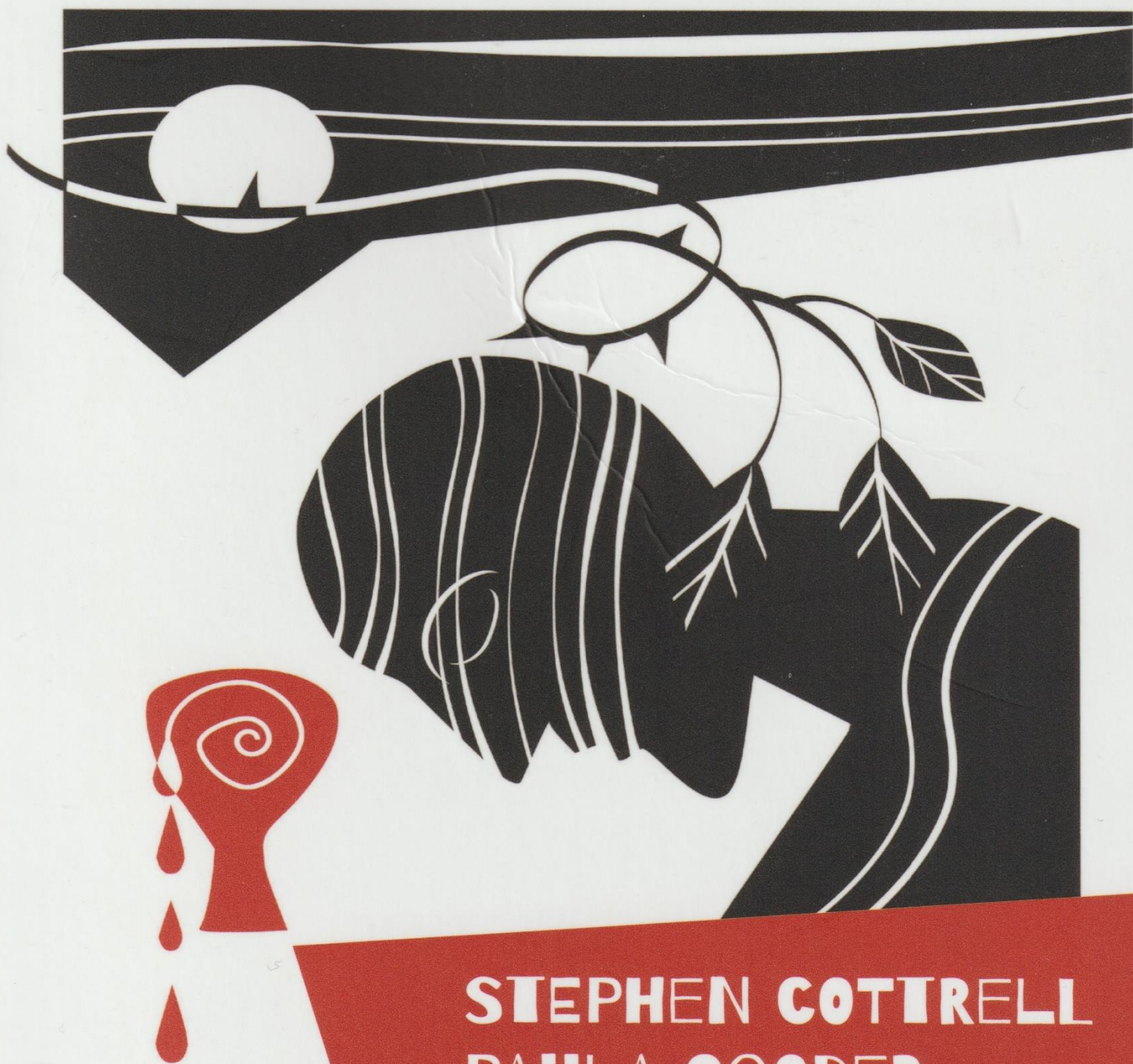


WALKING **THE** WAY **OF THE** CROSS

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.**

¶ *Ninth Station:*
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

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 Luke.

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.” Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us”; and to the hills, “Cover us.” For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’

Luke 23.27–31

Reflection / Meditation

*Reflection or meditation may follow.
See pages 66–68.*

*Ninth Station:
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem*

Reflection A

by Philip North

'Do not weep for me'

A young woman moved into her current house eight years ago. On the walls of one downstairs room, there are at least nine paint colours in an extraordinary patchwork pattern. It's not some cutting-edge, new interior design scheme. Rather all these colours are from testing pots. Even after eight years, this woman cannot decide what colour to paint the room.

Making decisions can be impossibly difficult – often we decide by *not* deciding. We simply defer until we reach a crisis point.

Even as Jesus makes his way to Calvary, he does not stop seeking to bring people to decision. He comes across a group of ritual mourners but is scornful of their engineered tears.

'Don't weep for me!' he says. 'Weep for yourselves!' The crisis point has come. Judgement is at hand. Now these women must decide, along with everyone else. Who is Jesus? Is this condemned man really God's son? Will his death mean anything at all?

Constantly in the Gospels Jesus tries to get people to decide, perhaps most dramatically when he takes the disciples to a quiet place and asks, 'Who do you say I am?' That question is the most important one any of us will ever have to answer.

Who do you say Jesus is? A madman? A deluded fool? A teacher? An example of a good life?

Or is he more than that? Is Jesus actually God in our midst? And if so, does his death destroy death and set us free for a new life lived with him for ever?

Who do *you* say Jesus is? That's a decision that can't be deferred for ever.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you:
move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.
You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the 'city of peace':
bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path
of profound peace.

To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept
for the city of peace,
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.