

Jesus' Way of Suffering

Meditation on the
Via Dolorosa

Day 1: 6th April 2020

Stations 1 & 2

Prayer:

God our Heavenly Father, in the name of Christ Jesus, I surrender the following moments to you. Your love is so deep and wide, your ways higher than man's ways and your thoughts higher than our thoughts. As I wander down this via dolorosa meditatively, may your Holy Spirit give me light so that I can understand the suffering heart of Jesus and be able to see myself on this journey. Enable me to be willing to carry my own cross to follow the Lord. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

Rev Dr Niam Kai Huey

Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death

Text:

¹When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ² And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²² Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³ And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." ²⁵ And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

~Matthew 27:1-2,11-14,20-26 (ESV)

Meditation:

Jesus stood in front of Pilate, silent, refuse any effort to defend himself...

This is a life-and-death battle between Jesus and the fallen world. Representing the world, Pilate threw a gauntlet at Jesus.

Which side are you on? Under who's banner will you choose to stand? To endorse the world is to condemn Jesus; to endorse Jesus means to will to be condemned together with Him...

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Enable me not to drift along with the rest of the world. I long to simply belong to You, to follow You. Even if it means being persecuted for righteousness, to be condemned

by the world like You, I shall not flinch and shrink back!

I understand:

One cannot serve two masters. You alone are the Lord of my life. Amen.



Station 2: Jesus Carries His Cross

Text:

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion[e] before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

~Matthew 27:27-31 (ESV)

Meditation:

Pilate handed Jesus over and allowed the soldiers to trample on Him. Jesus quietly bore with everything...

With the love for the people in the world, Jesus bore your sins and mine. To Golgotha, He carried the cross with the weight of the debt of human sin across his breast...

Look at the image of Jesus and feel the weight of your sin now upon Him...

No longer will I run away from my own cross: It is no longer the price of sin or the accusations of the old me, but it is for the sake of the gospel, for God's Kingdom and righteousness that I want to carry the cross. This is because I have new life when I placed my trust in Jesus.

Prayer:

O my Lord! I want to be your disciple. Help me that I may continually deny myself, take up my cross and follow Your footsteps. Amen.



Station 3: Jesus fell for the first time

Text:

¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

~John 19:17 (ESV)

Meditation:

Covered in bruises and gashes, Jesus bore the cross on His own to Golgotha! Physically inadequate, He fell down...

Jesus did not conceal his limitations and weaknesses as being of flesh and blood. He was interrogated through the night, endured humiliation and whipping, his skin was torn, his flesh a-gaping, fresh blood flowed down...

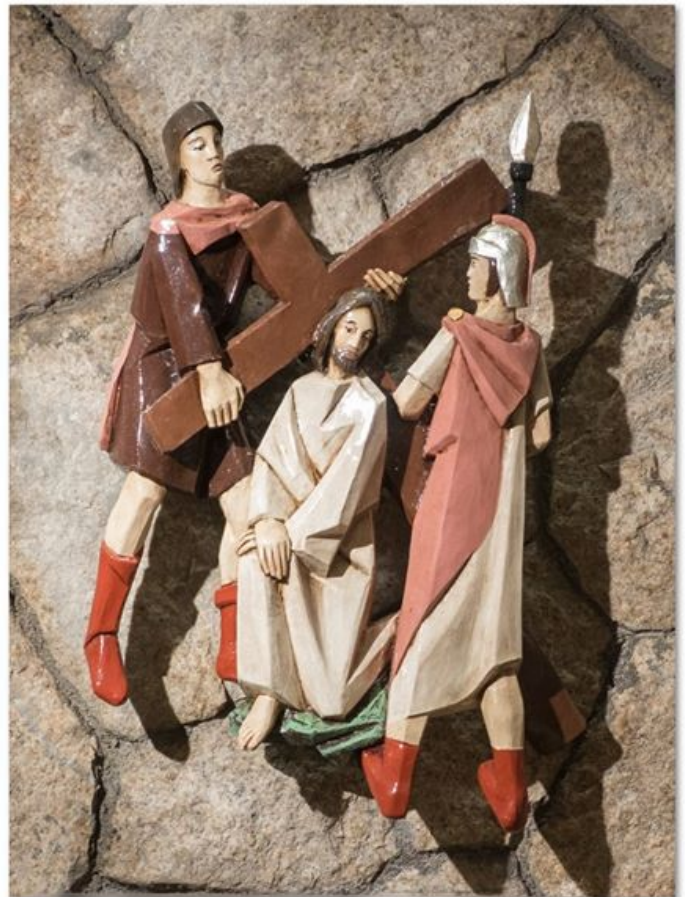
he was exhausted, and dragging the heavy cross, he fell onto the ground in the sight of the crowd...

