



First Station

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Pilate the Judge said, "Look, here's your king."
But the people yelled, "Get rid of him. Kill him!"
"Should I kill your king?" Pilate asked them.
"Yes," they yelled back, "kill him!"
So, Pilate allowed Jesus to be led away by the soldiers (*John 19:16*).

(Recite the following with hands folded.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have begged Pilate to set you free. We would have yelled, "Let him go; he's a good man."

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I really have been brave enough to speak up for Jesus? What if Pilate had arrested me, too?

Here and now, do I have the courage to speak up for someone who is being treated unfairly?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Second Station

Jesus Carries His Cross

The soldiers led Jesus away as Pilate had ordered. They put a crown of thorns on his head; they beat him up, and then made fun of him. Then they laid a heavy cross on his shoulders and ordered him to carry it to a place called Calvary. His whole body ached, and he was so tired he could hardly walk (Matthew 26:31-32).

(Recite the following with hands on shoulders.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have carried that heavy cross for you. We would have told those soldiers, "Get back; leave him alone! Can't you see he's in pain?"

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have dared talk back to a group of sword-carrying soldiers? What if one of them had pointed his sword at *me*?

Here and now, what do I do when someone is wrongly blamed for something he or she didn't do?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Third Station

Jesus Falls Under the Cross

Jesus was so weak that he could not stand the weight of the cross. He fell to the ground. Perhaps as he lay there, weak and in pain, he remembered the words of Job: "I have rubbed my face in the dust and it is red with tears. . . . My breath grows weak and I can feel that the grave is waiting for me" (Job 16:6; 17:1). But the soldiers had no compassion. They pulled Jesus up and pushed him forward.

(Recite the following with one knee on the floor.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have made sure you didn't fall. We would have walked beside you and given you strong arms to lean on.

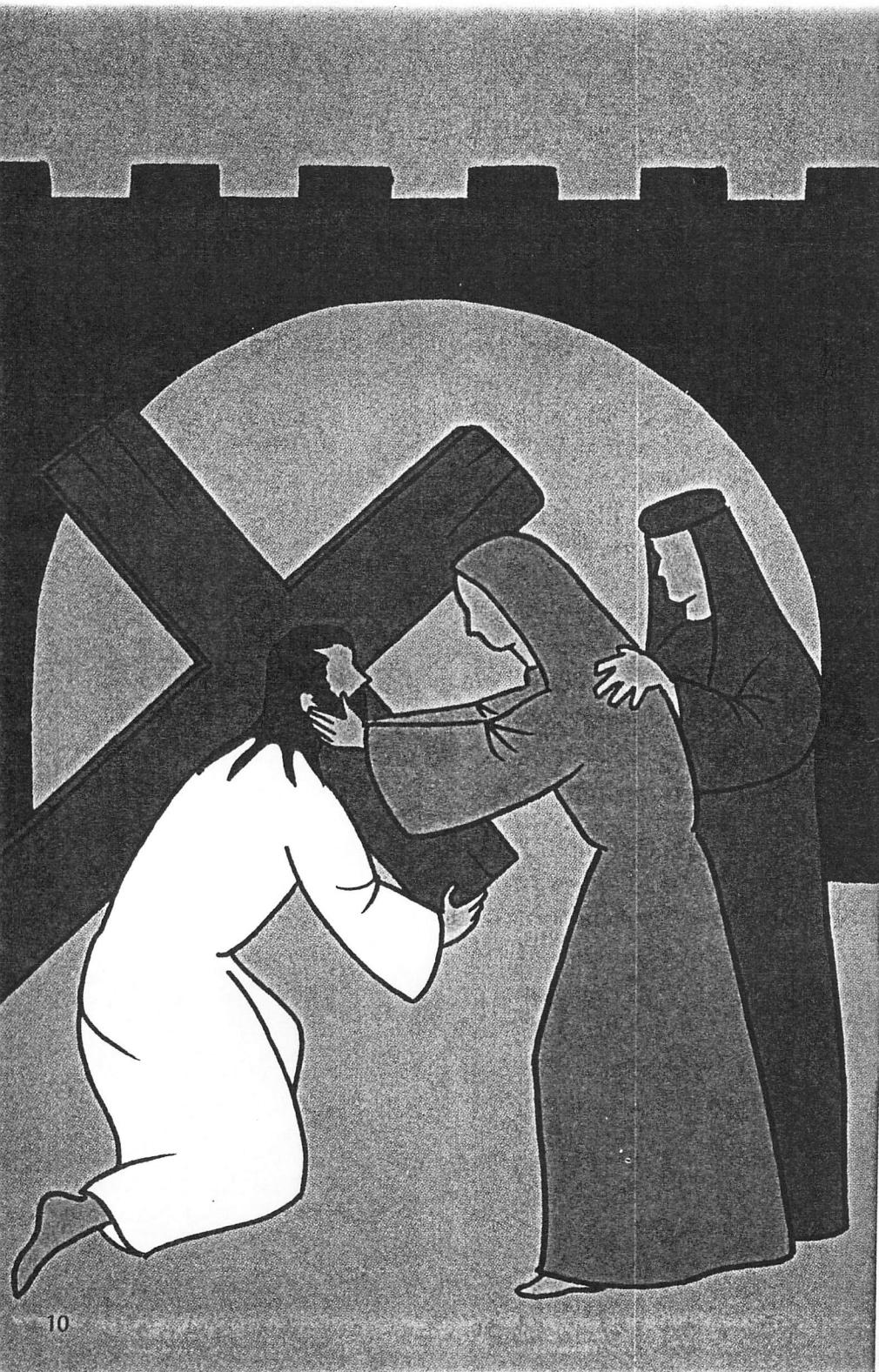
But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have wanted to touch Jesus and to get blood and dirt on my clothes? What if someone had seen me like that?

