



Toronto, Ontario, Canada March 2 to April 14, 2022



Crossings



On behalf of the Board of Directors of IMAGO, I am delighted to welcome you to Crossings, a unique arts exhibition inspired by the iconic biblical story of the Passion and expressed in the *Scriptural Stations of the Cross*.

The exhibition has resulted from the creative vision of IMAGO's

Executive Director, John Franklin and his committee who have brought to life an experience that will engage the faith community and those with an interest in art or in spirituality. While many of you may have encountered the Stations of the Cross in your church traditions, others will be discovering this ancient practice for the first time.

For fifty years IMAGO has sought to explore the interface between art and faith. IMAGO's Board of Directors commends the Executive Director for his timing of Crossings to celebrate not only the golden anniversary but also to coincide with Toronto's Year of Public Art.

The outdoor installations are particularly well-suited to the demands of pandemic life. The themes of the visual art works are timely and the Stations may be viewed chronologically as the events occurred in the Passion narrative or geographically by location as you are moved to view and reflect on what you are seeing.

May Crossings be a significant part of your journey to Easter.

Elizabeth Downie, Chair

Elizabeth Downie

Directors:

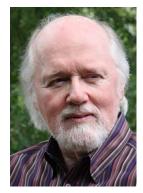
Carolyn Dartnell

Jared Erhardt

Robert Schiedel

Mark Thomson

Ben Volman



Over the past two years we have been called upon to negotiate our way along new paths and adapt our living to new practices. It has been a time of disruption and uncertainty.

The pandemic became the constant theme of news media and social conversation; an unsettling presence intruding

on "normal activity" threatening our livelihoods and life itself. Stations of the Cross tells another narrative of disruption. Its themes have a familiar ring, unjust judgement, misuse of power, false accusations, betrayal, denial, death, sorrow and suffering. Yet woven into the fabric of this story is the presence of self-giving love and the invitation to hope. Art Stations, the international series of art exhibitions, have, since 2016, been bringing that story to public attention in major urban settings.

Crossings Toronto is the 2022 version of this series held March 2 to April 14, 2022. The project has been initiated by IMAGO offering an exhibition that has some distinctive features. It has chosen to engage the Scriptural Stations of the Cross established by Pope John Paul II in 1991. And in addition to the 14 stations Crossings will include Triumphal Entry and Resurrection. Planning for Crossings began in early in 2019. The pandemic has nudged us away from the normal mixture of indoor and outdoor artworks to hosting an all-outdoor exhibition. This opens the way for a pilgrimage walk. Because the locations are clustered in two areas one can visit all 16 stations in a few hours. Most of the stations are located in plain view from busy thoroughfares that also have plenty of pedestrian passersby. The public presence of the art means that many will encounter the works in an unexpected way that can pique curiosity and draw them into the narrative. The story being told is arguably the most influential narrative that has given shape to Western culture.

We hope this catalogue will be a valued resource of inspiration as you view the images and read the poetry and reflections, all mediating the iconic story of the Passion of Jesus.

John Franklin

Executive Director, IMAGO

Curator of Crossings

Acknowledgements

Crossings turned out to be a project much larger and more complex than at first expected. The vision behind it was clear and the desire to see it happen was strong. And as with all such efforts it required a team of people who shared the vision and were prepared to do what it takes to bring it about. I want to thank those who have walked with us on this journey.

The idea began in hearing about *Art Stations* and then meeting Professor Aaron Rosen who launched the first event in London UK. Further exhibitions took place guided by him and Reverend Catriona Laing. I made a formal proposal to them to host an *Art Stations* event in Toronto which they readily endorsed.

Graf-Martin Communications has been a valued partner in shaping strategy and lending expertise to the task of marketing and promotion of *Crossings*. Our thanks to Ellen Graf-Martin, Dan Wilcox and their team for their support of this project. Thanks to Joel Clements of Brainstorm Studio who designed and set up the *Crossings* website, working closely with Pekka Varvas to provide a home base on the internet. And many thanks to Alana Walker and Intriciti for featuring *Crossings* and inviting me to participate in a spring and fall series of conversations on important themes for our times. Thank you to Christopher Brittain, Dean of Divinity at Trinity College, for the invitation for me to offer a credit course to coincide with the *Crossings* exhibition.

With sixteen works in the exhibition we faced the challenge of finding sixteen locations to allow for a walk of the stations. I won't list the names here but everyone we approached at the institutions and churches was not only open to the idea but responded enthusiastically to the invitation to participate. Many thanks to the leadership in each of these places for sharing the vision and providing a site to display the artworks.

A project of this size is expensive and could not be done without adequate funding. I want to thank the individual sponsors and foundations who have so generously supported this unique exhibition. They are noted on the next page. The willingness of so many to invest in this project not only affirmed the vision but inspired us in doing the work needed to bring it to life. Scott Cameron chaired our Steering Committee keeping us on track and took on the role of fundraiser for *Crossings*. His deep commitment and hard work on behalf of this exhibition has been extraordinary. Thank you to Scott for his belief in this project and for all he has done to make it possible. Thank you too to the many contributors who have mailed in a cheque or clicked on the donate button to support *Crossings*.

Thank you to Bob Schiedel, who expanded his role as the IMAGO treasurer, to include managing *Crossings* finances. And to Elizabeth Downie for her assistance in the editing process and to Patricia Paddey for reading over the proofs for the catalogue and saving us from unnoticed errors. Thank you to Warren MacDonald of MacDonald Design who entered into the spirit of the project and went well beyond the call of duty in getting the *Crossings* Catalogue and the Guide together.

Thank you to the writers and poets whose work is found in the catalogue. A special thanks to D.S. Martin who did the work of selecting and co-ordinating the poets for this catalogue. The effort to pair the writer with the station was part of the process and has brought a good result. I am grateful to each one and the way they readily embraced the assignment to give careful thought to the text for a specific station. Thank you to all the visual artists whose work is at the centre of this project. Each of these gifted artists brings a unique style to the exhibition and remind us again of the great resourcefulness of the human imagination.

Wycliffe College and IMAGO have collaborated on a number of arts events thanks to Steve Hewko. I am grateful to have had Steve along on this journey bringing his insights and rich practical experience in event planning. Thanks to Heather Alloway who from the early days of planning has been an enthusiastic supporter of the vision and source of innovative ideas. Heather has worked to get the word out to schools, and co-ordinated hospitality for the artists. Thanks to Rebekah Smick and Marion Franklin for their assistance in selecting the artists and the art for the exhibition. Thanks to Gordon MacKay who has been indispensable in providing the needed expertise to design the display units and see them placed in good secure settings at the various locations. Early in the process we searched to find locations, every location contact was welcoming and ready to participate in this project. Thanks to all those with whom we have worked with at the various sites.

I am particularly grateful to the Steering Committee members who have consistently supported this project: Scott Cameron, Heather Alloway, Marion Franklin, Steve Hewko, Rebekah Smick, Pekka Varvas and Alana Walker. Together they have provided insight, advice and unwavering enthusiasm for *Crossings* that has nurtured the project through the shifts and changes we have faced over the past two and a half years. Liam Kinnon, has done a fine job in overseeing our Social Media program assisted by Mobolu Coker. We are grateful to Sylvia Woods has provided good support in organizing volunteers. Lisa Kember, our Project Manager, has been a wonderful support not only in keeping

4

Acknowledgements

things in order but in offering innovative suggestions that have been significant for the project. The IMAGO board has been consistently supportive of me and of this very large idea—thank you. A heartfelt thank you to my wife Marion, a constant conversation partner, who has in ways I cannot fully know, influenced and given shape to *Crossings*. Through her unwavering support and exceptional patience she has been a sustaining presence as we have walked this journey together.

John.

John Franklin

Executive Director, IMAGO

Curator of Crossings

Steering Committee

Scott Cameron, *Chair*Heather Alloway
John Franklin
Marion Franklin
Steve Hewko
Rebecca Smick
Pekka Varvas
Alana Walker Carpenter

Lisa Kember, *Project Manager* Liam Kinnon, *Social Media* Mobolu Coker, *Social Media* Sylvia Woods, *Volunteers*

imago



Thanks for their generous support toward the printing of this catalogue.





Eagles' Wings Charitable Trust



John & Rebecca Horwood



McGrath Family Foundation

Onesimus Global Foundation

The Kiervin Family Foundation





Mark and Jenny Thomson

Copyright 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without prior written permission from the copyright holder except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

The individual artists hold the copyright for their work as represented in this catalogue and have given the publisher the right to reproduce their work in this publication.

The scripture excerpts on pages 43 and 44 are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, Oxford University Press, 1989.

Table of Contents

Station / Location / Artist / Poet

Alpha	Triumphal Entry: Jesus comes to Jerusalem Knox Presbyterian Church / James Paterson / John (Isaac) Slater	8
1	Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane Newman Centre / Symeon van Donkelaar / Vilma Blenman	10
2	Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested Trinity College / Patricia June Vickers / Richard Osler	12
3	Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin Wycliffe College / Betty Spackman / John Terpstra	14
4	Jesus is denied by Peter Knox College / Michael David O'Brien / D.S. Martin	16
5	Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate Toronto School of Theology / Ovide Joseph Bighetty / Richard Greene	18
6	Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns University of St. Michael's College / Brian David Johnston / Carla Funk	20
7	Jesus takes up the cross St. Basil's Church (University of St. Michael's College) / Colleen McLaughlin Barlow / Sally Ito	22
8	Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross Kelly Library (University of St. Michael's College) / Phil Irish / Sarah Klassen	24
9	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem Toronto School of Theology / Ruthia Pak Regis / Susan Alexander	26
10	Jesus is crucified Regis College / Timothy P. Schmalz / David Lyle Jeffrey	28
11	Jesus promises his Kingdom to the repentant thief Timothy Eaton Memorial Church on St. Clair / Komi Olafimihan / Ins Choi	30
12	Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other Christ Church Deer Park / Maria Gabankova / Debbie Sawczak	32
13	Jesus dies on the cross Calvin Presbyterian Church / Farhad O'Neill / Carolyn Weber	34
14	Jesus is laid in the tomb Yorkminster Park Baptist Church / Paul Roorda / Caitlin Thomson	36
Omega	Resurrection: Jesus rises from the dead Our Lady of Perpetual Help / Lynne McIlvride / Violet Nesdoly	38
Biographie	es of the Artists and Poets	40
History of the Stations		42
Biblical Texts		43

Station Alpha

Triumphal Entry: Jesus comes to Jerusalem

What just happened here? Next to nothing, it seems. Jesus rode a colt from Bethany to Jerusalem, entered the temple, looked around, and returned to Bethany. All told, not much to see.

There are two moments of drama, one which almost no one witnessed, another quite public. In the first Jesus seems to display prophetic foresight; he tells two of his disciples to get him a colt to ride. He describes where they can find it, how someone will question them taking it, and how to respond to that question. And it happens just as he said. Mark (unlike Matthew and John) doesn't quote Zechariah 9:9 about a king riding a donkey. If Jesus is a prophet, there's no big revelation.

The second event is a public drama. Jesus, on the colt, rides into Jerusalem, heralded by a Passover pilgrimage crowd in front and behind. The crowd calls out, 'Save us now!' ('hosanna'), believing (it seems) he is 'the one who comes in the name of the Lord,' a Davidic king who will inaugurate a new political regime, liberation and justice for occupied Judea and Jerusalem. 'Jewish lives matter!' It seems like a moment of revelation. But is it? Unlike the other gospels, Mark's 'crowd' is simply 'many people,' and it's not entirely clear they are acclaiming Jesus as such. And nothing comes of his non-triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus goes 'into the temple' and 'looks around at everything.' But, 'as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.' (Mk 11:11). An anti-climax if ever there was.

Readers of this text (if they know the Gospel of Mark) know what comes next. The following events in Jerusalem culminate in Jesus' crucifixion. Then Mark's gospel ends (in Mk 16:7) with what seems like only half an account of the resurrection. Readers must complete that account with their own faith.