Have I experienced what it is like not to be able to take another step, or have I experienced being embarrassed in front of a crowd? Have I been shamed? Utterly helpless? Indignant? Jesus experienced them, He understands, He identifies with us, He even bore on His shoulders the negative consequences of our human weakness and limitation.

He fell onto the ground, He fell on our behalf at the very same time.

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Whenever I feel close to giving up and falling because of my weakness, turn my mind's eye to take in this scene. Enable me to continue following you till the end with renewed strength. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 4: Jesus meets His mother

Text:

¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they
are no more."

~Matthew 2:17-18 (ESV)

Meditation:

While bearing the cross on His way to the execution, Jesus met his mother.

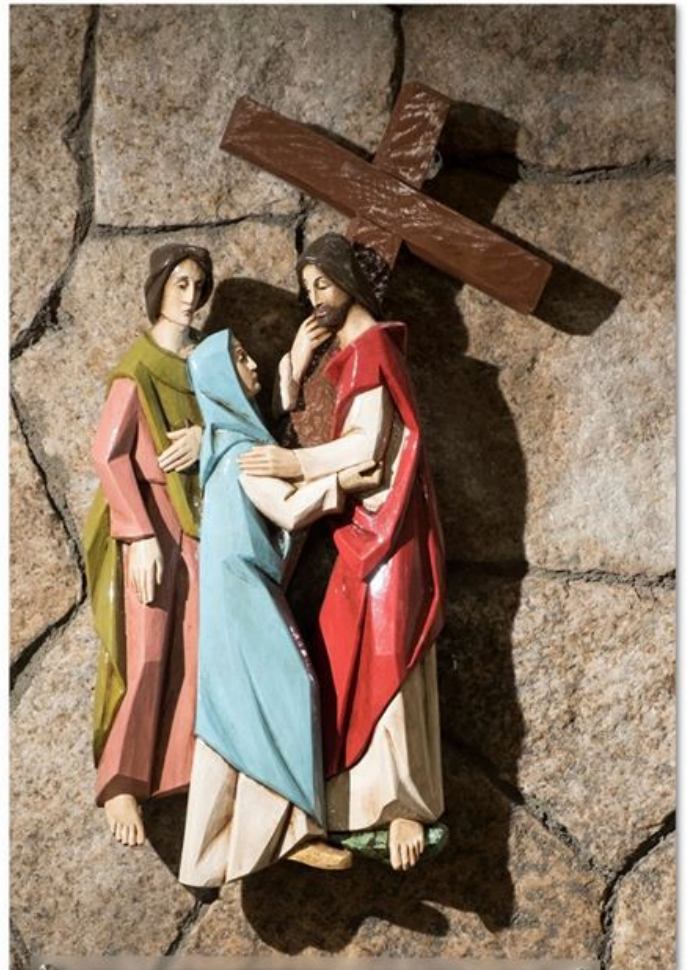
The suffering of Jesus and the sorrow of Mary were interlaced together...

Mary personally witnessed the ruptures on Jesus' flesh, the weight of the wooden contraption, his tottering steps as he pushed forward on his journey. As His mother, she was cut to the heart, and she wept...

Imagine Jesus passing by in front of you.
Looking at this scene, how do you feel?

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! I beg you to turn my heart of stone into a heart of compassion, so that I can be concerned over what brings you concern and rejoice in what brings you joy.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

Text:

²¹ And they compelled a passer by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

~Mark 15:21 (ESV)

Meditation:

Jesus staggered along as his steps began to falter. Observing that Jesus would have great difficulty proceeding on the journey, one soldier forced a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, to carry Jesus' cross.

