

A LENTEN JOURNEY:

Reflections on the
Scriptural Stations of the Cross



Franciscan
Service Network

Stations of the Cross Scripture Verses with Reflections by the Franciscan Service Network

This expression of the Stations of the Cross which we used in this booklet were introduced by Saint Pope John Paul II on Good Friday in 1991. They are presented here with reflections written by members of the Franciscan family. Our writers and visual artists are connected with one of seven Franciscan volunteer programs who are the Franciscan Service Network:



*One way to pray the Stations is
with these prayers.*

Opening Prayer:

God of power and mercy,
in love you sent your Son
that we might be cleansed of sin
and live with you forever.
Bless us as we gather to reflect
on His suffering and death
that we may learn from His example
the way we should go.
We ask this through that same Christ, our
Lord.

Amen.

Before each Station:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

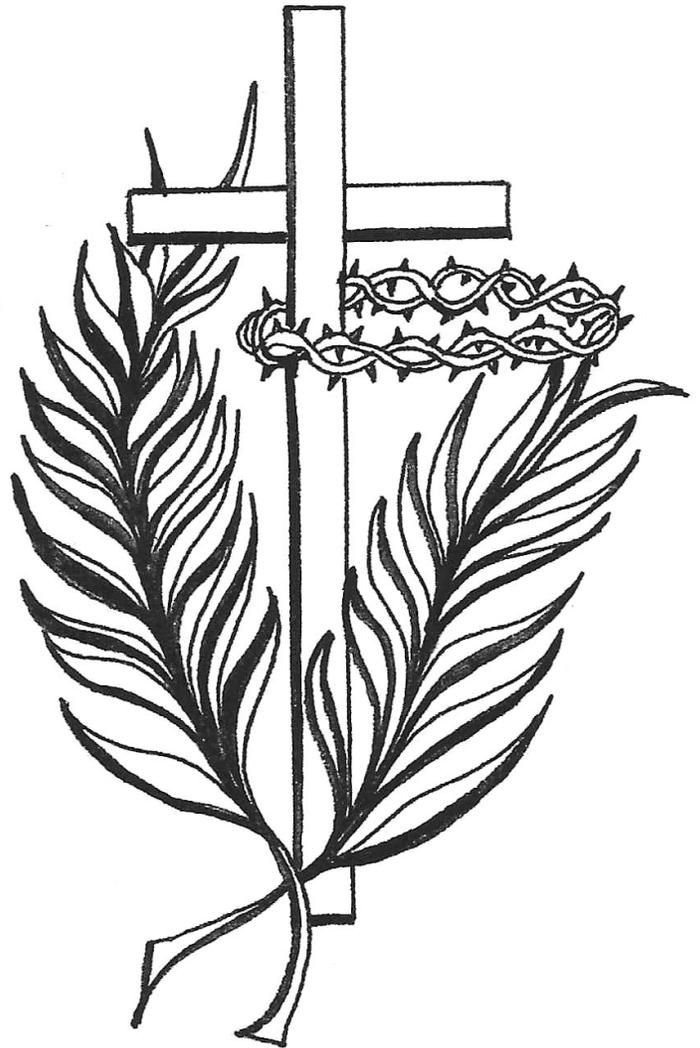
After each station:

**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your
steps.**

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death
is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven
and reconciles all people to you. May we
who have faithfully reflected on these
mysteries follow in Your steps and so come
to share Your glory in heaven where You
live and reign with the Father and the Holy
Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.



**Sr. Rosemarie Goins,
Felician Volunteers in Mission**

*Sister Rosemarie Goins, a woodcarver and
graphic artist, is a Felician Franciscan Sister.
During her long years of ministry, she has taught
art, English and Theology.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	4
First Station: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane	5
Second Station: Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested	7
Third Station: Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin	9
Fourth Station: Jesus is Denied by Peter	10
Fifth Station: Jesus is Judged by Pilate	12
Sixth Station: Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns	14
Seventh Station: Jesus Bears the Cross	16
Eighth Station: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross	18
Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem	20
Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified	22
Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief	24
Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciples	25
Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross	26
Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb	28

First Station: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then He said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as You will." When He returned to His disciples He found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(Matthew 26:36-41)

Mountain Companion Ministry — Alyssa Magnuson, Alumna

I hate my job. Okay I don't hate anything, but I really do not enjoy it. Lately I have found myself asking God why and doubting Him more than I have been thanking Him. I understand that I am human and with this in mind I think of God's time in human form and begin to picture Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, our story brought to life at the first station of the cross. It is here that Jesus finds Himself "Sorrowful to the point of death" and prays "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." Here we see, even Jesus having doubt, even Jesus asking for a less painful and more understandable option; but it is also here Jesus displays His unwavering faith, yielding to God that no matter what, if it is His will it shall be done. You see, Jesus understands His *why*, He is in the know of God's plans. Knowing that His death is essential to the overcoming of death and the eternal life of the world, Jesus can enter this torturous experience with faith — knowing His *why* gives Him the strength for the *how*.

So, it is here that I find myself — on my knees praying to God for another option, for a miracle option or a booming voice from the sky to explain to me that I am doing the right thing. As a follower of Christ, I know my *why*, every day I am given the opportunity to be a messenger of the Lord's Word and to serve Christ however that may be needed ... even if His word is needed most for the coworkers I interact with everyday at the job I really do not like. With this heavenly purpose in mind, I can find the strength for the *how* to make it through the day. However, this does not stop me from asking God for His strength to do His work as He sees fit. Keeping my eyes on the cross and *understanding* the heavenly *why*, has given me strength to overcome the earthly *hows* placed in my path.

The same way everything in Jesus's life was planned by God, from being born of the Virgin Mary to this moment we are reflecting on now, through hindsight, we can all say the same. Although, this may be hard to see at times, God does not leave us unprepared for what is to come. It was through my two months spent living as a Mountain Companion in Franciscan Community at Mt. Irenaeus that developed my faith in preparation for the trials I face in my current work environment, giving me the strength and grace to make it through this chapter of my life with God by my side.

What is your *why*? Is it God given, or Earth driven?

What is something that you consider to be a failure in your life?

How have you reconciled that with God?

**What is something you are currently living in fear of failing at,
how could God's plan rewrite that fear?**

Alyssa Magnuson currently lives near Tacoma, WA (the beautiful area makes up for the job!). She is a 2019 St. Bonaventure University graduate, and spent two months as a Mt. Irenaeus Season Companion before beginning her professional career.



Station 1 — Katie Rauch, FrancisCorps

Katie Rauch is a recent graduate of Miami University (OH), where she studied kinesiology and art therapy. She currently serves at Assumption Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen as a FrancisCorps volunteer.

Second Station: Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested

Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to Him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed Him. At this, they laid hands on Him and arrested Him.