And so it is with Mark's telling of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. What's to see here? On the scale of big moments in history, 'revelatory' moments, who would have known that the one riding into Jerusalem was a prophet and king? Almost no one knew how he got the colt. A small crowd may have seen some kind of messianic hope in his arrival. But that's it.

'He comes to us as one unknown,' 'a stranger and an enigma,' said Albert Schweitzer. Just so, Jesus comes to us as God—God, who does not live at the beginning and end of our dreams for our 'best life,' or health and safety, or liberation and justice, or a good death—God, whose way crosses all of these in this enigmatic man who rides into Jerusalem one day and leaves.

Would we see God's arrival here? God's anointed prophet and king arriving as 'hosanna'? Look again. Look against what you're looking for. 'He comes to us as one unknown.' 'The beginning of the good news of Jesus Messiah, the Son of God.' (Mk 1:1)

By Douglas Harink, Author and Emeritus Professor of Theology, The King's University, Edmonton

Entry to Jerusalem (King of Peace)

By John Slater
Somber Palm

8

Sunday all Before the crown of thorns over the world-streets purple robe and churches torture—beempty. comes his own parody He comes! they of Herod spill out from and Pilate the City So you are a king? no hosanna! scramble up followers palm trees hack defending his kingdom off branches wrestle from by force *he* cloaks to fling shall banish at his feet chariot joyous oand horse the vation for warrior's bow king of the people's champion suffering head down meek king of peace. riding a donkey-led Monks process into the into an ring—his face empty church set like flint. palm fronds poke discreetly The children from choir stalls spray from vase swept up in their parent's near altar ecstasy the chant less exultant dart thru crowd cut palm wave than serene branches shout and yet still hosanna! carpeting this strange king the Master's like them with path with song. no standing.



Triumphal Entry by James Paterson

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

What are the limits of human despondency? This is a question Jesus explored at agonizing depths in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was acutely aware of his own impending doom, and, in the throes of heartache and agitation, he questioned his

calling and doubted his strength. He yearned for a less painful path and for companions to share the struggle.

Neither of these expressed hopes was realized. Instead, Jesus went on to suffer a cruel and ignominious execution, and he faced these hardships alone.



10

The Cup by Symeon van Donkelaar

In his darkest hour Jesus sought two forms of companionship: human and divine. Both, it appears, let him down. Wearied by a long and eventful day capped with ceremony and wine, Jesus' closest colleagues couldn't stay awake to honour his request for company. They slept.

Jesus himself was too troubled to rest, consumed by griefs too raw for words.

And what about God? Was Divinity paying attention when Jesus stared into the abyss and poured out his anguish to an unresponsive "Father?" This was human prayer in its most primal form—"Help me! Help me!" But nothing changed. Jesus remained a pawn destined to be sacrificed in a cosmic contest while the Being outside of time declined to intervene.

"Yet not what I want, but as you want."

Really? Is that it? Can such submission be godly, be good?

Jesus' response of humble obedience is counter-intuitive. Had he just reached the end of his rope? Was he emotionally depleted, cowed by circumstances into ceding autonomy, simply resigned to do whatever came next? Jesus discovered his way forward through stark unburdening in authentic prayer, and the grueling compliance it prepared him to accept.

Prayer and pain are the yin and yang of human existence. When humanity hurts we reach out to powers beyond our normal ken because our reflective hearts know it takes more than willpower, provisions, or pills to settle distressed minds, hurting hearts, or troubled souls.

Identifying deficiencies and dependencies reminds us of our status in the universe, forcing us to acknowledge how small is our actual sphere of control. As human beings we're always out of our depth, our most valiant labours the futile wiggles of an insect's limb caught firmly in a web.

And so, we pray. We reach beyond our knowing to summon forces we only dimly apprehend. At times we feel abandoned, yet when an ego is stripped of its pretensions, a person's soul may be strangely calmed, like a post-tantrum child nestled securely once again in a parent's arms. Agonizing can be a portal to more profound experiences of human and divine connection.

Gethsemane begins as a place, a location where a deep encounter with suffering and abandonment actually occurred; where Jesus experienced the utter depths of human existence; where body, soul, and spirit cried out their harshest hurts. Gethsemane also suggests a posture of pleading; an unbridled outpouring of personal distress whereby painful questioning of God morphs into prayerful asking of God. Gethsemane reveals a way of reckoning with life's trials. It gives permission to name both pains and desires, and leads those able to trust to accept whatever must next occur.

By Doug Koop, Winnipeg-based freelance writer and Spiritual Health Practitioner

Getting to Gethsemane

By Vilma Blenman

March moves mornings along like a river rolling logs, yet no tulips, no green shoots of Solomon's seal to greet April's arrival. Snow mounds stick to black earth--impregnable as the stone walls of that city where other gardens root the gnarled trunks of timeless trees in deep groves, green with the aroma of ripening olives.

Here at home I watch and wait for white crocuses to return.
Colour calls to me from walls inside and I see the fresco yellows and reds etched Michelangelo holding his brush in the small space between reaching hands. I confess that I've held spaces, run races to keep the distance inviolate, that like a child chided, I've locked myself in rooms.

Was mine a phantom faith? Why is spring so late?

Yesterday a cardinal sang sitting on a bare lilac branch and I saw a red-robed choir, heard its antiphonal anthem clearly—resurrection reminder. Now morning makes its rounds again and the garden's all sounds as cardinals come back to sing:

Get up. Go now. Stand back no more Soar, soar. Free, free. See, see.

I do. I see a solitary silhouette kneeling in garden dust and suddenly I want to go to say:
Here's my white flag.
Heaven knows it's soiled with earth's dirt, but a garden gives cues and a cause. I only pause now to ask:
How do I get to Gethsemane?

Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

"Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall."

- Measure for Measure

Why did Jesus choose Judas as one of his disciples? Why did Judas choose to follow Jesus? What were Judas' hopes and expectations of Jesus? There is always the danger of projecting our expectations and hopes on others and when they fail to live up to our ideals and ideologies, we feel they have betrayed us. But, who has betrayed whom? There are seasons in our all too human journey when we need to ask ourselves whether our aims and ambitions are but mirages lacking substance and when we expect others to fulfill them we are, initially, betraying ourselves, using others to fill our hopes, dreams, ambitions and deep emptiness and hunger.

There is no doubt Jesus' notion of the Kingdom of God was different from that of Judas. But Judas, for a tragic phase of his life, seemed addicted, too attached to his limited vision of the Kingdom and how Jesus was meant to fit into such a Procrustean bed and coffin of sorts.

Did Jesus betray Judas or had Judas betrayed a larger vision of reality in his read of Jesus? There is always the danger of demonizing the other when the other does not fulfill our wants, our expectations, our immature constructions of the good, true and beautiful, we then feel betrayed.

Where do our imperfect, finite and fallible expectations come from? What part of us? What unvisited place do we need yet to visit and call home, our deeper, truer self, our eternal face?

There remained, deep down in Judas, a tender, a sensitive place. His heart was not hard. When he formally betrayed Jesus, he knew he had betrayed himself, the disciples and Jesus. He could have turned, as did Peter when he betrayed Jesus, recognized a poor path he had taken and returned, via confession and forgiveness, to health and healing. But he betrayed himself again, refusing to face his shadow, his darkness, his deep sadness.

The tree, which is meant to be deeply rooted and bear much fruit, was his gallows. Again, betrayal! Betrayal works at so many levels, layer upon layer upon layer. And yet, did Jesus betray Judas? In the harrowing of hell, did Jesus visit Judas, wash his feet, welcome him home, Judas the prodigal of sorts, Jesus ever in search of the lost lamb, the wayward child?

Betrayal can be interpreted in so many ways, used and abused in so many forms and guises, chameleon-like, changing colour and size. There often lurks in those who are the most vocal in their claims to be agents of the Kingdom, justice advocates and makers of peace, worrisome motives and actions, in thought, word and deed, betraying the very ideals espoused. Let me conclude with quotes from Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Becket in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral:* "Terrible is the temptation

to do good" and "Sin grows with doing good.....For those who serve the greater cause may make the cause serve them."

By Ron Dart, Professor of Political Science, Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford

Judas and a Boy

By Richard Osler

And so I sing: *Judas*.
I name you: *Iscariot*. Man of Kieroth. *Sicarious*, daggerman —
Judas, in the garden of Gethsemane,
where you sold out Jesus — that false kiss.

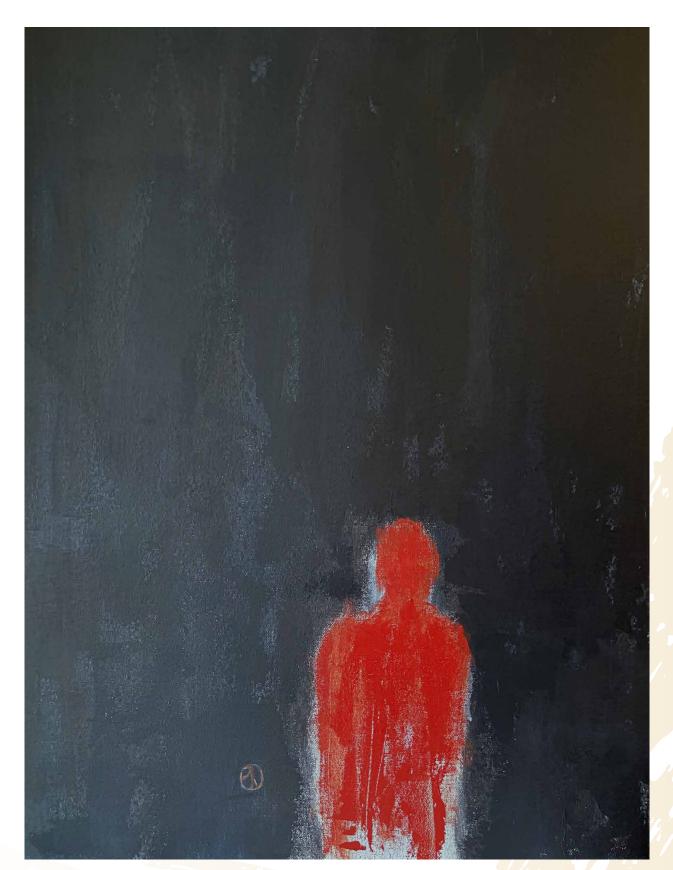
What is this iron in my mouth I can't spit out? This taste of blood, my teeth clamped to my tongue, as I try to sound out, pray, against what curses us, to staunch the wound — what brays inside betrayal.

When I say *Judas*, *sicarious*, what leaves my mouth wounds other scars deep in those dark passes of my body.

Dare I say, *Judas*, not as curse but lament. In brotherhood — this psalm I write on a chill day of rain as my prayer turns yellow/gold like the leaves of the thorn-apple outside my window. The red berries, offerings, for the God of seasons and the cedar waxwings who congregate each Fall to gorge them down.

But yes, I will say: *Judas*, and let what lingers whisper and rise into a croon of a mother holding a restless child and then deeper, a singing down in the chest and Cohen's *hineni — I am here, Lord,* and now, I am here in a field under a tree and its fruit this man, hanging, and *Judas, Judas,* I croon as I climb these limbs to cut you free, lower you reverently, lower you to the ground, your broken body.

I remember me, a boy, what broke one day in a garden, the heads of red tulips slaughtered on the ground, the boy beside them, shears in his hands hearing his mother's false accusing words in his ears and now I hear *sicarious*, *sicarious*, daggerman. Daggerman. And Judas, I place you here in this poem beside your silver, my red blossoms, Judas, I cradle you, I cradle me and I pray *hineni*, I sing *we are here, Lord*, and we wait, we wait for you here, Lord.



