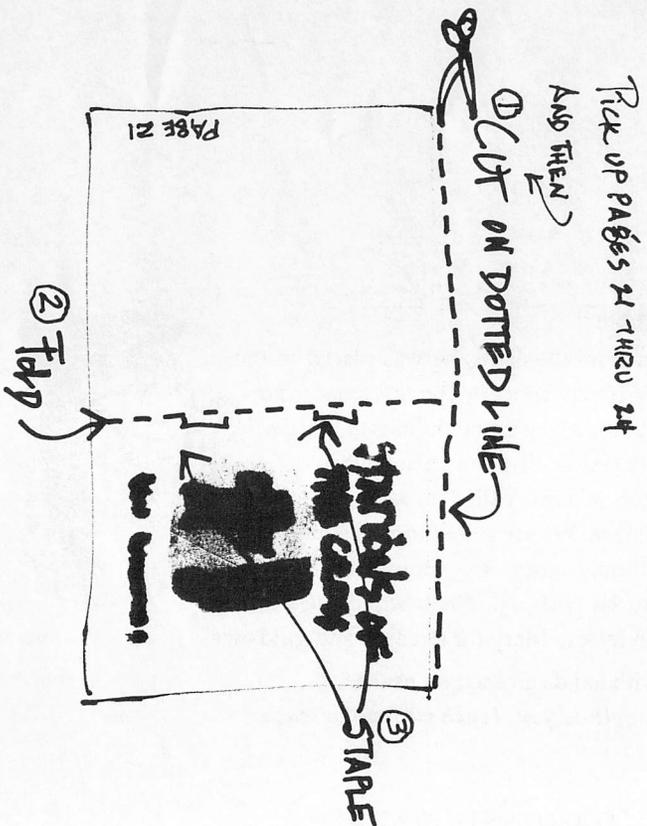
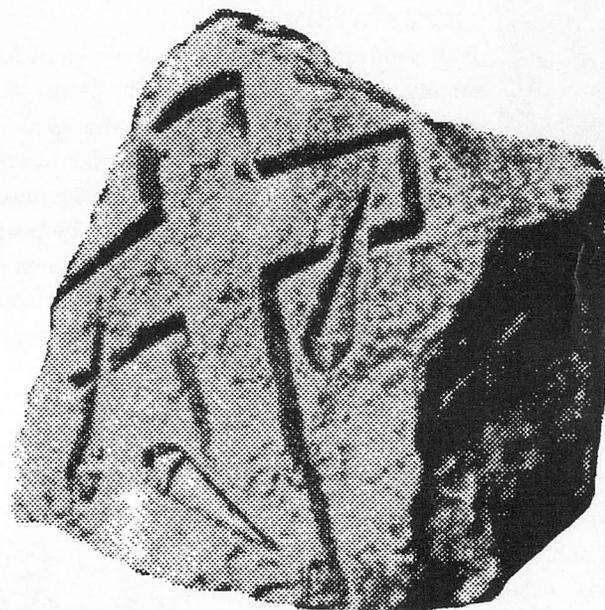


Stations of the Cross for Catechists

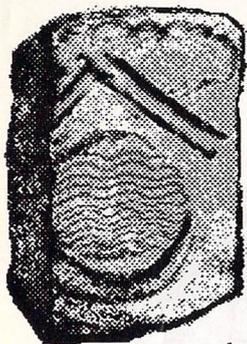


TWENTY-THIRD PUBLICATIONS
Mystic, Connecticut

Gwen Costello

INTRODUCTION

When Jesus issued the invitation: Come follow me, he was not speaking to disembodied spirits. His followers were real people, who were to follow him with heart, mind, body, and spirit. Today, you, too, are being called to follow Jesus, as a Christian, as a catechist. How might you answer this call with all your heart, mind, body, and spirit? The Spirit of Jesus will guide you. As you now pray the Way of the Cross with Jesus, open yourself to his Spirit that you might find your way to greater wholeness and holiness this Lent.



FIRST STATION

Pilate, the judge, a man who did not know Jesus personally, passed judgment on him. Jesus was at the mercy of this Roman official, this stranger.