Here and now, what do I do when my friends laugh at me for helping someone?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Mother

Mary was following Jesus as he carried the cross. Watching him stumble along, she must have remembered what the old prophet Simeon had said to her: "Mary, your sorrow over this child will be great. It will be as if a sword is piercing your heart" (Luke 2:34). Now the soldiers were allowing Mary to talk to Jesus. She had only a moment and there was so much she wanted to say. She knew then exactly what Simeon meant.

(Recite the following with arms crossed and hands on shoulders.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have formed a circle around you and Mary to let you talk as long as you wanted. We would have held out against anyone who tried to push us away.

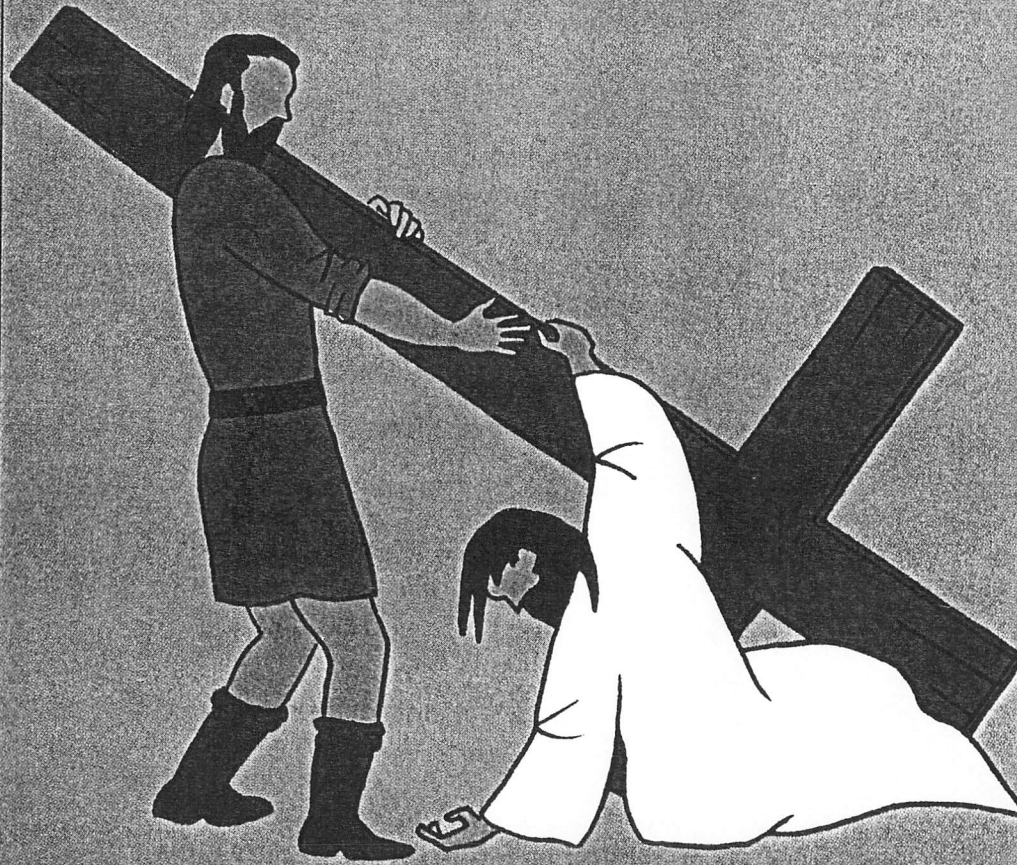
But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have dared to get in front of an angry crowd of people? What if I had been pushed down and hurt?

