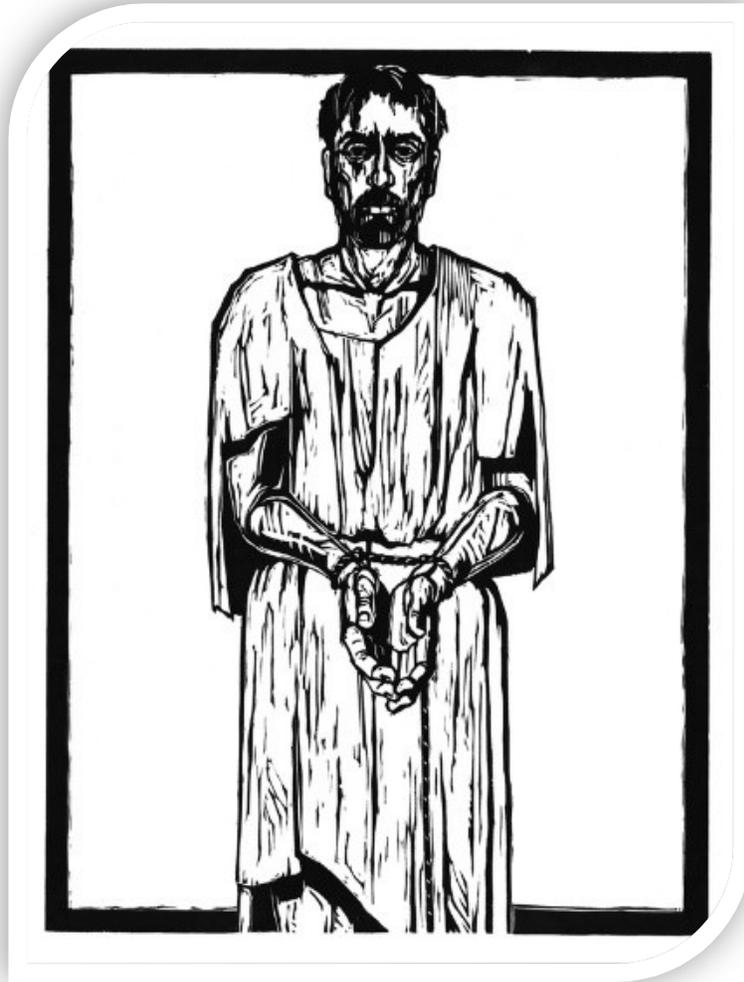


Stations of The Cross for Our Times



Contemporary Meditations and Prayers on the Sufferings of Jesus

March 31, 2021 | 6:00pm

The Reverend Daniel Leatherman, Priest-in-Charge

Stations of The Cross for Our Times

From the earliest days of Christianity, Christian pilgrims to the holy city of Jerusalem sought to walk in the footsteps of Jesus tracing the path of his crucifixion. Tradition holds that Mary, the mother of Jesus, made daily visits to the sites of her Son's sufferings, death, and resurrection following his ascension into heaven. Now, more than 2,000 years later, Christians are still trying to grasp the saving gift of Jesus by meditating on or re-enacting his crucifixion through what has come to be known as the stations of the cross.

ABOUT THESE STATIONS:

The original version of the *Stations of the Cross for Our Times* was devised by the Catholic Diocese of Ossory, Ireland. It is revised and adapted for our use using material from *Praying the Stations of the Cross – Finding Hope in a Weary Land*, by Katherine Sonderegger & Margaret Adams Parker (Eerdmans Publishing, 2019.)

The **sung response** given at the end of each Station is taken from the well-known spiritual song '*Were You There*'.

The images of the **Stations of the Cross** that accompany each written reflection are the work of Margaret Adams Parker.

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Stations of the Cross for Our Times

AN INTRODUCTION:

We gather as Christians united in prayer. In the midst of our busy lives we pause to pray as we reflect on the suffering journey of Christ.

As we accompany Jesus on his journey to Calvary, let us take a moment to remember how difficult that journey was. He carried his cross through the narrow-crowded streets of Jerusalem. It was Passover time and so the city was full of people, many of whom mocked, jostled, and took pleasure in watching as Jesus struggled with his heavy burden. The way was often steep. The journey that Jesus made on that day remains a symbol of Christianity in the world, as it struggles with its own crosses, failures, and the challenges of modern life. The streets of our towns are filled with people who carry their personal crosses, who are bruised, battered and broken. Through these Stations of the Cross, Jesus is inviting us to journey with him and to reflect on his suffering as it continues in the lives of his people. In solidarity with all who suffer, let us pray that we will be open to whatever he wants us to see, hear and understand.



