

~From the Administrator~

Dear Parish Family,

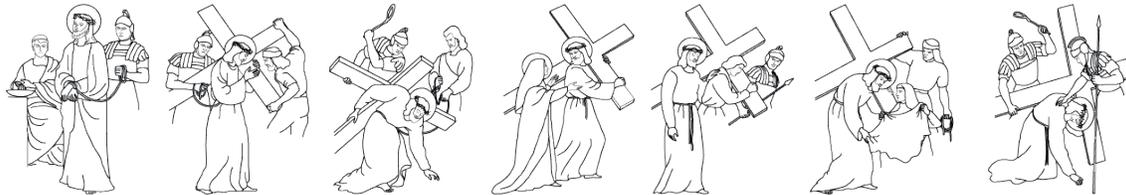
February 28, 2010

Well, the weather has been pretty awful, and there seems to be a lot of bugs going around. Hopefully everyone is staying warm and healthy!

This week we welcome for the weekend our seminarian Marcel Portelli. Marcel has been traveling with his seminary class to the Holy Land. He is making a stop in Beal City on his way back to Chicago to continue his studies. Please continue to pray for Marcel as he draws closer to his ordination to the diaconate on May 14 - which is roughly 75 days away!

Let us resolve to pray for each other daily! God bless you!

Fr. David



+++++ The Stations of the Cross +++++

I. Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus is brought to stand in front of Pontius Pilate, the judge. He is innocent but Pontius Pilate condemns him anyway and sentences Him to death.

II. Jesus Takes His Cross

Jesus has been beaten by the soldiers. He has been laughed at and spat upon. Now he must pick up the heavy cross and carry it while the crowd yells. He is so tired and sad, but no one cares.

III. Jesus Falls The First Time

The cross is too heavy. It is so heavy that Jesus falls down under its weight. The blood from the crown of thorns is running into His eyes and His back aches from the scourging. People are still screaming and throwing things at Him. His heart must be as heavy as the cross He carries.

IV. Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

Suddenly, Jesus sees His Mother. She is standing at the side of the road surrounded by the crowd. Her eyes fill with tears when she sees Jesus. She wants to help Him but she can not. Both their hearts ache at the other's pain.

V. Simon Helps Carry Jesus' Cross

The soldiers are in a hurry. They grab Simon of Cyrene out of the crowd to carry the cross and make Jesus go faster. Jesus was grateful to Simon for his help.

VI. Veronica Wipes Jesus' Face

Jesus' face is covered with sweat, blood and dust. It is itchy and uncomfortable. In pity, Veronica runs out to the road to wipe the dirt from Jesus' face. This small act of kindness is all she can do to help Him.

VII. Jesus Falls the Second Time

The road is so long and the cross is so heavy. Exhausted, Jesus falls down again. The soldiers yell at Him and whip Him to make him get up. Don't they know that they are hurting Him more? Jesus knows that He is suffering for the sins of the world. He gets up and keeps walking.

VIII. Jesus Speaks to the Women

Next, Jesus meets some of the women he taught. They are crying. They are crying for Jesus, and for their own loss -- what will they do without Jesus? Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, but for all sinners.

IX. Jesus Falls the Third Time

Jesus reaches the last hill before Calvary. He looks up to see how far he has to go. When he sees the hill where He knows he is going to die, His strength leaves Him and He falls to the ground. There is still more pain, still more sorrow to endure.

X. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

The crowd has followed Jesus and the soldiers to the top of Calvary hill. Now they laugh as the guards pull off his clothes -

His robe has stuck to the blood on His back. The guards push and shove Jesus. They do not care Who He is, they only see that He is an object of scorn.

XI. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Is this the worst? The feet that carried the message of God's Love and the hands that healed are pierced with nails as Jesus is nailed to the cross. More wounds, more pain and more humiliation for Jesus.

XII. Jesus Dies on the Cross

The sword that Simeon prophesied has pierced Mary's heart. The hopes of the Apostles are crushed. The veil of the Temple, symbol of the old covenant of God's Love, is torn in two as Jesus' death opens a New Covenant with God.

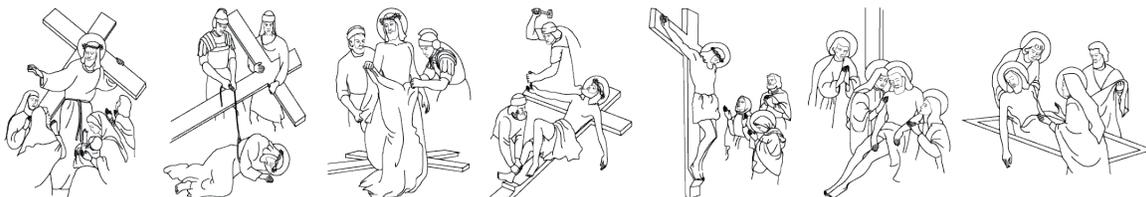
XIII. Jesus is taken from the Cross

Now, all that is left is to take Jesus' body down from the cross. All the gentleness, reverence and love denied through this terrible day is possible now. Mary and the Apostles wonder, Is it too late? Is it over?