Here and now, what do I do when someone shoves me or a friend out of line?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Fifth Station

Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

Simon was an African who had come to Palestine to work in the fields. He had settled there but people still called him a stranger. Yet, it was Simon who was called upon to help with the cross. The soldiers grabbed him and pushed him toward Jesus. He must have thought, "Why me? Is it because I'm different that they're making me do this?" When he saw how much Jesus needed his help, however, he quickly lifted up the cross (Luke 23:26).

(Recite the following with both hands on the right shoulder.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have taken turns carrying the cross so that you wouldn't have had to carry it at all. And we would have let Simon go on by.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Maybe the others would have taken turns carrying the cross, but would I? What if I had hurt myself?

Here and now, do I respond eagerly when my parents or teachers ask me to help with difficult chores?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Veronica saw Jesus, and she ran forward to wipe the blood and the sweat from his face. Who was she? Maybe a friend of Mary's? Maybe one of those women who had followed Jesus as he went from town to town preaching? Whoever she was, here she was simply being a friend to Jesus. And she received in return the gift of Jesus' friendship. At that moment she understood that friendship can be a great thing, something money can't buy (Ecclesiasticus 6:14-15).

(Recite the following with hands on cheeks.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have done just what Veronica did. We would have wiped your face with soft, warm cloths, and then put bandages on your open cuts.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I really have dashed out toward Jesus with all those people around? What if someone had made fun of me?

Here and now, what do I do when someone gets hurt on the playground or gets sick on the bus?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Seventh Station

Jesus Falls the Second Time

Jesus fell again under the weight of the cross. It must have been embarrassing to fall down in front of so many people. Maybe Jesus felt like Jeremiah the prophet who cried out: "I am in anguish! I feel great pain. My heart is throbbing" (Jeremiah 4:19). And yet what could Jesus do? The soldiers forced him to get up and pushed him on his way.

(Recite the following with one knee on the floor.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have demanded that the cross be removed from your shoulders. We would have told the soldiers, "Can't you see he's had enough?"

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have made demands in such a dangerous situation? What if the soldiers had pushed me back?

Here and now, what do I say or do when I know that a grown-up is doing something wrong?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Eighth Station

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

A huge crowd was following Jesus, including some women who were crying out and weeping for him. Jesus saw their tears and he said to them, "Don't shed tears for me. Cry instead for yourselves and your children" (Luke 23:28). The women must have wondered what Jesus meant. He was the one carrying the cross, yet he was asking them to weep for themselves. They shook their heads in wonder as he was shoved forward.

(Recite the following with partially covered eyes.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have told the women, "Don't you understand? It is sin, our sins and your sins, that Jesus wants us to cry over."

