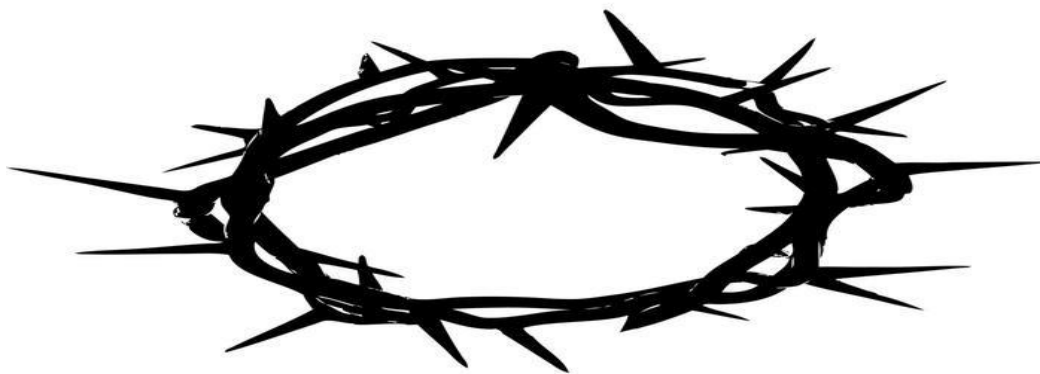


Prayer Around The Cross

GOOD FRIDAY



‘Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit’

The way of the cross is based upon bible reflections on how Jesus carrying his cross, walked through the streets in Jerusalem towards the place of execution called Golgotha. Most of us call it Calvary or the place of the skull.

The Church meditates upon fourteen special events that happened to Jesus on his way to Calvary – these fourteen events are called the Stations of the Cross.

Every Friday at 3pm the Franciscans follow the way of the cross with the faithful. The present road is known as the Via Dolorosa, or the Sorrowful Way. The last four stations are made on Calvary in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchur.

The Catholic Church later set up fourteen stations in every Catholic church and chapel, so that people all around the world may share in the rich blessings of meditating upon the way of the cross.

The Church encourages the faithful to reflect on the final days of the life of Christ on this earth. Through the Stations of the Cross we enter into the fullness of his Passion and Death. By means of praying the Stations of the Cross we recall the events, and the actions of those in authority, that brought about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We unite ourselves with Mary whose 'soul was pierced', the women of Jerusalem, Simon of Cyrene, and Joseph of Arimathea who journeyed with Christ to the very end.

'Christ has Died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come Again'

Opening Prayer

Dear Jesus, what have we done to deserve so much of your love? You gave yourself totally to us and died on a cross because you love us.

Through our sufferings and struggles within our families, help us to come closer to you. We offer you this prayer by reflecting on the stations of the cross and specially praying for our families and all families around the world.

Mother Mary, protector of our families hold our hand and take us with you, in the manner you followed Jesus on the way to the cross.

'Were you there when they crucified my Lord,

Were you there when they crucified my Lord,

Oh, sometimes it cause me to tremble, tremble,
tremble,

Were you there when they crucified my Lord.'

(We pause and reflect)

1st Station – Jesus is Condemned to Death

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!

‘What is your judgement?’ They answered, He deserves death.’

