



Holy Week

“If anyone wants to come with me,
he or she must put aside self-interest,
and then pick up the cross and follow me.
Pursuing self-interest leads to nothing
in the end,
but putting aside self-interest for my sake
leads to everything”.

Matthew 16:24 (adapted)

Jesus spoke these words to his first followers.
And now he is speaking them to you.
Yes, you. Though “only a teenager,”
you are a person of *great worth*
in Jesus’ eyes, so great that he is inviting you to follow him.

And how might you follow Jesus?
Firstly by putting aside your own selfish interests.
This requires looking around you at other people whose
wants and needs are more important than your own.

By caring for others and taking responsibility for them
you are picking up the cross to follow Jesus.

In the following slides, walk the Stations of the
Cross with Jesus.

Open your mind and heart and allow
him to speak to you, to teach you.
In doing so you will lose nothing.
Indeed, you will gain everything.

"Open my Eyes Lord"



Jesus is condemned to die

‘Pilate asked him, “Are you a king, then?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth.”’ John 18:37

REFLECTION

Jesus was not intimidated by Pilate's power and the lies of the people. Jesus had spent his life standing up for truth and justice, he wasn't going to stop now.

It can be scary when we are called to stand up for what is right. It is tempting to say nothing, especially if mine is a lone voice. But if we fail to speak out, we feel uneasy because we know we are not being true to ourselves; to the person God calls me to be.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to remember that when I stand up for fairness and truth I am never alone; you are before and beside me, strengthening me always.



Jesus takes up his cross

‘And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.’ Mt 27:31

REFLECTION

Jesus was used to being pointed at; he didn't act like other people, he didn't fit in, he was 'different'. But many had admired Jesus' new teaching - now things were beginning to change. In just a few hours Jesus was mocked and rejected by almost everyone.

It is a terrible feeling to be mocked and rejected, it eats away at our self-worth. We doubt ourselves and ask, 'What's wrong with me?' But often the answer lies not with me but with the offender.

PRAYER

Lord, when I am mocked or bullied, help me to seek to understand and forgive, so I might never fall into the trap of bullying others in turn.



Jesus falls for the first time

“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young people stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.”

Isaiah 40:30-31

REFLECTION

It must have taken a while for Jesus to adjust to the weight of the rough wooden cross. His first steps would have been unsure; made worse by the push and shove of the jeering onlookers. Without help he was bound to fall.

Whenever we enter a new stage of life it takes a while to adjust: starting a new school, moving to a new area, leaving school. It's easy to stumble as I try to work out where I fit and whom I can trust.

PRAYER

Lord, guide my steps as I journey through life. When I stumble and fall, may I always remember that you are ready to pick me up and encourage me to walk tall.



Jesus meets his mother

‘God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary... The angel said, “Peace be with you. The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you. You will give birth to a son and name him Jesus. He will be great and called the Son of the Most High God.”’ Luke 1: 26-33

REFLECTION

The words of the angel must seem like a distant memory for Mary; her hopes for her son now appear dashed as she sees Jesus in pain, dejected and humiliated. Since his birth she has cared for him; now, as he carries his cross, she can do no more than watch.

It can be difficult for my family to watch as you become more independent and struggle with life's challenges. They worry you might make the wrong choices. Sometimes this hurts all of us, but know that, whatever happens, they love me and want the best for you.

PRAYER

Foster in me a loving, grateful and humble heart, ready to listen and grow.



Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

‘As the soldiers led Jesus away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.’ Luke 23:26

REFLECTION

Simon didn't want to get involved. He was just trying to pass through the crowd and get on with his day. But he was picked out and forced into helping. He did - and it changed his life forever.

Sometimes we turn away when asked to help. We feel there is little we can offer, or we are afraid we'll make a fool of ourselves. But the world is changed by people stepping forward to do whatever they can to share the burden of another.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that when others ask for my help they believe I can make a difference. Give me the courage to step forward and get involved.