(Mark 14: 43-46)

Franciscan Mission Service — Emily Norton, Staff

When I reflect on this station, I imagine the heartbreak and emotional anguish that Jesus must have experienced as He watched one of His closest friends betray Him and hand Him over to authorities, even when He was an innocent man. To sin against a friend, like Judas did, seems like such a personal attack.

I have been reflecting on the concept of betrayal in a new way this Lent.

In the last couple months, as I made preparations for the opening of Franciscan Mission Service's new US-Mexico border mission site, I have learned a lot about the challenges that our migrant sisters and brothers face as they flee their hometowns in search of safety and basic necessities. In numerous scripture passages, God instructs us to love and show hospitality to the stranger (Deut. 10:19 and Heb. 13:1-3), and tells us that "the alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you" (Lev. 19:34). Yet even with these clear instructions, as individuals and as a society as a whole we have "missed the mark." I use this phrase intentionally since it is the definition of "sin" in Hebrew and Greek.

[We Are Salt and Light](#) defines *social sin* as "residing within a group or a community of people. It exists within any structure in society that oppresses humans, violates human dignity, stifles freedom and/or imposes great inequity."

Hearing the atrocities of how migrants have been treated by ICE, the Border Patrol and detention center authorities has broken my heart in the same way that it does as I reflect on Judas's betrayal. Our society has betrayed our neighbors, forgetting their innocence and inherent dignity, and instead unjustly calling them "criminals" and treating them inhumanely. This betrayal is social sin.

It is so clear to me how needed the Franciscan charism is in our country to fight against social sin. Franciscan values of hospitality, authentic fraternity/community and accompaniment are three of the many values that could help to transform how we interact as a global family. It has been a gift to witness these values in our Franciscan Service Network (FSN) programs.

One aspect of the charism that I appreciate is that, as Franciscan-hearted individuals, we not only are called to critically analyze structural injustices or social sins, but also to actively build relationships with others and ground ourselves in the reality of those who are impacted the most by the injustices.

Pope Francis similarly reflects: "I find it helps to focus on concrete situations...you see the reality of each person. I've always thought the world looks clearer from the periphery" (*Let Us Dream*, 11).

I believe that the FSN programs are striving to follow Pope Francis's call – to form relationships with individuals on the periphery and see the world through their eyes. This, I believe, is what mission is all about, and if you adopt this way of life, it will transform your perspective and every aspect of your life!

In the past, I have often questioned, “How could anyone betray Jesus like that?” It's easy to distance myself from Judas's horrible act. This Lent I am inviting myself to use imaginative prayer to put myself in the scene. Maybe I'm not Judas, who is the obvious betrayer in the scene, but there are others who are guilty that night and throughout the following days – all the bystanders who witnessed the injustices and abuse that Jesus suffered and allowed it to happen even when they knew it was wrong and sinful.

I pray that I have the courage to not be the bystander that watches and does nothing. I pray that I have the fortitude and perseverance to keep fighting against the unjust immigration policies and not to become overwhelmed by the enormity of it all, but to walk in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers – the fathers, mothers and children all seeking a better life that upholds their dignity as beloved children of God.

When have you betrayed someone or a group of people by partaking or not fighting against structural sin?

Spend time sharing this experience with Jesus. What emotions surface for you?

Receive the mercy and healing presence that Jesus can offer you. How is God inviting you to take concrete action to walk in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers?

Emily Norton is the Program Director at Franciscan Mission Service and has had the gift of accompanying FMS missionaries for the last 5.5 years while managing the Overseas Lay Mission Program. She credits FMS for introducing her to Franciscan spirituality, a joy-filled spirituality that aligns well with her personal values and faith. She is a proud native of Portland, Oregon, and finds spiritual nourishment in being outside celebrating God's creation and engaging in justice-minded, faith-sharing groups.



**Station 2 — Dan Riley, OFM,
Mountain Companion Ministry**

Dan Riley, OFM is a Franciscan Friar of Holy Name Province. He is one of the founders of Mt. Irenaeus, a Franciscan Retreat Community located in Allegany County, NY. The Mountain is committed to simple, joyful, healing communion with God and all creation through contemplation and a communal experience.

Third Station: Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought Him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but He replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

(Luke 22: 66-71)

Change A Heart — Maura Wallace, Current Volunteer

For me, the third station speaks to the path of Christianity and the adversity that we may face on our journey to Heaven. As faithful people, we seek to reflect the Kingdom of God through our efforts toward social justice and peace. We do our best to accompany those who are unjustly discriminated against and condemned. We step out of our own comfort zone, in order to accompany someone who stands alone. Jesus intimately knows how it feels to stand condemned unjustly, as illustrated by this station. Personally, I am reminded of the homeless individuals that I serve and how they so often stand alone. So often, they are condemned for their outward appearance or the stigmas that our culture places on them. Reflecting on this station, I feel that God is calling me to be a voice for the voiceless and to stand in authentic solidarity with my brothers and sister. He does not call me to change them, but rather to meet them in the midst of their suffering.

Sometimes I wonder if it would have been so much easier for all, including those of us who seek to follow Jesus today, if He had only said, "Yes, I am the Messiah." Yet, He didn't say that. It's something we have to piece together from His words and deeds. Our calling as followers of Jesus is to do the works of the kingdom, so that God's love will be ever present in our world. I am inspired by the courage that our Lord displayed as He stood alone, without any of His followers and professed who He was. This courage is ever so needed in our divided world today, and we as Catholics are challenged to be the living Gospel. We are called to be the light for those who are suffering in such darkness. Whether this darkness be persecution, addiction or not having a relationship with Christ, it is our duty to boldly embrace our faith. I pray that the Lord can give each of us the compassion and courage to look for and accompany those who are persecuted or discriminated against today. May we work toward a world where each person is treated with the dignity they inherently deserve.

**How can I alter my thoughts or assumptions
when encountering those who are not like I am?**

How can I take a stand with those who are cast out or persecuted?

What ways can I boldly proclaim the Gospel in my day-to-day life?

Maura Wallace is a 2020-2021 Change A Heart Volunteer. She is from Pittsburgh and is currently serving the homeless with Operation Safety Net. Her plans are to continue schooling to be a Physician Assistant and continue serving the marginalized.

Fourth Station: Jesus is Denied by Peter

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

(Matthew 26: 69-75)

FrancisCorps — Kate Timmermann, Alumna

Jesus has been betrayed and abandoned by His friends, and as His enemies question Him, Peter, outside, denies Him. We have often heard this moment in Scripture used to dissuade Christians from denying their faith, even when, as it was for Peter, the consequences are dire. But Peter does not deny his faith in Jesus; he denies knowing the person, Jesus. It would have been easy for Peter to say, "Oh yeah, that guy. He's crazy, I don't follow him," and remain blameless in the eyes of the bystanders in the courtyard, unassociated with the condemned religious leader. But he does not deny Jesus' teaching. He denies knowing "the man", which is a more fundamental and complete denial, as if their relationship never existed, as if Peter had not shared meals with Jesus, had not witnessed the miracle that is Jesus' existence, had not learned from Jesus, the man, what it means to be fully human.

