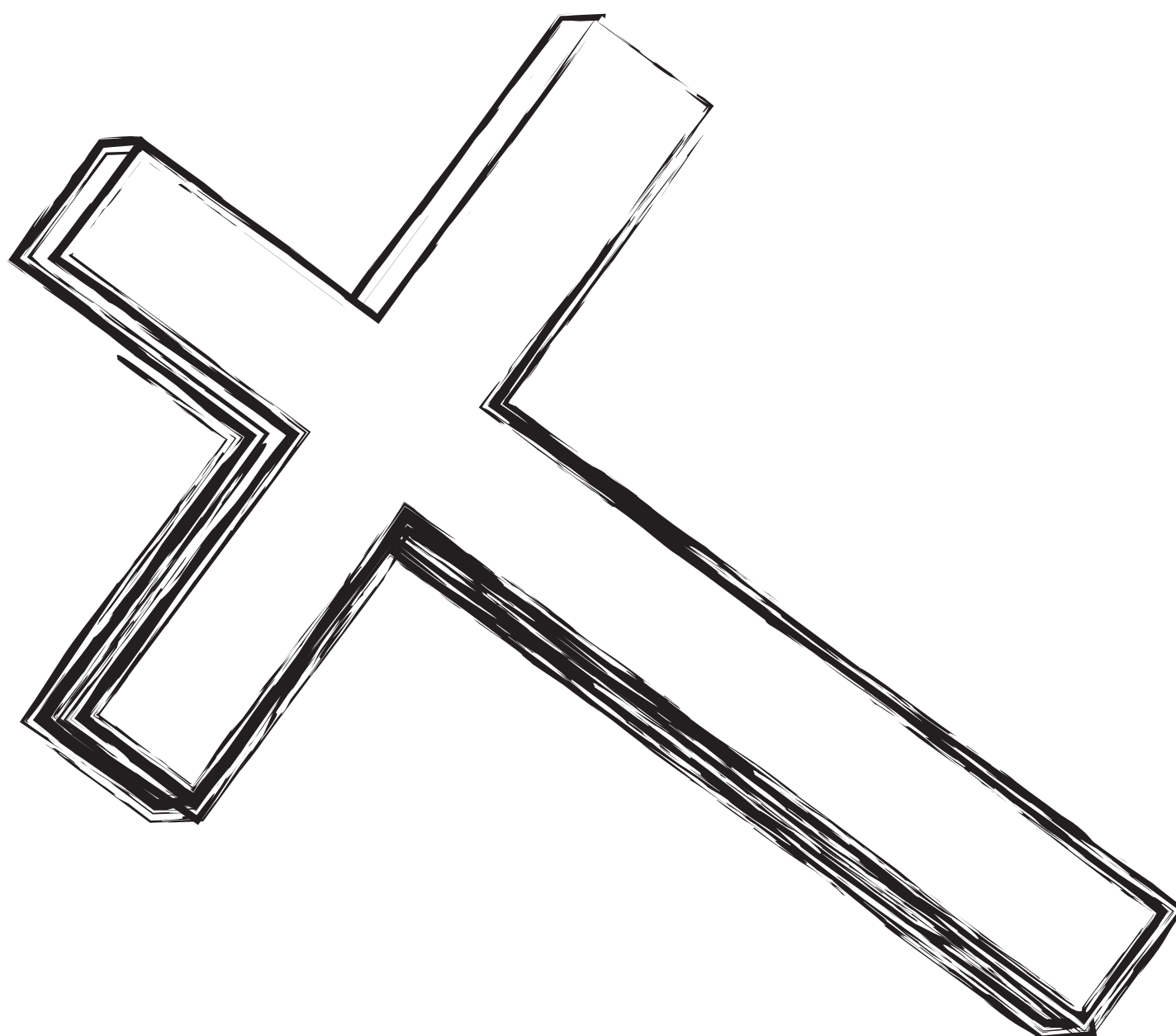
Envision a burden, pain, responsibility or task of yours as a cross.

Write a few words on that cross describing what the burden, pain, responsibility or task is.

Now, consider how you might enlist the help of someone else to carry that cross.