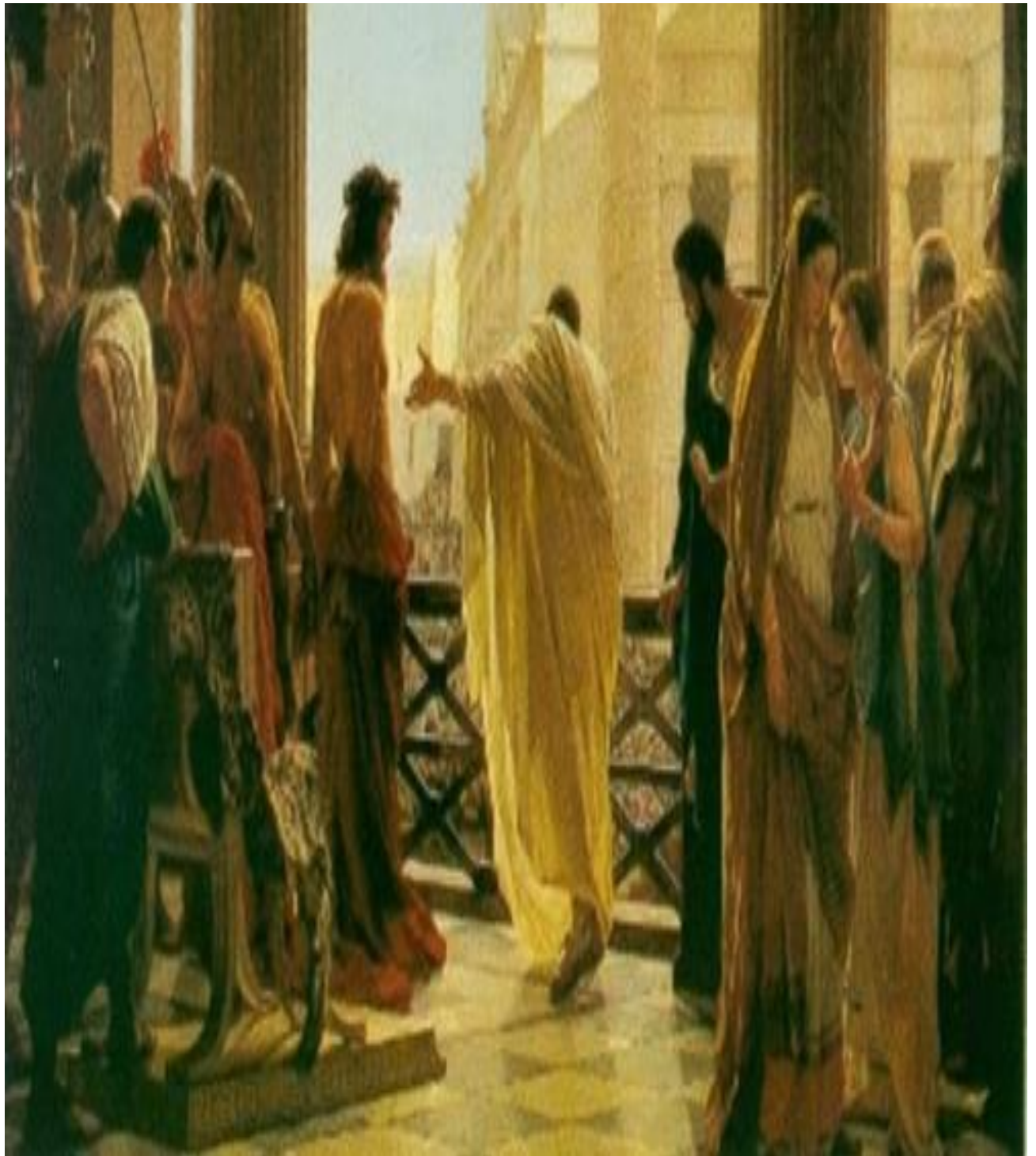
Reflection:

We all do it, make judgements about practically everything. The judgement of Jesus by Caiphas and indeed Pontus Pilate is that of the world. Jesus, though innocent, was falsely accused and unjustly judged to death on the cross. ‘The amount you measure is the amount you’ll be given back’

A Family Reflection:

Lord, many times in our families, parents are misunderstood by children and children are misunderstood by parents. Husbands and wives misjudge each other; children falsely accuse each other: ‘You did it!’ No, I didn’t, it was you who did it!’ When we are falsely accused, Lord give us the strength to bear the injustices with patience as our way of following You, on the way to the cross.

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!



2nd Station – Jesus Accepts His Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!

'Jesus was led away, carrying the cross by himself.' (Jn 19:17)

Reflection

To be a follower of Christ is to embrace the Cross of ridicule, abuse, hostility, and rejection. As Christ accepted his Cross, so may our Cross in Life become the means to show our family and society God walks with our story.