It is easy to notice ourselves denying our faith. We keep quiet during a conversation about the unborn that makes us uncomfortable, afraid to share our views; or we claim to be only nominally Christian so that culture will accept us; or we say, for whatever reason, "I don't believe." But it is hard to notice ourselves denying a person, who is probably alone, who might have been betrayed, like Jesus was. Maybe we have a relationship with this person, like Peter did with Jesus, and it is more convenient or more socially useful for us to sometimes act as if that relationship does not exist; maybe they are a friend who always asks more from us than they contribute to the relationship. Maybe we truly don't know the person, don't have a personal relationship with them; maybe they are "just another homeless person" in the soup kitchen line. We deny that person when we act as if their humanity is not the same humanity we share, the same humanity our Lord took on for us. We deny that person when we convince ourselves that we do not recognize the image and likeness of the Father in them. We deny that person when we continue our day without letting ourselves realize that they are our brother, they are our sister in Christ, and that our God loves them more than we could ever imagine.

Just as there were for Peter, there are consequences for us if we choose not to deny our brothers and sisters. We will be uncomfortable. We will find ourselves drifting to the outside, the places where the condemned, the abandoned, the forgotten people stay. We will sometimes overextend ourselves, and have to look away, like Peter, to save our own lives. But we have to begin by learning from Peter, learning to notice ourselves denying the people in our lives, our neighbors, who our Lord commanded us to love.

Have you ever denied Jesus to remain comfortable? What was that like?

In what ways are you following Jesus from a distance?

Kate Timmermann is a Residential Care Specialist at MBCH Children and Family Ministries. She served as a Community Organizer at Assumption Church during her year of service with FrancisCorps (2019-2020).



Station 4 — “By Dawn’s Early Light” by Jenny Tsui, Franciscan Mission Service

Reflection from the Artist:

In the account of Peter’s Denial of Christ, the rooster crow marks the moment when Peter suddenly understands the truth about himself: his true measure of faith, commitment, and courage which did not match his inflated self-image. On the other hand, Jesus has known the truth about Peter all along, having prophesied this moment in advance. Even more striking, Jesus loved Peter as he was, while also knowing the upward arc of his life. This earthquake of self-disillusionment was for Peter; to have a grounded, more accurate self-image from which to grow and develop and from which to help others do the same. As our Lord allows us to see ourselves truly in a time marked by deception and self-deception, may this be a source of hope and purpose in moments of bitterness and grief.

Jenny Tsui is inspired by living in community with others, mutual sharing and community gatherings where everyone is invited. She has been involved in community-engaged research, teaching, and activism in Detroit and Los Angeles. She is grateful for the 3-months of training she participated in with Franciscan Mission Service in 2020 and is excited to live out the Franciscan values as she serves with the Peace Corps in Kyrgyzstan, a country dear to her heart.

Fifth Station: Jesus is Judged by Pilate

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused Him of many things. Again Pilate questioned Him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified.

(Mark 15: 1-5, 15)

Felician Volunteers in Mission — Sister Judith Blizzard, Felician Sister

To be judged or accused by someone is a painful experience. It is even worse when it is a group of people, as in Jesus' case, or when it is people with whom you feel close. The first question I must ask myself is, "Is there any truth to what they are judging me or accusing me of?" If so, the next question is, "What do I need to do?" Whether we are accused out of malice or because of love, God allows it. In truth we are all called to conversion. This is how we grow in our faith and love. If it doesn't apply, I let it fly to the wind. Who knows the motivation? Not everything is about me. I still need to do some interior work and remind myself of who I am. I am a child of God and made in the image and likeness of God. My worth comes from God not from what others think or say about me. When I sit before God in prayer, I am grounded in this truth. Like Jesus I then can stand in my truth peacefully and courageously; and, I can pray for them.

What is the Truth about who I am?

What can help me live in the truth of who God created me to be and says I am rather than the judgments of others?

**When others' judge me they aren't seeing the full picture.
They aren't seeing my heart, my intentions, or my past experiences.
How can I stand firm in my words and actions with integrity before God and others regardless of what they know or do not know about me?**

Sr. Judith Marie Blizzard is a Felician Franciscan Sister. She received her Bachelors of Art in Education and Religious Studies at Felician University, Lodi, NJ and her Masters in Spirituality at Creighton University, Omaha, NE. Her past ministries have been in the areas of education, leadership, vocation ministry, formation, retreat ministry and spiritual direction. She has attended and participated in workshops and conferences on various types of spirituality, formation, faith, contemplative prayer, wholistic living, spiritual direction and new membership. She is currently a spiritual director in the Pittsburgh area and is involved in evangelization, retreat ministry, and giving parish missions. She also is mission leader for the Felician sponsored ministry, Mooncrest Neighborhood Programs in Moon Township, PA. Sister enjoys bringing the Good News to people everywhere she goes.



Station 5 — Sr. Judith Blizzard, Felician Volunteers in Mission

Sixth Station: Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on His head, and clothed Him in a purple cloak, and they came to Him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him repeatedly.

(John 19: 1-3)

Cap Corps — Maura Filoromo, Alumna

Each day feels harder than the one before. Why aren't things getting better? I feel like each day is beating my spirits down more. Maybe you have felt this way sometimes. It makes us ask "Why do we suffer? Why must others suffer unjustly?" Jesus was following God's plan. He was doing wonderful miraculous acts, feeding the hungry in mind and body, curing illnesses, giving sight to the blind. Yet, even with all these good works, he still suffered.

"All in God's time." "Don't worry something good will come along." A lot of times in my young adulthood I've heard multiple people say these things to me. While well meaning I'm sure, it doesn't help the situation. At times, it just feels dismissive. Like "don't feel this way" or a conversation stopper, "I don't know what else to say and don't want to continue delving into a hard conversation." I feel like it invalidates the feelings I am experiencing. Sure, good things come along and yes, God's time is not our time. I jokingly say that "If you have all eternity like God does, no wonder he doesn't move fast." Really what I am thinking is how pain, difficult situations, stressful jobs, etc. can all feel as if they go on forever. You're deep in the tunnel and can't see the light at the end. You are surrounded by water and darkness. You feel struck repeatedly.

