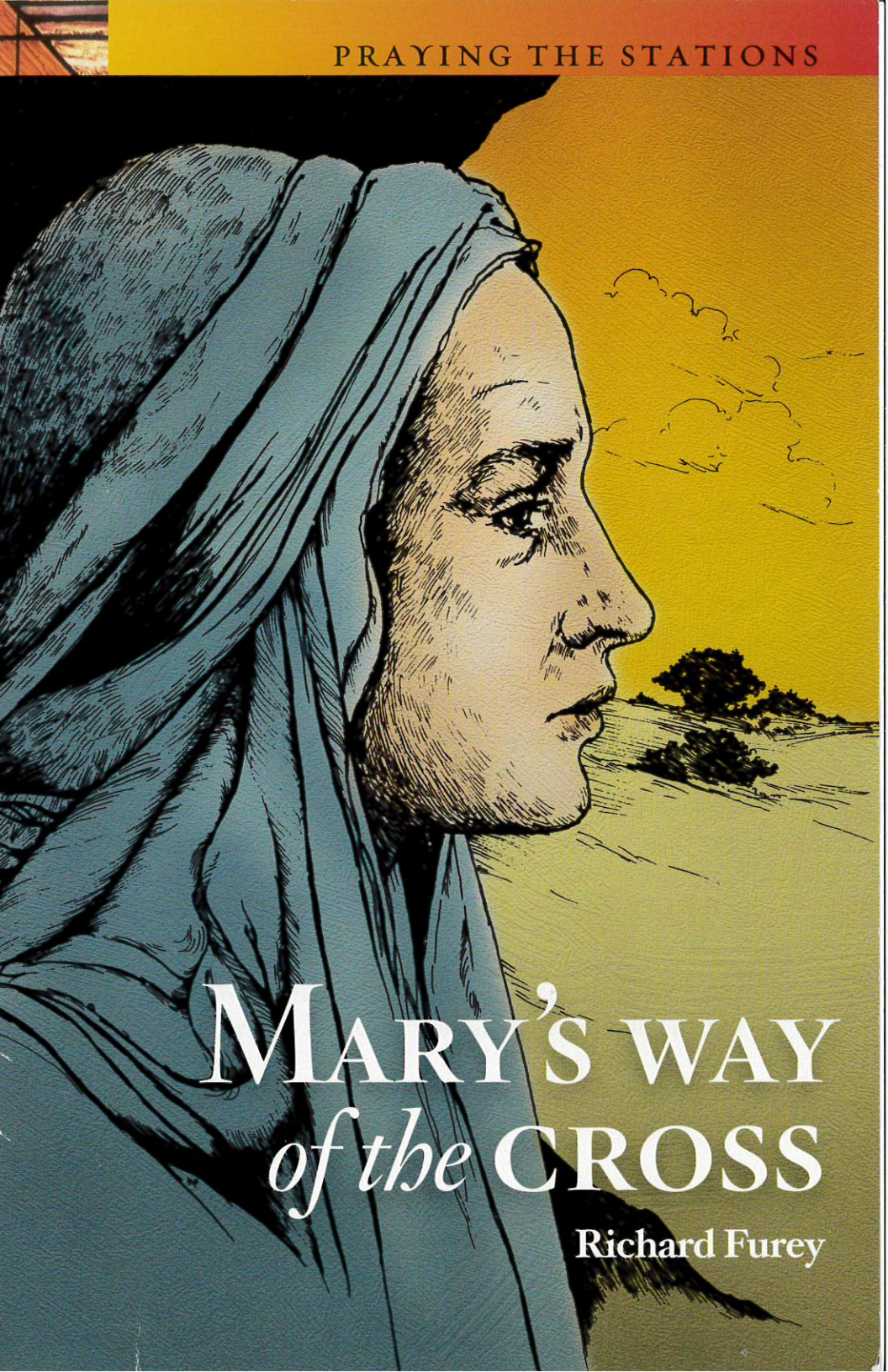
PRAYING THE STATIONS



MARY'S WAY *of the* CROSS

Richard Furey

Mary's Way of the Cross

Isn't the Way of the Cross the way of every person's life? Doesn't every life have suffering, falls, hurts, rejections, condemnations, death, burial...and resurrection?

