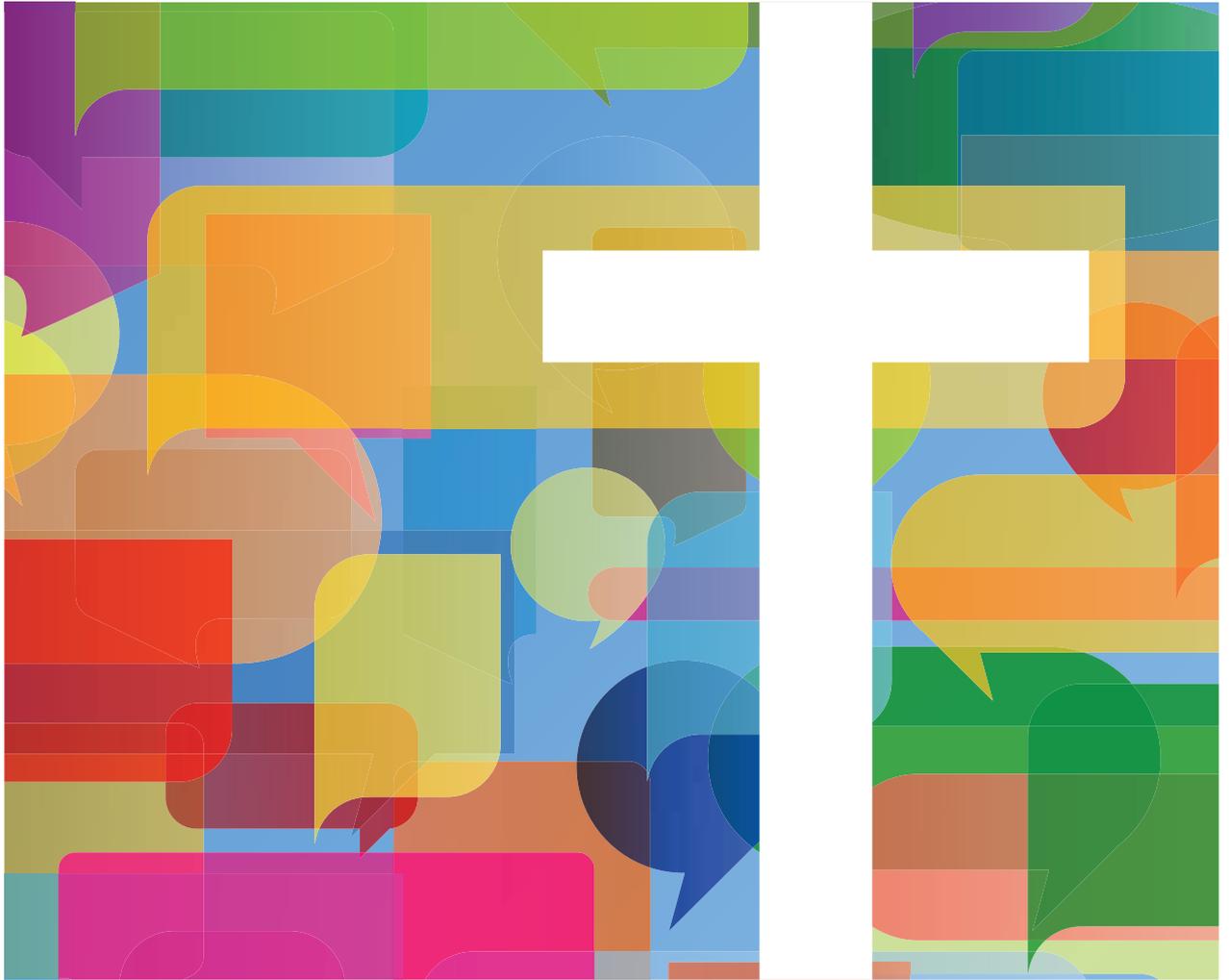


DIOCESE OF OSSORY



Lent Resources

Reflections on The Way of the Cross



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REFLECTIONS ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Choose just 2 or 3 Stations to reflect and focus on. It would be too much to take all of them. 8 reflections are chosen for you to choose from. It works best accompanied by beautiful Taize music.

