

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS 2004

## INTRODUCTION

### Public Introduction

Many people associate their faith and their religion with a building such as a mosque, a temple, a church or a synagogue.

With this outdoor or public Way of the Cross, we wish to show that this is not always so. In fact worship within walls is a very small part of our daily living of our faith.

We in the Catholic tradition of the Christian faith take this great day in the calendar, Good Friday, as a commemoration of the death of our Saviour Jesus following his suffering and his crucifixion. We use the Way of the Cross in a very special way to relate his sufferings and death to the sufferings in the world around us.

Around us, and in every city, are our neighbours. They are not just the people who live close to us. In this small world, there are so many neighbours, and so many hurting.

Also when we think of loving our neighbours, too often it is in an emergency and it for those people close to us. The Social teachings of the Catholic Church ask us to do much more. First we have to be sensitized or educated. It comes as a call to prayer and each place at which we stop to pray is an opportunity to reflect on issues and the many people crying out for justice and peace.

Prayer leads to discernment , and to take action to effect permanent change.

Each year different groups are invited to lead the reflection and prayer for a station. It is the suggestion of some participants that the reflection and prayer be placed on the website.

### ***The First Station – Restorative Justice***

Rev. Ed Hilchey, Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy

Theme: Restorative Justice

#### *Reflection:*

The Message of the Cross is truly a message of RESTORATIVE JUSTICE! About 2000 years ago Jesus Christ stood before the **courthouse** of His day. In fact, He was the subject of a **wrongful conviction**, having suffered a **malicious prosecution** with **trumped up charges**. And because of that, He walked the Way of the Cross, the Via Delarosa.

Yet we are told that Jesus went to the cross **willingly**, and on his accord! It was a death He freely accepted as the will of His Father. He claimed that nobody had authority to take His life from Him, but the Son of Man had authority to lay it down, and indeed authority to take it back up again (John 10: 17-18).

**Here is restorative justice:** that Christ died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust in order to bring us to God (1 Pet 3:18)! In fact, the Cross is the foundation for all conflict resolution, offering the reconciliation of all things! In the truest sense of the word, Jesus' death was an **ATONING SACRIFICE!** The Way of the Cross offers **RECONCILIATION** between parties separated by conflict, due to the human condition of selfishness. That kind of conflict resolution goes beyond simple justice to restorative justice!

**As we stand in front of our courthouse,** we are not gathered in protest of our system, but in a prayerful vigil for restorative justice. When people come to this courthouse to appeal to the law, we pray for them to experience Restorative Justice! The goal of Restorative Justice is not simply to pay back and make things even. The goal is to heal what has been harmed! To pay back what has been taken, and to offer reconciliation to relationships that are broken!

**Crime then, is not seen as a violation of the Law,** but a violation of relationships. Not a violation against the state, or against the Queen, but against fellow members of society! That violation needs healing! That is just what the message of the Cross offers! Only in the Cross do mercy and justice meet, and only there do "justice and peace kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10). It is our model for restorative justice!

### **1 Peter 2:21-25**

After all, God chose you to suffer as you follow in the footsteps of Christ, who set an example by suffering for you. Christ did not sin or ever tell a lie. Although he was abused, he never tried to get even. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he had faith in God, who judges fairly. Christ carried the burden of our sins. He was nailed to the cross, so that we would stop sinning and start living right. By his cuts and bruises, you are healed. You had wandered away like sheep. Now you have returned to the One who is your shepherd and protector.

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD!

**Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for the Restorative Justice made possible through your atoning sacrifice!** Thank you for Your grace, that though You were rich, yet for our sake you became poor, so that we, through Your poverty, might experience riches of the Kingdom of God! (2 Cor. 8:9)

**We pray.....**

- for the broken relationships in our world caused by crime and human selfishness;
- for healing of the brokenness between victims and offenders;
- for penitence in our Penitentiaries;
- for healing of the brokenness in our society and culture;
- for healing of the brokenness in our families.

