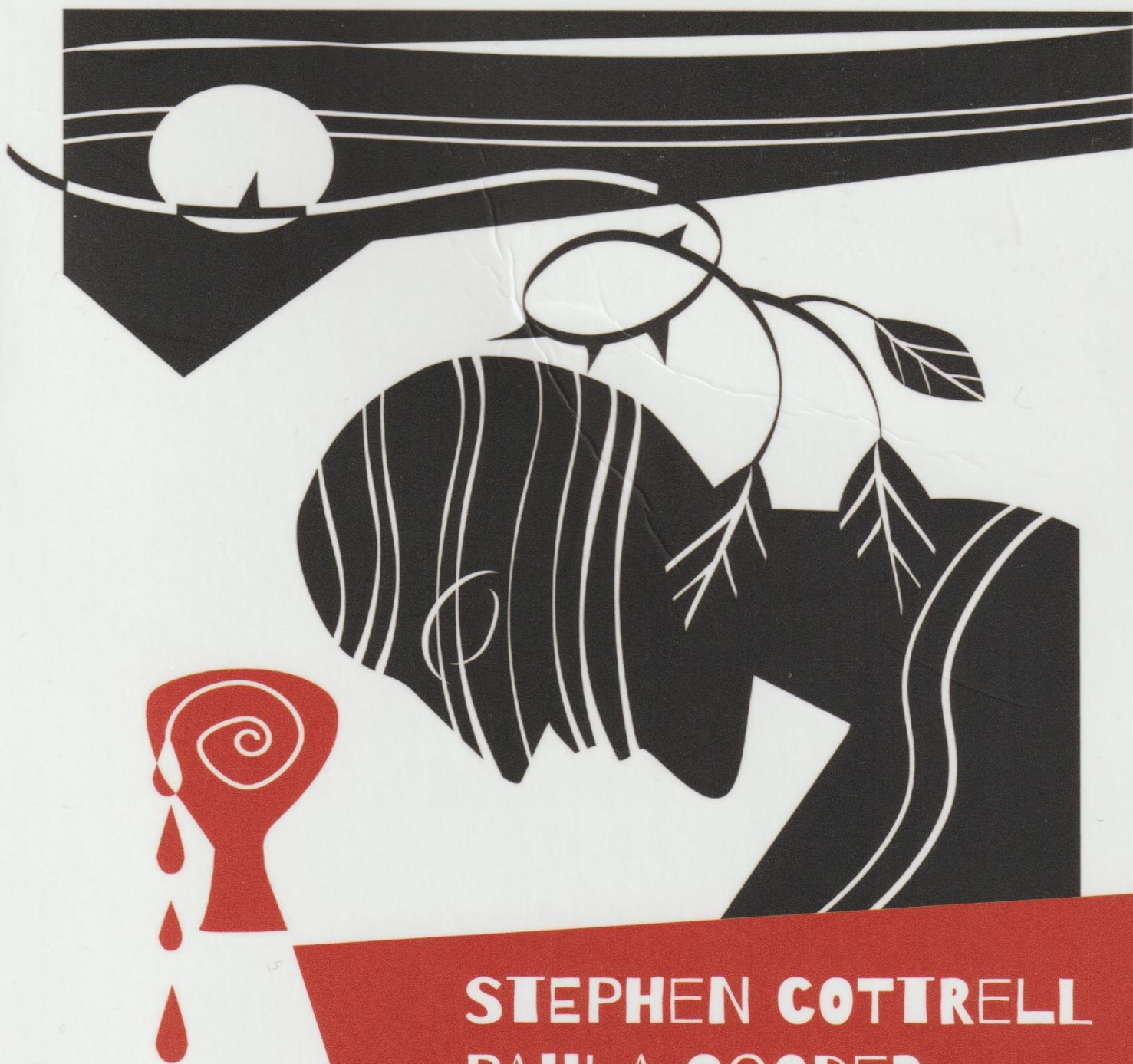


WALKING **THE** WAY OF **THE** CROSS

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



STEPHEN COTTRELL
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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.**

¶ *Fifth Station:*
Jesus judged by Pilate

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

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?'
But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!'
So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released
Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he
handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15.14, 15

Reflection / Meditation

Reflection or meditation may follow.
See pages 42–44.

*Fifth Station:
Jesus judged by Pilate*

Reflection A

by Philip North

He handed him over to be crucified

Who holds the power here?

On the surface it is Pontius Pilate. He was the Roman Governor who had at his beck and call a vast and powerful army and the might of the Roman Empire. He was known for his casual acts of brutality and for his savage crackdown on rebellion. This was a man who held the life of others cheap, and just one more crucifixion would not mean a great deal to him.

But who really holds the power? Pilate could not know that before him was God's own Son, the one who holds all creation in the palm of his hand. Nor could he know that by handing him over to be crucified, he was cooperating in God's plan of salvation. Really it is Pilate who is on trial here.

Two thousand years later, there are plenty of people who abuse their power. Pontius Pilate is alive and well in those who underpay their staff and subject them to poverty, in those who exploit the vulnerability of others as they lure them into gambling or addiction, in those who cover up the crimes of others and in those who deliberately spread lies and misinformation.

Such people may think they are in control. But their power is a sham. It cannot last. For one day we will all be judged on our use of power by the one whose power it is that threw the stars into space. Real power is to trust in his power.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency:

be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful.

You were the victim of unbridled injustice: change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters to your way of peace.

To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned, 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.