It has been a Catholic tradition through the centuries to meditate on the Way of the Cross, so that it becomes our way of life.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, made that first Way of the Cross. These Stations attempt to present that viewpoint. In this booklet we see through Mary's eyes what Jesus was going through on the way to Calvary. Then we try to make practical applications to our own lives.

This booklet and these words are not the heart of the matter; the heart of the matter is to go deeper and deeper into the sufferings of Christ so that we might come out of this spiritual journey with an appreciation of what Christ did for us, and a deeper love for him and for our brothers and sisters.

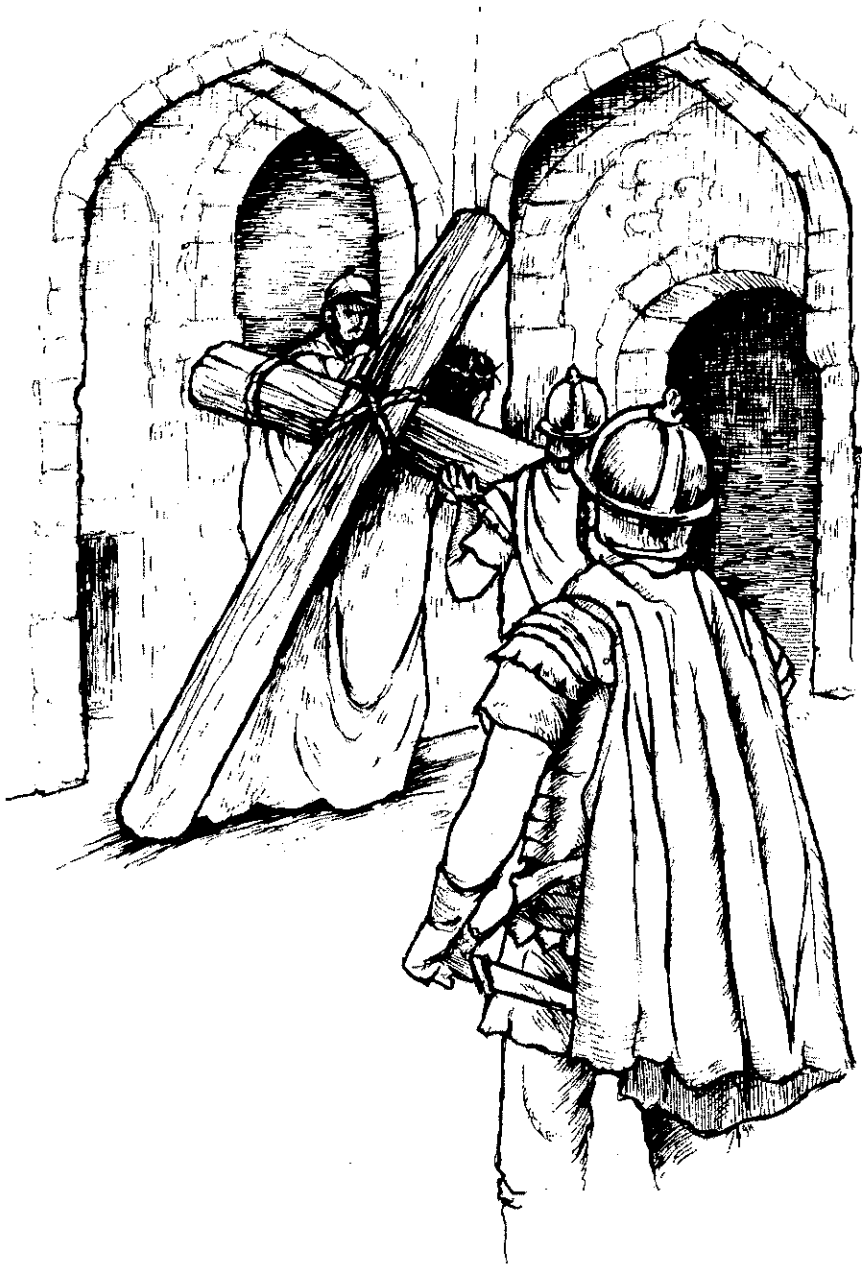
"We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world."

FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Die

It was early Friday morning
when I saw my son.
That was the first glimpse I had of him
since they took him away.
His bruised and bleeding skin
sent a sword of pain deep into my heart
and tears down my cheeks.
Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment,
asked the crowd why they wanted my son executed.
All around me they shouted,
"Crucify him!"
I wanted to plead with them to stop,
but I knew this had to be.
So I stood by and cried silently.