The path to the cross which Jesus took, languished both His spirit and soul. However, He did not pretend to be strong or that He could overcome it alone. He accepted the help of others to bear the cross for Him the rest of the way!

In this arduous and painstaking work of redemption, God has given human beings the privilege of participation. If Jesus wants to be the Redeemer of the world, He needs others to bear the cross along with him. Some people are forced into doing it, others do it willingly.

Which am I?

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Help me to be willing to suffer with you, so that when I suffer for your sake, I will still have sweetness in my heart. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 6: Jesus falls for the second time

Text:

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.

~Luke 23:26 (ESV)

Meditation:

Jesus fell again. Although Simon had already carried His cross and followed him from behind, He was totally exhausted!

Jesus' body, soul and spirit was put through a severe torment! The persons who followed him on weekdays, had turned their backs on him. Judas betrayed him. Peter denied knowing him. Herod and Pilate castigated and taunted him. The hostile masses insulted him. The Roman soldiers continually riled at him...

We experience exhaustion at times when our body, soul and spirit mind are totally impoverished. We also cry out: "Why do I even live?! Is there value in my life? Who am I busying myself for?"

Jesus fell down to bear these sufferings with us. He wants us to know that his fall and our falls are the authentic portions of that journey to the cross. In the face of setbacks, feeling emotionally exhausted is not a dead end.

After Jesus fell to the ground, he stood up again and continued to go to Golgotha.

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Help me to draw strength from you after each fall and stand up once more. Let me understand that the journey has to go on, right to its very end. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 7: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Text:

²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'

~Matthew 2:17-18 (ESV)

Meditation:

The women of Jerusalem followed Jesus all the way, wailing as they went along. They were used to crying for prisoners consigned to death and giving them some analgesic drinks to manage their pain.

While the numbers who wailed were many, the true followers who accompanied Jesus were sadly too few on this road of suffering!

It is no wonder that Jesus turned to them and said, " Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children..." Jesus was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and all the consequential strife and violence that came upon mankind.

If we are to mourn for Jesus, we must mourn the miserable human beings that Jesus wants to heal and redeem. If we are truly saddened by the sufferings and pains of his suffering, we need to embrace all the suffering people in the present world in it too.

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Once upon a time, you wept for Jerusalem, you wept for our world, let our tears lead us closer to your very heart. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 8: Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Text:

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

~Hebrews 4:15-16 (ESV)

Meditation:

Jesus staggered along as his steps began to falter. Observing that Jesus would have great difficulty proceeding on the journey, one soldier forced a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, to carry Jesus' cross.

The path to the cross which Jesus took, languished both His spirit and soul. However, He did not pretend to be strong or that He could overcome it alone. He accepted the help of others to bear the cross for Him the rest of the way!

In this arduous and painstaking work of redemption, God has given human beings the privilege of participation. If Jesus wants to be the Redeemer of the world, He needs others to bear the cross along with him. Some people are forced into doing it, others do it willingly.

Which am I?

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Help me to be willing to suffer with you. Let my heart experience the sweetness when I suffer for your sake. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 9: Jesus is stripped of His clothes

Text:

²² And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).

²⁴ And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

~Mark 15:22, 24 (ESV)

Meditation:

Jesus was stripped of his clothes, deprived of power and dignity. Denuded, His naked body brings into the open the countless number of people who had to endure contempt and humiliation in various forms in our world. Jesus identifies with those who suffer and are oppressed; Jesus endured our suffering.

Everything was snatched away from to encourage us to embrace our own poverty and the poverty of our humanity. It dares us to take fame and worldly possessions lightly.

Jesus said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." (Luke 9:24)

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Let me not be afraid of being deprived, enable me to take worldly fame and gain lightly. Thank you enduring everything for my sake. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 10: Jesus is nailed to the cross

Text:

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

~Luke 23:33-34 (ESV)

Meditation:

The hammer came down, and the nail pierced through the flesh and bone of Jesus. Fresh blood flowed, the pain, excruciating. . .