Family Prayer:

There are so many times and occasions when faced with family challenges and worries, like a seriously sick child, or loss of a job, or financial worries, or disunity in our families, or a challenging teenager, we question 'Why me, God?' or 'Why my family?'. May these occasions help us to accept these trials with courage and patience, trusting in the goodness of God, who accepted Death on a Cross.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



3rd Station – Jesus Falls the First Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!

'Jesus suffered outside the gate to sanctify his people with his blood.' (Heb 13:12)

Reflection:

Jesus falls the first time under the weight of the heavy cross. When we stumble and fall he understands how we feel. When we turn to Him, he will not fail us. No matter how heavy the cross of life is, may we never lose hope.

Family Prayer:

Jesus knew what it meant to fall when one is weak. There are so many times when among family members, that we just cringe at the mistake of another or just ignore them. Whether the mistakes are big or small, life-changing or not, help us to recognise we all make mistakes, there is nobody perfect, and give us the courage to get up and try to move on.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



4th Station – Jesus Meets His Mother Mary

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!

‘For the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places.’ (Isaiah 51:3)

Reflection:

Mary grieved and cried on seeing her Son Jesus being led to his crucifixion. The words of Simeon many years earlier that ‘a sword will pierce you own soul too’ is surely whispering and echoing in her ear. Mary sheds tears today, soon she will shed tears of joy at his Resurrection.

Family Prayer:

How many tears has a mother shed for her child? From the moment they are given birth, to the long nights with teething, the first steps taken, the first day in school, playing an instrument or swimming for the first time, doing well in school, worrying when they go out, making good decisions as they walk through life, and to see them create their own family. So many tears, we pray they will be very few of sadness.

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!



5th Station – Simon Carries Jesus' Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

'They meet a Cyrenean named Simon. This man they pressed to carry the cross.' (Mt 27:32)

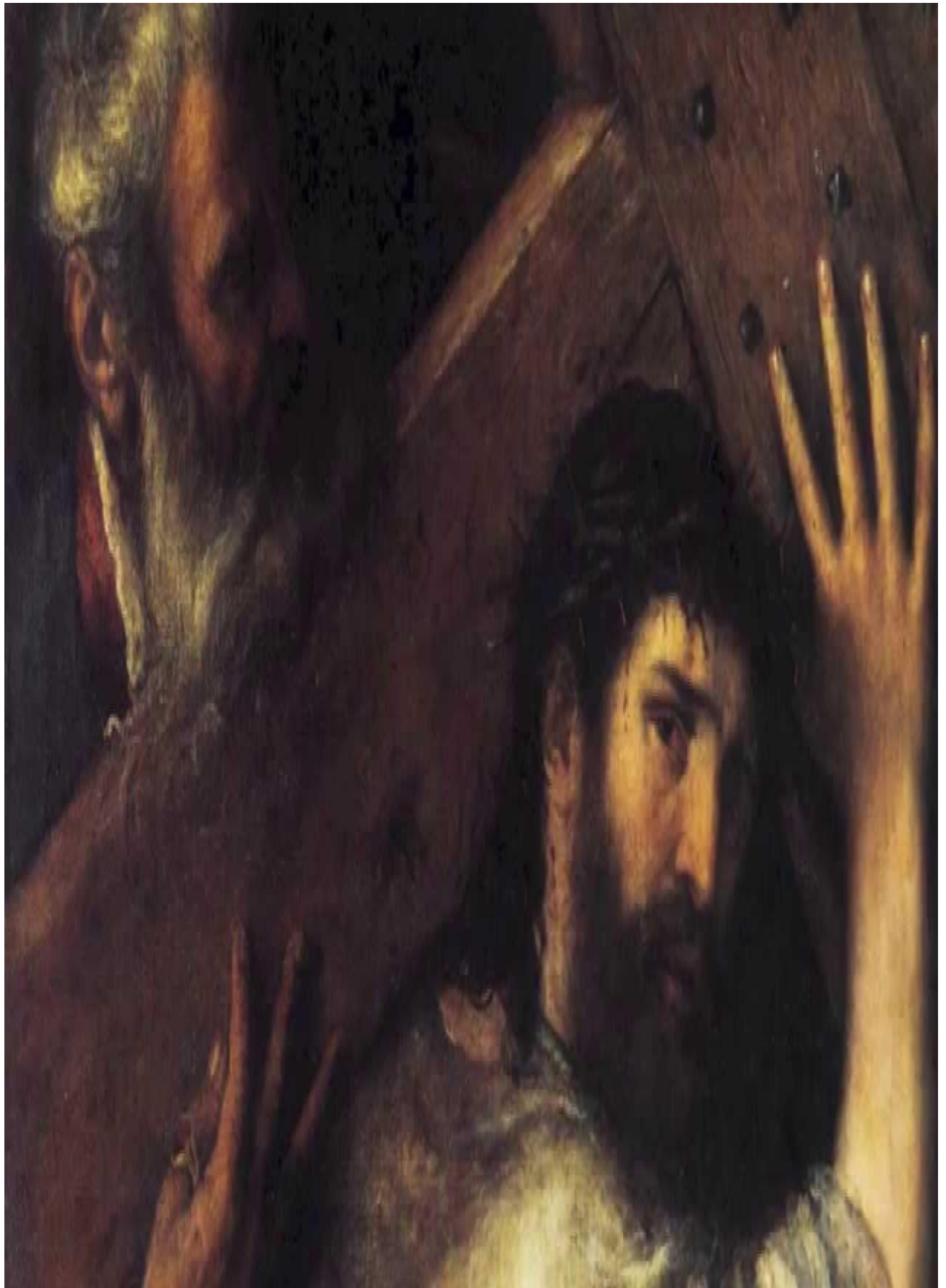
Reflection:

Simon is dragged from the crowd to help carry the cross of Christ. Despite the yoke being easy and the burden light, the heavy cross gets more difficult on the road to Calvary. Despite the pain Christ still stumbles. We too can stumble in pain and hardship. May we be blessed with a circle of love and care to help us carry our cross.

Family Prayer:

We think of all parents who very often carry a heavy cross with the worries of life. The worry of a difficult job, difficult people, paying the bills, leading by example in the home, providing warmth and security for their children. By carrying the cross on a daily basis, may all parents feel Simon carries the cross with them.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



6th Station – Veronica Wipes the Face of Christ

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you;

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

'As often as you did it for one of the least of these, you did it to me.' (Mt 25:40)

Reflection:

Isn't our natural instinct is to help another who is going through pain? That pain is often etched on our faces and brows. The painful expression is a reminder of what it means to be human. All too often there is a Veronica there with a kind word, a listening ear, a hand of support as a means to wipe our face.

Family Prayer:

Veronica appears time and time again in our lives. With so much suffering in families, in communities, and the world, we so need the gentle love of Veronica's hand to wipe away the bloodied face of those who often suffer more than we do; especially those who have no voice – the migrant and refugee, the unborn, the sick. May the imprint of our face find its way to the heart of Jesus.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



7th – Jesus Falls the Second Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

'Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak.' (Isaiah 35:3)

Reflection:

Christ falls for the second time under the weight of the cross. We too fall, falter, and fail. Life is not easy, society doesn't make it easy for us. We fall again and again, many times second.

Family Prayer:

We think and pray for families and family members who suffer the consequences of addictions of any kind. The addiction to alcohol, gambling, drugs, pornography, social websites, phones, television, cigarettes, shopping, and so many more. Through those addictions and other challenges we fall time and time again. We think of those who cannot get up again. Help them Lord and help all of us face up to our problems.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



8th Station – The Women of Jerusalem meet Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

'Do not weep for me, but for yourselves and for your children.' (Lk 23:28)

Reflection:

Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus could empathise with the sufferings of another. People were downtrodden by the Scribes and Pharisees, women considered second class, the sick and the poor were left to die. Jesus in his encounters with the downtrodden gave them hope.

Family Prayer:

When we choose to follow the poor carpenter of Nazareth guess what you'll get? You will get acceptance and respect for standing up for your faith and belief. You will be abused and ridiculed because you are saying to the world we can do better than what's on offer. The message of Christ is one of life. Family is the place of life. May we continue to witness to the life Christ brings in our homes, the workplace, in schools and universities to believers and non-believers alike.