For the healing You offer by way of the Cross, we give you thanks, through Christ our Lord.  
**AMEN**

## ***The Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross***

Brian Zimmer, St. Paul's Hospital

Theme: Health Care

“Though Jesus was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.”  
(Philippians 2:6-7)

### *Reflection:*

From the moment we are conceived in the mind and heart of God, and in our mother's womb, our health of body and soul, spirit and flesh, is a gift beyond imagining. Nurturing our health requires an interdependent relationship with our God, our community and our world. When we suffer illness, we experience a foreshadowing of that final illness when we pass from this world to the next. This is truly a cross that we carry. Let us give thanks for the compassionate touch and technical skills of health care professionals and for the caring members of our community and family who nurture us into healing and wholeness. We are thankful for the resources we enjoy that promote our health: the food we eat, the clean water we drink, and the peaceful country in which we live. We thirst for a time when every person might enjoy these gifts.

### LET US PRAY:

Loving God, we thirst for wholeness and health. May we be inspired by your ministry of healing. When we are ill, may we experience your presence in the hands of those who care for us and accompany us. When we are well, may our own compassion touch others, for you have no hands in this world but ours.

Strengthen all our health care workers with your kindness and gentleness, be they medical professionals, support staff, or spiritual caregivers.

Give us the wisdom and generosity we need to share what we have with a world in need. Guide us each day so that in all our actions, thoughts and words, no matter the weight of our own cross, we may be instruments of your healing power.

## ***The Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time Under the Weight of the Cross***

Inter Church Uranium Committee

Theme: Truth in Media

“He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him of no account”  
(Isaiah 53).

### *Reflection:*

As we stand in front of this building, we are called to remember how our local newspaper has fallen into corporate hands. Symbolically, the *Star Phoenix* represents modern media: be it written, spoken, or televised.

In our world of corporate domination and takeovers we ask ourselves what is the purpose of media. Is it to manipulate the public? Is it to massage the masses into a passive acceptance of the inevitability of globalization, of jobs before environmental safety, of big box and corporate domination, of sensationalism? Is the media a vehicle of moral de-sensitization where scandal, pornography and violence are entertainment? Is it simply a means to convince us that all our wants are needs? Is the media a vehicle of mass manipulation at the disposal of political parties, government agencies and corporate interests?

Has the media become a corporate instrument to assure the public that there is nothing to worry about despite the indisputable fact that our food is becoming increasingly contaminated, the air we breathe is polluted, and the water we drink has to be boiled? Can we really believe what we are told, for example: “No immediate danger”... “Toxins spilled, released, sprayed, or left as waste ‘are below acceptable limits’.”

Why is the last word given to industry when reporting environmental and labor concerns? Why is the last word given to nuclear advocates and military strategists whenever they are challenged?

Knowing, in a general way, that newspapers and other media contain both true and false statements, the ‘public’ is left to sort things out according to whatever they want or are able to hear. **“Truth becomes the victim.”**

LET US PRAY:

Jesus You told us “I am the Way, the **Truth** and the Life.” Just as you were despised, rejected and held of no account by those in power, so even now those who control information hide their faces from truth or hide the truth from us. We ask those entrusted to work in the media to be given the strength of the Holy Spirit to pick themselves up, and to speak the truth, just as you did Lord Jesus after you fell under the weight of your cross. Lord Jesus, may we also be enabled to discern the truth in what we see, hear and read in the media.

### ***The Fourth Station: Love is Stronger than Death*** (Song of Songs)

Nutana Park Mennonite

Theme: Peacekeeping

#### *Reflection:*

Love is stronger than death, for love never ends. True love cares for both victim and oppressor, and death is seen as a premature response to reconciliation. To deal death in the name of peace, is to cut short the possibilities whereby love can transform.

Loving the enemy means that neither the enemy nor death’s threat can control or dictate our response; love remains, for it is stronger than death. Retaliation, fear of death, allows the other to shape and to control our actions; love permits us to act freely, with the transforming act of grace of Jesus himself. For Love is stronger than death.