Veronica wipes Jesus' face

‘The King will answer them, “Amen I tell you, whatever you did for one of these brothers and sisters of mine, even the least of these, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40

REFLECTION

Veronica stepped from the angry crowd to wipe Jesus' bloody face. It is often said how brave she must have been to do this. But maybe it was her sense of compassion that was too strong to stop her offering the little care she could give.

Compassion means we feel the pain of another deep in our heart. It allows us to identify with their struggle. It can cost us tears, make us feel small. Yet it can motivate us to step out of our ordinariness to help ease the world's suffering. It is a gift to all.

PRAYER

Lord, foster in me a compassionate heart, brave enough to share another's pain, humble enough to shed a tear, big enough to shelter their hopes, ready, always, to care.



Jesus falls a second time

‘We are often troubled, but not crushed; sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed.’ 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

REFLECTION

The wood of the cross and the people's rejection must have weighed heavier and heavier on Jesus' body and heart. It must have been ever harder to go on as he stumbled through the streets of Jerusalem.

Sometimes life delivers a series of blows and we feel as if we can't take anymore. It is then that we recognise the value of resilience. Resilience is the ability to recover after set-backs. It is strengthened by faith, that no matter how low we feel, with God's help we can rise up again.

PRAYER

Lord, remind me when life is hard, that you never leave me to face my difficulties alone. Help me to see that you work through others; picking me up and restoring my strength.



Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

‘A large crowd of people followed him; among them were some women who were weeping and wailing for him.’ Luke 23:27

REFLECTION

Amidst the jeering crowd there was one group of women who refused to turn their back on their friend and teacher, Jesus. They withstood pressures to deny him or run away. Although it made them outsiders, their faith in him remained steadfast.

It can be difficult to live out our faith when the world around us doesn't. We can feel pressured into 'fitting in' by not wanting to stand out. It takes courage to remain faithful to a way of life and to support others as they follow their chosen path.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be faithful; to my friends, to my family, to my beliefs. Never let the pressure to fit in, prevent me from standing out.



Jesus falls for a third time

“Our enemies have no reason to gloat over us. We have fallen, but we will rise again. We are in darkness now, but the Lord will give us light.’

Micah 7:8

REFLECTION

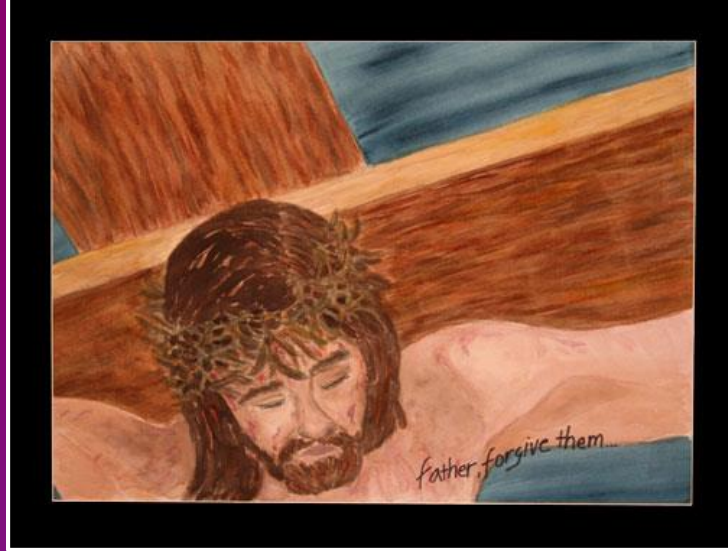
Jesus has almost reached the end. By his third fall many will have considered him a failure. How could someone who performed miracles and awed thousands now look so weak and hopeless?

The world has always praised successful people, but the lesson of the cross shows us that it is human to fail. With God however, we can't stay down. He lets our failures teach us to be humble, resilient and forgiving, not just of our own errors but those of others too.