We are followers of Jesus. We freely offer our time, our talent, and our energy to proclaim his teaching to others. But we are often condemned by people who don't even know us. We are blamed when children

don't know their prayers or teenagers don't want to go to Mass anymore. We are defenseless and vulnerable—as Jesus was.

(pause for reflection with hands folded)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

SECOND STATION

It was decided that Jesus should die, and the instrument of his death was thrust upon his shoulders. He was pushed forward by the soldiers with curses and jeers. Where were all those people whom he had blessed and taught and healed?

We are followers of Jesus. We are blessing and teaching and healing in imitation of him, more often than not without thanks or praise. But we continue to do it because we believe in the message Jesus lived, and preached, and died for.

(pause for reflection with outstretched hands)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



THIRTEENTH STATION

When Jesus was taken from the cross, he was placed in the arms of his mother. Without concern for the blood and sweat and dirt on his body, Mary gathered him to herself. What helpless and agonized sorrow she must have felt.

We are followers of Jesus. We are called to hold out our arms to our parish children. We are called to receive them and embrace them, though they are sometimes rude, selfish, or unwilling to be with us. What helplessness we sometimes feel! We can look to Mary for strength and guidance.

(pause for reflection with hands crossed on heart)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



FOURTEENTH STATION

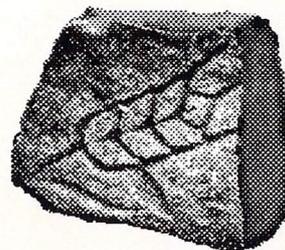
Jesus was placed in a tomb that did not belong to him. Even in death he could claim nothing as his own. How could this man, convicted and crucified as a criminal, be our Lord and God? How can we place our faith in him?

We are followers of Jesus. We know that death on the cross was not the end of his story. And yet, Jesus did indeed endure death before he was gloriously raised.

We catechists are called to give ourselves over, to "die," in many small ways in our teaching ministry. And we can claim nothing. We must wait, in a way entombed, for God's grace to work in us in God's own time. But Jesus waits with us. He has shown us the way.

(pause for reflection with hands at your side)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



FIFTH STATION



Jesus encounters Simon, the reluctant one. Simon probably didn't come forward freely; he probably didn't want to get involved with Jesus. He was dragged into it. What happened to him as a consequence? We'll likely never know.

We are followers of Jesus. We know only too well how it feels to encounter "reluctant ones." They seem to close their minds and hearts to his message, but we can't be sure. And so, we continue to plan, to prepare, and

to proclaim to them, because we act in the name of Jesus.

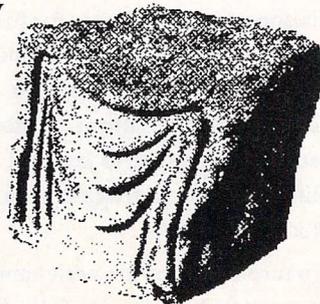
(pause for reflection with hands on shoulders)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

SIXTH STATION

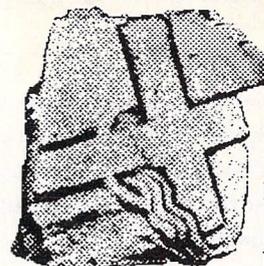
Was there really a Veronica? Was there really someone so oblivious to danger that she sprang forward to comfort and cleanse Jesus?

We are followers of Jesus. He has told us clearly that when we do something for his least ones, his little ones, we do it for him. Can we dare to be Veronicas for those we teach, holding out to them the cloth of faith that will comfort and cleanse them?



(pause for reflection with hands extended forward)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



SEVENTH STATION

Jesus fell again. He was overburdened and then left to fend for himself. Couldn't the soldiers at least have helped him up? Couldn't someone from the crowd have helped?

We are followers of Jesus. We sometimes feel overburdened by life and all its tasks. Yet we step forward to teach, often fending for ourselves without guidance or support.

Jesus picked himself up and moved forward. Can we do less?