LET US PRAY:

Lord Jesus Christ, who faced death and the temptation to deal death to others, may the strong love that walked you fearlessly in a hostile community that overcame the hatred of that community's agents, may that love impel us into a broken and warring world, bringing hope to others and a witness to the powers. For love is stronger than death. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

### ***The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross***

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism –

Theme: Celebrating our Faith

From Galations, chapter 6 verse 2: “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

#### *Reflection:*

Among Christians there is a common sign – a strange, marvelous sign that is known around the world, understood by all Christians, no matter their denomination, their nationality, their language. All of us know and value this sign. We carry it today: the Sign of the Cross.

The cross is the symbol of the suffering love of God. Under the sign of the cross we are all brothers and sisters – with the same needs and hopes. We have one God, one Baptism, one Faith.

Jesus falls and the soldiers conscript a stranger, Simon, for they see that this time Jesus can't continue without help. With Simon *we* reach out to help carry the cross. We gather around Jesus who is powerless and defenseless. His weakness is visible. He began as a helpless and dependent child, and now completes his earthly journey again in total dependency. He waits. Simon cannot stop the pain, but he can help Jesus by carrying the cross. He may not have wanted to; he may have been forced to. But the truth is that Jesus needed him. Jesus could not go on alone.

What happens when we cannot go on alone? Are we willing to allow someone else to help us carry our cross? Are we willing to be touched in our weakness, admitting that we are no longer in control of our own destinies? Do we dare ask for help to admit our own helplessness?

It is important that we know ourselves to be weak and in need of others' help. It is in weakness that maturity grows. It is in acknowledging our weakness together that our community understands how we may reach out to others in need. In weakness there is strength. In weakness a new community can emerge – a fellowship of the weak, strong in relying on the Spirit, strong in trusting one another. In weakness we celebrate the one faith that allows us to become a people of hope for a broken world.

Come, let us bear one another's burdens, allowing ourselves to be touched and healed, then offering that healing to our broken world.

LET US PRAY:

Loving God, teach us to trust others to help us. May each of us also reach out and care for our brothers and sisters who are in pain or trouble. Thank you for becoming human, and for suffering with us. Amen

### ***The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus***

Students – University Campus Ministry

Theme: Family Life

“Your face Lord do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.” (Psalm 27:8-9)

*Reflection:*

Many of our families suffer from the effects of addictions – gambling, substance abuse, consumerism, pornography. We thirst for what destroys us, and lust for what tears us apart. In our hopelessness we strike out in anger, but feel powerless to change our lives. Sometimes we are forced to flee for the safety of our own lives, and for the future of our children. And all the while, we witness those who would profit from our misery.

LET US PRAY:

Merciful God, in their suffering many of our families and loved ones bear the image of your crucified Son. May we, like Veronica, be present to those who suffer from addictions, and offer them our support and assistance. And may your Spirit give us the strength to overcome our own addictions, and be reconciled and healed through your Son. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen

### ***The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time***

Youth Drop In Centre

Theme Youth: How is the voice of youth being heard.

“My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaw; you lay me in the dust of death.” Psalm 22: 15

*Reflection*

We are surrounded, indeed overwhelmed, by the burdens of poverty. None more so than the youth of our world. We expect them to be adults, yet we are not willing to give them a part of an adult world of work and responsibility. They spill on to the street bringing them a world of gang violence.

Here at the youth drop in centre gather those who seek a place of comfort and relaxation, a place for food, warmth and companionship. A place where they can be lifted up. A place with a supportive atmosphere for school work and homework.

LET US PRAY:

Lord Jesus, you know well the burdens placed upon yourself by an uncaring society.

You know well how the burdens can be so great that the human body and mind cannot carry on.

But in knowing the Father and in doing His Will, you showed us then and you show us now, that faith will help us to carry the burden of our crosses. Faith will lead to action.

### ***The Eighth Station: Jesus Consols the Women of Jerusalem Who Weep for Him***

Spanish Ministry

Theme: Concern for People in the Third World

“A large number of people followed Him, including women who mourned and wailed for Him. Jesus turned and said to them, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, “Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!” Then they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us”, and to the hills, “Cover us!” For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry? (Luke 23:27-31)

A reading from the prophet Zechariah (12:10): When they look on the One whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child; and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a first born.