Assume that this burden is not only yours to bear, and that, providentially, God has brought someone into your life who can help bear this cross. Who is that person?

And how might you ask them for help?



## Via Crucis 9

### Pray

Jesus,  
 if I must bear this wound,  
 may it at least become an open wound—  
 the kind that opens my sight  
 to the suffering of others  
 rather than just the misery of me.

### Ponder

Spend time in this scene:

*27 And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. 28 But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Lk. 23:27-31 ESV)*

Imagine this scene, and yourself within it. Bring the scene to life:

- See the specific faces of people making up the great multitude; the facial expressions of the women mourning and lamenting; the imagery of a green and fruitful tree and a dry and dead tree.
- *Hear* the sounds of the mourning and lamenting; the words of Jesus to the women.
- *Feel* the tears on the faces of those weeping.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? In the crowd? One of the women?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus envisions prejudice and injustice as a fire. And some, Jesus laments, can spark that fire from anything. They can even take a person or a circumstance, green with life and beauty, and burn it to the ground--just as the powerful have done with Jesus. Jesus came offering vibrant life and unparalleled beauty. Still, sacred and secular legalists, moralists and nationalists managed to ignite an inferno. The presence of painful flames isn't always a sign you've done something terribly wrong, but a signal that others are calling terribly wrong what you're actually doing right.

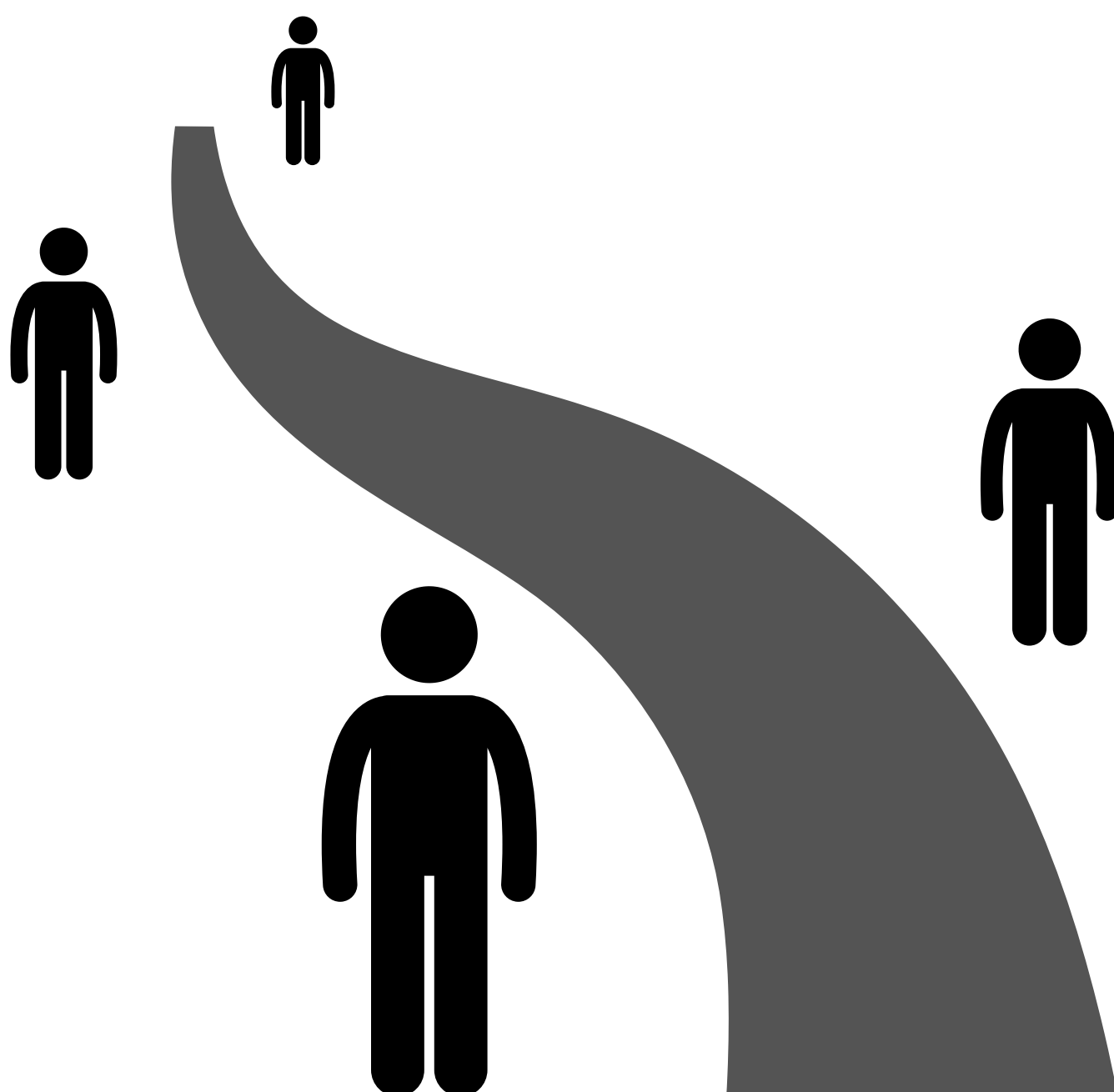
## Via Crucis 9 (cont.)