PRAYER

Lord, there are so many reasons as to why we fail. Lack of effort, lack of support, lack of belief. Help me to give witness to the truth, that with You there are always fresh starts.



Jesus is stripped and nailed to the cross

‘The soldiers took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means “The Place of the Skull”... and divided his clothes among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get which piece of clothing.’

Mark 15:22-24

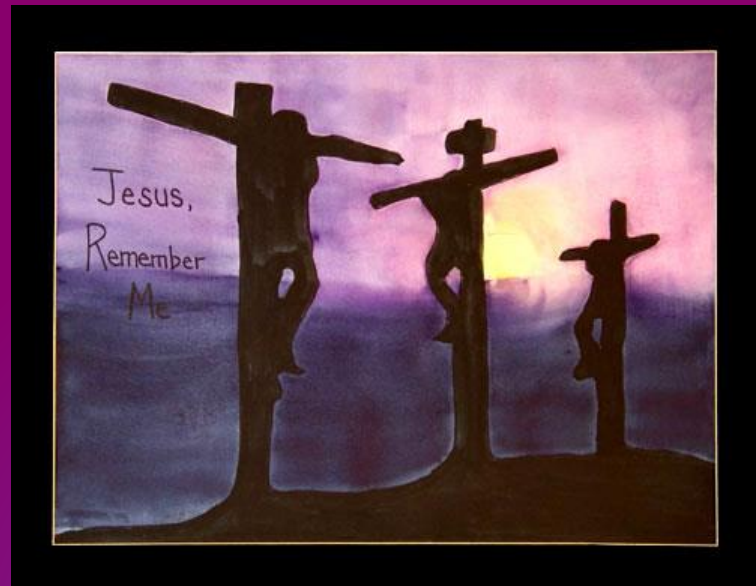
REFLECTION

After falling under the weight of carrying a criminal's cross, being jeered at and considered a failure, Jesus' dignity is now stripped away further as the soldiers take his clothes, leave him naked and nail him to the cross

We know we are made in the image of God and that we have an inbuilt dignity that deserves the upmost respect. Sometimes we don't act in a way that is worthy of this - when we don't respect ourselves by our words and actions or when we fail to acknowledge that others have their God-given dignity too.

PRAYER

Lord, open my eyes and my heart, that I can see your image in all around me. Give me the courage to stand up for the dignity of every person, including myself. Help me to create a culture of kindness and love.



Jesus dies on the cross

“At about three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice...“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Then with a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.’ Mark 15:34,37

REFLECTION

It is shocking to think that at this, his darkest hour, even Jesus doubted the Father's presence, shocking too for those gathered to watch. Is that how it ends? Have God and goodness gone?

It can be unnerving when someone we look up to begins to doubt themselves. We expect them always to be sure, to inspire and guide. Should I now doubt them as well? Or should I remain loyal and help restore their faith?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to stay faithful in the darkest of times. When others lose hope, give me the grace to help them find it.



Jesus is taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb

‘A request was put to Pilate by Joseph from Arimathea, that he might take away Jesus’ body. And Pilate gave permission. So he came and took his body away.’ John 19:38

REFLECTION

Joseph of Arimathea was a follower of Jesus. Unable to prevent his degrading death, Joseph and a few other loyal followers, now do all they can to ensure Jesus is finally treated with dignity and care.

Christ taught us that life is changed when we die, not ended. So we should always continue to pay our respects as best as we can because love and dignity never ends.

PRAYER

Lord, may I always pay my respects to those who have died and support those left grieving through prayer, a visit, and acts of care.



It is apt that Jesus' tomb was located in a garden, a place where the cycle of death and new life is witnessed as the seasons pass.

When they laid Jesus in the tomb, his followers had no idea of the new life that was beginning to rise; a life that would change all time.

He is not here;
he has risen,
just as he said.

Matthew 28:6



PRAYER

Lord, open my eyes, to notice beauty in the world,
kindness in people, love all around me, and Your risen
Son, everywhere.