

Week 4 - Finishing

Please refer to documents from Week 1 to enhance your meditations on these three Stations of the Cross. See "**Lectio Divina and the Stations of the Cross**" and "**Lectio Divina**" handout sheet or on the webpage go to: <http://www.churchhollyfamily.org/stations.pdf>
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It is suggested that you begin your daily journey with invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (See prayer Week 1)

### **Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments** **(Matthew 27:27-31)**

*Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.*

**Jesus** – Not once but three time Jesus is stripped of clothing: twice in the praetorium and finally at the site of Golgotha. Beyond the humiliation of clothing being harshly pulled off, how many wounds were reopened as the cloth and dried blood were separated. How many times must Jesus endure the opening of old wounds?

**Soldiers** – Were the soldiers really so insensitive? Did they really hate Jesus or was this just a job? Did they refuse see Jesus as a person, just an object of scorn? What did it matter to them? Were they just another aspect of the crowd mentality?

\*\*\* Perhaps your meditation will be more relevant to **your current life situation.** \*\*\* How do you feel when you go for medical tests and you have to remove your clothes? Do you feel like your identity has been compromised? How does it feel when your finances come under an audit? Do you feel uneasy, even when there is no infraction on your part? Do you ever feel exposed? How do you experience exposure?

## Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross (Mark 15:24-27)

*Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left.*

When athletes come across the finish line, they are given a medal and raised up on a pedestal for all to see. The crowd cheers, they appreciate the arduous feat that the athletes had to endure to reach this place.

Not the case with Jesus, when He reached the end of the agonizing path along the Via Delarosa, He was subjected to nails in His hands and feet not a medal around His neck. No crown of laurels placed on His head, he still wore a crown of thorns. No stepping up onto a pedestal for all to see, instead, Jesus was raised up on the Cross, no cheers only jeers from the crowd.

Is this the reward the Savior of all humanity had to endure? Why did His loving quest have to end like this? Was this the end or was there more to come as Jesus had promised?

A wooden cross, symbol of the intersection of the earthly plane and the heavenly, was sanctified by Jesus. He alone was the perfect intersection of Divinity and humanity. Did Jesus have to reinforce this concept by being nailed to the cross?

\*\*\* Perhaps your meditation will be more relevant to **your current life situation.** \*\*\* What happens when you come to the finish of an important project? Does it feel worth all the time and energy expended to reach the completion? What did you have to sacrifice to get to that point? What toll did it take on those around you?

***\*NOTE: If you have an opportunity to examine this eleventh station, take a close look at what he artist has done with the fine details.***

## **Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross** **(Matthew 27:45-52)**

*From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "This one is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him." But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised.*

**Jesus** – Calls of desperation. All that was in Him, the fiber of His being, was clinging to trust that even in this most horrible of situations the Father would be with Him. Jesus did not call out to be saved, but to be within the presence of His Father. Jesus, filled with desolation, of His own accord separated from life.

**Onlookers** – Everything shook, the Might of God moved the earth. Were these onlookers afraid of the earthquake or was it the realization of what they had done back at Pilate's residence?

\*\*\* Perhaps your meditation will be more relevant to **your current life situation.** \*\*\* How would it feel to witness an execution?

Have you ever had to watch as a loved one struggled in pain? How could you provide comfort to a loved one in moments of desolation? Could you do the same to a stranger?

(Kathleen Ullmann: Lent 2010)