Jesus Betrayed by Judas by Patricia June Vickers

Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

Things that feel like an irresolvable mess in the darkest hours of the night often are much clearer at daybreak, disturbance dispelled by the dawn. Not today. Not this day. On this day like many days before and since, the clarity brought by the light of day is hardened into a resolution. The distress and disorientation imagined through a night without sleep are manifested as a stark and extending dystopian reality.

The nightmares were prophecies. The monsters are real.

The olive garden now a memory of first pressing, Jesus finds himself stared down by those who could not really look him in the eye. It cost them thirty pieces of silver to get him there. Who knows how high they would have gone?

Gathering in the Hall of Hewn Stones in the temple, the members of the ruling religious elite have turned it into an echo chamber of their own confirmation bias. If they had listened carefully, they might have heard the stones themselves crying out. But with Jesus sitting in their midst they could think of only one thing — the smell of their own fear. Their project and position were under threat.

This man did not conform to their expectations. He didn't seek their approval or their company, and like powerful people everywhere, they really just wanted to 'get rid' of a rabble-rouser. It should have been easy but when they looked at him, they saw the people. So very many people. They wished the people looked at them the way they loved and honoured and followed Jesus.

They engineered the result. Yet Jesus played his own game. True to character, he did not join their power plays. Instead, he appealed to a different power altogether and surrendered to the worst that they could do.

If you are the Messiah, tell us.

He knows how this conversation goes.

If I tell you, you won't believe, and if I ask you a question you won't answer. But I know who I am.

Are you the Son of God?

You say that I am.

Twisting the words, turning the knife, they send him to the Roman authorities. Let someone else take the blame for their deviously-desired outcome. Jesus is gone now but somehow his presence lingers.

Jesus is always in the room. At a dystopian dawn after a fitful sleep. In corridors of power where the people are less feared than they ought to be. In tidy rooms we want undisturbed by injustice or bloodshed. In empty churches and bustling cafes. Take a moment to catch his eye.

Put aside what people might say if you even entertain the greatest possibility. Step out from historical misperceptions, wild depictions, cultural expectations.

And answer the question.

Who do you say that I am?

By Anna Robbins, President, Acadia Divinity College, Dean of Theology, Acadia University, Wolfville

Jesus Defends Himself

By John Terpstra

As Jesus faced the priests
and pastors of the day,
in that overheated, early morning interrogation,
with its foregone conclusion,
he felt the welcome fanning breeze
from the wings of an angel
he recognized, one of the crew
who'd attended to his rescue in the wilderness;

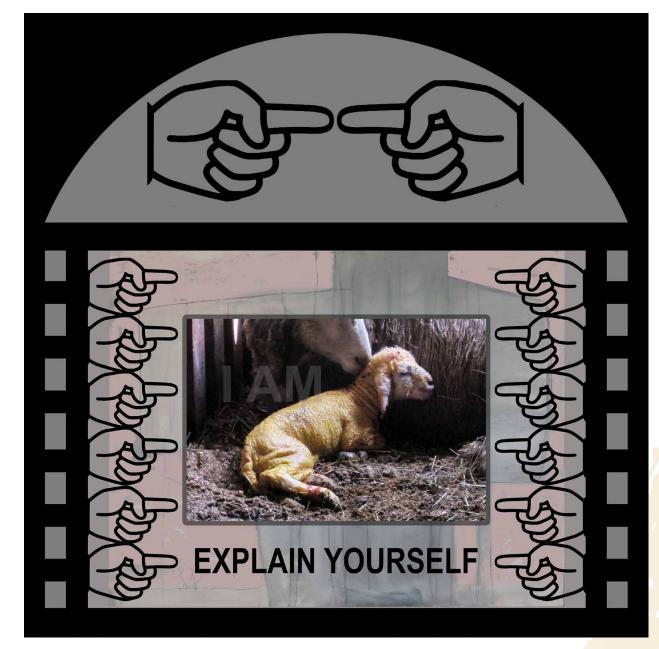
he heard in his ear the Spirit's sweet and whispered cue, refusing the ways of the world, the paths of power religion,

or to say much of anything at all.

He knew that he was not alone, and it was not hopeless. Yet he was very alone, and there was no hope that the brief replies he tendered would lead anyplace other than his end.

He knew who he was before God. And this, he could see now, was what they were so afraid of.

What more would they need to hear?



Explain Yourself by Betty Spackman

Jesus is denied by Peter

What does it mean, for an accent to betray you? In the most obvious sense, whether you want it to or not, your accent tells others where you come from and those whom you live among. In this passage from Matthew's Gospel, bystanders hear, in Peter's Galilean accent, evidence that he is "one of them," a follower of Christ. But there are other ways to think about the relationship between what and how and why we speak as we do, and what and how and why people respond as they do. I hear in Peter's accent—accent understood not as indicator of geography and culture and family background, but accent understood as noticeable, distinctive emphases—fear and rejection and trying too hard to convince others, and himself, of something they all know isn't true.

My oldest friends can always tell when I'm nervous about something or, worse still, when I'm being evasive or lying. They detect a change in the tone of my voice, a noticeable, distinctive shift in my emphases, and they always, always call me on whatever it is that they all know, we all know, isn't true. Even if I don't say as much or feel as much, I know and believe this is a good thing, to be called on it, because in turn this calls me, or recalls me, to my better self, the person I was formed by God to be.

It's because Peter is called out, in this sequence, that he comes closer to Christ. He comes closer to Him in recognition of his having failed to be the person he is called to be: "one of them," a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. His accent betrays him. In other words, his very act of attempting to deny this affiliation irrevocably proves the affiliation. So too, for us, it's in our very acts of denial that we reveal our want for a saving and merciful God.

Cocks crow three times, all the time, for each of us. Be thankful that Christ knows this; that He knows each of us as we are and are called to be; that He knows that when we say we don't know Him, we do; that in those moments, we need Him all the more.

By Randy Boyagoda, Vice-Dean, Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, author and novelist

A Servant Girl (by D.S. Martin)

By D.S. Martin

The courtyard's cold as bone & the porticos provide
no shelter as the day's warmth
slips into the star-speckled sky
The servants of those in the Sanhedrin shiver & wait
Some soldiers fetch fuel after they instigate
the building of a fire & eye

me with their predatory stare I'd rather be alone but we gather nearby & stretch wide our hands to where heat radiates

Male laughter echoes from stone to stone I turn to investigate a glint within a dark archway where orange light touches something metallic

One of the Galilean's followers who had spoken with me at the gate has brought his friend inside & now this friend watches the fire burn

Below thick brows his eyes dart as though he's scared to death exposing his brokenness his rabbit-like desire to hide

I ask Were you one of those with Jesus of Nazareth?

He flees for the cover of words pretends not to know the name That's when other servants of Caiaphas discuss what had happened to Malchus

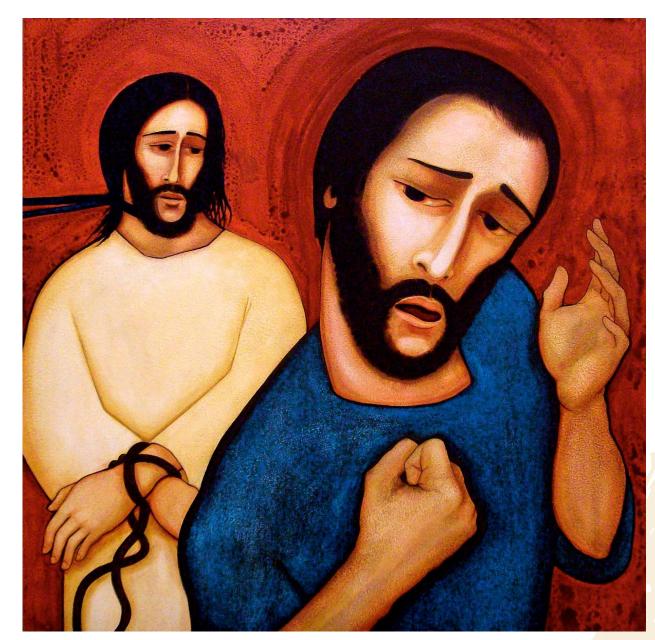
When some came to capture their lord one of the disciples had whipped out a sword blood pain & a missing ear soon restored I've heard the voice of this Jesus

He's inside now facing pious interrogation & this disciple's voice with its sonorous quality to us sounds the same murmuring like waves splashing a northern shore

A distant rooster crows & hooves clatter beyond the entranceway
In the ensuing chatter we ask him about Jesus again
but he tries to stress I am not one of them

Weapons clink as soldiers sway & shuffle to keep warm Beyond the firelight some dark shapes move about & as the Sanhedrin lets out a few servants are called away

For the third time we confront him & he calls down a curse on himself if he lies A rooster once more is heard He looks up into the face of Jesus cries & flees to outer darkness



Peter's Denial by Michael David O'Brien

Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate

He was a ruthless leader.

On his first official visit to Jerusalem he knowingly broke Roman custom and defied Jewish religious sensibilities. Riots ensued. He gathered the mob into the amphitheatre, ordered them dispersed under threat of death.

Jerusalem lacked adequate water supply. An aqueduct was needed. Who should pay? He robbed the Jewish temple. Riots

ensued. Plain clothes soldiers infiltrate the crowd. Protestors beaten and murdered at his command.

It was Passover. Pilate was once more in Jerusalem. Millions of pilgrims were expected. The feast celebrated God's rescue from Egyptian oppression. In keeping with the feast the yearning for freedom from Roman oppression was at a feverish pitch. Each year his presence, his soldiers were needed to keep the peace.



18

In Justice For The Just by Ovide Bighetty (d. 2014)

It's 3 a.m. There's a knock at the door.

It's the Jewish authorities. With them, a man bound, a man worthy of death they say. A capital crime needed Roman approval and necessitated a Roman cross.

They had their own reasons for wanting this man, this Jesus, dead. Reasons that would not satisfy Pilate. They needed to paint Jesus as threat to Rome. "He calls himself King" they say. Pilate questions Jesus. "Are you a King?"

"You say so" is Jesus' vague response.

There is no way Jesus can answer that question head on. In Pilate's mind he's asking — "Are you the leader of an insurrection with designs against Rome using guerrilla tactics?" (for such was the pattern of threat to Rome).

The questioning continues. Pilate can find nothing in Jesus worthy of death. This will look bad on them - he thinks. He tries to help the Jewish authorities save face by leaning into the Passover custom of releasing a prisoner. They don't take the olive branch. Instead they cry out "Give us Barabbas!"

Barabbas – bar abba - meaning son of the Father. He had been arrested for being part of an insurrection. Terrorist activity against Rome using gruesome tactics of pillage and rape. His first name was Jesus.

The moment drips with irony. For Jesus, now on trial, had called himself son of the Father, son of God. The Jewish officials are making their choice — "Not this Jesus son of the Father, give us that Jesus son of the Father, give us the terrorist."

This moment in the journey to the cross invites us to a similar choice. Which kingdom will we choose?

For Jesus is indeed a King, but not a King after the pattern of Pilate—holding onto power through fear, violence, and oppression.

Jesus will indeed establish an alternative kingdom but not through insurrection and guerrilla tactics.

He will establish his Kingdom through death on a cross. Laying down his life that forgiveness and new life might be ours in him.

Those who call him King are invited to participate in a new kind of kingdom. A kingdom of love, of justice, of peace. A kingdom which advances as it began with self-giving love of the other.

Which kingdom will we choose?

It is a question as relevant today as it was that morning in Pilate's palace.

By Reverend Canon Timothy Haughton, Rector, Little Trinity Church, Toronto

Occupation: Pilate Speaks

By Richard Greene

Execution hangs in the air like a figure of Roman rhetoric, every obscure point personified and made plain, an allegory played out in simple sentences and understood. We are an occupying power, one kingdom in the midst of another, compelling loyalty where the heart is beaten down and all things lie under the exaction of fear. My task is to quell their riots, to keep the peace of our advantages.