#### *Reflection:*

Jesus, as you carry your cross you see a group of women along the road. As you pass by you see they are sad. You stop to spend a moment with them, to offer them some encouragement. Although you have been abandoned by your fiends and are in pain, you stop and try to help them.

Who would be the people whom Christ would console and comfort these days? Those who suffer, those who are hungry, those who are left behind.....

God has created a world rich in resources. Yet more than one billion people (one out of every six people), the majority of them living in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, do not have access to food and clean water. They also lack access to education, health care, and even the right to vote.

Poverty and inequity are a scandal of the first order for any national community. Today God is asking us to do what we celebrate: to share to the utmost of ourselves with others, especially with those with whom Christ himself identifies: the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, and the homeless (Mt. 25:35-46). In third world countries, these are the landless, the exploited, the disadvantaged, and the powerless. These have the single most urgent claim on the conscience of the so-called powerful nations. To opt for them, to share with them is a requirement of the Kingdom of God.

We can learn to practice our faith by keeping our thirst for righteousness before us. We also hunger, not for a morally upright and up-tight world, where we expect everyone to behave self-

righteously, but we hunger and thirst for a world and a human family where justice will be sought and righteousness will prevail.

*Via Crucis 2004, Saskatoon, SK*

### ***The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time***

St. Philip's Parish

Theme: The Lonely/Isolated

“I am now rejoicing in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church.” (Col.1:24)

#### *Reflection:*

As human beings we are created for relationship. If we are not aware of God's loving presence in our lives, and are not nurtured in community, we seek to fill our emptiness in other ways. In our society we are told that to be happy, to be fulfilled, to be satisfied, we must consume, consume, consume – must have the latest technology, the trendiest clothes, the biggest R.V., must follow whoever promises riches, fame, popularity, eternal youth. So we blindly follow -- forgetting those who are isolated from the mainstream, those who long for relationship and have no one to relate to, especially those who are no longer young.

#### LET US PRAY:

O God, lover of the world  
Who holds all creation  
within your compassionate embrace,  
we bring before you  
these people and places that need  
Your healing, loving, transforming presence:  
those whose only community are the strangers whom they sit beside and mingle with in the mall  
the aged who live alone and do not feel a part of any community  
the aged forgotten, except by the staff, in care homes  
those trapped in the isolation of Alzheimer's or related senior dementia  
those who beg on our streets  
those of us who are afraid to reach out of our comfortable communities to the lonely and  
isolated in our midst.

May your healing presence gently transform  
the places of our lives where we hold pain.  
May your loving presence be a comforting reality  
For all those who find themselves  
in despair, lost or alone.  
May your transforming presence  
Create generosity in place of greed  
and community in place of isolation.

O, God, creator and lover of all,  
we pray in the name of the One who  
bears the cross  
transforming us into Resurrection people.

### ***The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of his Garments***

Earthcare Connections

Theme: Farm Crisis

“They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” (Psalm 22: 17-19)

#### *Reflection:*

At the tenth station, Jesus is stripped of his garments. Today, many forces are stripping our farmers from receiving a just income. At this station we (Earthcare Connections) stand with the farmer, with the dispossessed, with the hungry. We declare that there is a loss of dignity – that our food marketing system is failing.

Today in our world, farmers, land and resources are being stripped of their ability to nourish the hungry, and maintain a resource base that will be able to provide for future generations. We need to be reminded of how we have been richly blessed with food, water and land – the gifts of your creation. We need to be reminded that everyone has a right to eat and drink. Give us understanding and wisdom to look upon our brothers and sisters with compassion – the poor, those who have been stripped of the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families. Let us remember how You were treated by the soldiers. Let us remember to care for our brothers and sisters, and our farms.

#### LET US PRAY:

Lord Jesus, may we stand one with You and with the farmers, the hungry and the poor who are condemned to suffering and death. Help us to protect and love all whom You place in our care.