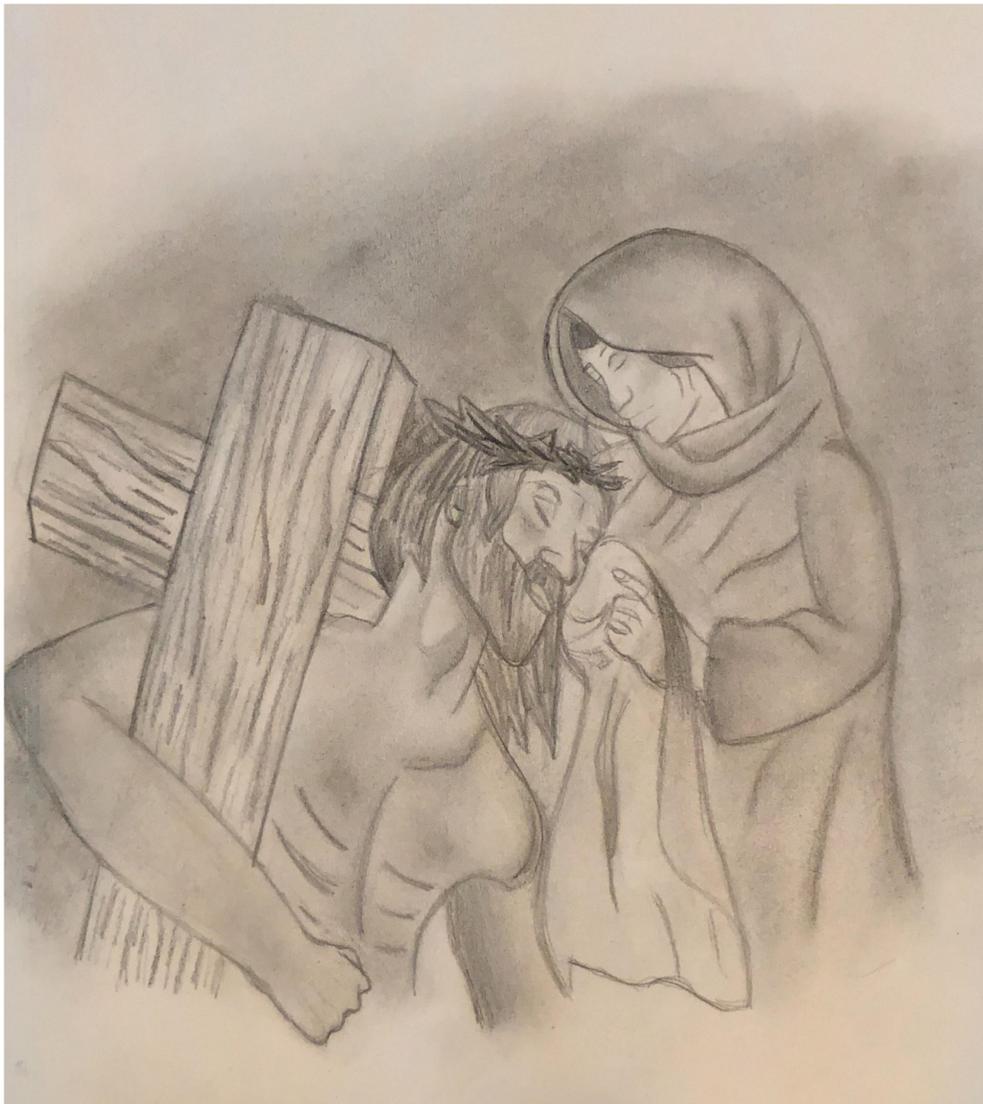
Where do we get our strength? It is in community. In my service year, I lived with four other incredible young women. My placement was difficult. It wasn't what I wanted to be doing. I often felt useless. What got me through the day? What lifted me up when I was beaten down? The love and support of my intentional community. I knew at the end of the day I would go home to a loving household with friends who would listen to me, who would encourage me, and lift me up to continue going when I thought I couldn't. We were welcomed into the larger Franciscan community and received great support from the Capuchin Friars.

You don't have to live in an intentional community to experience it. Right now, it is hard to see friends and family. So where do I find the greatest community? It's in the communion of saints. When all else feels dark and dim, when it is hard to even bring ourselves to Jesus, when we feel so far from God, look to the saints! There are so many Franciscan saints who've experienced emotional despair and physical suffering. St. Maximilian Kolbe died at Auschwitz. Padre Pio had the blessing of stigmata but it was not without pain. They kept going somehow. I like to look up quotes from saints such as them, who offer hope or insight. Sometimes it doesn't have to be profound. It can be simple as "I've felt that way too!" Perhaps they didn't understand what God was doing in their lives. They may have questioned why they were suffering.

There's a whole community in Heaven you can go to. Ask for their prayers. They lived on this earth. They know pain. They can be your support. Will your suffering go away? Probably not. We can be inspired and understood by reading the works of the saints. We can ask for their intercession when things are tough. An old friend once said something that has stuck with me: "You can feel lonely, but you are never alone."

**What has been a crown of thorns for you? How were you supported through it?
How do you support someone else in their time of struggle?
What saint stands out to you when you think of the communion of saints? What
is the significance of this saint in your life?**

Maura Filoromo was a 2019-2020 Cap Corps Volunteer and worked in the Volunteer Engagement Office at Catholic Charities of Washington, DC. She's currently living outside of Philadelphia and contracting work as a communications specialist with non-profits.



Station 6 — Stephanie Vogelmann, FrancisCorps

Stephanie Vogelmann is an advanced standing master of social work student from the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. She served as a caseworker at Downtown Cathedral Emergency & Hospitality Services during her year of service with FrancisCorps (2019-2020).

Seventh Station: Jesus Bears the Cross

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross Himself He went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

(John 19: 6, 15-17)

Franciscan Volunteer Ministry — Karen Pushaw, Alumna

What an appropriate Station to reflect upon in January 2021. My thoughts turn in two directions. First, let's ponder what the crowd was doing, or not doing. Second, we can consider the leaders, who decided they had to crush Jesus.

To frame the response of the crowd, allow me to relate a true story. Some time ago, I boarded the SEPTA El, heading home. It was rush hour, so the trains were crowded. I found a seat against a window, with a passenger seated next to me and people standing in the aisle. In the row in front of me was a young woman who had spread her meal out on the seat next to her. Oblivious to the increasingly packed train, she began to smear ketchup on her French fries and dab condiments onto her hamburger. Several stops later, a lady got on the train with an older man (who turned out to be her father) who was walking with a cane. They stood near the doors, rocking precariously as the El swayed. People began to stare at the woman occupying the two seats, trying to advocate silently for the woman to yield the "food seat" to the struggling older man. Eventually, the young lady tapped the woman on the shoulder and gestured first to the seat. The woman said quite clearly: "No. It's my seat."

At this, there was a hushed silence. Then the murmuring began. "How rude!" and "Did you hear that?" But nobody, including myself, confronted the woman directly. Nobody wanted to be the one to stand up for what was right; we were all so crammed in it was not feasible for anyone to get up to make room for the pair. By the time we got to Spring Garden Street, enough people had exited the train that there were two seats available side by side, enabling the lady and her father to sit. At that point, I turned around and offered my apology to the woman. She said in a tranquil tone, "Thank you, but it happens all the time." Meanwhile, as passengers left the train, they took turns glaring at the woman still enjoying her meal.

This incident has disturbed me for a long time. What was really going on? Why did nobody say or do anything? It has to do with one sort of group response, that is, passivity. Peer pressure causes us to shrink from standing out lest we be identified as "that person." Much has been written about this in terms of psychology.