In this man is the fiction of kingship: he requires or enacts no policy, and recruits to his cause no persons unworthy of nails. I wish to parley for his innocence, for the due process of irony ends in freedom or death, and I would not depose his heaven, his kingship that is not of this world. Yet his small elevation, this mound at Gabbatha, occupied at Caesar's pleasure, permits no gentle discourse. A voice may carry, and there is no King but Caesar. You know to whom you speak.

I hand him over to bloody converse of the whip, those lacerating words inscribing an empire in his flesh, such rituals of his coronation as will befit an ambiguous reign. My regret will have its other meanings, possible worlds invading our sleep with all unchosen things, holy jests as may stay for an answer I cannot give.

I send him from the mind's place into streets loud with voices of the world's no meaning; I linger in this moment's constant death to barb in three tongues my tribute to his reign.

Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

This episode in Jesus' passion might well be called "tormenting Jesus while honouring him." It is full of bitter irony, dripping with brutal sarcasm. The soldiers crown him, but with thorns. They drape a royal robe over his shoulders, hailing him as 'King of the Jews,' but demean him as a powerless torture victim.

It is Pilate and his lackeys' power that is illusory and hollow, however. Jesus is willingly and patiently offering his life as a sovereign act of relinquishment, trust, and love—including for his tormentors! Jesus gives himself over to his tormenters but also places his life into the hands of his divine Father. In other words, irony is not only found in the sarcasm of the soldiers' 'worship' of their victim but in the power of the victim vis-à-vis his torturers.

Christians quickly identify with Jesus. His suffering is seen as a measure of God's love for rebellious and lost humanity. What is harder to see is that his suffering becomes a call for those who put their faith and trust in him to "take up their own cross," as Jesus says in another gospel (Mark 8:34). It is a call to take up suffering in resistance to evil rather than hatred or retaliation, a radical, hopeful, patience that offers its life for those who are doing the harm. Of course, it is not pain and suffering itself, let alone death by torture, that is to be emulated, as has often been the case in the Christian tradition. It is rather the giving of oneself for others in the act of loving the world and its inhabitants, including those who do harm, in full trust and confidence in God. That is what loving enemies is all about.

Christians typically confess Jesus as "Lord"— boss, commander, sovereign authority. But with all our adoration and respect, have we followed him in suffering, bearing the harm and violence of our world out of the love we ourselves have experienced? Or do we join the soldiers in mocking Jesus with how we cheer on those with power with arms and money to make sure we benefit from the status quo? Do we forgive as we have been forgiven? Do we grace others as God has graced us? Do we thereby free up the future for those who threaten or harm us, allowing for reconciliation and the restoration of relationships? That is almost always a terribly vulnerable and costly process, as it was for Jesus. But that is what it means to "take up our own cross."

The story of Jesus' suffering fills us with awe at his costly love for us. It reaches out to us even as we have too often joined the mocking soldiers.

By Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, Professor Emeritus, Religious and Theological Studies, Conrad Grable University College, Waterloo

The Pillar and the Crown

Bv Carla Funk

He was one of the kids bussed in from Stoney Creek, the reservation south of town with a rep for trash houses, wild fights, and mangy dogs.

His name was George, but we called him Bushnell—like the brand of binoculars—for the way his eyes behind thick lenses magnified and blurred.

His glasses, heavy-framed, slid down his nose.

We were helpers in the eighth-grade Phys Ed class, that hyper pubescent horde we ourselves had been only a few years earlier. But now we were seniors, tasked with managing the bedlam—boys and girls, all sweat and acne—plus George, who appeared always to be looking at the world from far below, mystified, hunched, and straining to see.

We thought him slow, too slow to figure out that we were making fun. Hey, Bushnell, we called to where he sat alone on the highest bleacher, away from the other kids dividing into teams.

When he crossed his arms and bent to hide his face, we blew our whistles loud, smacked our clipboards.

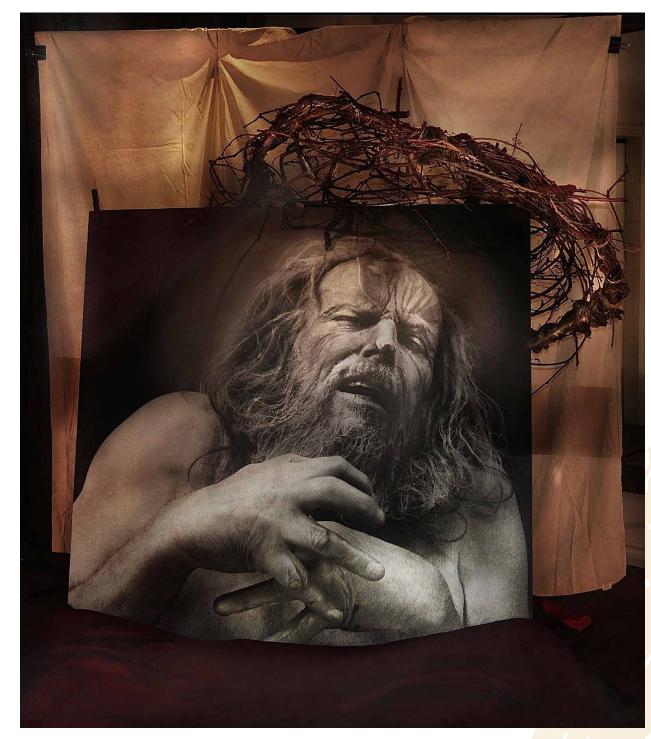
Come down! We lorded our authority with glee, smug to finally be the ones in charge, to force him off his seat and send him as the easy target into the dodge ball match waging on the floor.

Bushnell, called one boy, then chucked the rubber ball at George, who cowered by the wall. Bushnell, yelled another, stoking the whole gym to laughter.

We blew our whistles. We told them to be nice.

Each time I sing of how my Christ was scorned, flogged, spat upon, forty lashes minus one, I strangely think of you, George. Forgive us. We knew what we were doing, but did it anyways, handing ourselves over as the mockers and the mob. I say "we," meaning "me," my own clenched heart, a fist of broken glass, its blood both wound and cure.

At the pillar, Christ's body weeps still. His head, weighed down, adorned, throbs full of a world of hurt, of me, of you, George from Stoney Creek—all of us woven together in thorns, worn as His crown.



Jesus crowned with thorns by Brian David Johnston

Jesus takes up the cross

In these few words of the final condemnation of Jesus we are drawn into the power of systems that pull people into a centrifugal vortex of destructive actions. This story is not just about Pilate as an individual. It is about a man caught in the political tensions between the religious fervour of an oppressed people and keeping the peace away from the eye of Roman interference. It is about an oppressed people balancing the fears of that oppression with sufficient freedom for religious leaders to maintain their identity. It is about Chief Priests who walk the line between the power of Caesar and their vocation under God in the face of fear and uncertainties. It is about Jesus choosing faithfulness to the way of God's love, forgiveness and grace in the face of the principalities and powers around him.

The power of these tensions has grown around Jesus—one who gives to Caesar what belongs to Caesar but is clear about what belongs to God. His life and witness have exposed the compromises of some religious leaders while challenging the inflexibility of others in the name and healing power of loving neighbour as self. Jesus has challenged religious systems that will not bend to give life. Those systems resist Jesus in the name of order and the greater good, for it is always easier to blame the disrupter than to change.

Jesus is a disrupter for his voice challenges expectations and embedded privileges. Loving one's neighbour as one's self includes the refugee, the homeless, the addicted, the business executive, the transgender colleague, those who have violated the rules of the system and those who have not, the whole diversity of humanity. It includes healing on the Sabbath and consorting with those considered the least or sinful. In the face of growing opposition Jesus remained steadfast in his witness of forgiveness, healing, and grace whether it fit the expectations around him or not. It brings him face to face with death in this exchange with Pilate and he does not flinch or evade it.

Pilate briefly tries to extricate himself from this dilemma but the pressures on him are too great. A chanting crowd demands crucifixion and Pilate aquiesces even as he declares Jesus innocent.

Jesus carries the cross to his own crucifixion—a cross given to him by systems that could not bear to be challenged or reshaped. He did not choose martyrdom. It was the consequence of his commitment to God's way and even in the face of death he will not betray that commitment.

Throughout the centuries since the crucifixion, followers of Jesus have wrestled with the call to bear the cross—not chosen for itself—but because it is the consequence of faithfulness to the way of God in the face of all other powers and systems. Sometimes we cannot bear the cost and slip aside to join the crowds resisting change. At other times followers of Jesus stand firm and faithful even in the face of vilification and death, trusting in the greater truth witnessed in the resurrection, that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Some are known as saints for the strength and courage of their witness that inspires future generations.

To bear the cross is the call to vulnerable faithfulness that resists the pull of the powers around that would resist grace and transformation where the love of God demands more than religious, political or economic systems will give.

By Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

The Cross Speaks

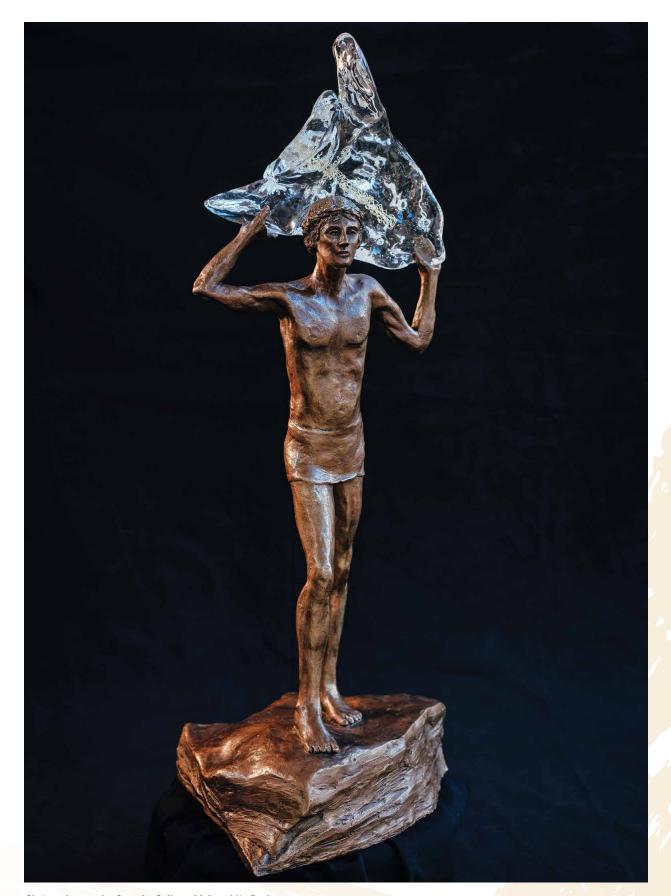
By Sally Ito

I was a tree once, and of one body that grew upward into the sky and downward into the soil.

Many were the seasons of my life until it ended with the ax.

Only the human would make out of my death something out of the death of their God, my dead body carried by him who will die for them.

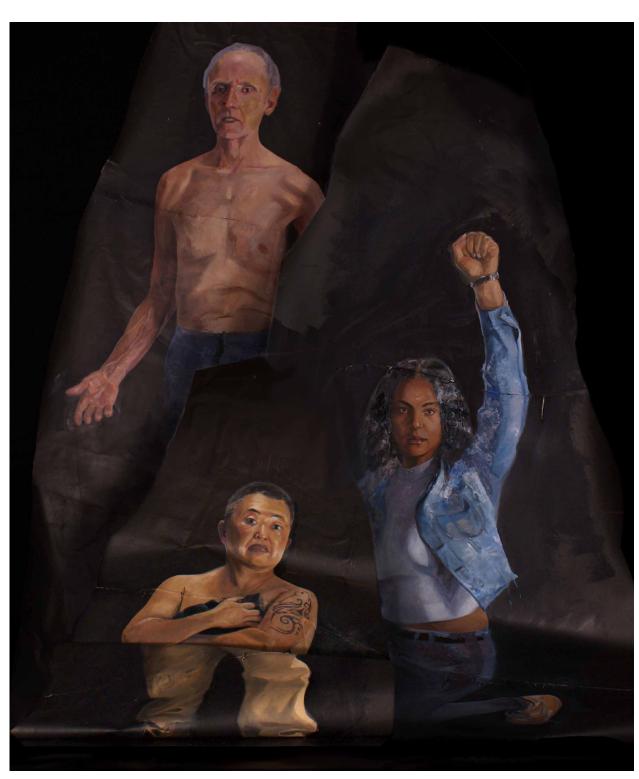
Still, I will lift him, and become the tree I once was and I will bear him, as he bore me and be planted once more in the dark soil of my Creator's nurturing.



