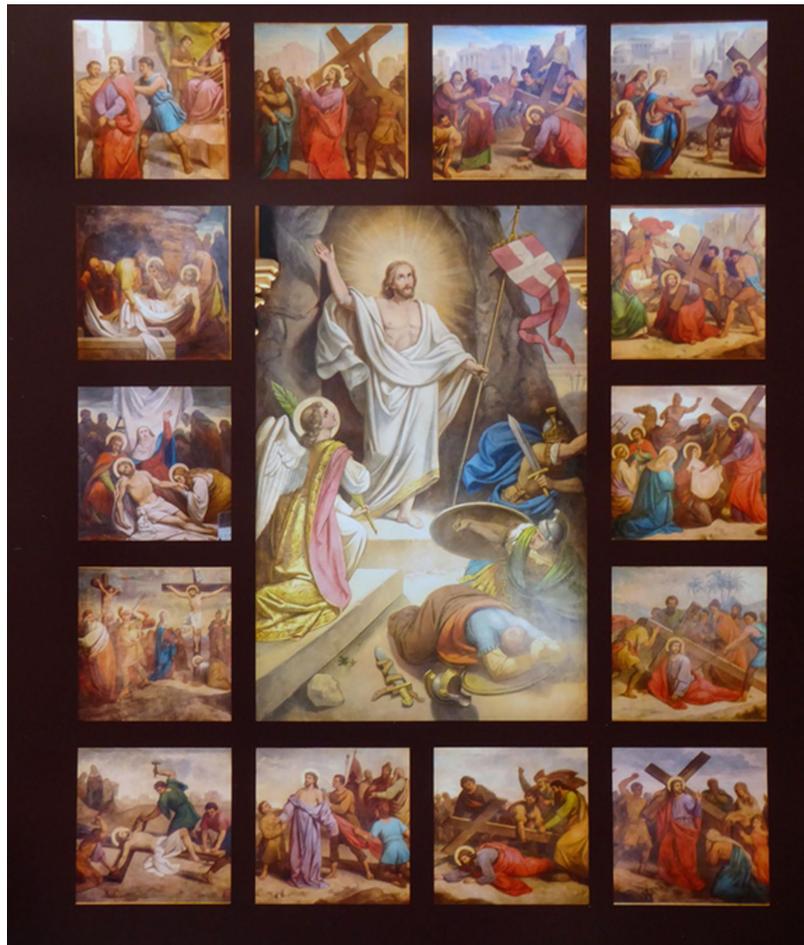


STATIONS OF CROSS: HOLY WOMEN: DOROTHY DAY & SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ



FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2022

*ARRANGED BY TERESA THOMPSON, MARY HURSON,
AND CHRISTINE SANTISTEBAN ON BEHALF OF
CATHOLIC LESBIANS & THE WOMEN WHO STAYED
REFLECTIONS BY IVAN BREA (SOR JUANA)
AND CATHERINE O'HAGAN WOLFE (DOROTHY DAY)
READERS: ELLIE CRUM, BEATRIZ HERNANDEZ, DEE KELLY,
AND JENNIFER TOKASH*

FOR THOSE IN THE CHURCH: IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIAL DISTANCING, PLEASE REMAIN SEATED FOR THE DURATION OF THE STATIONS. THE CROSS BEARER WILL WALK THE STATIONS FOR EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH.

General visual description of the Church of St. Francis Xavier's depiction of the Stations of the Cross.

William Lamprecht, a German-born artist, one of the most prominent ecclesial painters of his day, painted the Stations of the Cross. The murals are unusually large, approximately eight feet tall by twelve feet wide, wrapping around the Church from the north wall of the east transept to the west transept. The stations begin in rich colors with Jesus wearing a red cloak over a purple garment under a clear blue sky, but the stations grow noticeably darker as Jesus is stripped of his clothes, and the sky darkens until Jesus' death in station twelve. The figures depicted look white and European reflecting the ethnic makeup of the 19th century congregation and the artist. In general, the bold movement of the twenty or so figures in each station convey drama and energy with Jesus and two or three figures typically dominating the foreground. A gold halo always surrounds Jesus' head as well as the head of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other women disciples, including Veronica, and presumably Mary Magdalene (4, 6, 12, 13). Large buildings and palm trees complete the background.