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



9th Station – Jesus Falls the Third Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

‘Be not far from me for I am in distress; be near, for I have no one to help me.’ (Ps 22:12)

Reflection:

The road to the hill of Calvary gets increasingly difficult. The weight of the cross gets heavy and more difficult to carry. Bodily weakness, shedding blood and sweat make His body weak. He can’t go on much longer, surely? How long more will this go on for? Yet, He continues to carry the cross despite the third fall.

Family Prayer:

Life and family can be so hard at times the weight can be overwhelming. We don’t have the strength or the spirit to go on. There are so many pressures that present themselves day in day out. It’s a rat race, you have to be in the fast lane to get on. I don’t have the time to sit and reflect. I’m constantly chasing after myself. And as for the children, they zap me of energy. It’s easy to switch on the television and get them out of my way. And despite it all you have to keep going, for the family and the children.

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!



10th Station – Jesus is Stripped

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

‘They divided up His garments by rolling dice for them to see what each should take.’ (Mk 15:24)

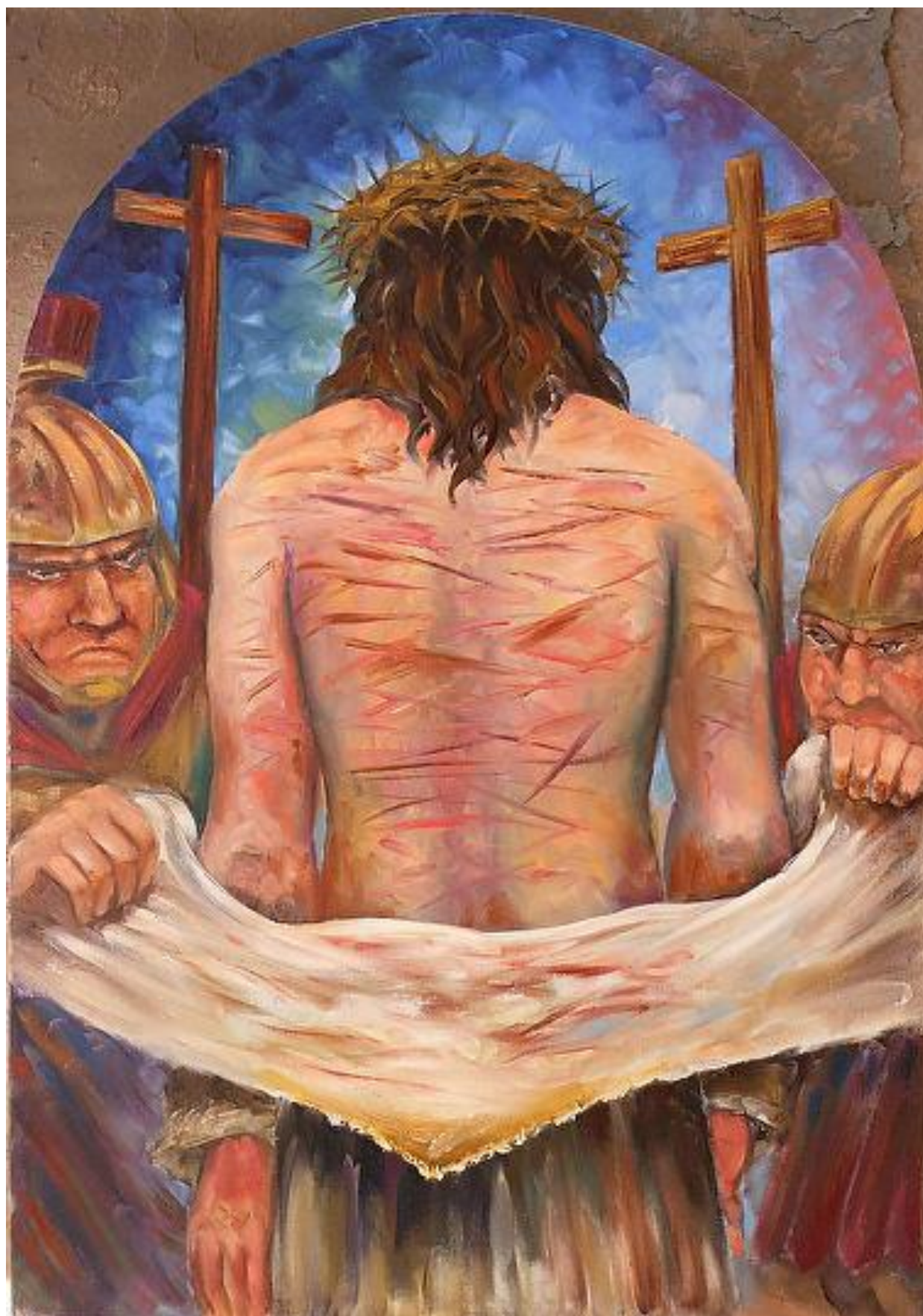
Reflection:

There will come a day when what we have will be separated from us. Nothing we own belongs to us permanently. All we possess is just a passing luxury. Lord, help us to realise that someday our possessions will be divided up. May we be generous with what we have and help us to share our gifts.

Family Prayer:

Bless all our young people who are the future of Church and society. Bless all the young people in our families, and circle of love and care. Help them to use their talents so that others will benefit. Be with them in the decisions they make in life, and may what they do and say show the world the presence of God. Bless them in their vocations. Help them to stand against the attacks on family and life. Give them the wisdom to seek what really brings fulfilment. Help them to build a whole new generation of courageous Christians.

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!



11th Station – Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

‘With Him they crucified two insurgents, one at His right and one at His left.’ (Mk 15:27)

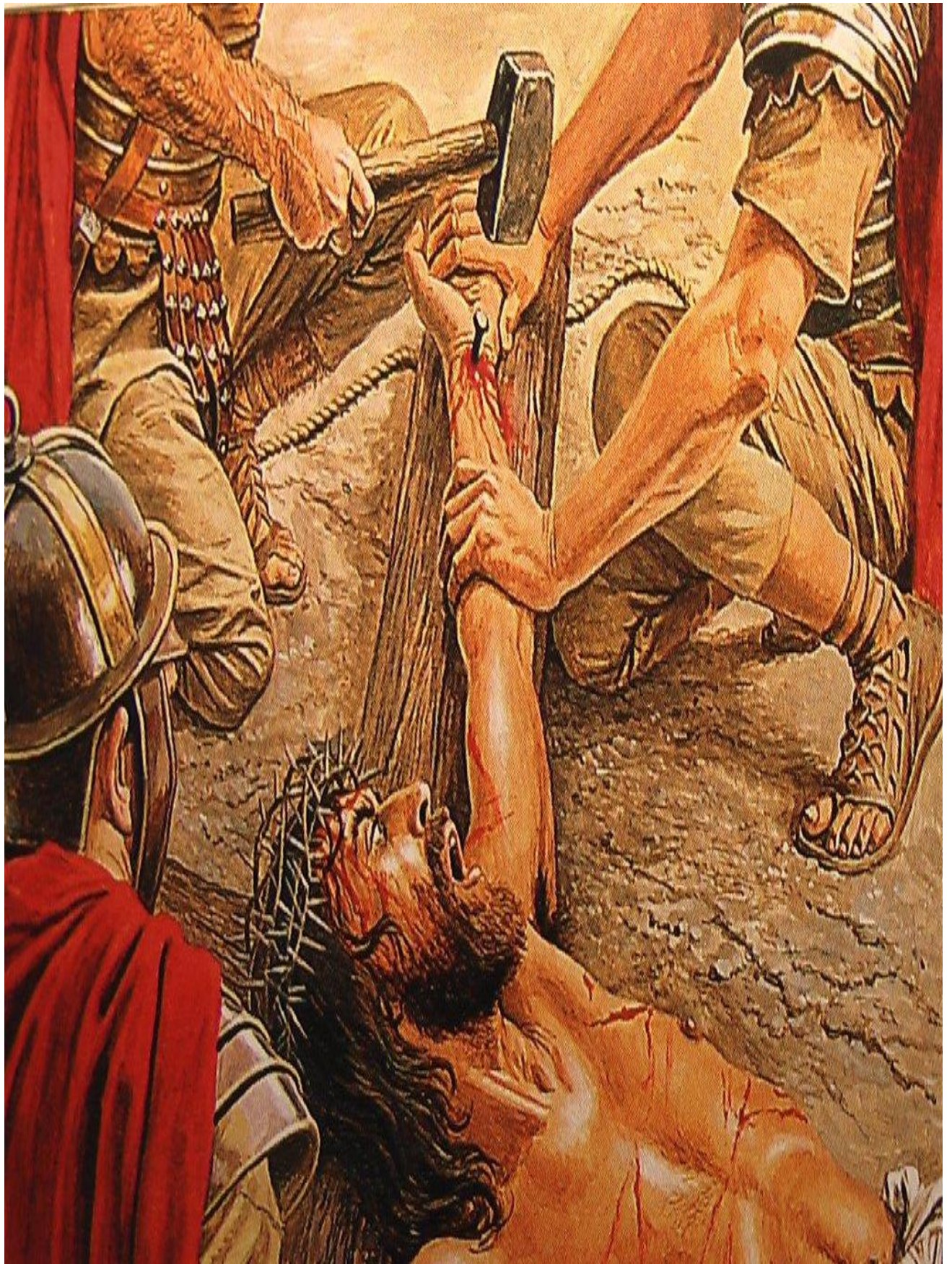
Reflection:

We know what it’s like to be given an injection. We don’t know what it feels like to have nails hammered into our hands. We cringe at the thought of it, the pain, the anguish. Christ knew the pain of being nailed to the cross.

Family Prayer:

We think and pray for those families in deep distress: Parents crying for their dying child in a hospital; children in distress watching their parents go through a divorce or separation; broken relationships; parents who have lost their children because of an addiction, or in prison; children who have lost a parent due to a mental illness; parents who have lost their unborn babies and families who have lost their loved one in war. The nails of the Cross of Christ continue to resonate in the daily experiences of people. Lord give us strength

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!



12th Station – Jesus Dies on the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

'Then Jesus uttering a loud cry, breathed His last Eloi Eloi, lama sabachtani.' (Mk 15:37)

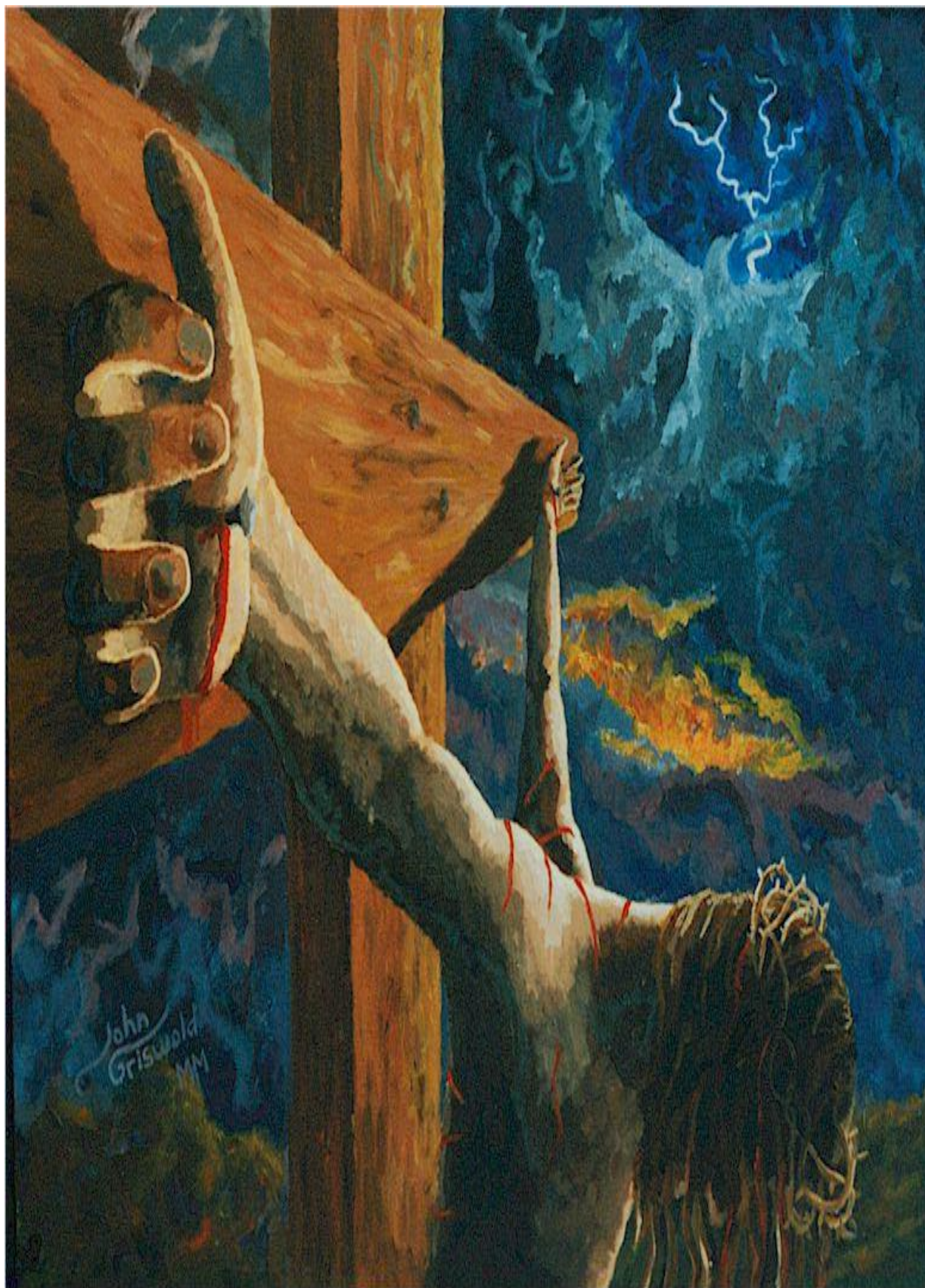
Reflection:

There will be a moment in time when we will close our eyes to this world, and open them to life with the Father in heaven. Death comes to visit us all. Death is part of being human. Death calls us from this world to the eternal vision of Christ. The mystery of death marries us to the mystery of life. Help us to appreciate our lives, so we can be prepared when God calls us home.

Family Prayer:

We all have the privileged experience of being with a loved one when they have closed their eyes to this world. The mystery of life and the mystery of death. We don't like death, death changes everything, it numbs and pains us. Family is changed forever. Where they are gone we hope to follow. May our final breath to this world bring the loud cry 'I am the Resurrection and Life'

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



13th Station – Jesus is Taken from the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**And a sword will pierce through your own soul
(Lk 2:35)**

Reflection:

Christ's death is the final proof of His humanity. Unless He was human, he could not have died. "Ours were the sufferings He bore."

Family Prayer:

We experience the hours after the death of a loved one. The journey home with silent tears. Reflecting and praying that they are in a better place. Recalling could we have done things differently. Weighting it up and working it out. But to no avail. Then planning and arranging the funeral for neighbours and friends to pay their respects and recall the memories. The wake, the removal, and the funeral Mass are reminders that in sadness God walks with us 'it was then I carried you.' O Mary, as you took your dead son from the cross, may your strength be our strength, may your tears and prayer be our tears and prayer. 'Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.'

'Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.' Amen!



14th Station – Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

‘Joseph of Arimathea laid Him in a tomb, and rolled a stone across the entrance.’ (Mk 15:46)

Reflection:

Christ’s lifeless body is laid to rest. The King of the universe, laid in a borrowed tomb.

Family Prayer:

“The King of the universe, laid in a borrowed tomb”!
We take them to their place of rest beside loved ones who have gone before them marked with the sign of faith. They are now with loved ones looking over us. We sadly, lovingly and respectfully lower their coffin into the soil of the earth: ‘From dust you came and from dust you return’. The echo of the Church’s burial rites: ‘Bless this grave and send your holy angels to watch over it’. The angels will take care of them, while we pick up the pieces and try and move on. ‘One day we shall meet them again, when the love of Christ which conquers all things, destroys death itself’.

We depart in silence, they are gone, but live in our minds and hearts forever!

‘Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.’ Amen!