Now let us turn to the situation described in the Seventh Station. Religious and political leaders—the power centers of the day—feel threatened by Jesus, who has become popular with the masses because He speaks the Truth and appeals directly to the people. Jesus is the ultimate outsider who upsets the establishment. The establishment's power is unchecked; the leaders exert control over what the common people are allowed to hear (a kind of primitive social media censorship), what they are allowed to do and say (ostracizing alternative voices akin to the current cancel culture), who they are allowed to associate with (demonizing dissenters as a group). Through their domestic intelligence apparatus, they seek out the "troublemakers" who threaten their authority. The religious leaders cave to the political establishment

("We have no king but Caesar") to maintain their position. The leaders then close ranks against the outsider and hunt down his followers.

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" The planted instigators in the crowd start the chant and the mob, rightfully fearful of those in power, or unaware that they are being manipulated, take up the chant. Those who do understand the reality of what is happening shrink back, passive in the face of Evil to protect themselves against the crowd and the coordinated machinations of the powerful. In the end, even Pilate acknowledged that he had been played, when he observed "What I have written, I have written," in relation to his inscription (INRI).

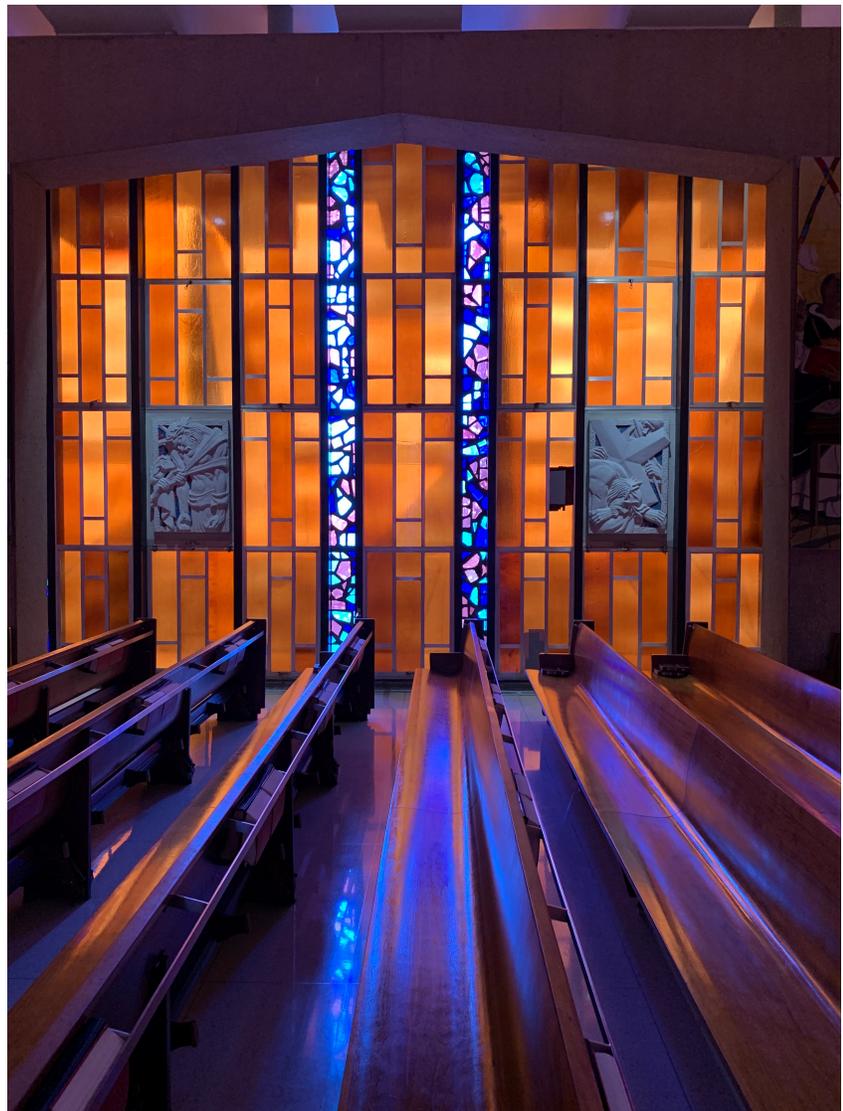
This Seventh Station affords us food for thought and for deep reflection in these turbulent times. Our religious faith does not exist in a vacuum.

Will we stand up for the Truth?
Are we susceptible of manipulation?
Who Is being crucified today?
What does Jesus have to say to us?

Karen Pushaw is part of the Franciscan Community of St. Francis Inn Ministries in Philadelphia. She has served there for nearly 30 years, including two years as a Franciscan Volunteer Minister before joining the Team full time. Additionally, Karen is an attorney and has her Master of Theological Studies.

**Station 7 – Michael Duffy, OFM,
Franciscan Volunteer Ministry**

Michael Duffy, OFM is a Franciscan Friar of Holy Name Province. He is one of the founders of the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry (FVM) and serves as a FVM Site Supervisor. He is part of the Franciscan Community of St. Francis Inn, a soup kitchen in Philadelphia where he has been a Team Member for over 30 years.



Eighth Station: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross.

(Mark 15: 21)

Mountain Companion Ministry — Tyler Grudi, Alumnus

I love fireflies. Such care-free creatures. My heart often turns to memories of my summer living at Mt. Irenaeus, and chief among them are my memories of the fireflies. I began my companionship with the Mountain during the summer of 2018. I slept in a tent at the top of the hill beyond the chapel. Two other companions joined me in the "tent city," one of them a close friend from St. Bonaventure University. For nine weeks, I lived out of my car where I kept my clothes and toiletries. While we mostly stayed at the Mountain, we lived like vagabonds, like passers-by.

At nights, tired from the day's work, my friend and I would walk down to the Sofia house and sit on the front porch to talk. We watched the valley in front of us turn black, the sun always just setting behind the horizon line of trees. There the fireflies would break free from the meadow flowers and set the whole forest ablaze. I had seen fireflies before, but never like this.

It was like a light show just for me and my friend. Fireflies communicate through unique blinking patterns. Each firefly flashes out a signal, looking for a mate, a partner. And somehow in this haphazard sea of flashing lights, two fireflies find each other, recognizing the other by their light!

I wonder if something similar happened to our friend Simon when he was pulled suddenly out of his place in the roaring crowd, and thrown against this random criminal - our Jesus. A nobody from Cyrene, passing by, on his way, coming face to face with a criminal from Galilee, passing through, on His way to die. And here on the road for a few minutes, in the chaos of the crowd, amidst the messiness of their seemingly separate lives, two souls find each other. Two hearts meet.

Like Simon, we find our friends in unexpected ways and in unexpected people. My friend and I shared many conversations during those sacred nights among the fireflies, baring our hearts. Yet sometimes we simply shared each other's silence and watched the lights for hours. While friends for years, that summer we began seeing each other anew. And as the nights blazed on, we found one another.