Introduction

The Stations of the Cross offer us a tremendous privilege: to be with Jesus along his journey as he carried his Cross to Calvary. Tonight, we will deepen our witness of critical moments of the life, suffering, and death of Jesus through immersing ourselves in the works and spiritualities of two holy women who lived their lives in close accompaniment of Christ.

On odd-numbered stations, let us reflect on Jesus' journey through contemplating the life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Sor Juana was a Mexican writer, philosopher, composer, and poet of the Baroque period who lived in the late 1600s in New Spain during the height of the Spanish empire.

On even-numbered stations, let us enrich our understanding of Jesus through savoring Dorothy Day's spirituality and writing. Dorothy Day was a journalist and co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement who devoted her life to care for the poor, pacifism, and anti-war activism through civil disobedience.

We live in a rapidly changing world - decades separate us from Dorothy Day, centuries from Sor Juana, and millennia from Jesus. Yet their challenges remain startling, giving us pause to consider the ongoing suffering that exists in our midst. As we follow the call to seek and create justice, let us fortify ourselves with the words of Jesus:

My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.



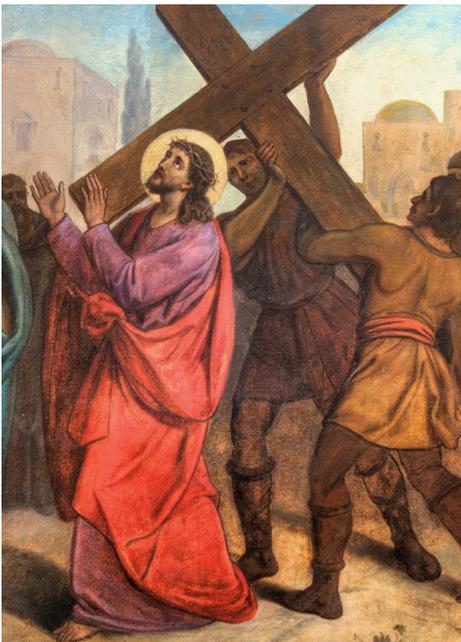
THE FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Wearing a purple tunic and red robe, Jesus is led / pushed forward towards the street, where His Cross awaits Him. Pontius Pilate, seated on a throne behind Jesus, is washing his hands of the condemnation.

Like Jesus, we are invited to take the journey of the unknown with faith in the God who loves us unconditionally.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Sor Juana believed that her inclination for study was an irresistible desire that God put in her. That fierce belief and desire fueled decades of Sor Juana's work.



SECOND STATION: JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

Still in the same tunic and robe, Jesus looks beseechingly up to Heaven; while two Roman Soldiers, in short white military tunics, lower the heavy wooden Cross onto His shoulders.

Members of the jeering crowd, in various colored tunics and robes, point the way to Calvary, the Crucifixion site.

Jesus reminds us that trust in God's greater plan is often a decision—one made from the very core of our being, even when the outcome remains questionable or unknown.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Dorothy Day wrote, *"The justification for a Christ who urges militant action is the story of how Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple... The most effective action we can take is to try to conform our lives to the folly of the Cross, as St. Paul called it."*



THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Weak after the Scourging at the Pillar and the Crowning with Thorns, Jesus Falls for the First Time under the weight of the heavy Cross. While being whipped by the attending Roman Soldiers, Jesus is mocked by the crowd.

Jesus's fall reminds us of our own vulnerability to the unforeseen struggles of life. Our challenge is to continue the journey, even when we do not understand.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Sor Juana pleaded to her mother to let her attend disguised as a man. Her request was denied and her hopes, wants, and dreams to learn from an institution of higher learning was crushed.



FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

Pushing through the crowd, the Blessed Mother, dressed in a blue cloak and white head scarf, sees her Son and holds out her hands, imploringly to Him. Jesus, sadly and painfully, looks at Mary, and, knowingly, their eyes meet.

As Jesus meets his mother, we are reminded that our journey of life is one that is deeply connected to the lives of others.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Dorothy Day wrote, “The Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of my child. No harm can ever come to her with such a Mother.”



FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

Simon, from the North African city of Cyrene, dressed in a yellow cloak, is taken from the crowd and forced to carry Jesus' Cross for a time. Jesus, nearly on the ground in pain, looks thankfully at Simon.

As an embodied Christian community, we are individually and collectively called to care and serve the good of others for the sake of the Gospel.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Without Octavio Paz, Sor Juana would have been forgotten. Helping others is core to the Christian life.



SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Veronica, emerging from the shouting crowd, kneels in front of Jesus, the white cloth opened in her hands before her. Jesus, looking lovingly at her, reaches out to Veronica and the cloth.

Veronica is said to have wiped the face of Jesus—she dared to show care and compassion to someone assaulted, rejected, and condemned to die—understanding she was witnessing the presence of God embodied.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Always committed to the poor, laborers and the forgotten, Dorothy Day finally found the answer to her search for meaning in Catholicism.



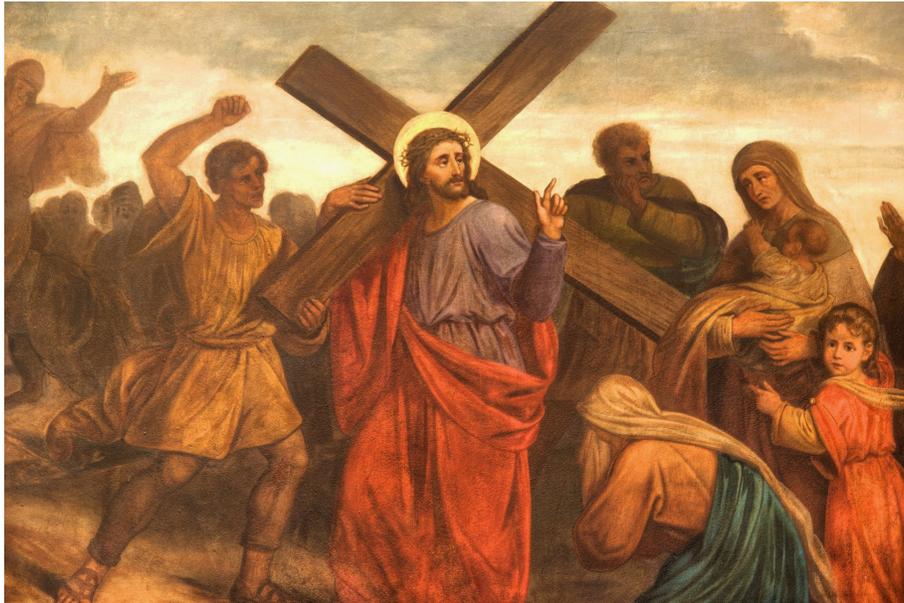
SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Exhausted from the heaviness of the Cross, Jesus stumbles and falls for the Second Time. The Roman Soldiers continue to whip and beat Jesus, while the crowd, even louder than before, deride Jesus.

Sometimes we fall, even a second time. Yet we are encouraged to persevere — moving forward while placing our total trust in that Sacred Presence who accompanies us.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Sor Juana trusted that God would allow her to be a servant of His will and live the life she was destined for by God.



EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Continuing on the way to Calvary, Jesus encounters many of His women followers from Jerusalem, dressed in many colored robes and head scarves, crying and lamenting over the pain that He is suffering. Jesus turns to them, telling them not to weep for Him, but for themselves and their children.

The fruits of authentic weeping compel us to work for the kingdom of God and to change for the sake of a world, so we may become who God has invited us to be.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

The women of Jerusalem were witnesses to Jesus's suffering. Dorothy Day made acting in solidarity with people who lacked the basic necessities of life a cornerstone of her life.



NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Overwhelmed by the heavy weight of the Cross, Jesus Falls to the ground for the Third Time. Ridiculed by both the Roman Soldiers and the crowd, Jesus is yet again forced to His feet by the soldiers, while the crowd admonishes Jesus by pointing towards Calvary.

Like Jesus, we may be called to submit to that which is no longer in our control, trusting that God will prevail over evil.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Only two poems of Sor Juana written in Náhuatl survive to this day compared to hundreds of her other works in Spanish. They may have been passed over during preservation efforts - after all, writing by a woman in an indigenous language was often considered “lesser”. This is emblematic of the struggles for recognition still faced by women and people of color.



TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

While the Cross is being readied for the Crucifixion, Jesus is stripped of His outer robe and tunic, left standing in only His white loincloth before the crowd, who angrily continue to leer at Jesus.

In his vulnerability, Jesus continues his approach to the greatest act of love ever accomplished. So, too, we pray that we can let go of all that holds us from giving that same love in the world today.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Dorothy Day said, “If we love poverty we will be free to give up a job, to speak when we feel it would be wrong to be silent. We can only talk about voluntary poverty because we believe Christians must be fools for Christ.”



ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Laying the Cross flat on the ground, Jesus is pushed down on top of it, His hands nailed to the crossbeam and His feet, one on top of the other, are nailed to the vertical post. Above His head is nailed the inscription “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

What sustained Jesus in these final moments was not bitterness and anger—it was the support and care of those who loved him. That love radiated through even in the midst of hatred and violence.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Sor Juana’s advocacy and outspokenness got her in conflict with many priests, bishops, and her fellow religious sisters and many of those she called friends. Yet when it was time for Sor Juana to give up her writing, sell her books, renew her vows, and care for her sisters - she did.



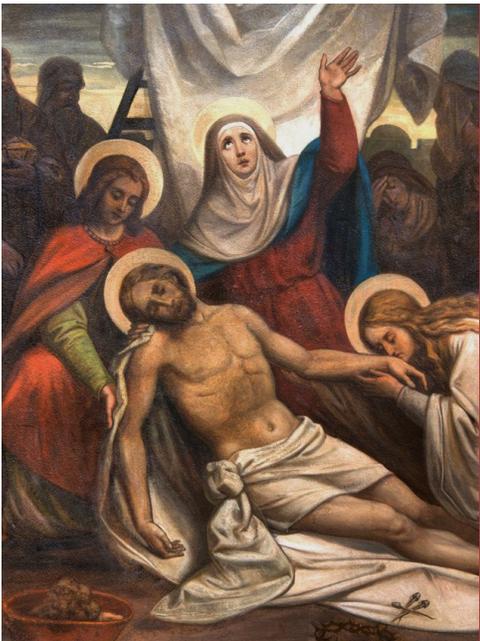
TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

The soldiers hoist the Cross up in place. Jesus' final agony begins as He is crucified between two thieves. While the soldiers cast lots for His clothing and the crowd throws insults at Him, Jesus, suffering from pain, dehydration, and asphyxiation, breaths His last breath.

In Jesus's death, we are reminded how to live: act justly, love tenderly, and travel humbly with God—even in the face of death.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Radical pacifism was central to Dorothy Day's life and spirituality.



THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Jesus' lifeless body is taken down from the Cross and placed in the arms of Mary, His mother. Surrounded by Mary Magdalene and John the Apostle, all are sorrowful and weeping.

May we be faithful companions for those who seek freedom from their crosses in life.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Sor Juana died with no status, prestige, or recognition. Yet in life, Sor Juana was never in despair. She never gave up.



FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS BURIED IN THE TOMB

Jesus' body, wrapped in the white ceremonial Jewish burial cloth, is placed in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea and an attendant. The Blessed Mother and Mary Magdalene watch from outside the entrance to the tomb.

In this tomb, there is more than a body. Jesus's death has destroyed death. The world is turned upside down. The end is only the beginning.

Antiphon: My peace I leave you, my peace I give you - be not afraid.

Dorothy Day wrote, "But the final word is love. At times it has been a harsh and dreadful thing, and our very faith in love has been tried through fire. We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love each other we must know each other. We know him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet too, even with a crust, when there is companionship."

Closing Prayer

Jesus, help us to follow in your example, to love and serve in a world that is in great need of your presence. We ask that you shower us with the gifts of wisdom, strength, and compassion, and that we may take heed of the examples of your faithful servants, Dorothy Day and Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz.

As we leave this space and time in contemplation, keep us ever mindful of the suffering you endured for our salvation. Give us the strength to bring others the comfort, hope, and healing that you have secured for us. And remind us always of the great truth: that no matter how vast our brokenness is, love will prevail.

My peace I leave you, my peace I give you – trouble not your hearts
My peace I leave you, my peace I give you – be not afraid