

# The Way of the Cross



## A Good Friday Walk

A series of meditations on

Christ's Passion and Death

April 2, 2021

Provided by

# Hagerstown Area Religious Council

## **Dear participant in the Crosswalk**

This series of meditations is intended for any who wish to commemorate Christ's passion and death on the cross by its use.

During this time of social restriction necessitated by the threat of COVID, we offer this Crosswalk format, altered for use by individuals or small groups.

These readings can be printed and are ideally suited for a garden, a park or other peaceful outdoor setting. In past years we have held this service at the City Park. If you would like to walk the meditations there, please see the last page of this booklet for a suggested walking path.

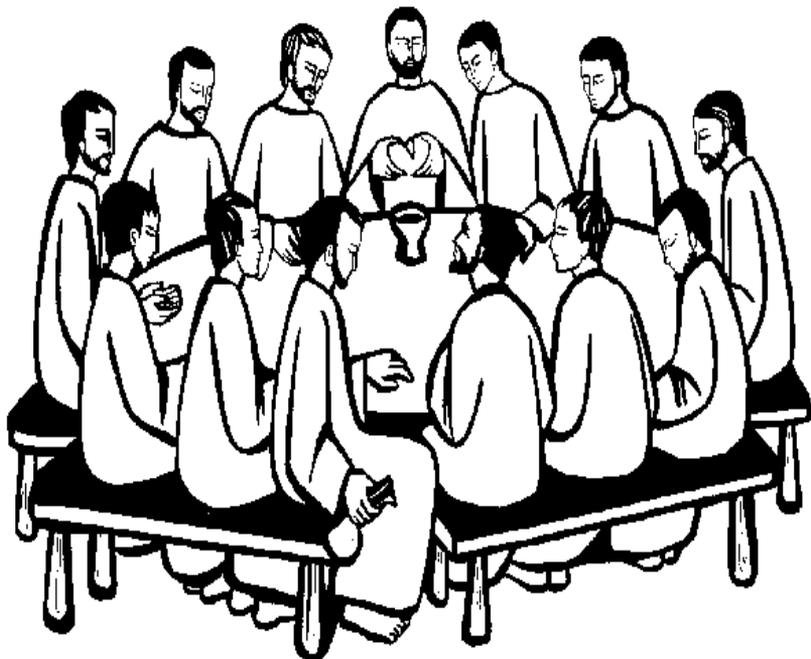
We of HARC encourage use of masks and attention to social distancing if this experience is shared with others.

May each of you know the peace of Christ and the blessings of his presence among us.

*The Hagerstown Area Religious Council—2021*



**1<sup>st</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS SHARES THE PASSOVER MEAL**  
**WITH THE APOSTLES**



**SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 26:17-20**

*On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, 'My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve...*

**TOGETHER:** *“My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples”*

**MEDITATION—an apostle speaks:** Once again we gather for the Passover celebration. Of course, we remember the anguish of our exile and bondage—the flight in the dark of night, but more than that, we remember the goodness of our God. Like any feast, it means we will spend time with those dearest to us—and this year we spend it with you, Rabbi.

There is an edge in the way you look around the table—as if you sense something amiss. Yet in your own beautiful way you break bread and pass the cup and lead us as we refresh ourselves in the meaning of our past and in the promise of the future.

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Lord, in this difficult time of isolation, sometimes from those we love most dearly, you have been our strength and our light. Be with us always. Let us find your comfort and guidance through the uncertainties of our future. And let us never forget to commemorate and to celebrate the good that is ever present among us. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

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

**2<sup>nd</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS IS BETRAYED BY JUDAS**



**SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 26:46-50**

*[Jesus said,] “Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”*

*While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.’ At once he came up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you are here to do.’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.*

**TOGETHER:** *“...The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.”*

**MEDITATION—spoken to Judas:** Thirty pieces of silver—no small sum. Matthew will say that you asked for it. But Mark says they decided to offer it to you for what you did. So, which was it, Judas? What caused you to turn on a friend? Did you simply succumb to the temptation that riches hold for all of us? Or was it more personal—perhaps that sinister side in each of us that harbors envy, resentment, the need to feel important?

I can see your sorrow—in your face, in your posture. Do you want to cry out, “Forgive, me”? Or have you decided for yourself that forgiveness is not something to which you are entitled? Yet it comes only for the asking.

