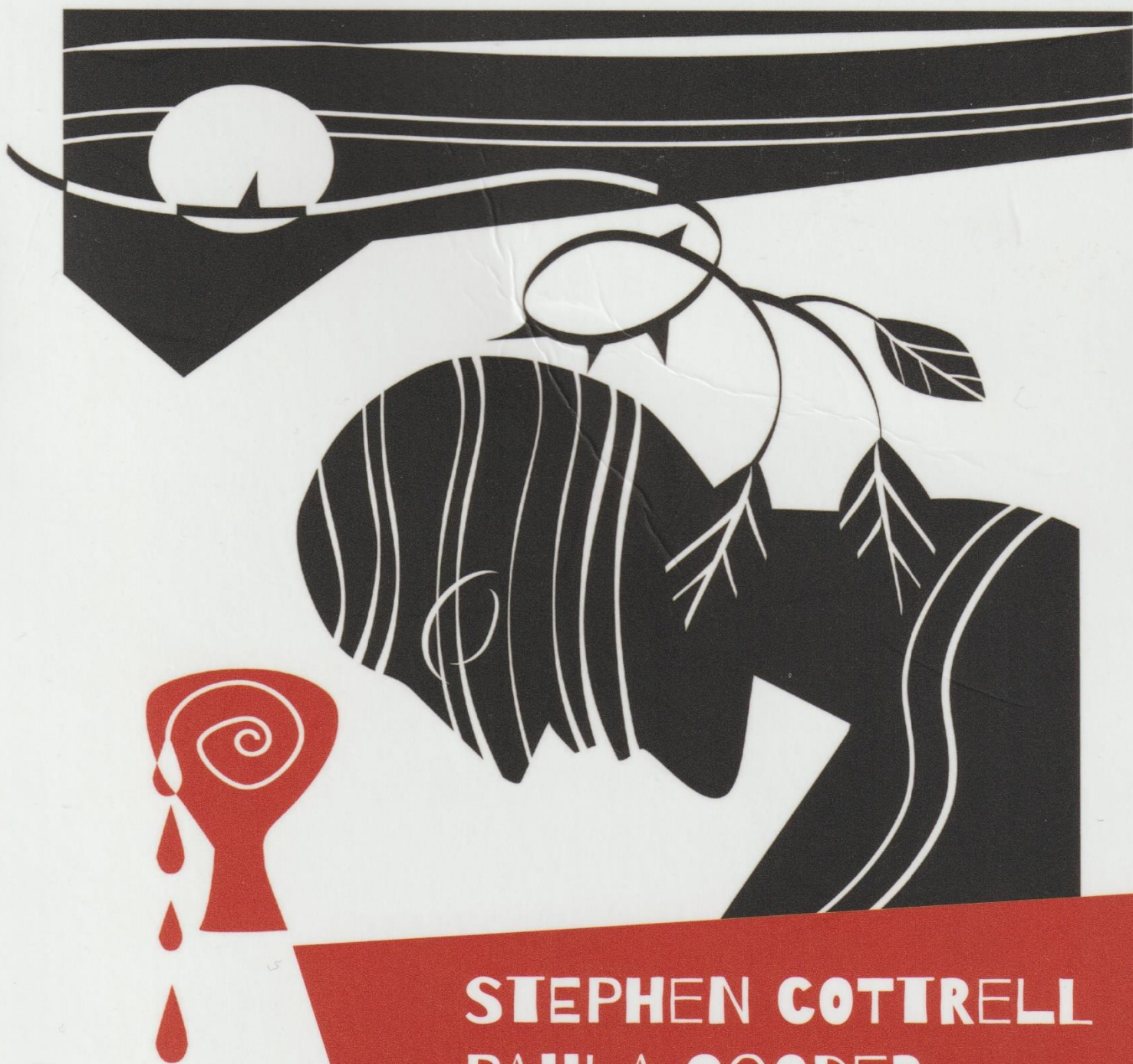


WALKING **THE** WAY OF **THE** CROSS

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.**

¶ *Thirteenth Station:*
Jesus dies on 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.

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Mark 15.34–37

Reflection / Meditation

Reflection or meditation may follow.

See pages 90–92.

*Thirteenth Station:
Jesus dies on the cross*

Reflection A

by Philip North

Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last

What kind of a God is it who goes and gets himself killed?

No wonder St Paul accepted that the cross seemed like foolishness to others. No wonder that, from the very first, Christians have been mocked and abused for such a bizarre belief. Surely the whole point of God is that he is *eternal*. How crazy, then, to offer your whole life to a hanged God?

Yet this moment of unspeakable and abandoned death is the most intense moment of divine revelation. The Christian God reveals his power through powerlessness. Because from the cross we see that there can be no greater strength than the strength of selfless love.

This act of utter, unconditional self-giving subverts and overturns all the twisted values of the world. As Jesus dies, the powerful are shown to be powerless. The dealers of injustice, the oppressors and the polluters are placed under judgement. The captives are set free. Because as we gaze upon the hanged God, we see a world transformed by love. The selfishness of sin is overcome by the selflessness of love.

And our response? To try and love as Jesus loved. To offer our lives as a gift to the poor as Jesus offered his life to us who have nothing. If the cross is our only hope, then it will also be our lifestyle.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree
of shame,
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.