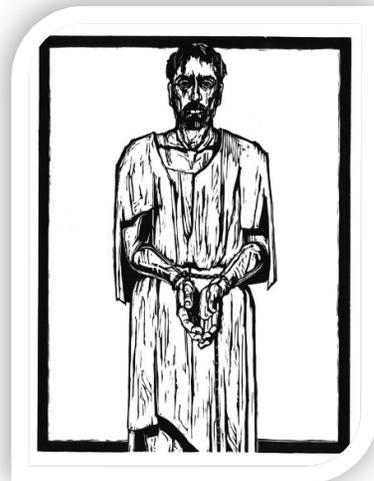
1: Jesus is Condemned to Die

Scripture:

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.'

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!'

-John 19:1-5



Response:

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

We Name the
Crosses of Today:

Jesus is condemned unjustly by those who did not understand him and by those who were frightened of what he did and said. We continue to condemn people unjustly today. People are condemned because of their race, gender, orientation, and beliefs; because they are born with a disability, because they do not conform to our way of thinking, the list is endless. There are also those who have been justly condemned, who have been found guilty, served their sentence and asked for forgiveness. Does our society really forgive? Does it really believe that people can change, or do we continue to condemn them over and over again?

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we also remember those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: for all who are imprisoned, justly or unjustly; for those who hold others prisoner; for all those who are tortured or who torture; for those held prisoner by disease, poverty, famine, or disaster; for those bound by fear and loneliness. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when Jesus was condemned?

2: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

Scripture:

Then [Pilate] handed [Jesus] over to [the Jewish leaders] to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

-John 19:16-17



Response:

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

We Name the Crosses of Today:

The cross is more than a piece of wood. It is everything that makes life difficult. There are burdens that we all carry, some are very obvious and others we take great care to hide. There are the burdens of illness, pain and disability, of old age, dependence, and caring for someone who no longer knows who we are. There are the burdens of the constant fear, of loneliness and of isolation. The invitation of Jesus on the cross is to hand over these burdens to him.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all who carry heavy burdens; for those weight down by fear; for those living with pain, disease, or long illness; for those caring for the sick; for those keeping watch over the dying; for those homeless who must bear their possessions on their backs. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when they laid the cross on him?

3: Jesus Falls for the First Time



Scripture

Then [Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.... He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it

-Mark 8:31, 34-35

Response:

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

We Name the Crosses of Today:

We look at Jesus fall under his cross. He might have fallen into the gutter or be slouched into a doorway on skid row. He doesn't look much like God there, but he didn't look like God when he fell into the dirt on the way to Calvary either. The crowds look on with disdain at this man whom they see as a sinner, who has been condemned to death by the authorities.

Like the crowd, we often have only condemnation and rejection for those we see as sinners. We judge them without knowing about their trials, scourging and crowning with thorns. What do we do to help them?

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all whose task and sorrows are beyond what they can bear; for those carrying the burden of illness; for those fallen beneath the weight of poverty or homelessness; for those stricken by shame, guilt, or fear; for those suffering from violence, oppression, or degradation. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?

4: Jesus Meets his Mother

Scripture:

What can I say for you, to
compare you?
O daughter Jerusalem?
To what can I liken you, that I
may comfort you,
O virgin daughter Zion?
For as the sea is your ruin;
Who can heal you?
-Lamentations 2:13



Response:

*We adore you O Christ, and we
praise you, because by your Holy
Cross you have redeemed the world*

We Name the
Crosses of Today:

Jesus carries the heaviest burden of the loss of his family. The violence inflicted upon him etched into the very heart of his mother, as she watched the agony of her son. We see Mary's pain in the mothers and fathers who watch their children struggle with addiction and mental illness; in the women and men who suffer violence and the ongoing threat of violence in their home from a partner, spouse or child. We see Mary's pain in the child coping with the breakdown of a parent's marriage; in the couple trying desperately to rebuild their relationship and family anew.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all who witness the suffering of those they love; for all those who watch beside a sickbed; for all those who keep vigil with the dying; for those who fear for a missing or injured child; for those who grieve for a loved one in danger. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when Mary met her son?

5: Simon Helps Jesus

Scripture:

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

-Luke 23:26



Response:

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

We Name the
Crosses of Today:

We see Jesus who lies hidden and unknown in the image of every person in need. We see human suffering in the faces of strangers, in the faces of those struggling for freedom; in the faces of those dealing with the loss of life and destruction of property. People we know of, but do not know, must live with the aftermath of the ravages and destructive forces of nature – coping with floods and drought, with the devastating effects of climate change, with the effects of a global pandemic.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for those who carry our burdens; for those who stand beside us in times of sickness and danger; for those who shield us from harm; for those whose love supports and carries us across dark places; for those whose hands prepare for us food and shelter; for ourselves, that we may have the grace to allow others to assist us. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when Simon helped the Lord?