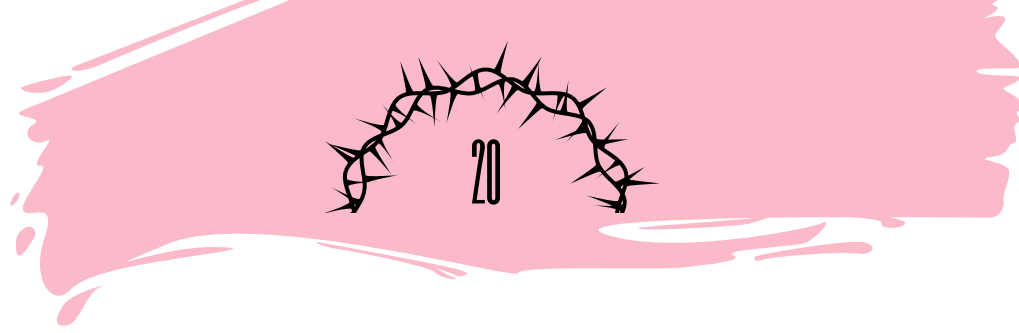
Perhaps not surprisingly, even as Jesus suffers and walks toward deeper suffering at Golgotha, he pauses to attend to others who are suffering and who are walking toward deeper suffering in their future. I often move through suffering with tunnel vision, not noticing anyone or anything except the hurt directly in front of me. But even en route to Golgotha, Jesus moves through suffering with peripheral vision, spotting and serving those nearby who are also hurting. It's sometimes true that there are others suffering just like me--with the same pain as me. It's always true that like me, there are others suffering--and even if their hurt is not the same as mine, I want to learn to regard it nonetheless.

### Practice

Imagine a road. This road represents some season of pain or suffering in your life. Consider the ways this suffering left you with tunnel vision, unable to really see the pain of others who were not on that road.

Now, consider the people standing off the road. Think about the people around you, at work, at school, in your grocery store, in your faith community. What forms of suffering might they be experiencing? Write down words on the people that summarize their experiences of suffering. How might you become more open to the suffering of others, even in the midst of your own pain?





## Via Crucis 10

### Pray

Jesus,  
I've reached the end of a road  
and the end of my rope.  
Here,  
in this place of endings,  
let me find you.  
And let me be found by you.

### Ponder

Imagine this scene:

*33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments (Lk. 23:33-34)*

Bring the scene to life:

- See the rocks, sand and vegetation making up "The Skull"; the three crosses and those upon them; and the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments.
- *Hear* the sound of the spikes driven by soldiers through flesh and wood; Jesus saying, "Father, forgive them ..."; and the rattle of lots cast by the soldiers on the ground.
- *Feel* the rough wood of three crosses; and the materials of Jesus' clothing.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

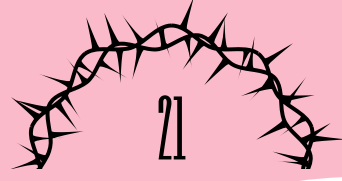
Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus on the cross? Are you one of the others on a cross? Are you a soldier casting lots? Are you one of those in need of forgiveness?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus' journey takes him from Bethlehem, the "house of bread,"—a place of sustenance and provision, to Golgotha, "the skull" (or Calvary, after the Latin word for skull)—a place of death and endings. It is, literally, the end of the road, of all roads, even Jesus' road. Yet even here we find something most surprising. We find Christ.



