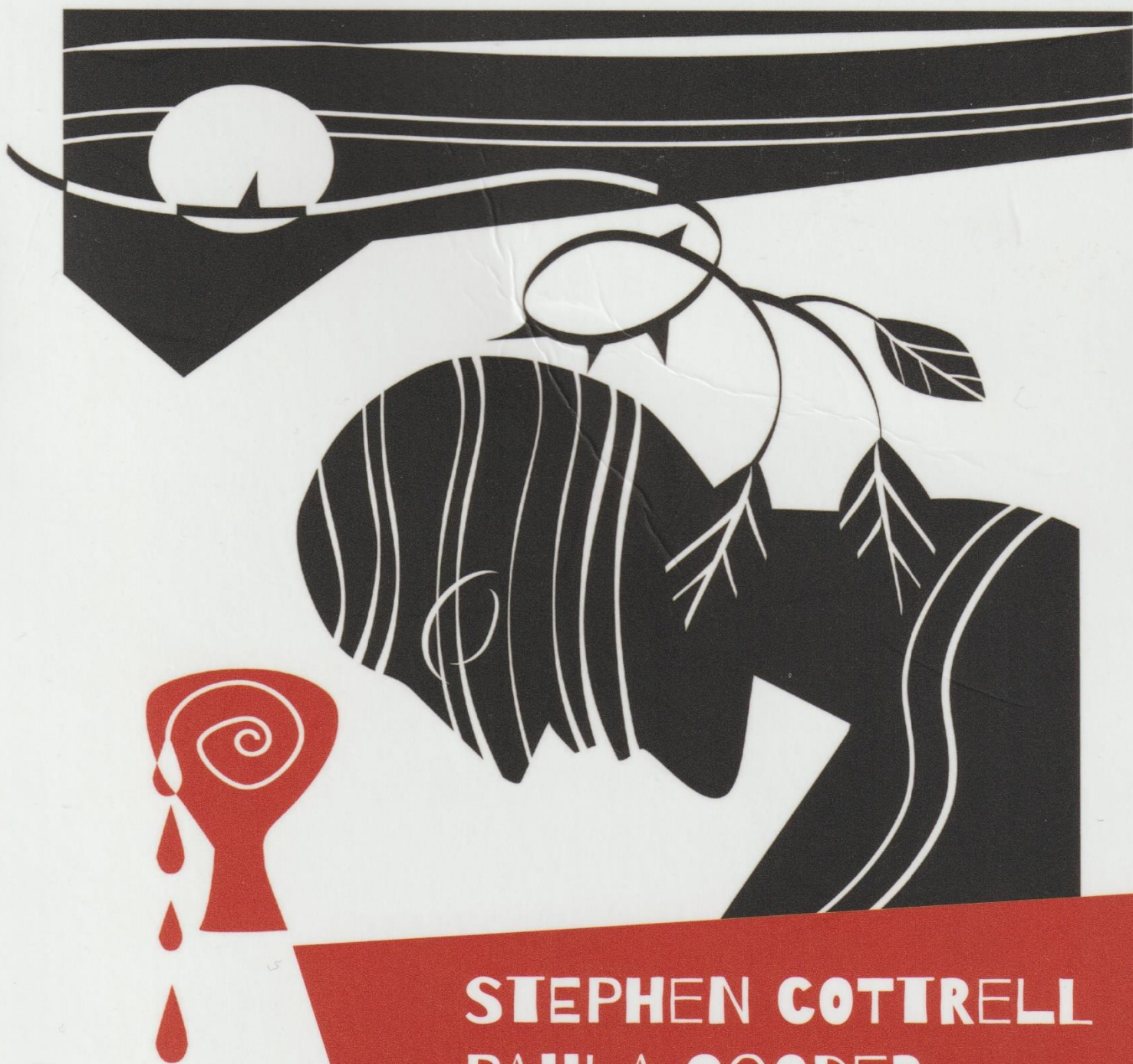


# WALKING **THE** WAY **OF THE** CROSS

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.**

¶ *Seventh Station:*  
*Jesus carries the cross*

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.

After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

*Mark 15.20*

**Reflection / Meditation**

*Reflection or meditation may follow.*  
*See pages 54–56.*

*Seventh Station:  
Jesus carries the cross*

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**Reflection A**

by Philip North

*Then they led him out to crucify him*

Imagine having to carry an object that you know is about to kill you. It is impossible to conceive what it must be like to have to bear on your shoulders the crossbeam to which soon your own hands will be nailed. As Jesus bore that piece of wood, maybe already stained with the blood of others killed on it, he must have felt cold, cruel terror at the appalling agony awaiting him.

At least, though, he knew that his death had purpose. Jesus walked the way of the cross with absolute certainty that his crucifixion was the only way God could deal with human mortality, and that through his dying, countless would live. Though this death would be unspeakable, it was part of God's plan to save his people. That knowledge gave him the strength to walk the bitter route to Calvary.

Jesus' death had purpose, and because of that, our deaths also can have purpose. James is an example. He was born with muscular dystrophy and despite periodic times of illness and countless operations, he lived his life as fully as he could, made many friends and loved his family. However, soon after his 32nd birthday, it became clear that his body was giving up the fight. But even as he lay dying, James went on caring for the people around him, far more worried about them than about himself. He stayed faithful and bore witness to Christ in a way that astonished his family and friends. James had deep trust in the cross of Christ, and he believed that, because of the cross, his life had purpose beyond death.

Jesus can bring comfort even to the dying. That's because, if we can trust in him, we can see that our lives have a purpose that death has no power to touch.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough  
streets of Jerusalem:

be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond  
their strength.

You bore the weight of our sins when you carried  
the cross:

help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love  
for us.

To you, Jesus, bearing a cross not your own,  
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.*