6: A Woman Wipes the Face of Jesus



Scripture:

My eyes flow with tears
because of the destruction of
my people.

My eyes will flow with out
ceasing, with out respite,
Until the Lord from heaven
Looks down and sees.

My eyes cause me grief

At the fate of all the young women in the city.

-Lamentations 3:48-51

Response:

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

We Name the
Crosses of Today:

Tradition has named the woman in the crowd who wiped the bleeding brow of Jesus as Veronica, but we really don't know her name. The Holy One of God himself is afflicted and suffering. She is among the few women in the Passion to braved the crowd to perform an act of love. We are called by Jesus to follow in his footsteps. But we are often afraid. We fear what others think or will say because of our faith. Can we, like her, see the suffering before us and reach out in love?

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all who comfort the suffering; for those who minister to the sick and dying; for those who accept the help we offer; for those who support the unlovely and the unloved; for those who go into dark places to bring them light; for those who know in us the goodness and beauty we do not see. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when the woman wiped his face?

7: Jesus Falls for the Second Time



Scripture:

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall may many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

-Isaiah 53:10-12

Response:

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

We Name the
Crosses of Today:

All around us people are overburdened by the crosses they carry; they struggle and sometimes fall. There are those who have lost their jobs and feel that they have little hope of finding another, those who live with the prospect of unemployment, and those who struggle to keep others in work. There are those who suffer because of failures in our financial, health and political systems. Jesus is with each one of us however we fall and there he chooses to love and save us.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all those stricken and afflicted; for those who have fallen over and again; for those felled by pain and illness; for those struggling with addiction; for those immobilized by fear; for those who struggle to stand upright beneath their burdens. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

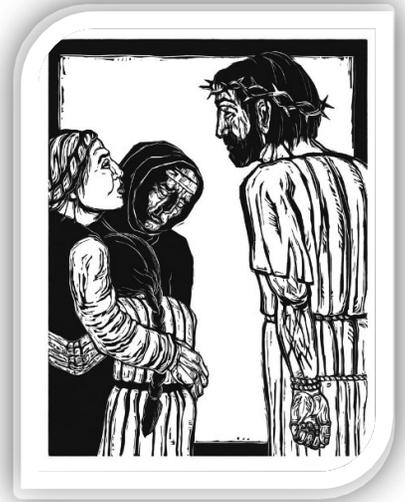
Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when Jesus fell again?

8: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem



Scripture: 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?” -Luke 23:27-31

Response: *We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world*

We Name the Crosses of Today: Look at Jesus and listen to his message for us today. Weep for the children who are abused. Weep for the women who are victimised. Weep for men and women who suffer from the tyranny of today’s body image that controls their lives and prevents them from feeling lovable. Weep for the young who cannot find a job or a way in life. Weep for the old who are forgotten. Weep for people who starve in the shadow of abundance. Weep for people who are homeless, in exile or seeking refuge.
Weep for them.

We Pray: Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all who face darkness in their lives; for those who fear for themselves and their future; for those grief stricken for their children and grandchildren; for those who live in times of war and trifle for those who live in places of famine or disaster. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response: *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

Sung Response: *Were you there when the women wept for him?*

9: Jesus Falls for a Third Time

Scripture:

Then deep from the earth you shall speak, from low in the dust your words shall come; your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

-Isaiah 29:4



Response:

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

We Name the Crosses of Today:

Many in our world today feel that they are at that moment of final falling, that their burden is too much to carry. They cannot bear any more. Crushed by the weight of their cross they feel unable to get up, unable to go on. Some may look for relief in addiction. Some may look to escape through harming themselves or suicide.

In Jesus we find our hope and our encouragement.

The third fall of Jesus reminds us that even in our moment of complete helplessness, or our experiences of depression, in our own Calvary, we can stand up again.

Jesus is with us and Jesus is our strength.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day for all those who are brought low; for those imprisoned by despair; for those with no hope for recovery or healing for those ground down by poverty, fear, or illness; for those who are wounded by oppression, violence, or words of hate. We pray for all those we name now, either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when Jesus fell again?

10: Jesus is Stripped of His Clothing



Scripture: 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." And that is what the soldiers did.
-John 19:23-25

Response: *We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world*

We Name the Crosses of Today: Look at Jesus and the absolute indignity inflicted upon him by society. Jesus continues to be stripped of his dignity in those who have their good name taken from them and the details of their lives exposed through the media. Society takes on the role of judge and jury as we curiously devour the details. Jesus is stripped again when men, women and children are portrayed as objects in social media, magazines, DVDs, on television and the internet.