## Via Crucis 10 (cont.)

There will be times when your journey takes you to Golgothas, places of painful losses and undesired endings. When those seasons come, and you find yourself among the defeated or deprived, know this: you also find yourself with Christ. Some journeys inevitably lead to a Golgotha. But every Golgotha leads inevitably to Jesus. The end of the road is where you're most likely to encounter the Christ.

And the Christ we encounter here exceeds all expectations. By the time Jesus journeys from his birth at Bethlehem to his crucifixion at Calvary, he has suffered incalculable losses, disappointments, criticisms, rejections and indignities. We might expect to find a hardened and bitter Christ ready to lash out at us or give up on us. Instead we find, "Father, forgive them." When I feel worthless because of the wounds I've inflicted yet again upon Jesus, this is the Jesus I long to meet. And when I feel wrathful because of the wounds other's have inflicted upon me, this is the Jesus I long to be.

### Practice

Consider for a moment people who've hurt you or disappointed you in some way. How might you complete these sentences?

Father, forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

Father, forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

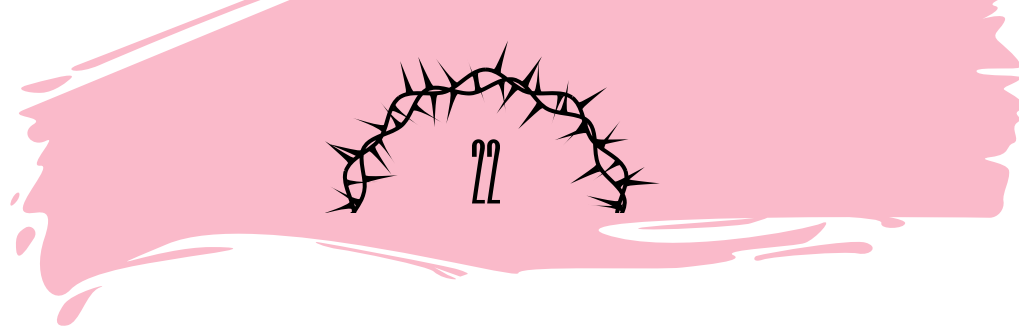
Father, forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

Consider for a moment people who've been hurt by you or disappointed by you in some way. How might you complete these sentences?

Father, may \_\_\_\_\_ forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_.

Father, may \_\_\_\_\_ forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_.

Father, may \_\_\_\_\_ forgive me for \_\_\_\_\_.



## Via Crucis 11

### Pray

I've often forgotten the many who need to be remembered. But you, Jesus, have always remembered us in our forgottenness.

### Ponder

Spend time in this text:

*39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43 ESV)*

Bring the scene to life:

- See the three on their crosses; the face of the one asking to be remembered by Jesus; and the face of Jesus as he promises to be with the one asking to be remembered.
- *Hear* the anger in the voice of the criminal critiquing Jesus; the despair in the voice of the other criminal; the tenderness in Jesus' voice as he responds.
- *Feel* the rough wood of all three crosses.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? The first criminal? The second? Someone else?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

There is no cry more forlorn than the criminal's on the cross: "Jesus, remember me." We fear few things more than being erased, canceled or forgotten. And there is no comfort more fulfilling than Jesus' on the cross: "Today you will be with me." Know without any doubt this day that even if others treat you as out of sight and out of mind, Jesus will be right by your side. The cruel neglect of others may have dismembered you. Let the caring notice of Jesus re-member you.



## Via Crucis 11 (cont.)

Consider how the plea from the criminal on the cross mirrors the plea of many today: “remember me.” The aging resident in a senior living center. The young child with uncaring parents. The transgender teen bullied by peers. The war-torn refugee. The lonely neighbor. The remote worker. The patient. The prisoner. Consider what it means for your life to say to them what Jesus said to the criminal: “Today you will be with me.” The more the forgotten know that we, the followers of Jesus, remember, the more the forgotten will know that Jesus himself remembers.