Lord, you were stripped of your garments, but not of your dignity. Please help us to respect the dignity of others, regardless of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

Bless and guide our leaders and oppressors that they may find solutions to the farm problems in light of the globalization of the marketplace.

May the seeds that we plant in Mother Earth bring forth a rich harvest and nourish the world to do the will of God.

### ***The Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross.***

Downtown bingo.

Theme": Poverty

"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Luke 23: 43

#### *Reflection:*

Jesus is at the end of his journey of suffering. He has lost all his freedom and is now being nailed to the cross. The suffering on the Cross, he has yet to endure.

To live in poverty are simple words, but few understand how complex it is to be without money, especially in the attempt to escape from the lifestyle forced upon them.

To live in substandard housing, because the government cheque is not enough. To use money set aside for food to pay for rental accommodation which is not derelict. To be forced to rely on the food bank and the soup kitchen. These are usually all downward steps to more poverty.

Just as Jesus was nailed to the Cross, so too people find themselves nailed to the life of poverty. There is no escape, although some think there is. They are lured into thoughts of getting rich quick. They see the chance of getting rich quickly by resorting to gambling.

But only about 4 percent of any gamblers are winners. Few are winners in the game of chance. Money spent on entertainment denies food to the family as well as safe affordable housing.

#### LET US PRAY:

Jesus who began life as an innocent child in a stable, died for us as if he were a common criminal on the cross.

Help us all, with or without wealth, to learn the values and satisfaction of an unspectacular and ordinary everyday life.

### ***The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross***

Third Avenue Pawn Shop

Theme: Challenges to the First Nations People

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mark 15 .34

#### *Reflection:*

The journey of First Nations People not only here in Canada can be described as that of a forsaken people. These were the first in many countries who learned to live in a sometimes harsh climate and a sometimes harsh land.

As the centuries passed, they have witnessed harsh conditions placed upon them by new peoples in their lives. Disease from new settlers, forced attempts at assimilation, new cultural styles are some of the burdens that have been placed upon these people.

Coming to live in the city has its own burdens and demeaning life styles. No wonder that we and they wonder if they are a forsaken people.

LET US PRAY:

O great and mighty Spirit, as you heard the mournful call for help from the Cross, listen with mercy to your peoples whose lives are so close to a death

***The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken from the Cross and Laid in the Arms of His Mother***

Holy Spirit Parish

Theme: Refugees/Work Opportunities

“Then Mary said: ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word’.” (Luke 1:38)

*Reflection:*

Many people come to Canada looking for refuge from oppression and persecution. They want to enjoy the many benefits that we have here – education, health care, a voice in our government. But they don’t want to do it for free. They want to become contributing members of our society – if we would give them the opportunity. Perhaps they don’t speak English too well, but neither did many of the people who built this country.

LET US PRAY:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your grace and power. Help us to carry the presence of Jesus into the world as Mary did. Inspired by You, she was the first to believe in Jesus, the first to follow Him in love and service. May we follow Mary’s example as we welcome our refugee brothers and sisters to Canada, and offer them a share of the gifts that the Father has given us. Amen

***The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is placed in the Tomb***

St Pauls Roman Catholic Cathedral

Theme: Stewardship

“For if we have been united with him in the death like Him, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” Romans 6.5

*Reflection:*

The organization for overseas aid of the Catholic Church, Development and Peace is one of many agencies that is concerned with the Third World. The people who live there are still our neighbours even though they live thousands of miles away across mountains and oceans.

Furthermore, we are all united through the Cross with people who need help, particularly when we know that we are working alongside people of different faiths. It is both the Crucifixion and the Resurrection that lift us high in the love we have for our neighbour.

LET US PRAY:

Our Saviour and our risen Lord, help us that in contemplating your crucifixion for the atonement of our sins, we may also learn to be part of the sufferings your people and your planet undergo. Only then will we be in solidarity with them and begin to help them to a full life. Only then will we be united in the true joy of your Resurrection.