XIV. Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher

Even in this time of sorrow, there is help. Joseph of Arimathea arranges for Jesus to be buried in a nearby tomb. Everyone walks away, weeping. Finally, all is quiet.

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.*



A History of the Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross (or Way of the Cross; in Latin, *Via Crucis*; also called the *Via Dolorosa* or Way of Sorrows, or simply, The Way) refers to the depiction of the final hours (or Passion) of Jesus, and the devotion commemorating the Passion. The tradition as chapel devotion began with St. Francis of Assisi and extended throughout the Roman Catholic Church in the medieval period. It is less often observed in the Anglican and Lutheran churches. It may be done at any time, but is most commonly done during the Season of Lent, especially on Good Friday and on Friday evenings during Lent.

The Stations of the Cross originated in pilgrimages to Jerusalem. A desire to reproduce the holy places in other lands seems to have manifested itself at quite an early date. At the monastery of San Stefano at Bologna a group of connected chapels were constructed as early as the fifth century, by St. Petronius, Bishop of Bologna, which was intended to represent the more important shrines of Jerusalem. Several travelers who visited the Holy Land during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, mention a "Via Sacra," which was a settled route along which pilgrims were conducted. The devotion of the *Via Dolorosa*, for which there have been a number of variant routes in Jerusalem, was probably developed by the Franciscans after they were granted administration of the Christian holy places in Jerusalem in 1342.

The number of stations varied between eleven and thirty. In 1686, the number was fixed at fourteen.

The object of the Stations is to help the faithful to make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer, through meditating upon the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death. It has become one of the most popular devotions for Roman Catholics, as well as featuring in the worship and devotion of other Christian denominations.

Although not traditionally part of the Stations, the Resurrection of Jesus is sometimes included as a fifteenth station.



TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRUNING

Our blessed Lord used a powerful example when he spoke to the apostles on the night of the Last Supper. He said: "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener. And every barren branch of mine he cuts away and every fruitful branch he cleans to make it more fruitful still." So the heavenly Father purges us. A discipline, a trial, a handicap, or a cross comes into our life. And why is the pruning done? To make us more fruitful. That's why we've asked for this discipline, for more fruit. Our vines have to be pruned. We will be surprised at the richness of the harvest.

JUST COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Avoiding the cross is the essence of the demonic. When our Lord was finally on the cross, Satan had one last chance to be anti-*crucial* (against the cross.) Through his agents he challenged our Lord, "Come down and we will believe." Believe? Sure. In what? The Trinity? Yeah, sure. In the hypostatic union? Yes. That he's the Son of God? Yes. That he made Peter the rock of his Church? Certainly. That he will send the Spirit? Sure. That he will rise from the dead? Sure. Anything — just come down and we will believe. Jesus did not come down. Had he come down, he would never have saved us. It's human to come down. It's divine to hang there. Consider the softness of the Church today: the desire to accommodate to the world, shrinking away from sacrifice, self-denial. Today, it seems, we have a new bad word in Christianity; but it doesn't have four letters. The new bad word has five: c-r-o-s-s. Christ without the cross? Sure — anyone will accept that.

SHOULD WE COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS?

Two thieves were nailed on either side of our Lord. They both cursed and blasphemed; there was no difference between them

at the beginning. The first one, the rebel that was on the left of our Blessed Lord represents the pain of those who say, "Take me down." The one on the right wanted to be taken up. The one on the left turned his head as much as he could and said to our Lord, "If you are the Son of God, save yourself; save us." He thought that our Lord was simply a healer. There are many today who are beginning to believe that this is the essence of Christianity — healing. The Lord does heal, but not always. There will not be a complete healing until the whole cosmos is renewed. Our Lord did not heal Lazarus, he allowed him to die. Our Lord did not release John the Baptist from prison. God does now and then heal. But healing is not the essence of his coming. That was all, however, that the rebel on the left wanted, just to be healed. As a matter of fact, if he were living today, he would probably never think of sin. If he had money, he would spend thousands of dollars on doctors. But the thought of sin would never enter into his mind — just the desire to be taken down.

THE MEANS OF OBTAINING GLORY

There is only one way that pain can be handled, and it is by looking at this scene: the three crosses on Calvary and particularly our Blessed Lord in the middle. He took this absurd symbol of the cross, put himself upon it, and solved the enigma of life and death. He solved it by making it a condition of life. "Take up your cross daily and follow me." Good Friday precedes Easter Sunday. The crown of thorns precedes the halo of light. The scourged body precedes the glorified body. If you die with him, you rise with him. In other words, he conquered pain by using it as a means of attaining glory.

Excerpted from Through the Year with Fulton Sheen