### Practice

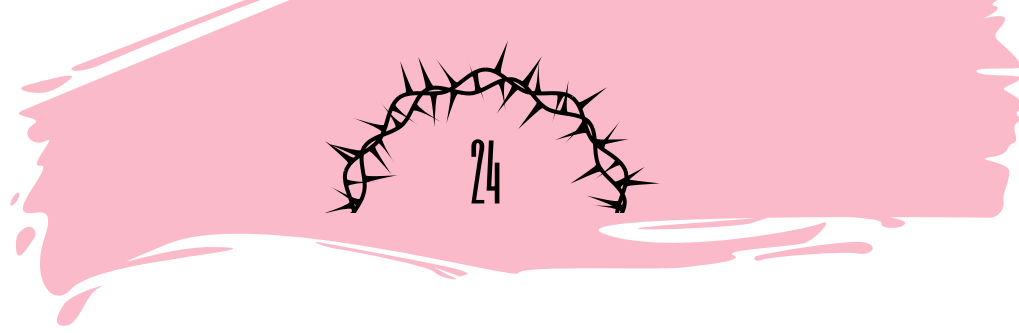
Consider the last two months.

What are some specific ways in which it feels that Jesus has truly remembered you and been with you?

Consider the upcoming two months.

What are some specific ways in which God may be inviting you to remember a specific person, circumstance or group?





## Via Crucis 12

### Pray

Thank you Jesus for the community I find at the foot of your cross.

### Ponder

Spend time in this text:

*25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (Jn. 19:25-27 ESV).*

Bring the scene to life:

- See Mary, Mary and John beneath the cross of Jesus; and the face of Jesus as he speaks to Mary and to John; the face and body posture of Mary and John as Jesus speaks to them.
- *Hear* the emotion in Jesus' voice as he speaks to Mary and to John.
- *Feel* the rough wood of the cross.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? Mary? John?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus sees John. Jesus sees Mary. Two people connected by the crisis unfolding before them. A crisis involving the torment of the one who is treasured by them both. The disciple loved by Jesus is also the disciple who loves Jesus. And Mary who parents Jesus is also Mary who prizes Jesus. Both now behold their beloved broken before them. Both languish in a loss that links them. Mary and John are bound by broken hearts as they watch the breakdown of Jesus. And what Jesus wants them to know is that they are not alone.

"John, do you see this woman? She drinks from the cup of despair you also drain. This common calamity makes her your kindred."

"Mother, do you see this man? He moans with the same groans erupting from your own throat. This hardship makes you part of his household."

Jesus's cross, and all our many crosses, are not places of isolation but association. Suffering initiates us into the guild of the grief-stricken. The society of sufferers. What Jesus does at his place of pain is create a place for all in pain, a *communio iuxta crucem* (a community at the cross). Community is found at the foot of the crucified. A family of the forlorn. A fellowship of the forsaken. Come in your calamity to his cross. You will not be alone.

## Via Crucis 12 (cont.)



This is a truth meant to be experienced. We are to breathe in this oxygen when burdens have taken our breath away:

I am not alone.

Here, at the cross, I find solidarity with the Crucified One.

Here, at the cross, I find solidarity with his crucified ones.

I am linked with all who have ever lamented.

I am bound with all who have ever been broken.

Jesus folds me into a forsaken family.

I am not alone.

People in pain are fixed on Jesus not because he promises prosperity but because he understands pain. There is a unique and unfathomable fellowship that occurs between those who share suffering. Jesus left the world of heaven and entered into a world of hurt to show us that we are not alone—he suffers with us. His cross now stands as a place of sorrowful and satisfying solidarity. It is the space from which we, too, enter into the pain of other people. It is the space from which we, too, bind ourselves to others in the household of hardship.

