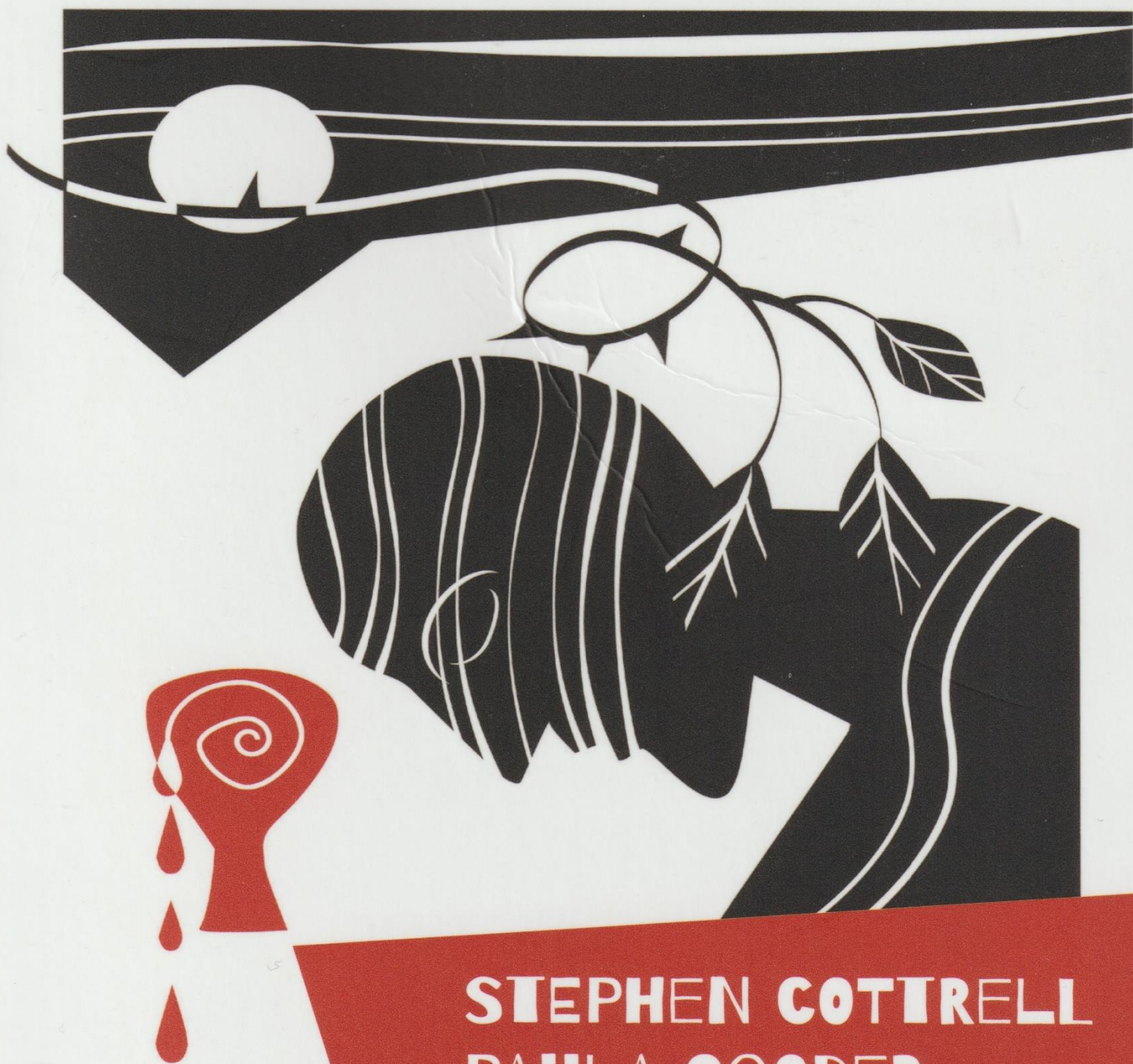


# WALKING **THE** WAY OF **THE** CROSS

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.**

¶ **Second Station:**  
*Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested*

**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.

Immediately, while he 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*

**Reflection / Meditation**

*Reflection or meditation may follow.*

*See pages 24–26.*

*Second Station:  
Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested*

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**Reflection A**

by Philip North

*'The one I will kiss'*

Why a kiss? It seems a very odd way to betray someone. Couldn't Judas simply have pointed at Jesus? Kissing is what a parent offers to a child, what a lover offers to their beloved. It is the deepest sign of human affection. Yet here it is disfigured and distorted. The kiss of love becomes the sign of betrayal as Judas kisses Jesus to his death. Why? Because the people who betray us are usually the people who love us.

Of all the difficult pastoral situations that priests and pastors have to handle, the most distressing usually involve betrayal. A wife betrayed by an adulterous husband. A child betrayed by an abusive parent. A teenager betrayed and abandoned by friends.

One reason such situations are so difficult is that they demonstrate to us the innate fragility of all human relationships. We desperately need the people in our lives. We cannot be ourselves without their love, their presence and their support. Yet we know that human affection is fickle and so the loneliness we fear is an ever-present danger.

Here, the man whose relationship with Jesus is so intimate that he can kiss him uses that gesture of love to give him away to men who will crucify him.

Yet as Jesus suffers the fragility of one relationship, so he shows us the utter reliability of another. Jesus has placed his life into the hands of his Heavenly Father. A relationship with the God of perfect love is one that can never suffer betrayal.

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed by the kiss of a friend:  
be with those who are betrayed and slandered and  
falsely accused.

You knew the experience of having your love  
thrown back in your face for mere silver:  
be with families which are torn apart by mistrust  
or temptation.

To you, Jesus, who offered your face to your betrayer,  
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.*