Christ takes up the Cross by Colleen McLaughlin Barlow

Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross

Simon the Cyrenian was compelled by the Roman soldiers to help Jesus by carrying the cross for the last steps of his journey to Golgotha. All we know of Simon is that he was a passerby visiting the holy city from Cyrene in North Africa, a man in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was pressed into service because of Jesus' need, forced to take up Jesus' cross. The Roman soldiers were probably indiscriminate in their choice. Perhaps Simon was simply the biggest man in the crowd; he



24

Crushed, my beloved by Phil Irish

stood out so he was conscripted. Perhaps he was too close to the spectacle and was easily drawn into the ugly parade toward the place of crucifixion.

So much service is like this, something we are compelled to do by the needs of those around us. Welcome children, even when they are out of sorts. Honour parents, especially when they are old and sick. Love neighbours, even the ones who come from a culture that we do not understand, or the ones who are not kind to us. Show kindness to the poor who are always with us.

However unknown Simon was before his role in this crucifixion, he is remembered by all generations for this service. We are given his name in Mark's account of the crucifixion, which suggests that he was known to Mark's readers. We can only assume that his life was changed by this act of service and that he continued as a follower in the Way. Mark also gives us the names of his sons, Alexander and Rufus. Simon must have taken the word of this crucifixion back to his hometown, and his whole household was transformed by his testimony.

We might wonder what Simon felt as his pilgrimage to Jerusalem became something quite different than what he had planned. How did he take on this 'request'? Was he afraid when the soldiers singled him out? Did he resent being compelled to serve? Did his attitude change as he looked back on the event after having returned to Cyrene? Or even later, as an old man reflecting on his life? In the end, did the choice of the Roman soldiers seem providential?

We prefer to serve out of a spirit of compassion, but service is service regardless of our motivations. When we are compelled to serve, when actions of self-denial are forced upon us, there is still a possibility of transformation. Jesus said that if we want to save our lives, we need to lose our lives; that if we want to follow in the Way, we must deny ourselves and take up a cross [8:34-36].

Sometimes we lose our lives because we have no choice—we are conscripted into carrying someone else's cross. The word of Mark's gospel is that even conscripted service builds the Kingdom of God, perhaps only in a wider community or for the next generation. The work of the Kingdom is accomplished not only by those who intended to do it but also by those compelled to participate. The Kingdom of God is like a seed that grows in ways we do not understand [4:26-29].

By Jo-Ann Badley, Dean of Theology, Associate Professor of New Testament, Ambrose University, Calgary

Simon of Cyrene: the story

By Sarah Klassen

1.

The grip of a Roman hand on his shoulder. A barked order. A sword pointing in a direction he could not refuse to go.

Was it brute fate or amazing grace brought Simon of Cyrene into the city, assigned him a supporting role in an unfolding drama?

2.

He raised the wooden plank from a doomed man's wounded shoulder and laid it on his own. The burden rubbed his cheek raw as he followed the stumbling victim of empire:

a whipped and bleeding Jew who must be brought alive at the appointed time, to the appointed place of execution.

3.

Walking behind Jesus, like a servant following his master, Simon could be forgiven for believing:

a drama featuring torture, thorns, the whiplash of scorn and death by crucifixion of an innocent man, must be, by definition, tragedy.

4

The cross, cumbersome to carry, held high the Prince of Peace, who rose and raises up the fallen and disoriented wanderers who cry out to be found.

Shepherd to his sheep, Jesus leads them, along with Simon of Cyrene, into the story.

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

They were acquainted with grief, those women who followed Jesus for so much of his ministry. Some had shed tears of pain and despair before Jesus had healed them.

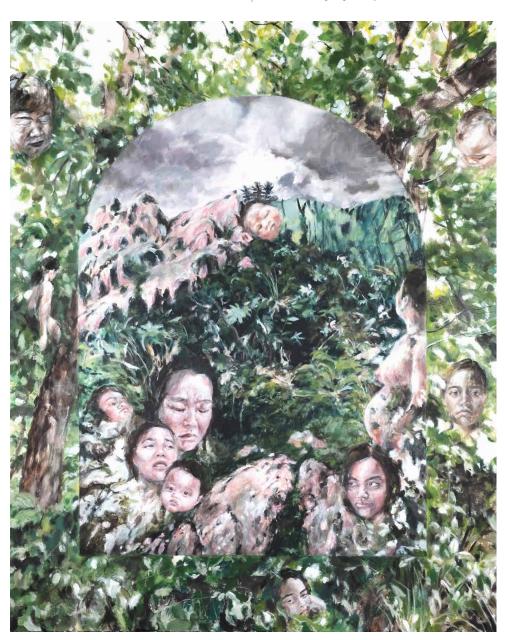
All had witnessed the suffering of those who begged Jesus for healing, seen the weariness of those who brought loved ones for a word of hope.

For some, suffering had been overwhelming, flowing into mental illness and turmoil. They had borne grief, and carried sorrow. And they had dared to hope.

They had walked the road with Jesus, provided him with food and money,

listened to his teaching,
sat around the fire at night,
and dared to hope that healing had finally come,
that perhaps violence and pain
would no longer shape their days,
that perhaps they would be a part
of a new world where peace and justice
would put an end to grief and despair.

They had dared to hope that their land would no longer be occupied by a colonizing power, they had dared to hope that their children would no longer grow up hungry, would no longer be punished for their resistance, would no longer grow up in fear.



Women of Jerusalem by Ruthia Pak Regis

They had dared to hope that their land—the mountains and hills—would be fertile and abundant once again.

They had dared to hope, until they saw him carrying the cross.

Here was the end of their hope. They were not only lamenting for Jesus, they were lamenting the future of their children and their land.

And Jesus knew this.

But he also knew that they were the daughters of Jerusalem, their faith had been shaped by a city that did not know peace, and their children, longing for freedom from the colonial oppressor, would bear the brunt of imperial anger, resulting in grief beyond words.

Their trauma would make the women who had no children the enw of

Their trauma would make the women who had no children the envy of all. No sword would pierce their hearts.

If the green wood of Jesus,

subversively gathering a community of welcome and generosity around him, results in Roman crucifixion,

then the outspoken resistance of their children will be the dry wood that will turn the flame of Roman violence into the forest fire of war.

These are not just women of the past.

What word would Jesus speak to the grieving mothers today?

Those women who were shaped by the land, and acquainted with grief.

Those whose land was stolen, and whose children starved as the wild rice died and hunting was forbidden.

Those who shed tears of pain and despair, as their children were removed, stripped of their language, their stories, their innocence.

Those mothers who mourned the children who never came back.

Their suffering had been overwhelming, flowing into mental illness and turmoil. They have borne grief and carried sorrow.

And yet they have dared to hope that their land will no longer be occupied by a colonizing power. They have dared to hope that their children will no longer grow up hungry, will no longer be punished for their resistance, will no longer grow up in fear. They have dared to hope that their land —the mountains and hills, lakes and the rivers—will be fertile and abundant once again.

Is there a word of hope for them?

By Sylvia Keesmaat, Author, Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity College and Wycliffe College, University of Toronto

Women of Jerusalem

By Susan Alexander

Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Matt 27:19

Passover stragglers watch among daughters and grandmothers, children behind and between, petals in their hands. What do they hope to see?

The dream that shook me out of bed, brought me here. My servant glares. A prefect's wife can't disappear against the souq's smoked walls.

What I saw —
 a white goat
 laced with scarlet ribbons
 fire on a hill
 a lamb at a rough altar
 its throat slit over the stone trough

My husband dismissed my warning, mocks the sight that's given to me. He finds Jerusalem stifling, a city of captives; he much prefers the coast.

the earth shaking

The day we came up from Caesarea was the day this one entered.
Crowds shouted and stamped.
They sang for him, threw down branches until the stone road turned green.

Now the soldiers' tramp. The plank. What is it we hope to see? A god? A sign? His mother and sisters follow behind crush the petals, bruised and black.

Here he is, just a torn man who staggers under the weight. Each woman lifts her arms, signs the blessing.

He turns, sees their outstretched hands, speaks into their sudden hush. I can't understand the language. My own words rise to choke me, unspoken. Armed men end it, push past.

Close by, a whimper inside a sling, the hungry cry of a child. I push my fists tight against my chest. Out of a clear sky, rain.

Jesus is crucified

Then as now, only a few noticed that someone was suffering.

We are too busy to notice. The numbness covers the soul like cardboard. The suffering shuffles along.

It is so silent, now as then, when he is only one among many, when she is more a number than a name. One among many. Not even one.

Now as then, there is nothing special about suffering. The screams go silent. There is no sound from the slow and suffering ones.

Suffering is homeless.

The ordinary suffering of the poor is of no account to the powerful of this world.

Their poor suffering becomes invisible in the ledger book of life.

Then as now, suffering gathers a numbness unto itself. It is slow and almost without sound. The words are breathless and beaten: look and see my suffering, listen and hear my cry.

Until it becomes your cry.

Until it becomes your tears.

The sad and sorrowful face of the crucified One reminds us that there is One who has noticed our suffering, your suffering.

There is One who has noticed that you may have inflicted suffering. You may be the petty thief or a quiet criminal.

There is One who has noticed that you may be afflicted with an ordinary suffering.

Cry out loud and cry out long. Someone has noticed. Someone has noticed your suffering and the suffering you have served.

Someone cries out so long that it becomes tears of joy. For this you were born; for this you came into the world.

By Mary Jo Leddy, Professor of Theology, Regis College, Founding member of Romero House for Refugees, Toronto

Christ Crucified

By David Lyle Jeffrey

On that dry-scabble hill, naked under scorching sun, condemned men are dragged down on wood, Arms forced akimbo by sweaty soldiers; rough spikes are driven swiftly through their wrists.

Struggle is vain; low moans and pounding hammer blows strike a sordid chord. Each ankle twists

So one large spike will cripple both. Blow on blow, the soldiers curse or jest. At last each cross is stood, Then dropped into its socket with a sickening thud. Moans of the crucified, echoed by some who watch, Are countered by cruder curses, accusers, derision much louder than weeping of the grieving few Who stand back, afraid, though love draws them, inch by inch toward the central cross. Agony not new In the history of men here too is ordinary. On the side of that oft-used beam a soldier carves a notch.

Routine torture, routine death. Groaning, gasping, choked up breath, sounds of silence closing, done By painful fractions as the body sags, that he who ordered nature's laws should not evade them now Nor scape the curse of human hurt. Passion pent, here spent, love's extasis in extremis stalls the sun But not his torment. Deep darkness dooms; wild angels shriek; the veil is rent. Guilt questions how The guiltless thus should die; tormentors idly wonder why one prayed they be excused. The lowering sky Is broken, pierced by prayer: "Eloi, Eloi! lama sabbacthani!" The thorn-caught lamb lifts his final cry.

Sabbacthani, from Matt. 27:46 usually translated 'forsaken,' is a Hebrew verb which appears most prominently in Gen. 22:13, as sabach, in reference to the substitutionary ram caught or 'hung up' in the thicket.