Lord Jesus,
it is hard for me to imagine
the anguish your mother felt
at your condemnation.
But what about today, when I hold a grudge...?
"Crucify him!"
When I judge others...?
"Crucify him!"
Doesn't this bring tears of anguish
to both you and your mother?
Forgive me, Jesus.



SECOND STATION

Jesus Takes His Cross

Regaining a little strength,
I walked with the crowds
to the entrance of the square.
A door flew open
and my son stumbled out,
the guards laughing behind him.
Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross
and dropped it on his shoulders.
Then they shoved him down the road.
My pain for him was unbearable.
I wanted to take the cross from him
and carry it myself.
But I knew this had to be,
so I walked on silently.

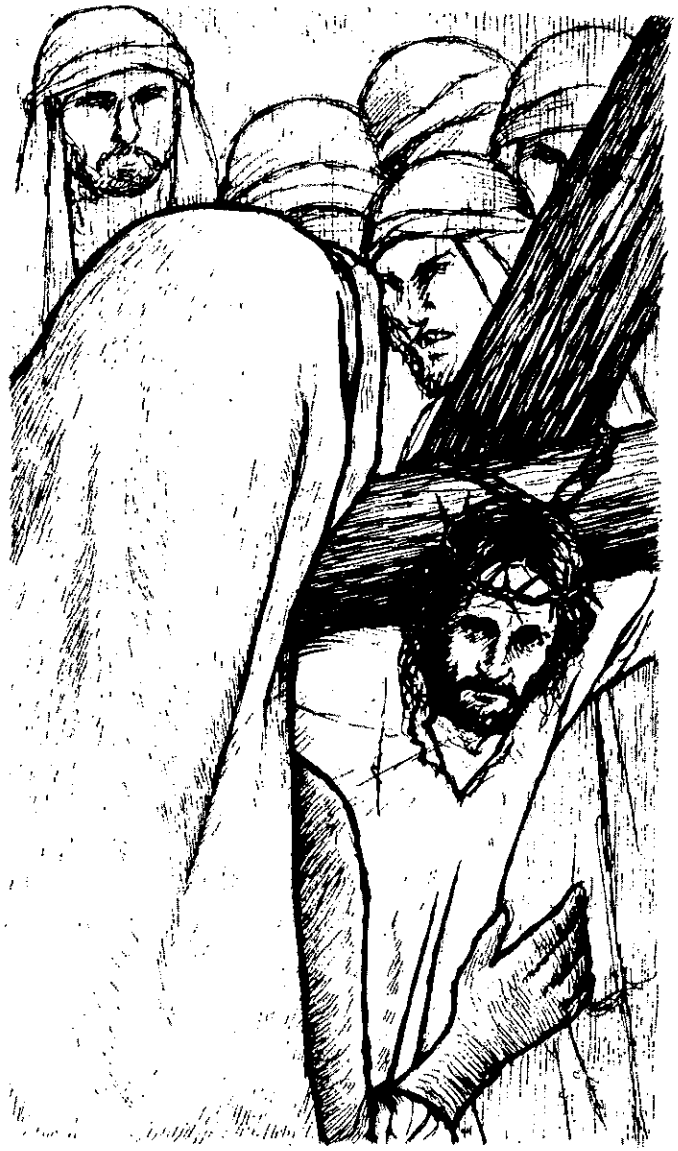
Lord Jesus,
I beg you to forgive me
for the many times
I have added more weight to your cross
by closing my eyes
to the pain and loneliness of my neighbor.
Forgive me for gossiping about others
and for always trying to find excuses
to avoid certain people
who wish to talk with me.
Help me to be like Mary,
always seeking to lighten the crosses of others.
Forgive me, Jesus.

THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time

I followed close behind my son
as he stumbled toward Calvary.
Nothing had ever hurt me more
than to see him in such pain.
I saw the cross digging into his shoulders.
My heart dropped when I saw him fall
face to the ground,
the heavy cross landing squarely on his back.
For a moment I thought my beloved son was dead.
Now, my whole body began to tremble.
Then the guards kicked him.
He rose slowly and began to walk again,
yet they still whipped him.
I wanted to protect him with my own body.
But, I knew this had to be,
so I walked on and wept silently.