In your own life who are those people/relationships that happened unexpectedly or that changed the direction of your life?

Do you see the Spirit working in your relationships/encounters with everyday people? Do you take for granted little interactions or do you let them pass you by?

**How open are you to change in your life and in your relationships?
How can you move "out of the crowd" and engage in unexpected relationships?**

Tyler Grudi is a Franciscan Friar of Holy Name Province living at Old Mission Santa Barbara. He graduated from St. Bonaventure University in 2019 and spent the following summer at Mt. Irenaeus as a Summer Companion.



Station 8 — “VIII” by Bekah Galucki, Franciscan Mission Service

Reflection from the Artist:

In the process of making this, I found myself with loads of ideas, however this depiction of the eighth station shines through my new lens of the Franciscan charism. My journey has been uplifted by a series of Simons. One of my housemates in particular works with the UNHCR’s Refugee hotline, in which he has expressed a feeling of his hands being tied with all the different circumstances beyond himself. Nonetheless, while he may not be able to resolve the issue, he does accompany the individuals. He takes on being Simon for those he encounters in his ministry, journeying alongside our called universal siblings in solidarity. I hope and pray that I may help others carry their crosses as well as surrender my trust to allow others to do the same for me.

Bekah Galucki graduated with a B.F.A. emphasizing Graphic Design from the University of Georgia. Creativity has always been a part of her, from a small Crayola-crazed toddler to her current role as Franciscan Mission Service’s communications associate working on design projects for annual appeals, website pages, social media content and more. Often inspired by the saints, she hopes to bring light to this life through community, empathy, laughter, and joy.

Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented Him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

(Luke 23: 27-31)

Franciscan Mission Service — Madeline McKissick, Current Volunteer

As a writer, I love learning the definitions of words and where they come from. It's like uncovering the hidden story or message that gives a word a more powerful meaning. When I said "yes" to going on a mission trip to Nicaragua in college, I learned that the word "compassion" comes from a Latin word meaning "to suffer with." That tiny etymology lesson not only set the trajectory for my time on mission, but it also changed how I view service and evangelization.

During Jesus' Passion, most bystanders remained callous and cruel, but the women of Jerusalem opened their hearts and put themselves in a position to suffer with Jesus. Out of compassion for Him, they wept and allowed their hearts to break for Him. These women took on a portion of the pain of His Way of the Cross. They didn't physically carry His cross like Simon of Cyrene, but they held part of the emotional suffering of Jesus' painful journey.

As He carried His cross, Jesus stopped to encounter the women. He took a moment to pause and speak to them. His cryptic words might seem confusing at first, but He foreshadowed the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus saw that the women humbled themselves to become vulnerable in their compassion for Him. In return, they were able to listen to Jesus' wisdom and encounter Him in an intimate way that the hard-hearted bystanders couldn't. Jesus saw that the women were weeping for Him in His suffering, but by alluding to the destruction of Jerusalem, He shared in their suffering as well. Jesus knew the pain and hardships that the women would endure, so He took a moment to grieve with them. In the midst of His own suffering, Jesus was still sensitive to the suffering of others.

The Peace Prayer attributed to St. Francis touches me in reminding me that "in giving that we receive," meaning that service isn't one-sided. Whenever I serve my neighbors, they serve me too. As much as I can think that I'm the one helping, those whom I serve tend to find ways to give to me and comfort me too. For example, while in Nicaragua, my team and I spent our days playing with and loving the children in Mustard Seed Communities. In the middle of my time on mission, we attended Mass with the children. The closing hymn was "O God Beyond All Praising," and because this song is so special to me, I began to cry. A little girl immediately gave me a hug to console me. This gesture touched my heart and I felt her love so deeply.

My pride can tempt me to resist this receiving, but instead, I can soften my heart and accept the returned compassion with humility. When I reflect a little deeper on the ninth Station of the Cross, I see that the women of Jerusalem are examples of solidarity and receiving in service. This Station of the Cross shows me that those whom I have compassion for also have compassion for me. As I serve, I can think of the women of Jerusalem. Their witness reminds me to stay open-hearted to the service and blessings that God grants me through those whom I encounter.

When have you received love, compassion and accompaniment from someone at your ministry site?

How has this experience impacted you?

How has God invited you into deeper humility this year?

Originally from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Madeline McKissick recently graduated from Slippery Rock University with a BA in dance and a BS in professional writing. Madeline serves as the development associate for Franciscan Mission Service assisting with donor relations, grant writing and other fundraising projects as she lives in intentional community with her fellow DC Service Corps members. She passionately shares her faith through her personal blog, radiantwithjoy.blog.



**Station 9 — Via Crucis, St. Anthony's Camden, NJ (2016) —
Katie Sullivan, Franciscan Volunteer Ministry**

Born and raised in Washington, DC, Katie Sullivan is both an Alumna and the executive director of the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry. She gives thanks for her family's and the Franciscans' examples of faith, service, and love.

Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."]

(Luke 23: 33-34)

Change A Heart — Scott Peters, Current Volunteer

The crucifixion of our Lord and God is definitely a difficult reality to be both physically and emotionally present to. Sometimes when one sees an injustice, it can be easier to just look away. I don't want to deal with this, so I'm not going to look at it; rather, I am just going to set this problem aside and hope that it goes away. This is a truth that can be applied to so many life situations. Sometimes it can be easier to look away or to just try to avoid a difficult situation; but almost always, that doesn't make the problem go away. Jesus knew this when He said to His Father in heaven, "*My Father, if it is possible may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.*" (Matt. 26:39). Jesus knew that giving Himself up for the sake of the world wouldn't be an easy task, but He still chose to do it out of love. We can truly see His total abandonment of self in order to do the Father's will in a tangible way in this scripture verse as He asks the Father: "*If there is any other way to bring about the redemption of souls please let it be done, but not my will, but rather your will be done.*"