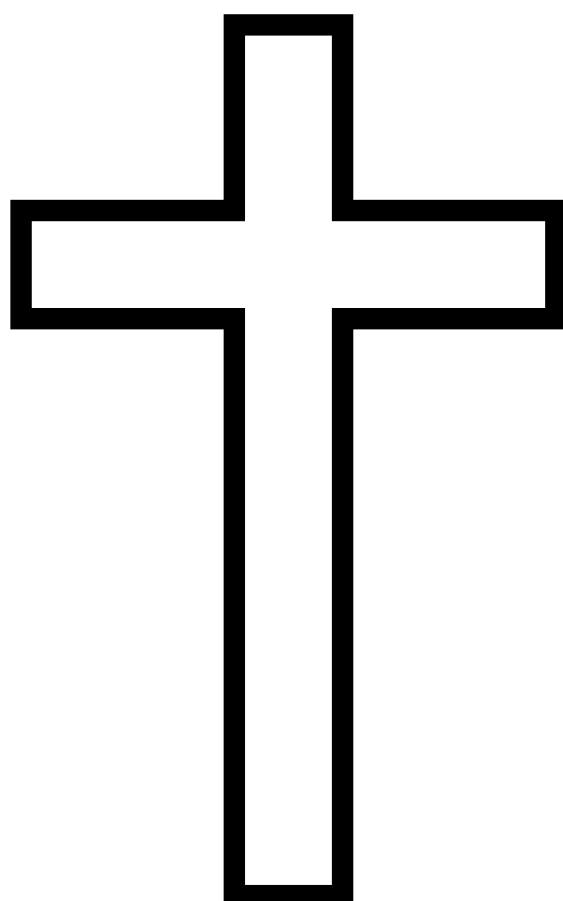
### Practice

Picture a cross and a handful of people standing around the cross.

Imagine that this represents your own *communio iuxta crucem*, community at the cross.

Write the names of those who are part of your household of hardship, those who share in the trials and pains of your life.

Give thanks to God for each one of them today.





## Via Crucis 13

### Pray

Jesus, help me, like you,  
to release all that I carry--  
every care and concern--  
into the hands of our Father.

### Ponder

Spend time in this text:

*44 It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46 ESV)*

Bring the scene to life:

- See the darkness approaching, then covering the land; the curtain in the temple torn; Jesus breathing his last.
- *Hear* the sound of the tearing curtain in the temple; the loud cry of Jesus; the sound of his final breath.
- *Feel* the coolness that covers you when the darkness descends upon the land.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Jesus? In the crowd?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

Henri Nouwen writes of attending a circus performance in Germany. He particularly enjoyed the trapeze artists called the Flying Rodleighs. After the performance, Nowen asked the leader of the troop about their craft. Here was his response:



## Via Crucis 13 (cont.)

“As a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public might think I am the star, but the real star is my catcher...The secret is that the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly I have simply to stretch out my arms and hands and wait for him to catch me. The worst thing I can do is to try to catch the catcher. A flyer must fly and a catcher must catch and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms, that the catcher will be there for him.”

Jesus has complete trust in his catcher. Through prayer Jesus stretches out his arms and flies. He knows the Father will catch him. There is no doubt in his mind.

Sometimes there is nothing we can do but trust that those hands still hold. We may not be able to change a thing about our situation. We may have no control over the source of our suffering. We may not be able to pause the pain. But one thing we can do: fall into the Father's hands. We can entrust what is most valuable and most endangered into his hands.

### Practice

For centuries, one way Christians have prayed through the five wounds of Christ on the cross. The updated version below invites you to use your body (the five fingers on your hand) and ties each wound of Christ to one part of Jesus' Great Command, the call to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength and the call to love your neighbor as yourself.

Close your eyes. Breathe slowly, in through the nose, out through the mouth. Hold one hand loosely in a fist. Extend the thumb outward. As you do, picture the first wound of Christ, the wound on Jesus' right hand/ wrist, where the spike holds that hand to the wooden cross. Pray something like this: *“Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others in a way that engaged all your strength--your talents, abilities, energy, resources and even your body. Forgive me for times when my own love is weak and anemic; reserved or compartmentalized; for my misuse or even abuse of my own gifts, energy and body. Grant me the ability to love all--myself included--with tenacity and resilience; to marshall everything I have and am for the good of God and others.”*