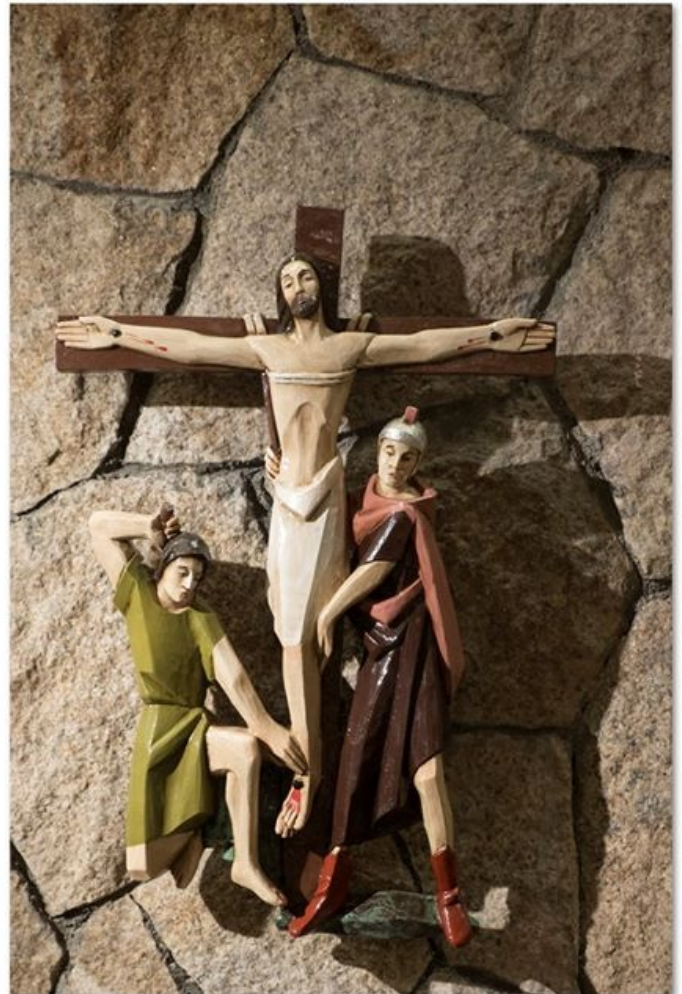
Jesus was crucified on the cross, between two prisoners, he died only three hours later. . .

The onlookers sneered at Jesus and said, "... save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matthew 27:40)

Jesus did not retaliate, nor did He turn the table around. Instead, he willingly bore your sins and mine silently, endured the pain of crucifixion without bitterness or resentment in His heart. What he was concerned about was not his own misfortune but rather the relationship between humanity and the heavenly Father: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Prayer:

O Father! Forgive us. Sometimes we actually nailed Jesus to the cross again! Let the prayer of Jesus come into force in our lives right now: " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 11: Jesus dies on the cross

Text:

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

~Luke 23:44-46 (ESV)

Meditation:

With a loud shout, Jesus breathed his last. . . .