(pause for reflection on both knees)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

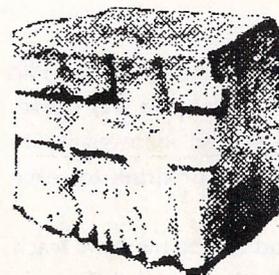
EIGHTH STATION

Those mysterious women of Jerusalem! They were weeping and wailing at the sight of Jesus. Why did he rebuke them? Why didn't he welcome their grief?

We are followers of Jesus. And yet we have a kinship with those women. Don't we often feel like weeping and wailing when those we teach aren't responsive? We are weeping for ourselves, of course; we are feeling sorry for ourselves. What about Jesus? Have we no tears for him?

(pause for reflection with hands over face)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



NINTH STATION

Jesus fell for the third time. Why was he forced to stumble along this way? Did the soldiers enjoy inflicting torture? Was the crowd calling for more?

We are followers of Jesus. From lesson to lesson we stumble along, sometimes failing miserably. No one comes forward to help, not the DRE, not the other catechists. Why don't they come forward? Perhaps we're hiding

our need from them because we don't want to admit failure. If Jesus would have accepted help, why won't we?

(pause for reflection on both knees)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



TENTH STATION

Jesus was stripped of everything, even his clothing. Jesus was helpless against the cruelty of the soldiers, and he was humiliated by their disgraceful treatment.

We are followers of Jesus. There are times when we, too, feel stripped—stripped of power to make decisions, stripped of patience when we most need it, stripped of time because of lesson planning and classes. These deprivations are nothing, however, compared to what Jesus endured. And yet we still need courage to bear them. Where can we go for this courage?

(pause for reflection with open hands)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

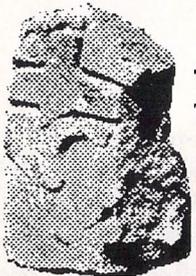
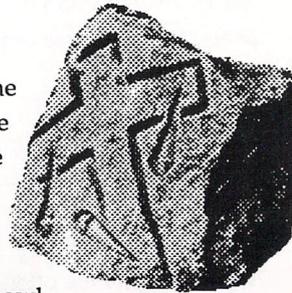
ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus was nailed to the cross like an animal; he was one more body for the soldiers to deal with. After a lifetime of loving service to others, how must he have felt to be rewarded this way?

We are followers of Jesus. We volunteer our time and our talents—not looking for anything in return. And yet, how it hurts when our contributions are not acknowledged, when people take advantage of our ministry, or worse yet, when they criticize us. What can we learn from the example of Jesus?

(pause for reflection with arms extended wide)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



TWELFTH STATION

The moment of death on the cross was full of pain for Jesus. His physical pain was excruciating, but the mental pain was worse. He had heard the call of his God and he had followed it. He had gone without rest, often without food or drink to serve others. Where were they now?

We are followers of Jesus. We give love and care to those we teach because we believe in our call to proclaim the gospel. Like the one we follow, we are often left alone. Where are all those we have taught? Where are all those for whom we have endured grief, hard work, or anxiety?

(pause for reflection with head deeply bowed)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.



THIRD STATION

Far too much was demanded of Jesus. The weight of the wooden beam was too heavy. He fell to the ground in front of the crowd. Some probably even cheered at this sign of weakness.

We are followers of Jesus. Sometimes too much is demanded of us and so we fall. We don't have time to prepare or we prepare poorly; we don't have time to read, or study, or pray enough. Our burden is heavy and we don't always carry it well.

(pause for reflection on both knees)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

FOURTH STATION

Mary wanted the best for Jesus. She wanted others to applaud him, to like him, to marvel at the wonder of him. And yet, here she meets him as a public failure, carrying a cross for his own crucifixion.

We are followers of Jesus. Sometimes it's very difficult to explain to others (or even to understand ourselves) that failure can lead to growth, that suffering can lead to joy, that death can lead to life. Did Mary struggle with these questions, too?

(pause for reflection with hands crossed over heart)

Jesus, teach me how to follow you. Teach me how to teach.