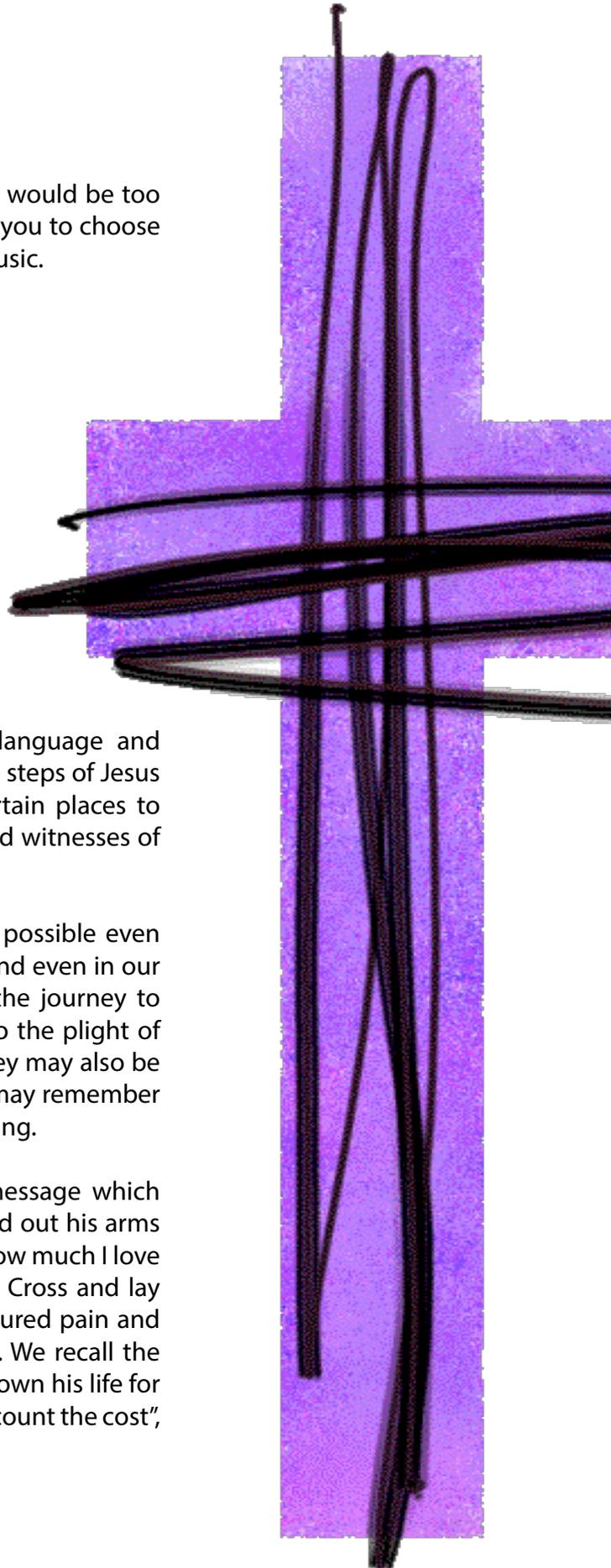
INTRODUCTION

Tradition has it that after the death of Jesus, his mother Mary would often walk the way her son had walked on his last Journey through Jerusalem, carrying his cross. She would pause here and there to recall some of the happenings of that “never to be forgotten” journey. Our Lady had many memories of that day.

Today thousands of people, of every nationality, language and tradition travel as pilgrims to Jerusalem to retrace the steps of Jesus and Mary on the way to Calvary. They pause at certain places to remember some of the details recounted by first hand witnesses of the event.

Apart from the historical aspect of the journey, it is possible even today to see similar pain and suffering in our world and even in our own lives. As we reflect on the different stages of the journey to Calvary we can easily relate the sufferings of Jesus to the plight of many, suffering people in our world today. The journey may also be very personal. As we recall the suffering of Jesus we may remember painful experiences in our own lives and pray for healing.

But the Way of the Cross also contains a special message which points beyond suffering to love. When Jesus stretched out his arms on the Cross and died, God was saying to us, “This is how much I love you! It’s what inspired Jesus to make the way of the Cross and lay down his life, is so powerful. The only reason he endured pain and suffering was to show you how perfect his love was. We recall the words of Jesus “Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends! The great mystery of “love which does not count the cost”, is what lies at the heart of the Way of the Cross.





JESUS TAKES UP THE CROSS ...

Jesus embraced the cross in love for us and in faith that God will see him through this difficult event. By accepting the cross, Jesus reminds us that he is present to all of us in our pain and suffering. He stands with all suffering people in their pain. He takes up the cross to remind us that God does not abandon us when the going is tough but is right there with us at the centre of our struggles.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus when we experience pain and suffering, may we remember that you have made the journey before us. Remind us that you are with us to give us strength and hope on the way. Bless and be with all people who experience the cross of suffering in their lives at this moment..



JESUS FALLS ...