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Lord, I often have the need of forgiveness. Sometimes my need for it is betrayed by my sorrowful expression, sometimes by my misdirected anger. Help me to know when I need it, and from whom. And help me never to hold myself beyond the touch of your tender mercy. This I ask in your holy name. Amen.

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

**3rd prayer stop**  
**JESUS IS MADE TO CARRY THE CROSS**



**SCRIPTURE READING: John 19:16-17**

*Then Pilate handed him over to them 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.*

**TOGETHER:** “...and carrying the cross by himself, he went out...”

**MEDITATION—spoken by a Roman soldier:** Even as he strains under his burden, so too do I. This order I am

given—to place the cross upon him. My soul cries out against this injustice. I have seen criminals. This man is no criminal. But the order has been given...

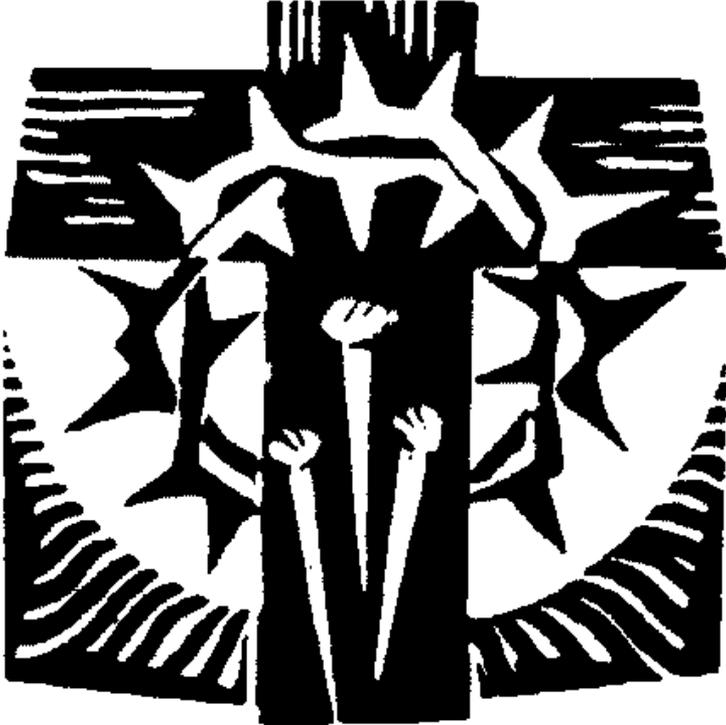
*Great Jupiter, I, a soldier of the governor, make this prayer to you. Would that this good man be spared the further brutality of carrying this weighty cross, for even as Pilate said, "I find no guilt in this man." If this man Jesus receive your protection, and if he be spared the ignominious death on the cross, then I will pour generous and costly libation in offering to you at my hearth this very night.*

May I be forgiven for the part I play in this good man's death.

**ALL PRAY:** Lord, for the time when life is not ours to control, when justice is not ours to deliver, let us look to you for grace, comfort, and forbearance. This we ask in your holy name. Amen.

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

**4<sup>th</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**



**SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 23:32-37**

*Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah\* of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the*

*Jews, save yourself!’ There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’*

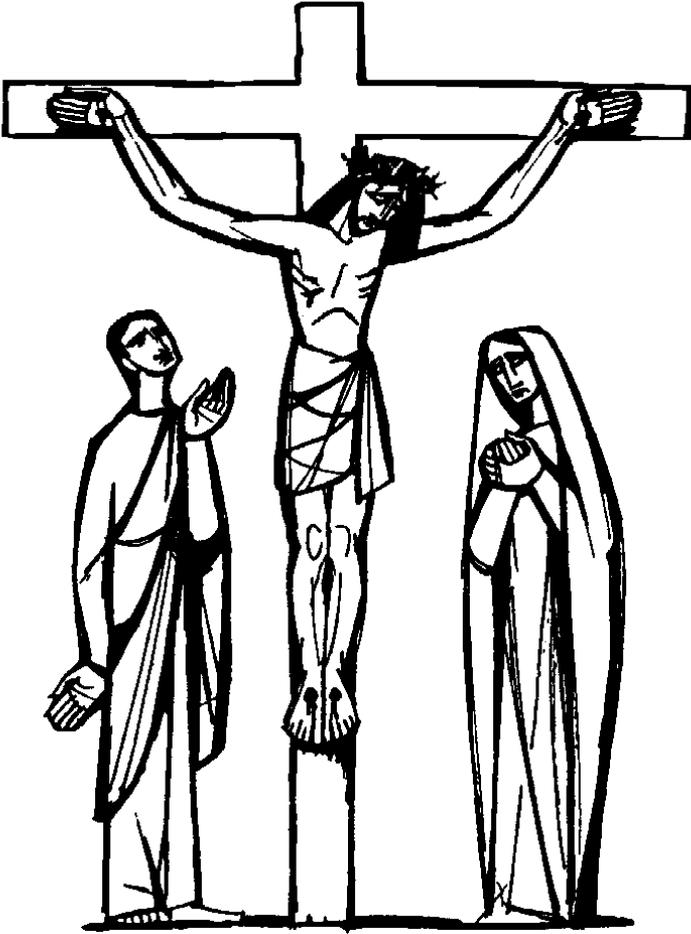
**TOGETHER:** “...*The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’*”