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have understood Jesus any better than the women of Jerusalem? Would I even have tried?

Here and now, am I sorry for the pain I cause others through the selfish things I sometimes do?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time

Once, twice, and now for the third time Jesus falls to the ground. He must have been extremely weak to lose his balance so often. It was only his faith in God that kept him going. In the Garden of Gethsemane he had prayed, "Father, let this pass from me, but your will, not mine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Now the soldiers forced Jesus up again and pushed him on his way.

(Recite the following with one knee on the floor.)

If we had been there, Jesus, you would not have fallen again. We would have held you up and supported you in every way we could. We would have picked up the cross ourselves.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have helped carry the cross with the others? What if it had fallen on me and hurt me?

Here and now, what do I do when someone old or sick could use my help?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Tenth Station

Jesus Is Stripped of His Clothing

By this time Jesus was so weak he was unable to resist anything the soldiers did to him. They cruelly ripped off his clothing, and they quarrelled over who would have it. "For his part, he made no resistance, neither did he turn away. The Lord God came to his help so that he was untouched by their insulting behavior" (Isaiah 50:6). Jesus stood there stripped and humiliated, waiting to be nailed to the cross.

(Recite the following with hands clasped behind back.)

If we had been there, Jesus, those soldiers wouldn't have laid a hand on you. We would never have allowed them to touch your clothing or to humiliate you in any way.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I have even followed Jesus that far, much less demanded that the soldiers back off?

Here and now, what do I do when someone is being made fun of at school? What if people start making fun of me?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Eleventh Station

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

The soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross (and they also nailed two other men to crosses, one on each side of Jesus). Pilate had written a notice to be put on the cross of Jesus. It said, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The leaders protested that Jesus wasn't really their king, but Pilate would not change what he had written (John 19:19-22). So, the soldiers raised the cross upright with Pilate's sign on it.

(Recite the following with both arms outstretched.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have told the leaders, "Don't you realize who this is? He's not a criminal. He hasn't disobeyed your laws. He's Jesus, God's own son."

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I really have protested what was happening to Jesus? What if the leaders had gotten angry with me?

Here and now, do I ever speak out for people who are being treated unjustly?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Twelfth Station

Jesus Dies on the Cross

As Jesus hung on the cross, he cried out, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing." From a crowd of people standing nearby, someone yelled, "You saved others; now save yourself if you are God's chosen one!" The soldiers made fun of him, too. At last Jesus cried out again, "Father, into your hands I place my spirit." After he said this, he died (Luke 23:44).

(Recite the following kneeling on both knees.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have pushed the people back from the cross. We would have knelt beneath it and prayed with you.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I really have knelt beside the cross for all the world to see? Would I, like Jesus, have asked God to forgive the soldiers and the crowd?

Here and now, do I pray for those who hurt me? Do I really forgive?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Thirteenth Station

Jesus Is Taken Down From the Cross

A man named Joseph, from the town of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross. He placed Jesus in Mary's arms and together they wrapped the body in a linen sheet (Luke 23:52-53). Filled with sorrow, Mary looked at the body of her son. She had loved and cared for him through his boyhood, and had been at his side when he was a man. Now his life was over.

(Recite the following with one hand over heart.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have done just what Joseph did. We would have taken your body down from the cross with dignity and with love. And we would have comforted Mary and stayed with her.