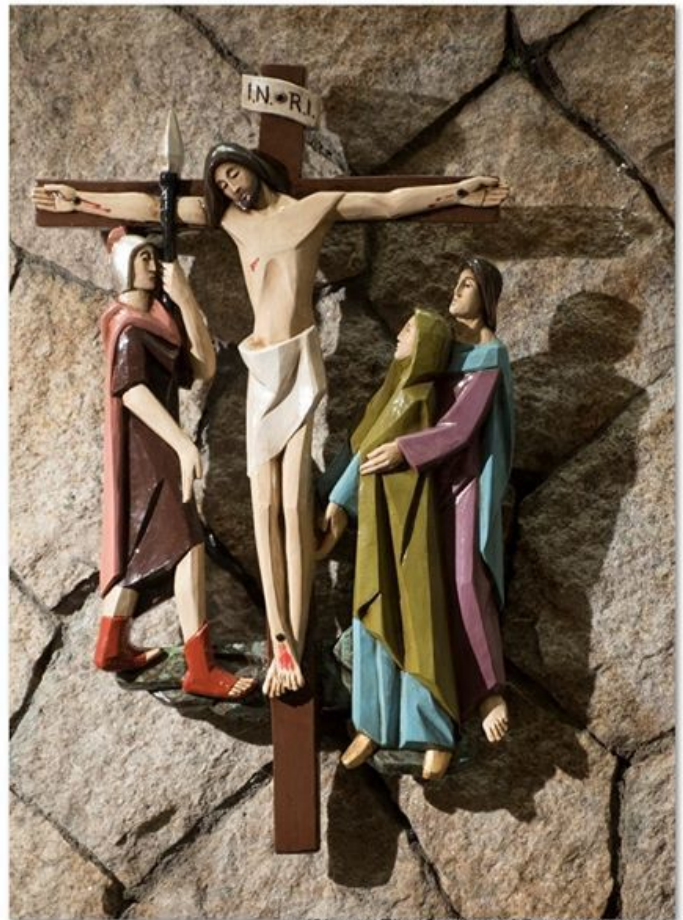
The loud cry that Jesus let out before He died, was not a hysterical one, nor one of grievance or injustice. He used his last breath in order to give voice to His last prayer: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"

Jesus presented life as a total gift to the Lord of life. Death is not the ultimate winner. The death of Jesus conquered all the powers of death, to "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:15).

In the face of the death of Jesus, how can I revisit the issue of death and life?

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Enable me to consider myself dead when I confront sin and the world. When I turn my face to Jesus Christ, who died for me, let me see myself alive. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 12: Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross

Text:

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. ⁴⁶ And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud...

~Mark 15:44-46 (ESV)

Meditation:

When the body of Jesus was taken down, his mother, Mary, was also there.

Mary held the breathless body of Jesus close to her breast. Silently, she gazed at her son, softly, shedding tears...

Many years before, when Simeon took Jesus from her, still wrapped in swaddling clothes, he had spoken a prophecy to her: "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also" (Luke 2:35). At this moment, the prophecy had come to pass as she held her son in her arms once more.

To face the death of a loved one (especially one's flesh and blood), to experience the separation brought about by death... who wouldn't be cut to the heart?!

However, this is not the end. Death is not the terminal point...

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! For the salvation of the people in the world, you really died on the cross. When we are faced with death, when we bid goodbye to the body of an old acquaintance, enable me to firmly believe that death is only a passageway and not a terminal point. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 13: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Text:

⁵³ Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

~Luke 23:53-56 (ESV)

Meditation:

The body of Jesus was laid in a tomb that no one had used before. In that darkened and silent tomb, he was the only one laid there... alone. A big stone was rolled in place at the entrance, to seal the tomb.

This was a sabbath day.

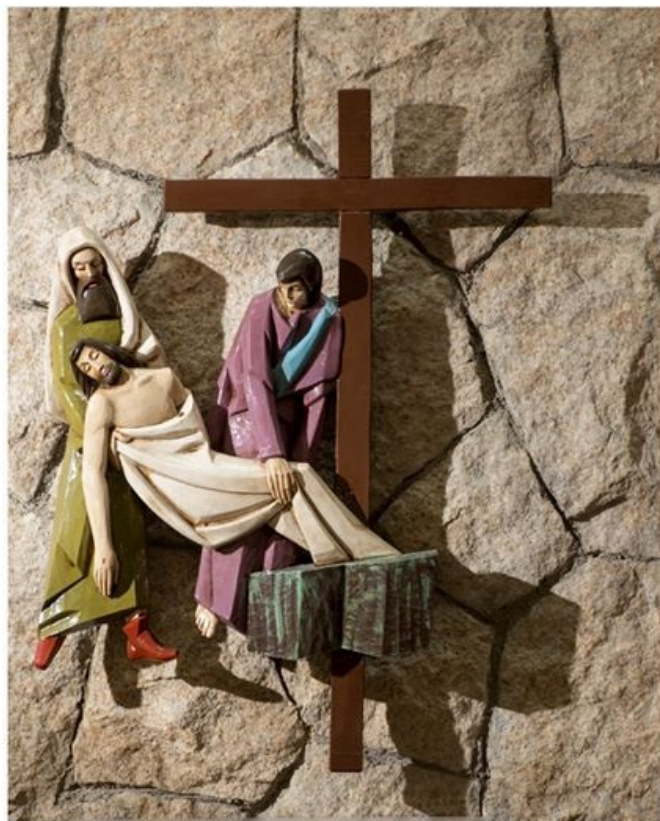
The stillness of the sabbath revolved around the burial of Jesus in the tomb. "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation." (Gen 2:2-3)