**MEDITATION—spoken to a soldier:** Soldier, what is your ilk? Are you one of those who scourged and ridiculed him? Or are you an honorable man given a command to be followed? Have you had the courage to look at him—to meet his gaze—as you nail him to the tree? Surely you would see the goodness, the love even for you—the proximate cause of his anguish. How you must wrestle with “duty”—a soldier’s lot. Is it all necessary? Will good come of it? In this close proximity to *this good man*, how you yourself must suffer. But the order has been given. Let it be done... Soldier, history will not record your name, but you will not be forgotten. Neither will you be forsaken.

**ALL PRAY:** Lord, like this poor soldier, we all are but cogs in the wheels of salvation. Guide us as we make our way through our own personal histories. Be with us when we must pass through the dark wood of uncertainty, error, and misery. Let us never forget that your love sustains us, your forgiveness refreshes us, and your embrace awaits us at the end of the journey. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

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

**5<sup>th</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS SPEAKS TO HIS MOTHER**



**SCRIPTURE READING: John 19:25-27**

*Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his*

mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

**TOGETHER:** "...standing near the cross of Jesus [was] his mother..."

**MEDITATION—spoken to Mary:** Mary, how your son suffers. How my heart aches for you. How many times did you brush his tears, patch his knee, bathe away the dirt and grime of a day spent exploring his beautiful, tactile world? How frequently you comforted, held him close, reassured him that he—like every mother's child—was unique. He would therefore be misunderstood by others, even bullied at times. "Be strong," *you* said. "Rise above their petty rantings. *Sticks and stones...*" You know the line. But today, you cannot brush or bathe or comfort. Today he will pay for the petty rantings and ragings of all the world's bullies. You, his first source of comfort in this all too physical world, stand powerless.

**ALL TOGETHER:** Mary, in the depths of your anguish, hold onto your hope. At this moment there is nothing else. You give bearing, and a hint of consolation to us who watch our own children struggle—be it with the pain of illness, injustice, personal shortcomings, or abject failure. *Keep us ever mindful of your* faithfulness, your hope. *They* give us a foothold in the terrain of our own miseries. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

**6<sup>th</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**



**SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 23: 39-48**

*One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of*

*condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into\* your kingdom.’ He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’*

*It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land\* until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!’ Having said this, he breathed his last.*

**PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OF QUIET PRAYER**

**7<sup>th</sup> prayer stop**  
**JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB**



**SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 27: 57-60**

*When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 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.”*

**TOGETHER:** *“He the rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.”*

**MEDITATION—spoken to Jesus:** Oh, Jesus, the finality of this moment! I believed you—BELIEVE you, but you are inaccessible to me now. I can’t bear the thought of never seeing you again. And the things you said—about love and hope and everlasting life—I never had doubts before, but it is hard now to see the great stone rolled in place and to know its meaning.

A later voice\* will call your life among us “the intersection of history and belief”—two lines crossing—each necessarily continuing on. And that is what I must hold on to. Right now, that is all I have.

**ALL PRAY:** Jesus, help me to realize your presence and to know your heart, your mind, your holy spirit even though the stones of doubt would block my vision and obstacles rise all around me. Help me to continue on—faithful to you in this fearful time and always. This I ask in your holy name. Amen.

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

\*John Reeves, *The St. Matthew Passion*, Erdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001

**Prayer Walk Stops**

- 1 - Gazebo**
- 2 - lower lakeside**
- 3 - round pavilion**
- 4 - upper lakeside**
- 5 - upper lake tip**
- 6 - band shell**
- 7 - grotto**