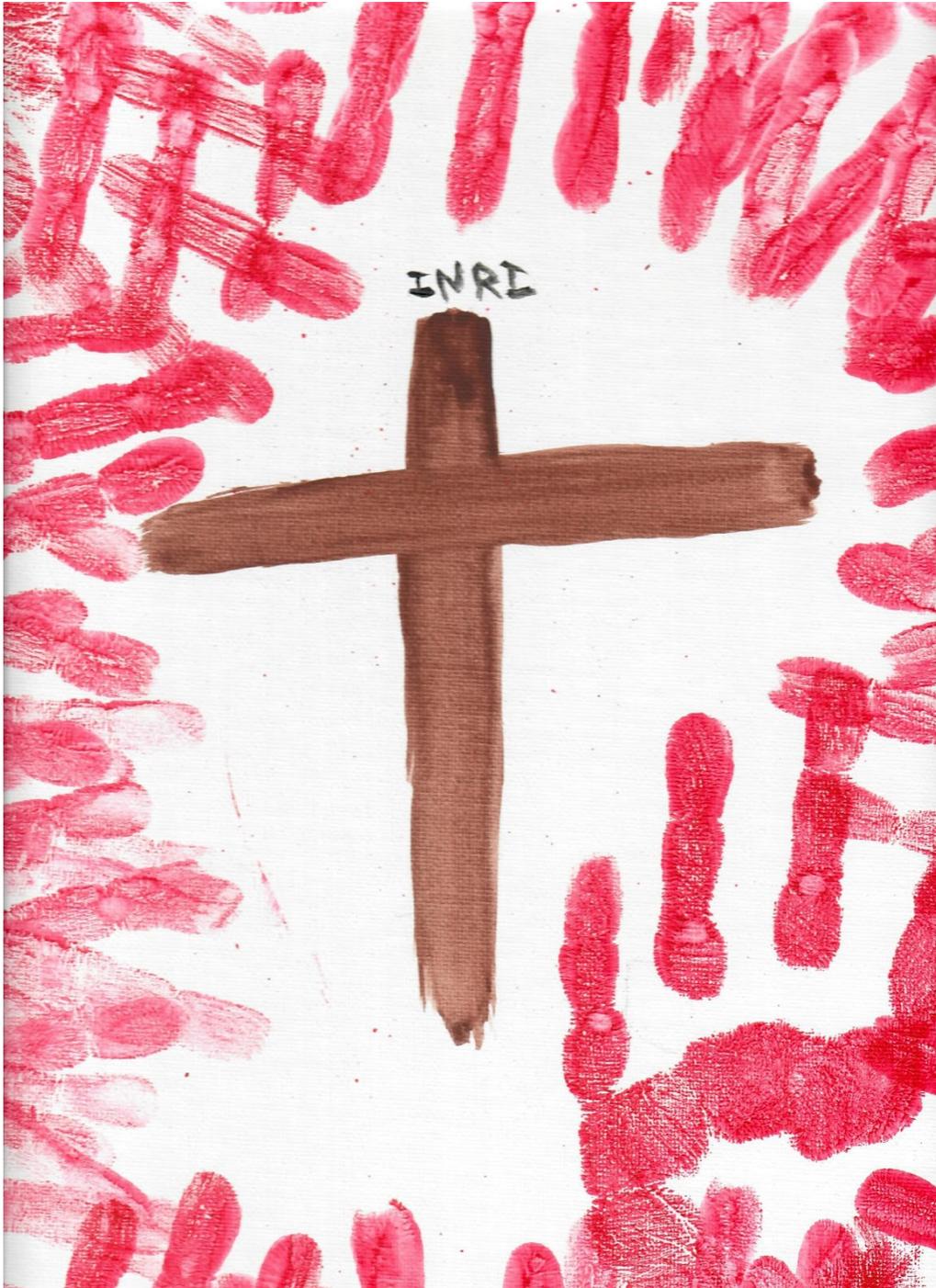
Sometimes in order to achieve some of the greatest graces, we are called to take on some of the greatest trials. It is important however to remember that we are not alone. Jesus is with us through it all. In fact when we are suffering or going through a difficult trial, it is God inviting us to unite our suffering with His suffering on the cross for the salvation of souls. Although it is very hard in the moment, it can be a truly heart penetrating thought to think that when we are suffering, Christ is allowing us to enter into His greatest act of love with Him on the cross. One of my favorite quotes from John Paul II is "Don't waste your suffering." Mother Teresa also said, "This is perfect joy — to share in the sufferings of the world as Christ did." So yes, the sufferings of Christ's crucifixion is real and hard to face, but I believe there are graces that come from them. God can also do great things with our suffering. Just think, out of the greatest evil, (i.e. Christ's crucifixion), God brought about the greatest good, that is, the opportunity for all souls to be saved. If He can transform Jesus' sufferings, just think what He could do with ours?

What things are you currently struggling with that you can offer up along with Christ in his crucifixion?

How can you love more like Jesus by denying your own will and accepting the Father's will?

What things are you suffering with alone that Jesus is inviting you to bring to Him?

Scott Peters is a Change A Heart Volunteer 2020-2021. He is serving at Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh where his day is filled with providing resources to the homeless in their Warming Center as well as their Pregnancy and Parenting program.



Station 10 — “Jesus Crucified” by Mary-Teresa Robinette, Change A Heart Volunteer

“The cross symbol as we know it in our Catholic faith, symbolizes Christ’s Crucifixion. In this painting, it is surrounded by bloody handprints. This acknowledges the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior that was shed for us sinners.”

Mary-Teresa is a second year volunteer with Change A Heart 2020-2021. She is serving ages 6 month to preschool at Angels’ Place, an organization that provides support and quality early childhood education to parents who are working or going to school.

Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

(Luke 23: 39-43)

FrancisCorps — Jenny Rose Anacan, Alumna

While living in an intentional community, serving those on the margins, and praying every step of the way during FrancisCorps, I remember telling myself: "this is all part of God's plan." Even during the moments of happiness and sadness, laughter and tears, I still kept telling myself "this is all part of God's plan." At the end of my year of service, those words I referred to so many times — "God's plan"— carried more meaning than I knew could exist.

In fact, what did I even know about a year of service? Before leaving for Syracuse my family and friends asked me "what exactly are you going to do?" I had such cookie-cutter answer: living with others, working at a youth center in an impoverished part of Syracuse, and praying. The only thing I knew was I had to trust God's plan. Little did I know, a year of service was so much more than just that. The more time I spend in reflection much more unfolded. I was inspired by the simplicity of life that Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi lived. I truly learned what "at all times preach the Gospel, if necessary use words" meant during community living to serving those in need to praying. To this day, those will continue to be significant in my life, wherever God's plan takes me.

I would be lying if I said only happiness and laughter filled my year of service. There were moments of sadness and tears. These were moments God was testing me — both emotionally and spiritually. Those tough times reminded me that at any given moment, I could have been the bad thief or the good thief while Jesus was right beside me all along. The bad thief doubted Jesus and His capabilities; whereas, the good thief stood up for Jesus and told Jesus to remember him when Jesus arrived to His kingdom. During my year of service, there were moments when I was the bad thief questioning God and all His works. There were other moments when I called upon God to guide me whether it was during my time serving the children or with my community. I trusted God just like how the good thief did.

When I trusted God during the challenging moments in FrancisCorps, it was not a time to question Him, but a time to grow in a relationship with Him. A time to seek the tender love God has for us all. When we put God first, we listen and contemplate his works. Saint Francis did the same. We let God lead a path that was meant for us, so we can one day be one with Him in His Kingdom. If Jesus can promise His kingdom to a thief, then He can do the same for us.

**As we live our life who will we be during those tough times —
the bad thief who doubted Jesus or the good thief who called upon Jesus?**

Jenny Rose Anacan is a candidate for the Master of Science degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration at Canisius College. She served as a Program Coordinator/Youth Mentor at Vincent House, an after-school program, during her year of service with FrancisCorps (2018-2019).

Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciples

Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple there whom He loved, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

(John 19: 25-27)

Felician Volunteers in Mission — Caroline Stanfill, Staff

Jesus never abandons His people or leaves them alone. With some of His very last breaths He continues to form community, family even, among His followers. He is faithful to His mission until the very end. Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved, were given to each other for support and companionship on their journey through life and in a more general way Jesus gave Mary as mother of all disciples. After Jesus died, He knew that it was His followers who would become the body of Christ in the world. Mary does not cease to be the mother of the physical Jesus after His transformation. Through His death and resurrection and the mystery of the Eucharist, God has incorporated the whole Church and the "people which He has gained for Himself" into the body of Christ. As His body was transformed so was Mary's relationship to Him and to us as her adopted children through Him.

Who are your companions on the journey of life?

Who has God given you for community, support, and family?

Do you see yourself as the physical expression of Christ in the world?

Do you see Mary as your mother as part of the Body of Christ?

What is your relationship with Mary like? Do you see her as your spiritual mother?

Caroline Stanfill is the program coordinator for Felician Volunteers in Mission. She lives in Blue Ridge, Virginia and enjoys working with youth at her parish, spending time with family, and adventures in travel and the outdoors.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when He had said this He breathed his last.

(Luke 23: 44-46)

Cap Corps — Philip Cordia, Current Volunteer

I'm always struck by how plain Christ's last moment is. You would think our God of all creation would go out with a bigger bang than just "and He sighed one more time like everyone else." But I guess that's the point here. Our God came down from His lofty throne and became one of us. People throw this fact around like it's nothing, and it's so easy to become numb to. But when we take a moment to reflect, our minds should shatter at the thought of an incomprehensible being becoming human. He ate like us, went to weddings like us, was tempted like us, our glorious Lord experienced our humanity.

Right now we sit before the Cross, where the King of Peace hangs stripped and flayed in a merely human body. Visibly, He is not extraordinary, He appears no different than any of us. And in His final moment He simply breathes His last, just as you and I will at the end of our pilgrimage.

After taking a moment to revere the Godhead, realize that you are worthy to gaze upon our God as human. He tells us, "Bring all your blessings to the cross. Share them now with the One who knows every moment, every feeling, every breath of your past. Bring your sorrows to the cross. It is only here that they will turn into joy. Bring your problems to the cross. It is here that they have been undone".

Do not back away with the false humility that you are unworthy to be in His presence. He became one of us.

Christ quotes the psalmist when He cries out His thirst for us. Understand that our God is inconsolable without our love. He desires us so immensely; He became one of us. You are not too small for our Lord, you are the only thing that will satisfy Him. He wants nothing other than to share in our humanity. Will you go to Him?

Here our Lord dies on the cross.

**Do you approach Him and console His aching heart,
or run away in fear of the intimacy demanded?**

Do you sit at the foot of the cross regularly?

How do you approach Him compared to how He wants you to approach Him?

Philip Cordia is a current Cap Corps Volunteer serving in the ER at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland, OH. He graduated from Virginia Tech and plans to go to medical school. Philip was assisted by community member, Alexandra Bishop, who edited his reflection.



**Station 13 — Sr. Rosemarie Goins,
Felician Volunteers in Mission**

Sr. Rosemarie Goins, a woodcarver and graphic artist, is a Felician Franciscan Sister. During her long years of ministry, she has taught art, English and Theology.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

(Matthew 27: 57-60)

Franciscan Volunteer Ministry — Kevin Cilano, Alumnus

Each step of the fourteenth station feels like its own miracle. First, Joseph of Arimathea was a generous enough person to consider donating his new tomb. Then, despite the doubtlessly crippling grief of witnessing Jesus' crucifixion, he was still able to garner not only Pilate's attention but also his acquiescence to what must have seemed a bold request. Lastly, but crucially, they were able to take Jesus' body down from the cross and entomb Him before the Friday sunset that marked the beginning of the Sabbath.

A lot had to go right in the span of a Friday afternoon, and considering how things had gone so far that day ... well, it would be hard to blame Joseph or any of the disciples for being pessimistic and giving up.

And yet, there was quite a bit of work done well in advance of these miracles. Joseph must have had to work to become or remain rich and put himself in a position where he could be so generous. Jesus' itinerant ministry had to reach and touch Joseph's heart to make a devout disciple out of him. Most fundamentally, though, the "new tomb" itself had to be hewn into the rock.

As if it needs to be mentioned, there were no drills, jackhammers or dynamite for this task. There were just hardworking hewers who carved out the tomb and door from stone in the hot Jerusalem sun, likely over a period of some years. Was this just another job for them? Were they thankful and eager for work to feed their families? Did they grumble as they sweat and scraped, jealously cursing whoever had the means to finance the project? Perhaps they were devout and softly murmured benedictions upon the space revealed by the sundered rock?

Regardless of who or how, the rock was indeed worked away, day-by-day and bit-by-bit, to reveal ... well, nothing; just space and the potential for the miracles that were to come. In this way, the fourteenth station is almost an inverse reflection of St. Francis' life: divesting riches and responding to the call to "go and repair my church" through a lifetime of sacred ministry. What the two have in common, though, is a stepwise process that is arduous much more often than it is miraculous.

Taken together, Joseph of Arimathea and St. Francis remind us that whether we have riches or not, whether we need to hew away a heart of stone or mend one that is broken, what matters most is making space for the Lord. Even during times as trying as these, when illness and ill will, poverty and selfishness seem to eclipse generosity, courage and perseverance, every step we make can still be a part of a good journey.

Who in your life have been examples of hard work and generosity and how have their examples inspired you?

Think of the seemingly ordinary tasks in your day or happenings in life that you take for granted. What are they and who helps make them a reality?

How can you foster generosity, courage, and perseverance in times of brokenness, challenge, illness and ill will?

How can you make space for the miracles to come, make space for the Lord?

Kevin Cilano is a librarian at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. A St. Bonaventure University graduate, he served for five years at the St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, two as a Franciscan Volunteer Minister and three as a team member.



Thank you for joining us this Lent to pray with the Stations of the Cross. Together, we are part of the Franciscan family and appreciate this opportunity to pray as one. May this Lent and the coming Easter Season be times of deep reflection, living Faith, acting with kindness, and being reflections of God's love.



Franciscan Service Network (FSN) is a network of Franciscan-based service programs across the United States and the world. We offer opportunities modeled after the lives of Saints Francis and Clare to be in relationship with people who are poor and marginalized and to care for creation. We share a rootedness in Franciscan spirituality, a desire to support intentional communities motivated by justice and love, and a commitment to live out our values in service with all our brothers and sisters, especially those who are impoverished and oppressed, including our Earth.

To learn more about FSN, please visit our website:

[HTTPS://FRANCISCANSERVICENETWORK.ORG](https://franciscanservicenet.org)