Homeless Jesus by Timothy P. Schmalz

Jesus promises his Kingdom to the repentant thief

In a Good Friday sermon to the inmates of the prison in Basel, Switzerland, the noted theologian Karl Barth once asked: "Which is more amazing, to find Jesus in such bad company, or to find the criminals in such good company?" (Karl Barth, Deliverance to the Captives, pg 76) Barth was reflecting on this second word from the cross, pondering the deep solidarity shown by Jesus towards the criminals hanging there alongside him.

It is one of the most surprising, unsettling, and hopeful verses in the Bible. Even as it evokes theological debate, the words of this eleventh station of the cross fill us with hope.

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. (The Greek identifies them as kakourgoi, "evildoers" who had committed serious crimes.) When the leaders who crucified Jesus mocked

him as a failed messiah, one of the criminals hanging there cursed him: "Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! And save us, too, while you're at it!"

But the other criminal refused to play that game. Rather, he responded, "Don't you fear God? You're getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him – he did nothing to deserve this." Then he implored, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

Jesus replied to him with a startling word of grace and promise: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." The word paradise was used in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures as a word for the Garden of Eden. As one commentator notes: "In Judaism of the time of Jesus, paradise

Remember Him

By Ins Choi

"Lord remember me

When you come into your kingdom"

Remember him?

Why?

What for?

What he do?

He somebody?

He invent something?

He do a lot of good with his life?

He's up there for some reason

Sure, could be unjust punishment but just because you're unjustly punished don't make you worthy of remembrance If that were the case, hey, get in line, there's trillions of us and who's to say what's unjust?

It's a desperate plea in the midst of a public execution, that's all, understandable, for sure, I'd probably do the same, but that's all it is

Survival instincts kicking in

A little insurance request at the end taking full advantage of who he happened to be hung beside

Move on

Not worth it

Besides, that wouldn't be fair How would that be fair? How would that be just? What about everybody else?

You gonna remember them too?

He's getting what he deserves Done

Kaput

Kuman

Finito

Case closed

What, he's gonna do something for va?

You think he's got great potential hanging there like a

bloody billboard sign?

Gonna advertise you?

Be of benefit to you somehow enough to make it worth it?

None of that is happening

Definitely not

He's just gonna hang there naked until he runs out of air

That's it

A cautionary tale for what happens to bad people That's what's happening

He's got a hundred breaths left, if that, with no opportunity

to do any good for you even if he could

Even if he wanted to, he's no use to you

You don't gain by remembering him

In fact, you lose

He'll make you look bad Look at him

He looks bad

He looks shameful

He'll only defile, tarnish, shame your name

Bring you down

Smear it all in and stink it up

He's only thinking of himself, after all, with that

audacious, impudent, brazen request to be remembered

What about that other guy?

That's not rewardable behaviour, thinking only for himself

Forget him

He's nobody

Stop wasting your time

Don't remember him

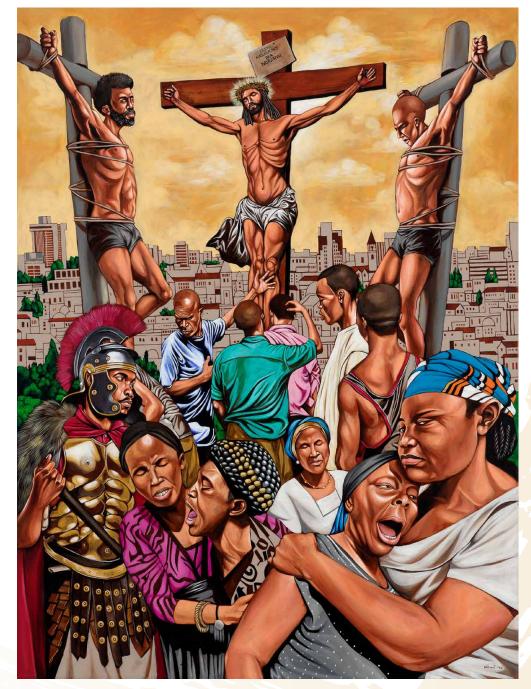
"Truly I say to you today You will be with me in paradise"

was associated with heaven, and also with the future when God would restore all things to the perfection of the Garden." Paradise was thought to be the place where righteous people went after death.

How can Jesus make this promise to a dangerous criminal? Isn't it scandalous to extend such mercy to an unrighteous lawbreaker like this man? And does his last-minute plea even deserve to be called faith? Yet, to this forlorn and hopeless thief who cries out to be remembered, Jesus expresses a word of confident hope. "Today you will join me in paradise."

At its heart, Christians have seen this story as a profound example of the amazing grace of God in Christ. We don't have to pray perfect prayers for God to respond to us with favour. We don't have to have right theology or selfless motivation. Rather, when we call out with a mere speck of faith, God answers. God's grace is poured out on us in abundance. God hears us when we cry out for mercy.

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Livingston, Clairlea Park Presbyterian Church, Toronto



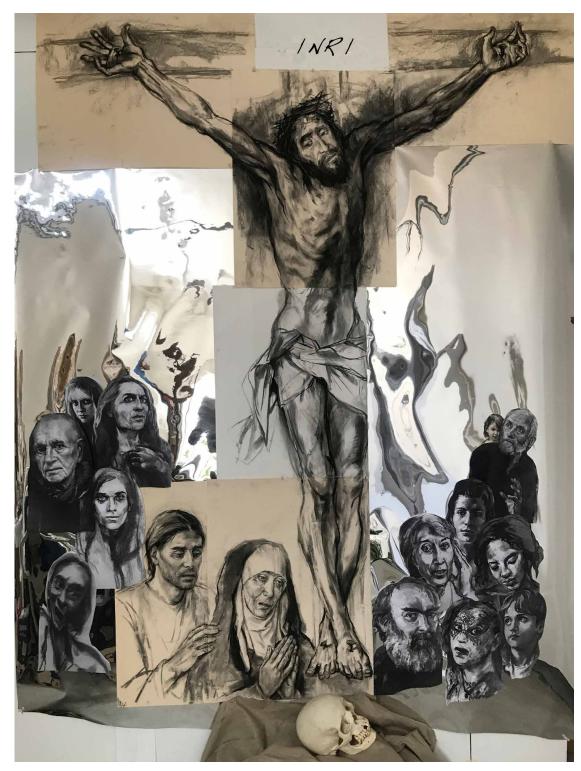
The Repentant Thief by Komi Olafimihan

Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

At the cross, our deepest longings and complex needs for relationship in community are revealed in a particular way by the isolated Jesus, who touches the pain of his mother Mary and his close friend John by giving them to each other. Here we have a picture of love and justice mingling into the brokenness

of human life so often created by tragic personal loss and the resulting social dislocation. What life rips apart, Jesus is working to put back together.

While the depth of Mary's sorrow as a mother grieving the loss of a son is sometimes missed in our reflection, her despair,



32

Jesus entrusts Mary to John by Maria Gabankova

along with her impending social-economic vulnerability is not lost on her son who offers her a new life and a new home, where she participates in the relational and spiritual needs of John and his family. When life goes terribly and uncontrollably wrong, our holistic needs as human beings are truly exposed. But it is also here that we are invited to catch a glimpse of a primary movement of grace, one which challenges us to continue on the journey with the presence and support of people who show up in our lives, often unexpectedly, and who stay with us and we with them, for the sake of love and compassion.

As we pause at this station, Jesus' profound love as justice echoes yet deeper connections for our meditation. First, in his suffering on the cross, even as the very fabric of his own personal and social realities are disintegrating, Jesus reveals his reconciling, community-building instincts by normalizing the forgiveness of enemies and by welcoming the terrorist as expressions of God's healing way in a broken world. Along with caring for his beloved, these acts of radical relational reshaping paint a thicker vision of the heart that benefits Mary and John.

Further, Jesus' ministry here evokes and embodies the centre of Israel's ancient vision of social justice of caring for widows, orphans and refugees, those who are at risk due to their lack of necessary social-economic resourcing. Most certainly in his imaginative redesigning of Mary and John as family, we also receive a poignant reminder of Israel's kinsman – redeemer tradition, so beautifully and powerfully narrated in the ancient story of Ruth as two abandoned widows find their protection in the care of the kind and generous Boaz, who takes his own social responsibility seriously by reclaiming these women in crisis through remarriage as a creative expression of domestic justice.

While this act of fascinating community re-purposing no doubt serves in some way as a powerful foretaste of the new community Jesus called the church—where water is thicker than blood as people are called to a sacrificial love amidst larger social contexts of trouble—Jesus' overture of kindness bespeaks a compassionate artistry. An artistry that reaches out to all of us, if we would only be refreshed in the realization that to live shouldering our deepest losses and grief in loneliness is not our true calling.

As you linger: three questions for your contemplation.

What is the source of this deep concern for others?

What does a community shaped by the cross look like in our present cultures of vulnerability?

When on your journey were you placed into relationships of nurture, provision and care, that you desperately needed but did not see coming?

By Paul Johansen, Pastor, King Bay Chaplaincy and Good Shepherd Community Church, Scarborough

Jesus Commends Mary and John to each other from the Cross

By Debbie Sawczak

Even in death

breath torn, organs failing

tongue cleaving to the roof of your mouth and thickening your speech

you saw their keening side-by-side aloneness.

Perhaps you also saw in that instant

her rushing to scoop you out of a sudden rain

at the dawn of your memory

in firm arms muscly from daily kneading

heard her humming to you in the dark

O Yahweh my Shepherd

retelling by lamplight till you fell asleep and dreamt

the exploits of Joshua, Rahab, David

the time she took you along at Purim

to help carry roast lamb, warm loaves, currant cakes, olives

to neighbours with none

Torah is love

her bathing and binding with salve and linen your bloodied foot in the wood shop while

she clucked over you,

your inattention to splinters and nails

how, at Cana, she affectionately paid no attention to No,

to your mention of incorrect timing,

her trust resolute as she primed the servants

Love for you, Ima, rose to my throat that day

and I melted like beeswax

Whatever Simeon said over me in the Temple

you never foresaw this day

this disgrace, this blade that pierces us both;

but John—ben reghesh, thunder's son—

stands kind and strong in my place at your side and shall be my embrace.

Be mother to him

and so to each one of my faithful

forever,

hailed by them, held in their tender awe.

And you, dear friend,

even now I still feel it

how, as we reclined at Passover supper

your head rested heavy and warm on my chest

its weight the weight of your trust.

It was your eyes saw me the most—and will yet see more

beyond all conceiving—

but for now, believing your love,

your grim loyalty as you stand with eyes unaverted upon Skull Hill when friends have withdrawn

I ask you to be to my griefstruck mother

her son.

You will all be me to each other anon.

Jesus dies on the cross

Breathe.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Jesus Christ—fully human and fully God—breathed his last on the cross.

Execution by crucifixion was torturous because it was a form of suffocation. The weight of the body as it hung on the cross would press down on the lungs and make it increasingly difficult to take even a shallow breath. The reduction of oxygen in the bloodstream weakened the internal tissues and walls of the veins, causing fluid to spill out into the sac around the heart and into the lungs, which in turn made it even more difficult to breathe, further reducing oxygen in the blood, in a deadly cycle.

The last breaths of Jesus would have been difficult and excruciating.

And then he breathed his last.

People around the world are having trouble breathing. They are dying from a rapidly spreading disease which causes many to experience a form of suffocation. Like Jesus on the cross, they feel a heavy weight in their chests, which makes it difficult to take even a shallow breath. Their oxygen levels plummet. Their organs begin to fail. Often separated physically from their loved ones, they breathe their last.

People around the world are having trouble breathing. Air pollution in major urban centres—from London to Warsaw and Delhi to Los Angeles—is making it hard to for children and adults with grave respiratory conditions to take even a shallow breath. Asthma and chronic pulmonary obstructive disease are occurring at increasing rates in the largest cities, especially in the global South. Trapped by poverty, people cannot move to where the air is cleaner. As the heat rises in the summer, the skies fill with smoke from wildfires.

