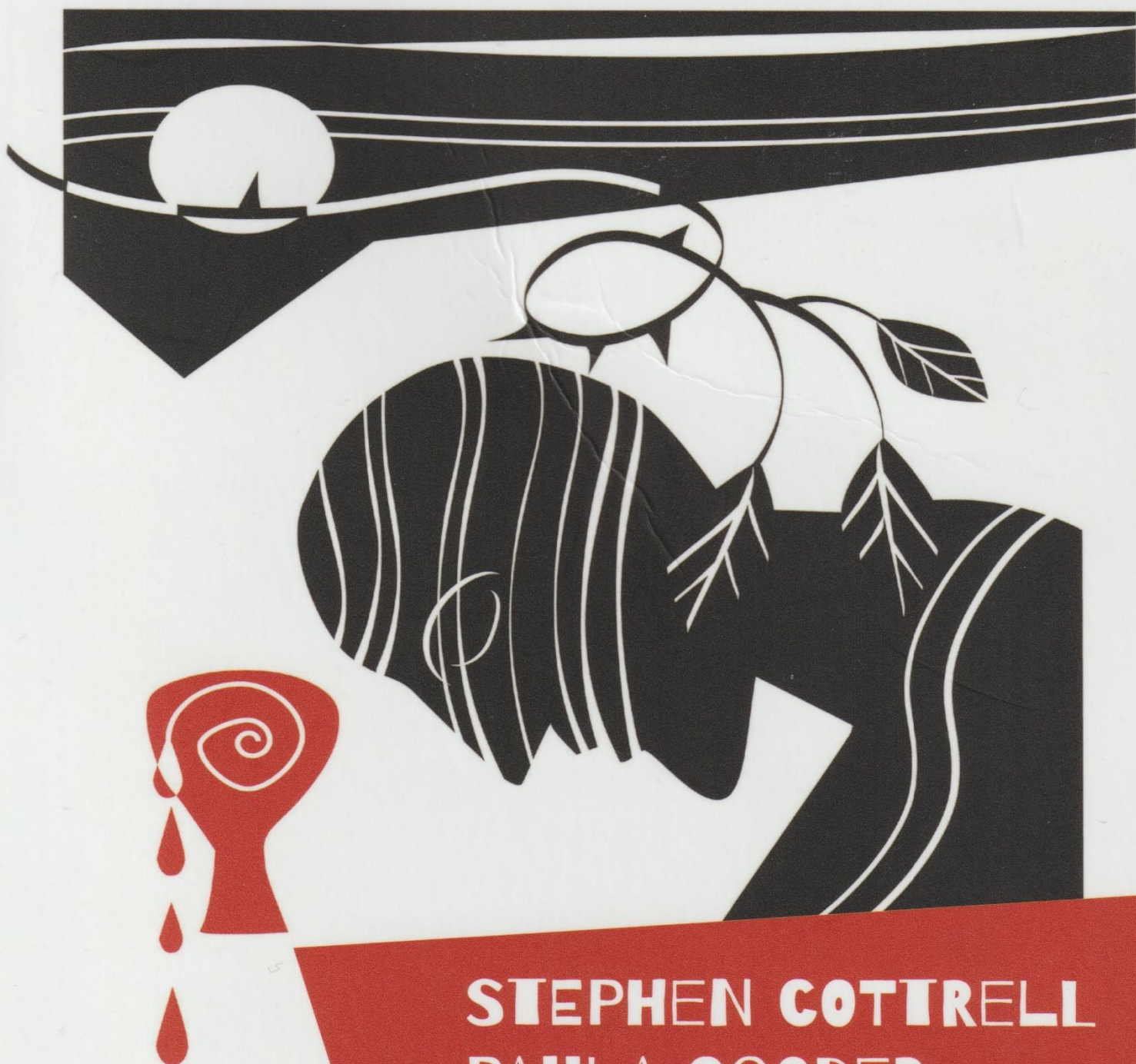


WALKING **THE** WAY **OF THE** CROSS

PRAYERS **AND** REFLECTIONS ON THE
BIBLICAL **STATIONS** OF THE **CROSS**



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The Gathering

The ministers enter in silence.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit,

All **Amen.**

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Matthew 16.24, 25

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

Ephesians 2.13, 14

An appropriate greeting may be given.

A minister may introduce the service and then says

Let us pray.

A brief moment of silence follows.

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience
and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

All **Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

¶ *First Station:*
Jesus in agony in the
Garden of Gethsemane

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

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

They went to a place called Gethsemane;
and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.'
He took with him Peter and James and John,
and began to be distressed and agitated.
And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved,
even to death; remain here, and keep awake.'
And going a little farther, he threw himself on
the ground and prayed that, if it were possible,
the hour might pass from him. He said,
'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible;
remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want,
but what you want.'

Mark 14.32-36

Reflection / Meditation

Reflection or meditation may follow.
See pages 18–20.

*First Station:
Jesus in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*

Reflection A

by Philip North

'Not what I want, but what you want'

The little boy waited with absolute patience for his moment. He could only have been two or three, but he timed it to perfection. The moment his mother turned away, he was off, running as fast as his little legs would carry him down the High Street, his face alive with joy.

Of course it didn't last long and his mother soon outpaced him. But the look on his face said everything. That short moment of freedom meant everything. That child wanted control over his own life. And that is something we value even more as adults. It means everything to us that we can make our own decisions, begin and end our own relationships and choose for ourselves where we live and how we earn.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, it is this precious control of his own life that Jesus hands over. He could have avoided the cross and lived life exactly as he wanted. But he doesn't. 'Not what I want, but what you want,' he says, and entrusts himself wholly to the Father. Why? Because he knows that it is when we willingly hand our freedom over to God that we find in him a freedom that lasts for ever.

No matter how much we value the capacity to make private decisions, in the end that cannot set us free. Whether we like it or not, we are captives. We are chained up by responsibilities and expectations, we are bound fast by sin and death.

We find freedom when we sign over the rights to our own lives and offer them to the Father. In the short term that may not be the easiest of paths. But ultimately it is the path of liberation.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you entered the garden of fear
and faced the agony of your impending death:
be with those who share that agony
and face death unwillingly this day.

You shared our fear and knew the weakness of
our humanity:

give strength and hope to the dispirited and despairing.

To you, Jesus, who sweated blood,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

All **Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

¶ *The Conclusion*

A response may be made to the preceding stations. This might take the form of praise, penitence, intercession or some other relevant action, accompanied by silence or singing.

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words our Saviour taught us.

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son
 Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

One of the following responsories is used

You are worthy, O Lamb, for you were slain,
and by your blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and language and nation;
you have made them to be a kingdom and priests
serving our God.

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

To him who loves us
and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us a kingdom of priests
to stand and serve before our God;

**All to him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honour, glory and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

(or)

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

Christ was manifested in the body,
vindicated in the spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
glorified in high heaven.

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

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.

All Amen.

The ministers depart in silence.