Jesus became tired and weak and fell beneath the weight of his cross. There are moments in life when we all feel tired or weak. Sometimes life's journey gets too difficult and we just don't have the strength to carry on. This is how Jesus felt when he fell beneath the cross. But although tired and weary, Jesus found the strength in his heart to get up and complete the journey he had begun.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, when things seem to be going very wrong in our lives, grant that we may not lose hope. May we remember that you struggled to carry your cross and fell beneath its weight. Give us the courage to meet and overcome obstacles in our lives. When we fall beneath the weight of our burdens, like you, may we get up again and struggle complete our journey, Bless and be with all people who struggle and fall beneath life's heavy burdens. Give them your strength to get up and carry on.



JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER...

It is difficult to see someone we love suffer. Mary must have been heart broken to see Jesus bruised and bleeding. But she stayed by his side because love sometimes asks us to do difficult things. It is not easy to see a child, a friend or a loved one in pain or suffering. Often we do not know what to say. But to remain present, without words, just caring as Mary did, is a special way to show love and care,

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, your mother shared your pain. May we also support family members and friends in times of pain and suffering. Bless and be with all people who care for a loved one who is suffering at this time and ease their pain.



4. SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS ...

Jesus was getting too weak to carry the cross so Simon was forced to help Jesus to carry the cross. Our world is full of people who struggle daily with the many difficulties they face. Some are lonely, homeless and hungry. Others suffer from abuse, violence and torture. At times they find the going too tough to carry on alone. Just as Simon helped Jesus to carry his cross, there are also many good people in our world who are willing to help others when they are no longer able to make it on their own.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus as Simon helped you to carry your cross, may we also be willing to help the people we see suffering around us. Make us sensitive to the needs of those who are no longer able to bear the weight of the crosses they carry. May we share their burdens with generous hearts. Bless and be with all people who can no longer make it on their own but need a helping hand.



VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Veronica was a good woman who was moved to pity by the pain she saw on the face of Jesus as he carried his cross. So she offered relief to him by wiping his blood-painted face with a damp towel. There are many people in our world who need to experience a touch of care in their suffering. Some are the victims of natural disasters. Others are caught in the trap of addiction. Many are burdened by debt. Quite a number suffer the pain of broken relationships. But there are many good people like Veronica who notice the pain others are going through and are willing to help them out.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, Veronica noticed your suffering as you carried your cross and reached out to help you. May we also notice the people around us who are victims of life's unfortunate circumstances. May we be generous in the time and support we give to them. Bless and be with all whose pain and suffering move us to help them.



JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

A little group of faithful followers stood beneath the cross of Jesus as he died. They must have remembered his words "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends" As they saw him suffer, they could not take away his pain but their presence reminded him that he was loved and supported 'm his greatest hour of need. Family members and friends throughout the world continue to stand by their loved ones when they are sick or dying. Often words are not easy at such moments. But to be present assures the other of love and support and that is what really matters. The group who stood beneath the cross of Jesus as he died, assured him that all his lov'ng and giving were seen and appreciated. Our quiet presence to others at critical moments gives the same assuring message.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, give us the strength it takes to be close to those we really 'love when they most need us. May our presence speak louder than any words how much we value and appreciate them. Bless and be with all who are sick, or dying at this time and bless those who are taking care of them.

**MARY STOOD BENEATH THE CROSS OF HER SON JESUS**

The angel told Mary God's favour rested on her and she was "full of grace" or goodness. Elizabeth, her cousin, said to Mary "you of all women, you are the most blessed". Standing beneath the cross the words of blessing must have seemed far away. Mary's heart was full of sorrow as she saw Jesus mistreated, tortured and crucified. How could a mother be "blessed" in such circumstances?

Mary was blessed because even beneath the cross she held on to the words of the angel who told her "nothing is impossible to God". Even in her deepest distress Our Lady was sure that God would not let her down – God would be true to his word. Mary's faith was rewarded. God restored Jesus to life – life that would never end. And God called Mary to share life with her son forever in Heaven.

When we are in very difficult situations it is hard to believe that God is close and still loves us. But from the cross Jesus made Our Lady the Mother of all Believers. Mary can teach us the ways of faith. She has shown us in her own life, that she continued to trust God even when trust seemed impossible. Our Lady asks us to have the same trust in her Son and to believe our faith will see us through.

Blessed is she who believed the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled. Amen

**NEW LIFE**

Through the death of Jesus, God proclaimed his love to the world in the most radical possible way. This love was too strong to be contained by death and so Jesus rose to New Life. This new life he shares with all bringing hope and inspiration into our lives. St. Paul reminds us "Nothing, can come between us and, the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ."

This is the ultimate victory of the Cross.