We Pray: Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: For all those who are stripped and exposed; for those who have lost their homes and possessions; for those who are shorn of their name and reputation; for those whose sense of their own worth has been taken from them; for those without health, or home, or companionship. We pray also for all those we name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response: *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

Sung Response: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

11: Jesus is Nailed to The Cross

Scripture:

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

Luke 23:33



Response:

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

We Name the Crosses of Today:

Jesus continues to be crucified in the children who die in every minute of hunger in our world. He is crucified in all who are maimed, damaged and displaced because of war. He is crucified in all who are marginalised in our society because of their race, sexuality or gender. He is crucified in those who are abused. He is crucified in those who are trafficked across the world. He is crucified in the exploitation of the earth and its resources.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: for all those who are pierced by fear; for those scourged by poverty, disease, or exploitation; for those transfixed by anger, hatred, or self-loathing; for those held hostage by oppression or prejudice. We pray also for all those we name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

12: Jesus Dies on The Cross



Scripture: Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

-Luke 23:46-47

Response: *We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world*

We Name the Crosses of Today: There is much to seek forgiveness for in our world today, hunger, poverty, violence, abuse, war, neglect, corruption, the list seems endless. Each one of us praying these stations could continue the list on our own behalf and indeed on behalf of those who have hurt us. As Jesus dies on Calvary, he challenges us to love our enemies, to let go of hurt, to ask for forgiveness and when we cannot find it in our hearts to forgive, to ask God to do it for us.

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

We Pray: Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: for those who are crucified; for those held in solitary confinement; for all those tortured and slain by a perversion of justice; for those executed; for those who torture; for those who kill. We pray also for all those we name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response: *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

Sung Response: *Were you there when Jesus breathed his last?*

13: Jesus is Placed in the Arms of his Mother



Scripture: And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." Luke 2:33–35

Response: *We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world*

We Name the Crosses of Today: Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother. Mary's grief is our grief too. As Mary cradles the lifeless body of her son and offers him back to the Father, she stands with all parents who have held their children close to them in death:
those lost through accidents or acts of violence,
those who have died by suicide,
those who died suddenly or after illness.
Mary grieves with all who sorrow for loved ones: parents, siblings, family members, friends.

We Pray: Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: for all those who mourn the death of one they loved; for those who hold in their arms the body of a loved one; for those who feel their lives broken and shattered; for those who cannot see their life beyond this death; for those who cannot grieve or weep. We pray also for all those we name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response: *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

Sung Response: *Were you there when Mary held her son?*

14: Jesus is Laid in The Tomb



Scripture:

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

-Mark 15:42-47

Response:

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

We Name the Crosses of Today:

There are times when we are overcome by the darkness of the tomb, by the countless deaths that we experience each day, but the answer to all our grieving and despair lies in this place. The world is now the tabernacle of God. The grain of wheat sown in darkness and in death has indeed yielded a rich harvest. Our presence here gives witness to that. Jesus' death was not in vain.

We Pray:

Lord Christ, as we meditate on your passion, may we remember also those for whom you died. Hear our prayers this day: for those with lives cut short; for those who die unmourned, outliving everyone they knew or loved; for those who die in peace and hope; for those who die in fear or pain or suffering; for those who stand watch at the grave; for those who fear the finality of this loss. We pray also for all those we name either aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

Spoken Response:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Sung Response:

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Let Us Pray:

O Lord God, our times are in your hands. You alone know in full the seasons of our lives, the days of joy and strength renewed, the night seasons of sorrow and aching loss, the quick exaltation of gifts given and received, the light restored after sickness or wrong. You encompass them in your greatness, O Lord; you alone make them small, at rest in the palm of your hand.

Bring us, we pray, into your presence where this pilgrimage of ours will end. Let this way of the cross rise up to your throne, and may we even now glimpse our little deaths turned over into life, even as your Son went down among the lost to bring up the prisoners and set them free. Make his way a blessing and guide for us, and grant us grace to be light along this way for those who have wandered away, and to welcome them home, as you have welcomed us.

All this we ask in the name of the One who is Lord of all seasons and days, the man of sorrows and Lord of glory, even Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, *V Bishop of Hawai'i*

ST. TIMOTHY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

98-939 Moanalua Road | 'Aiea, HI 96701 | (808)488-5747

Office@sttimothysaiea.org | www.sttimothysaiea.org



St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Aiea



Sttimothysaiea



@sttimothysaiea

The Rev. Daniel L. Leatherman, *Vicar/Priest in Charge*

Angie Delight, *Organist*