Keeping your thumb extended, extend your index finger. As you do, picture the second wound of Christ, the wound on his left hand/ wrist. Pray something like this: *“Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others with all your mind; for the ways you are so attentive to us and thoughtful of us. Forgive me for times when I've been preoccupied with so much that I was thoughtless or forgetful of so many, including you. Grant me the ability to think good things of others, to be mindful of them and always present to them.”*



## Via Crucis 13 (cont.)

Keeping your thumb and index finger extended, extend your middle finger. As you do, picture the third wound of Christ, the wound on his right foot/ ankle, where the spike holds that foot to the cross. Pray something like this: *“Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others with all your soul, for a love that is not superficial or merely external, but that emanates from your very core. Forgive me for times when my own love for you or others has been skin-deep and lightweight. Grant me the ability to love from the inside out, to have a dedication that is authentic and genuine, through and through.”*

Extend your ring finger. As you do, picture the fourth wound of Christ, the wound on his left foot/ ankle. Pray something like this: *“Thank you Jesus for a love that envelopes every neighbor, even me. Thank you for enlarging neighbor so that it includes all and excludes none. Forgive me for times when I’ve narrowed that definition and reserved my love only for those like me. Grant me the capacity to tear down those walls and let love loose, to love my neighbor as I love myself, no matter who that neighbor is.”*

Finally, extend your pinky finger. As you do, picture the fifth wound of Christ, the wound on his side, piercing his heart. Pray something like this: *“Thank you Jesus for a love that involves your entire heart. You love so deeply even when it costs so dearly. The constancy of fervor from you brings me constantly back to you. Forgive me for times when I’ve been half-hearted, when I’ve held back parts of my heart from you and others, when my own devotion has not beaten as loudly as your own. Grant me the ability to live and love whole-heartedly, to be emotionally available to myself, you and others. May my every day pulse with passion.”*

## Via Crucis 14

### Pray

Lord Jesus,  
you're there  
when everything else has ended  
and you're there  
before anything has started.

### Ponder

Spend time in this text:

*42 And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. 45 And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. 46 And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid. (Mk. 15:42-47 ESV)*

Bring the scene to life:

- See Joseph wrapping Jesus' body in a linen shroud; the body of Jesus in the rock tomb; the stone rolled against the entrance.
- *Hear* the sound of the cloth as it is wrapped around Jesus' body; the grind of the stone as it is rolled to close Jesus' tomb.
- *Feel* the weight of Jesus' body held by Joseph; the roughness of the rock tomb.
- *Notice* what your body senses and what emotions emerge.

Where do you find yourself in this scene? Are you Joseph? Pilate? Mary Magdalene or Mary the mother of Jesus? Someone else?

Take some time to fill in these blanks:

1 - What most catches my attention in this scene is: \_\_\_\_\_.

2 - Ponder what you wrote for a moment, asking God its significance for you. I believe that through what I wrote in #1 God is inviting me to \_\_\_\_\_.

The tomb in which Jesus lies is like the stillness between air breathed out but not yet drawn back in. Jesus' grave is the lull that lies between exhale and inhale. His stone bed is the poverty of lungs released and the promise of lungs refilled.



## Via Crucis 14 (cont.)

We must hold this tension as we, too, sit in the tomb, alone with Jesus. We cannot hurry too quickly to inhale--repressing our emptiness while rushing to fill it. We cannot linger too long in exhale--denying ourselves what we truly, desperately, need. We must allow ourselves, just as Father and Spirit allowed Son, to be present to the polarity of both an ending and a beginning. In this moment, we dwell in the wilderness of something that's just stopped and something that's just about to start. We feel both heavy from the anguish and dizzy from the anticipation. The echo of that final tick is still ringing in our ears while the hints of the next tock starts tingling in our ears.

### Practice

Find a comfortable and quiet place. Close your eyes. Breath out. Breath in. Do this several times in a row. In through the nose. Out through the mouth.

After you establish a relaxed rhythm, become present to the pause between your exhale and inhale. In this pause, silently repeat these two words "stop" and "start." Exhale. Hold, while silently repeating "stop, start." Inhale. Do this several times in a row.

Take a few moments to reflect. What seems to have ended in this season of your life? Write a few words down. And, what may be about to start in this season of your life? Write a few words down.