When Jesus had completed the mission that the heavenly Father had sent him into the world to do, he laid in the tomb quietly and rested.

Jesus rested at last. In the same manner, we need to accept that the day will come when we will also cease from our labours and rest on Jesus' breast.

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! No matter what we accomplish or fail to accomplish with our lives, help us to be connected to that sabbath day, where Jesus was buried inside the tomb, awaiting to make all things new after that sabbath day. Enable us to understand the true meaning of sabbath rest. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

Station 14: Jesus is Resurrected from the Dead!

Text:

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.

~Matthew 28:1-6 (ESV)

Meditation:

In the lifeless burial cave, Jesus spent a quiet sabbath. Unexpected things happened, and startling words went out from here:

"He (Jesus) is not here; for he has risen, as he said!"

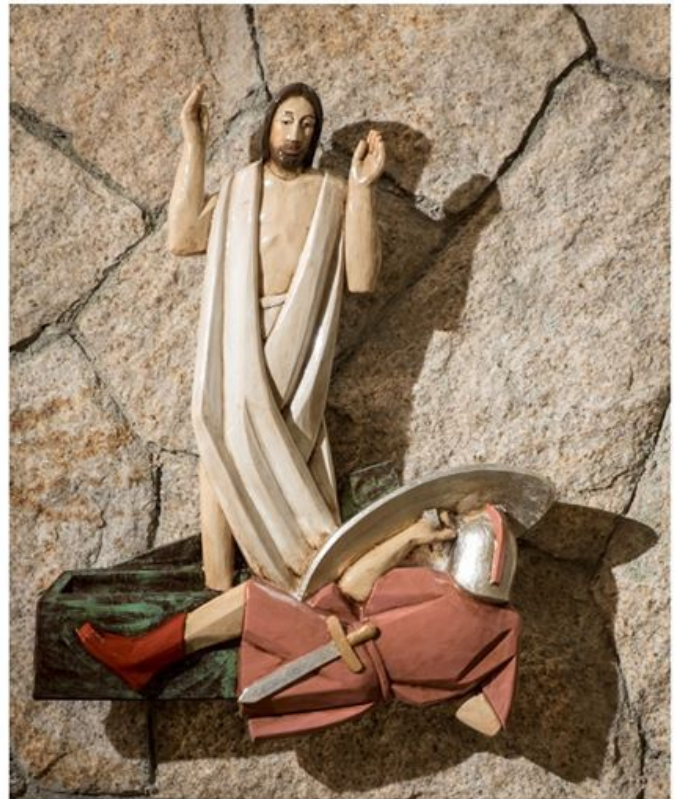
This is the first day of the week. This is God's new creation. When God created the heavens and the earth on the first day, God said, "'Let there be light' and there was light." (Gen 1:3). Now God sent his messenger to announce His new creation: Jesus has risen from the dead, conquered death and has become the Last Adam. "Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (1 Cor 15:45)

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

Thanks be to God, since Jesus is the Lord of the Resurrection, in Christ, we are new creations: The old has passed away; behold, the new has come! (2 Cor 5:17)

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus! Thank you for accomplishing all these things for me and everyone in the world. I am willing to live my entire life as a new man in you. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Amen.



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)

End of "Jesus Way of Suffering*" Affirmation of Faith

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our
Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under
Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was
buried. He descended to the dead. On the
third day, He rose again. He ascended to
Heaven and is seated at the right hand of
the Father. He will come again to judge the
living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic
church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and
life everlasting.
Amen.

**Via Dolorosa*



(Photo: The Garden of Remembrance)