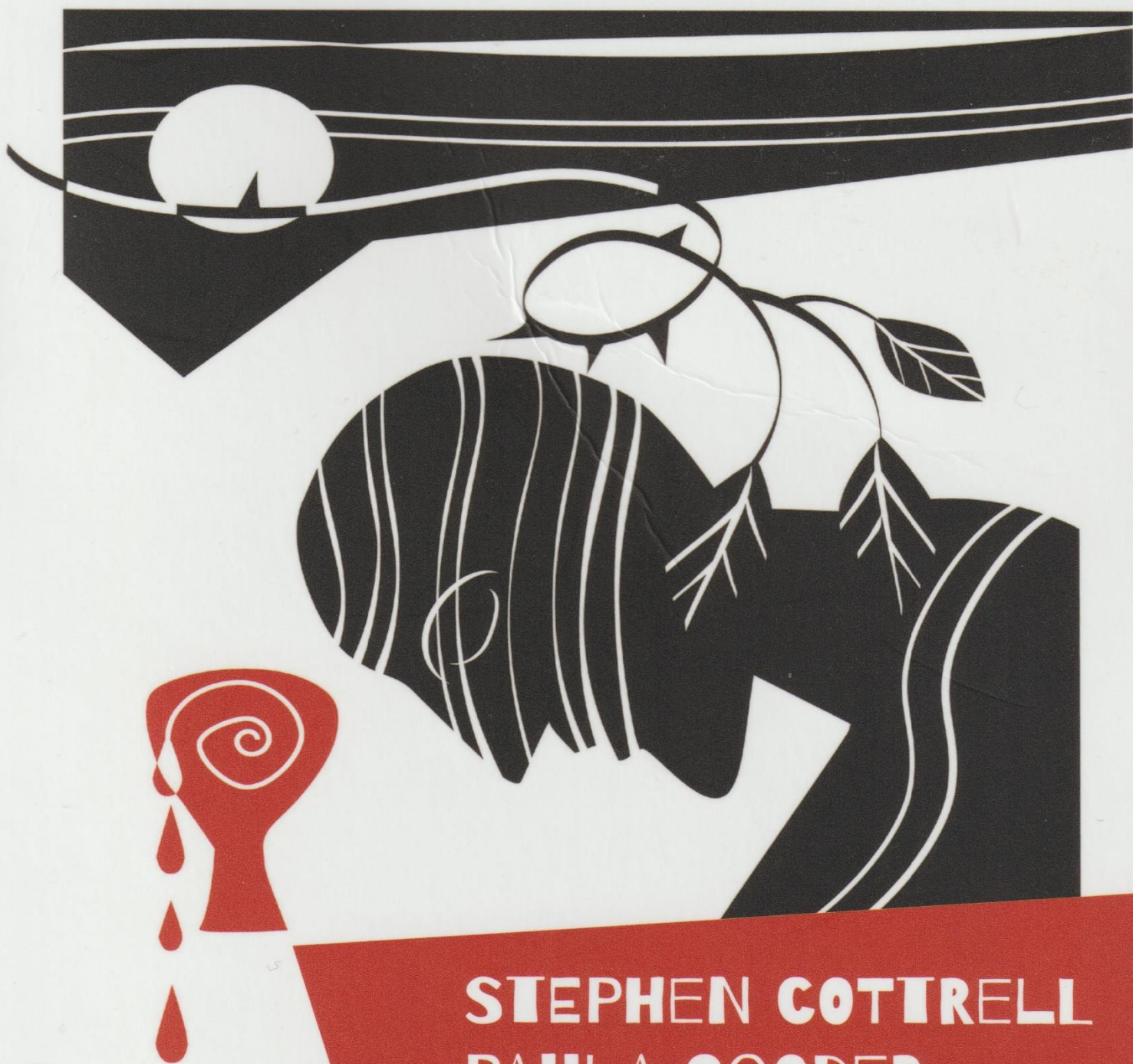


WALKING **THE** WAY **OF THE** CROSS

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.**

¶ *Twelfth Station:*
Jesus on the cross;
his mother and his friend

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 John.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

John 19.26,27

Reflection / Meditation

Reflection or meditation may follow.

See pages 84–86.

*Twelfth Station:
Jesus on the cross; his mother and his friend*

Reflection A

by Philip North

'Here is your son'

Loneliness is the sickness of the age. In a recent BBC survey, one third of people said that they often felt very lonely, with the 16–24 age group the worst affected. The privatization of housing, the collapse of traditional places of association and the individualized nature of the online environment all mean that our culture is afflicted by a crisis of relationships.

At the very height of his agony, at a point when every single word must have meant unendurable pain, Jesus forms community. As he commits his mother and the beloved disciple to each other, he is doing so much more than making domestic arrangements. Here, through the shedding of his blood, he forms a new family of love, one that we call the Church.

The Christian thinker Sam Wells argues that the most important word in the Christian faith is 'with'. The life to which Jesus invites us through the cross is not just about eternal being. It is about eternal being *with*. So healthy relationships, mutual belonging and participation in the life of a community lie at the very heart of the Gospel.

Human beings are made for relationship – with Jesus and with each other. Perhaps loneliness is so hard to bear because it is an anticipation of hell. From the cross, Jesus invites us to be part of his family of everlasting love. To belong to him and so to each other is heaven.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed
with you to the bitter end,
yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them:
be with all broken families today
and care for those who long for companionship.
You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes:
give us a love for one another
that is stronger even than the fear of death.
To you, Jesus, loving in the face of death,
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.