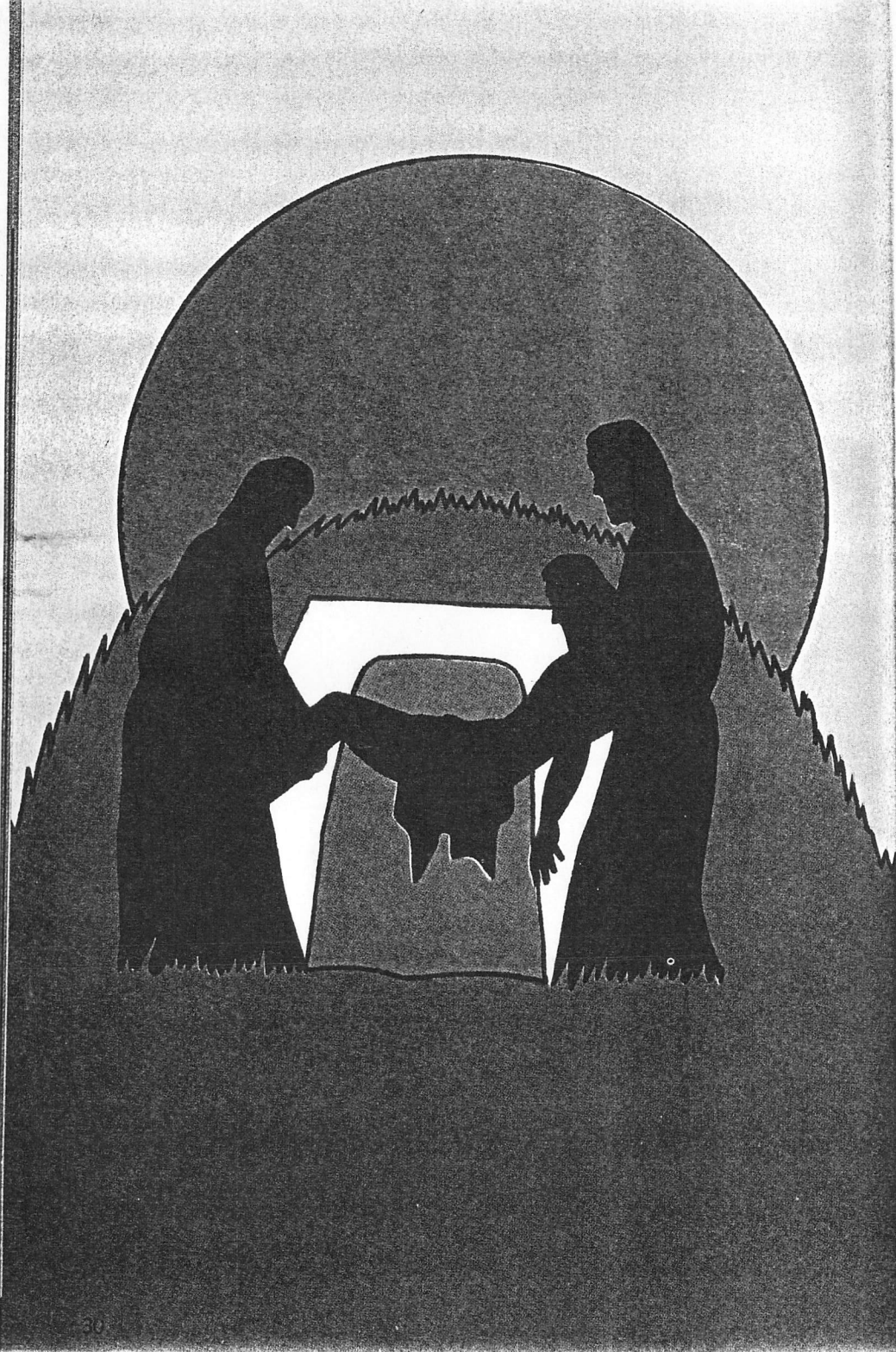
But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I, like Joseph, have admitted being a follower of Jesus? What if Pilate had arrested me?

Here and now, what do I do to show that I am a Christian? Do I ever try to hide my faith from others?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Fourteenth Station

Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

Joseph of Arimathea carried Jesus' body to a grave that had been carved out of a rock—a grave that had never been used (Luke 23:53). After he put the body inside, he rolled a stone to cover the entrance. Slowly and sadly, Mary, who had gone to the tomb with Joseph, left her son there, believing that she would never see him again.

(Recite the following with hands crossed on chest.)

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have helped carry your body to the grave and we would have put our own pillows and blankets beneath it.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

TIME TO THINK AND PRAY

Would I really have given up my own pillow or my blankets, even for Jesus? What if I had been unable to get any others?

Here and now, do I give up any of my comforts to help those in need?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.