People around the world are having trouble breathing. Filled with anxiety, they are suffering panic attacks, experiencing shortness of breath and a painful tightening in the chest. They are turning to addictive substances, which impair their mental health, causing their chests to tighten, so they reach out for one more drink, one more hit, in a deadly cycle.

Their breathing quickens as they gasp for breath and grasp for space to be. To breathe.

Take that space now.

Breathe.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

By Natasha Duquette, Vice-President Academic, Professor of Literature, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College, Barry's Bay

Crucifixion

By Carolyn Weber

Thirsting

you swallow bitterness as you trust your mother to another man's home

Pending over creation eternal Forgiving

those who take offence at the forgiving:

thie

this is what you breathe

Father, forgive them

at the height of your agony
For they know not

where we meet at my fall

What they do

Through

woods darkly wended

to find

you when I

would not,

not, could not, seek

Care for our mother

whence we came Commend to our father where we are going

Behold:

the fallen sparrow's pinioned soaring reflected in your still, fixed eye



Jesus Dies by Farhad O'Neill

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Death is so final, so... *ending*. We can't avoid it. But we try to. We eat healthily and exercise, we build legacies through accomplishments or families or bank accounts, and we seek to be known, all in the hope that these things will let us know that we were really alive. That we mattered.

Some psychologists say that our fear of death drives nearly all of our behaviour.

And long before we actually die, we face many types of death. Suffering is a form of death as we experience loss: of hopes, health, loves. We experience death before we die. Maybe we're practicing for it?

Living in the shadow of a pandemic, we collectively have faced our powerlessness to 'fix the problem.' We have seen varied responses from those around us: anger, frustration, avoidance, a need for artificial certainty, fear, a rise in the use of addictive substances, and more. As Canadians, many of us are just not used to facing an overwhelming danger about which we can do little. That is not true for many people in the world, who are all too familiar with living in the shadow of danger about which they can do little. Some of those people manage to escape and come to Canada as refugees.

For many of us, the more than two years of pandemic has revealed our mortality in a way we have never before experienced. Is there a way to face death — and all the little deaths before the final one — without feeling overwhelmed by it?

Maybe it is time for us to sit outside the tomb, with the huge stone blocking the entrance, accepting and facing our powerlessness.

Jesus is dead. It really happened. My imagination does not have sufficient capacity to truly engage with the thought that God died. I could almost handle it if it was just for a few seconds or for a few minutes, because then it wouldn't feel as real. (As if there's a thing like a minor death!)

The tomb stayed sealed for days. Jesus is dead, for days.

We need to stay here, outside the tomb, knowing He's inside. To stay by the tomb allows us to face the reality that we will join Him one day – that we, too, will die. It's not Easter yet, as we sit. We know what happens next. Resurrection is coming. And even though we die, the promise is that it will not be permanent.

Death is not the end but it is still real.

We live in the space between death and resurrection. In our lives that are full of suffering and full of gifts and graces, we live in that tension between the 'already and the not yet.'

For now, though, in this moment . . . let evening come. Let suffering come. It is not final. We will wait for resurrection. And as we wait, we are invited to live in hope.

By Sam Chaise, Executive Director Christie Refugee Welcome Centre, Toronto

Pandemic Spring 2020

By Caitlin Thomson

To bury a body is an act of kindness people have died for. I have only buried the bodies of rabbits my dog killed. Even that took more digging than I thought it would.

When Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in the tomb he'd purchased for himself, there was no digging, just the wrapping of clean linen, the rolling of a stone.

When there is order in the world, the dead are hidden from the living. In Lombardy the dead wait to be buried without ceremony.

If there's trick-or-treating this year, I don't think anyone will go as the grim reaper. When I tell this to a friend over the phone, she says, *It's not even Easter yet. Give it time.*

When Joseph buried Jesus, he wrapped the body, that did not remain a body, in linen.







Tally by Paul Roorda

Station Omega

Resurrection: Jesus rises from the dead

There was a time when I felt so close to God that I could imagine myself relaxed and reclined in his soft hand, as if God were a friendly giant. There I lie, God's palm my pillow. That's how I described my feelings of being safe and loved to a friend who probably found it so silly. It sounds a little silly to me now too, except that I can still reach back and tug the memory of that feeling forward by the strands. It comforts me now, like it did then.

In my stretch of years in church — within my long attendance — moments like that have been rare rest in what can be the work of believing and belonging. We all know by now the Christian life is not one long parade.

In these resurrection moments in John there is proof of the Great Rising — that rolled rock, those linens unwrapped, unneeded, and now lying in a puddle of cloth. There is the mercy of the angels and then of Jesus himself. The way he says, "Mary" which stopped her tears, perhaps, but threatens to start our own because here Jesus is so tender, and we can feel so tiny and tired.

I like how Mary first thinks Jesus is the gardener, caregiver to soil and seed, grower of carrots and crocuses. In her confusion there is poetry, because he is a gardener of sorts, and so much more. Here is the proof of who he is, standing full and heavy in his warm body before her. But also, just out of reach. "Do not hold on to me..." must have been difficult to hear. Here is joy, tempered. There are mysteries upon mysteries, some resolved, others unsolved. Some still to come.

This is more than a recounting of what happened that morning, although that is essential to what we believe. It is also a picture of how we might believe.

Here is the Christian life spelled out in one perfect scene; all hinged on the fact of this one-and-only resurrection. Even knowing what we know now, what is true right in front of us, there will be darkness and light. We will run toward and turn away. Even the racing between the disciples with the careful noting of who arrived first feels familiar. We will weep and be comforted. He will call us Holly, Jenna, Pierre or Stanley, because now we are on a first-name basis. We will reply, "Teacher," when we are steady on our feet.

"I have seen the Lord!" we will exclaim, with so much relief and belief, which will be convincing to some guy on a bus, but maybe not to our very own sisters or cousins. We will believe but still need to be convinced. We will live this faith out together, buoyed by each other's witness, reminding each other through stories and songs and then, later that afternoon, be alone in our own homes, sipping tea and still trying to sort it out.

We hold within us overflowing cups and dry deserts and they will temper each other. To remember to remember is a discipline we will need in the days ahead.

Mary of the resurrection morning, whose witness rounds out and fills up what we know about what happened that day, was as full of sunny afternoons and rainy Mondays as the rest of us. I suspect her life did not become a Sunday School picnic after her discovery at the tomb. But I do like to think of her years later sitting somewhere comfortable, and remembering.

By Karen Stiller, Editor of Faith Today and author of The Minister's Wife: a memoir of faith, doubt, friendship, loneliness, forgiveness and more.

Lily

By Violet Nesdoly

One must have a mind open to miracle disregard the parch-fissured hoary-frozen earth

overlook how lifeless the bulb freckled with age, pale as a corpse root hairs sparse and white.

One must nourish seeds of faith believe the dull drop-patter of spring

will pass through nether-world walls and summon to green-pierce blackness reach for light.

So, on the third day Another burst the bud of grave clothes to pure and eternal blooming.



Resurrection by Lynne McIlvride

BiographiesBiographies

Artists

James Paterson BFA A graduate of the University of Waterloo, he taught art in the public school system, but left teaching in 1988 to pursue art full time. The Prayer Machine series began during a three-year sojourn in Europe 2008-11. Prayer Machines have shown in Canada, United States, Europe and Asia and are in private, public, and corporate collections.

Symeon van Donkelaar is an iconographer, artist, teacher, and writer. After completing a traditional apprenticeship in a Greek Orthodox monastery many years ago, he creates artwork that embodies a contemporary iconographic vision for prayer. He completed a Masters of Fine Arts at the Transart Institute at Donau Universität Krems in Berlin, Germany in 2011. He lives near Kitchener, Ontario.

Patricia June Vickers, her interest in art comes through a culture rich with symbolism, metaphors, grace and beauty. With roots in the United Kingdom on her mother's side and Indigenous of the Northwest coast on her father's side, inspiration was found in every day life through her paternal grandparents and her older siblings and their cultural and artistic passions. Her goal with each painting is to create a piece that has healing medicine, and portrays aspects of the actual coupled with mystery.

Betty Spackman MFA is a multimedia installation artist, painter, educator and author. She has worked, taught and exhibited internationally for over 20 years and has a background in Theatre, Animation, Performance Art and Video Art. Her celebrated book *A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch*, is about images of faith in popular culture. She is co-founder of the Fort Gallery in Fort Langley, British Columbia.

Michael David O'Brien is the author of thirty books, including thirteen novels, which have been widely reviewed in both secular and religious media in North America and Europe. Since 1970 he has worked as a professional artist with more than 40 exhibits. Since 1976 he has painted religious imagery exclusively. He is Artist in Residence at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College, Barry's Bay Ontario.

Ovide Joseph Bighetty (d. 2014) was a Cree (Missinippi-Ethiniwak) self-taught artist originally from Pukatawagan First Nation on the Missinippi River in northwestern Manitoba. He was influenced by the Woodland art style of Norval Morrisseau. Bighetty's paintings were based on spirituality, stories, symbolism and legends passed down by elders.

Brian David Johnston is a mixed media (tradigital artist) of Indigenous Six Nations (Mohawk) descent. An artist whose career spans more than 40 years, his passion is to explore the human soul's most inward anxieties and exhilarations as an expression of the human condition. His art is an attempt to communicate the human soul in exile and its hope of redemption.

Colleen McLaughlin Barlow Cancer led her to a dissecting room where she saw the component parts of humanity. Moved by the beauty of these structures, she began to draw, paint and sculpt landscapes of mortality. She says that the gift of the disease was an acute awareness of her own mortality. While in Florence to study art, a chance tour brought her to an astonishing place: La Specola. www.colleenbarlow.com

Phil Irish MFA, of Elora, Ontario, makes paintings that are both fierce and beautiful. His work has been shown at public museums, and commercial galleries across Canada. His time as visual artist on the Canada C3 icebreaker shaped new directions in his work. He is Art Department Chair, Redeemer University Ancaster, Ontario.

Nathan Stretch is a creative communicator who bridges many disciplines in collaborative projects. This work has involved writing, music composition and performance, film, video and sound art. His exploratory processes often cross boundaries, creating fusions. He is particularly nimble at maximizing limited resources to amplify marginalized voices.

Ruthia Pak Regis BFA lives in Toronto. Her painting looks towards abstraction using patterns found in nature; whether in shadows, placement of branches, clusters of leaves or dappled sunlight. For her, the process of painting and growing in spiritual disciplines is intimately intertwined. In between studio work, she produces commissioned pieces. She is represented by Roberts Gallery in Toronto.

Timothy P. Schmalz For over 25 years, Timothy has been sculpting large scale sculptures. He is a figurative artist with his pieces installed worldwide. Some of his most reputed pieces are installed in historical churches in Rome and at the Vatican. Timothy describes his most important work as visual translations of the Bible.

Komi Olafimihan is a visual artist, poet and architectural designer best known for his ability to represent, both visually and poetically, the complexities of the world and the current generation. In recent years, Komi's art has been shaped by a cultural and artistic movement known as Afrofuturism, which explores African and African-diasporic cultures in intersection with technology.

Maria Gabankova, was born and raised in former Czechoslovakia in a family of visual artists. Her parents had a profound influence on her development through their art and dissident lifestyle. 1991 - 2015 she was associate professor of figurative drawing and painting at Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto. Portraiture holds a special focus in her practice.

Farhad O'Neill grew up where music, visual arts, science, religion, politics, and a love of learning were ever present. University studies focused primarily on music – he graduated with a degree in Fine Arts (Music) in 1991. His sculpture

training consisted of studio courses and a basic knowledge of the workings of the tools and machines in the sculpture studio.

Paul Roorda is a Waterloo area artist who transforms found materials to create two-dimensional art, sculptures, and outdoor site-specific installations that examine the relationship between religion, medicine, science, and environmentalism. He has exhibited extensively with solo exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and Germany.

Lynne McIlvride is a mixed media artist who has been working and showing in the Toronto area for over 35 years. Lynne has shown in several galleries in Canada and the U.S. but is most interested in turning her house and studio in Utica, Ontario into an art destination where she is slowly blurring the line between her art and her environment.

Poets

John (Isaac) Slater, a Trappist monk at the Abbey of the Genesee in New York, is the author most recently of *Lean*, a chapbook of poems, and *Beyond Measure: the Poetics of the Image in Bernard of Clairvaux*.

Vilma Blenman is a Jamaican-Canadian award-winning poet, a psychotherapist, retired teacher and mother of two millennials. She has poetry and prose pieces in the anthology series, *Hot Apple Cider*, published by That's Life! Communications and was recently published in Ekstasis. She resides in Pickering, Ontario. Visit Vilma's blog at www.writelife.ca

Richard Osler is a poetry blogger, poetry therapist and generative poetry retreat leader whose full-length poetry collection *Hyaena Season* appeared in 2016. He lives on the unceded territory of the Cowichan Tribes of Vancouver Island and, in particular, of the Quamichan (*Kwa'mutsun*) people.

John Terpstra's most recent book of poetry is titled, *Call Me Home*; his most recent creative non-fiction, *Daylighting Chedoke*. He lives and works as a cabinetmaker at Head-of-the-Lake, otherwise known as Hamilton.

D.S. Martin is Poet-in-Residence at McMaster Divinity College, and Series Editor for the Poiema Poetry Series from Cascade Books. He has written five poetry collections including *Ampersand* (2018), *Conspiracy of Light: Poems Inspired by the Legacy of C.S. Lewis* (2013), and his new book *Angelicus* (2021).

Richard Greene, born in Newfoundland and now living in Toronto, is a poet, biographer and university professor. He has published four volumes of poetry, and has received both the Governor General's Award and the National Magazine Award for poetry. He is also the author of widely-discussed biographies of Edith Sitwell and Graham Greene.

Carla Funk is the author of five books of poetry and two memoirs, the most recent of which is *Mennonite Valley Girl: A Wayward Coming of Age* (Greystone, 2021). After teaching in

the UVic Writing Department for 15 years, she now leads private workshops and writing groups for pure fun.

Sally Ito is a poet and literary translator who lives in Winnipeg. She teaches creative writing at Canadian Mennonite University. Her latest book is a memoir, *The Emperor's Orphans*.

Sarah Klassen's eighth and most recent poetry collection is *The Tree of Life* (2020). Her poetry has received awards including The Canadian Authors' Poetry Award and two National Magazine Awards—gold and silver. Her first novel is *The Wittenbergs* (2013).

Susan Alexander is the author of two poetry collections, most recently, *Nothing You Can Carry* (2020, Thistledown Press). She was honoured in 2019 as the winner of the Mitchell Poetry Prize.

David Jeffrey is a Canadian-born scholar and poet now living in Texas. He taught at the Universities of Victoria and Ottawa as well as Rochester and Baylor, has written articles and books on the Bible's influence on poetry and painting, and written poetry, including his new collection, *Translations* (2021). He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Ins Choi was born in Korea but grew up and currently lives in Toronto with his wife and two children. His theatre writing credits include *Kim's Convenience, Subway Stations of the Cross* and currently touring, *Bad Parent*. He's developing many other creative projects for theatre, tv and film.

Debbie Sawczak grew up in Toronto and has been writing poetry since high school. Her work has enjoyed exposure through public readings, in print journals and anthologies, and online. Married and the mother of three adult sons, she also works as a lexicographer and editor, and lives in Georgetown, Ontario.

Carolyn Weber is a Canadian author who has recently relocated to the Nashville area, where she teaches at New College Franklin. Her first memoir *Surprised By Oxford* is currently in production for a film starring Rose Reid. Weber's newest memoir is *Sex and the City of God*.

Caitlin Thomson is the co-founder of The Poetry Marathon, an international writing event. Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and literary journals including: The Adroit Journal, The Penn Review, Barrow Street, and Radar. You can learn more about her writing at www.caitlinthomson.com.

Violet Nesdoly lives near Vancouver, B.C. She has been a poetry columnist and editor, had poetry and prose published in a variety of print and online publications, and authored two novels. Besides writing she enjoys making art, reading, and walking local nature trails with camera in hand. www.violetnesdoly.com.

History of the Stations Biblical Texts

The practice of walking the Stations of the Cross reaches across the centuries—inspired by that original journey of Jesus who was arrested, judged, condemned, and required to carry a cross and walk the humiliating path to his own execution. The power of this redemptive story drew many devotees to Jerusalem to walk that sacred path and enter into the experience of the original journey.

There is some history (St. Jerome, 342—420) noting that those who walked the "Via Doloroso" (Way of Sorrows) in Jerusalem would stop to reflect on the details of the Passion narrative. In some cases passages of scripture would be read, singing and prayers spoken, all part of the pilgrimage journey. In the 14th century Franciscan friars were designated as "Guardians of the Holy Land" and they still lead pilgrims along this historic sacred pathway.

The spiritual practice of "praying the stations" should be seen in the light of three meaningful realities. First, the great host of pilgrims over the centuries, whether they journeyed long distances or did their walks in a local church, all stand as witnesses to the death of Christ accompanied by the deep recognition that this death has significance for us all. Second, we are invited to enter into the narrative and to participate in the suffering articulated in this ancient story as we might in a contemporary story or in the journey of a loved one. In so doing we may find comfort and hope for our own experiences of vulnerability, unjust judgement, violence, pain and suffering. And perhaps in this we can find the threads of hope we so deeply long for. Third, the Passion narrative can serve as a wake-up call to draw our attention to the vast amount of suffering, injustice and darkness, so easily ignored, in the world around us. It's a story that can bring us fresh understanding, a new perspective and move us to action. Transformation is at the heart of this narrative as it calls us to places we resist going; to weakness in order to be strong, to submission in order to be free and to death in order to live.

Though rooted in the Catholic tradition, the Stations of the Cross capture a story that transcends denominational boundaries. High church Anglicans and Lutherans have historically embraced the practice of the Stations. In the latter half of the 20th century this practice has shown up among Reformed, Baptist, Evangelical and other Free Church communities. Perhaps it is the centrality of the cross in Protestant theologies and the draw to an embodied spirituality that has opened the way for an embrace of the Stations. The Catholic Church too has taken up a fresh perspective on this ancient practice by shaping a cycle of Stations all linked to New Testament texts. It is this series known as *Scriptural Stations of the Cross* that has been adopted by *Crossings* for its 2022 exhibition.

The earliest practice was a set of seven scenes, usually numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 14 from the list below. The standard set from the 17th to 20th centuries consisted of 14 pictures or sculptures depicting the following scenes:

- 1. Jesus is condemned to death
- 2. Jesus carries his cross
- 3. Jesus falls for the first time
- 4. Jesus meets his mother, Mary
- 5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross
- 6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
- 7. Jesus falls for the second time
- 8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
- 9. Jesus falls for the third time
- 10. Jesus is stripped of his clothes
- 11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
- 12. Jesus dies on the cross
- 13. Jesus is taken down from the cross
- 14. Jesus is placed in the tomb

Although not traditionally part of the Stations, the Resurrection of Jesus is, in very rare instances, included as a fifteenth station.

Out of the 14 traditional Stations of the Cross, only eight have a clear scriptural foundation. Stations 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 are not specifically attested to in the gospels (in particular, no evidence exists of Station 6 ever being known before medieval times) and Station 13 (representing Jesus's body being taken down off the cross and laid in the arms of his mother Mary) seems to embellish the gospels' record, which states that Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus down from the cross and buried him. To provide a version of this devotion more closely aligned with the biblical accounts, Pope John Paul II introduced a new form of devotion, called the *Scriptural Way of the Cross*, on Good Friday 1991. He celebrated that form many times.

- 1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
- 2. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested
- 3. Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin
- 4. Jesus is denied by Peter
- 5. Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate
- 6. Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns
- 7. Jesus takes up the cross
- 8. Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross
- 9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
- 10. Jesus is crucified
- 11. Jesus promises his Kingdom to the repentant thief
- 12. Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other
- 13. Jesus dies on the cross
- 14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI approved this set of stations for meditation and public celebration.

Triumphal Entry: Jesus comes to Jerusalem

When they were approaching Jerusalem ... near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden, untie it and bring it. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.' They went away and found a colt tied near a door outside in the street. As they were untying it some of the bystanders said to them 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it and Jesus sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting:

'Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes in
The name of the Lord
Blessed it the coming Kingdom
Of our ancestor David
Hosanna in the highest heaven.''
(Mark 11: 1-10)

Station 1: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved even to death. Remain here and stay awake with me." And going a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not what I want, but as you want." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:36-41)

Station 2: Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

Immediately while he [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived, and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi." and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. (Mark 14: 43-46)

Station 3: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes gathered together, 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, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard ourselves from his own lips." (Luke 22: 66-71)

Station 4: Jesus is denied by Peter

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus the Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them; for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man." At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. (Matthew 26: 69-75)

Station 5: Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.... So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified. (Mark 15: 1-5, 15)

Station 6: 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 put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe, and they kept coming to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. (John 19: 1-3)

Biblical Texts

Station 7: Jesus takes up the cross:

When the chief priests and the police saw [Jesus] they shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no case against him." ... They cried out, "Away with him, Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked 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 by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew, is called Golgotha. (John 19: 6, 15-17)

Station 8: Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross

They compelled a passerby, who was coming in from the country to carry his cross. It was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. (Mark 15: 21)

Station 9: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

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; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for the days are surely 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 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)

Station 10: Jesus is crucified

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 33-34a)

Station 11: Jesus promises his Kingdom to the repentant thief

One of the criminals who hung there kept deriding Jesus, 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." (Luke 23: 39-43)

Station 12: Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, 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 own home. (John 19: 25-27)

Station 13: Jesus dies on the cross

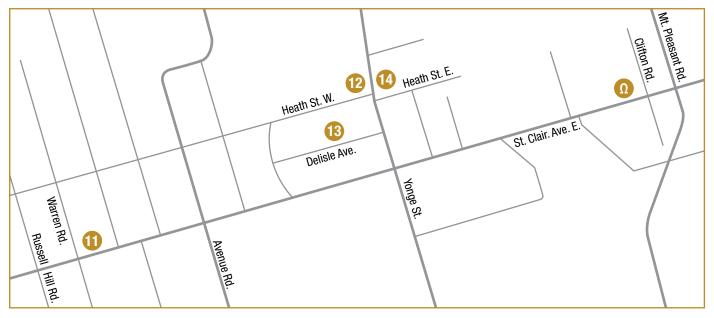
It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; Having said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23: 44-46)

Station 14: Jesus is laid in the tomb

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 new tomb which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27: 57-60)

Resurrection: Jesus rises from the dead

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb ... Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body had of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there but did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher) "do not hold on to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them he had said these things to her. (John 20:1, 11-18)





- A Knox Presbyterian Church, 630 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, ON M5S 2H4
- 1 Newman Centre*
- 2 Trinity College*
- 3 Wycliffe College*
- 4 Knox College*
- 5 Toronto School of Theology (banner facing on Queen's Park)*
- 6 University of St. Michael's College*
- 7 St. Basil's Church (University of St. Michael's College)*
- 8 Kelly Library (University of St. Michael's College on St. Joseph)*
- 9 Toronto School of Theology (on St. Joseph)*
- 10 Regis College*
- 11 Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, 230 St Clair Avenue West, Toronto, ON M4V 1R5
- 12 Christ Church Deer Park, 1570 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4T 1Z8
- 13 Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Avenue, Toronto, ON M4V 1S5
- 14 Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4T 1Z9
- $\Omega\,$ Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 78 Clifton Road, Toronto, ON M4T 2G2

*on the University of Toronto campus, 27 King's College Circle, Toronto, ON M5S 1A1