Lord, how often have I seen you fall,
and, unlike Mary, have left you there without concern?
How often have I seen people make mistakes
and laughed at them?
How often do I find myself getting angry
when someone does things differently than I?
Mary offered you her support
through your entire passion.
Help me to do the same for you
by the support I give to others.
Lord, have mercy on me.

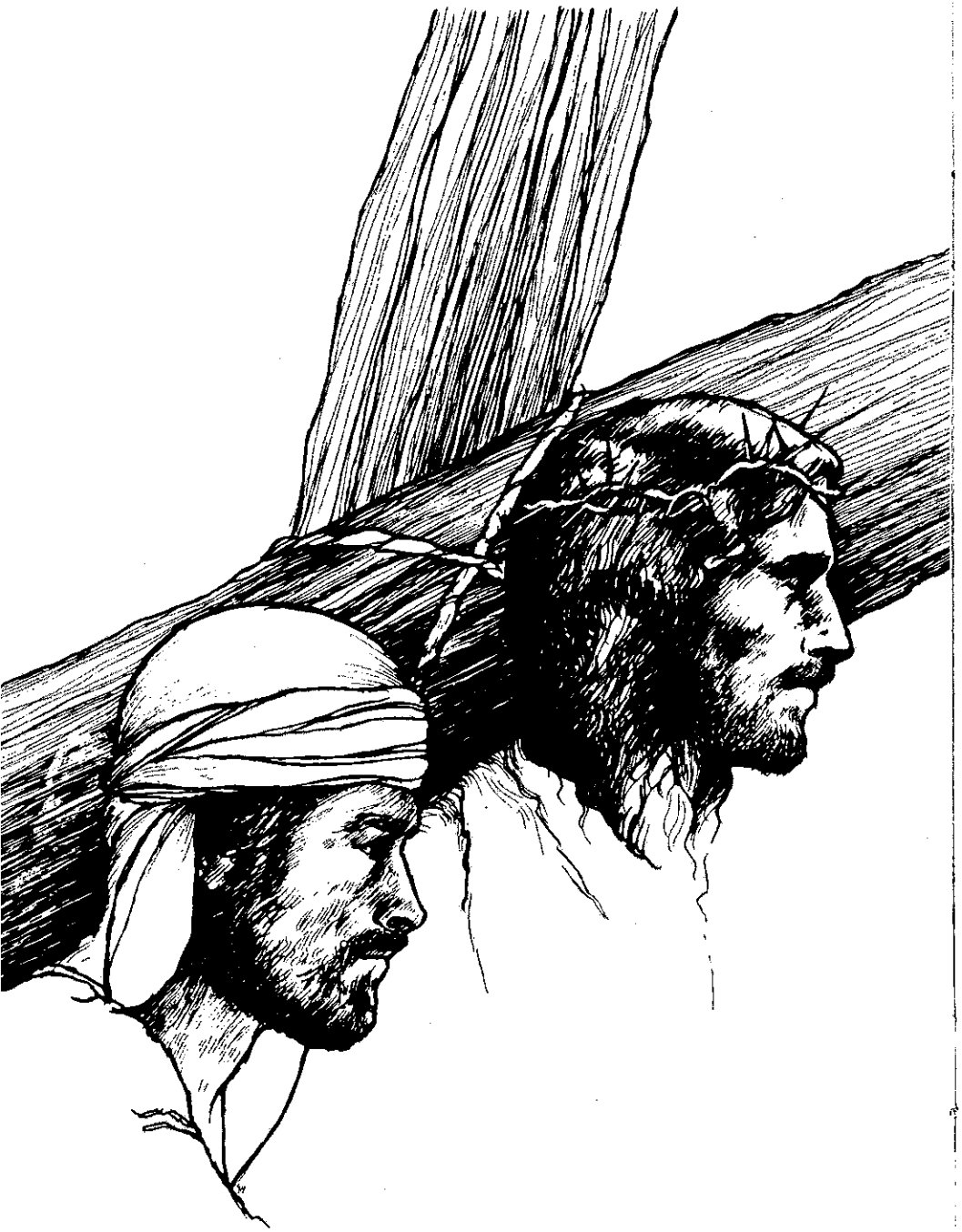


FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Grieving Mother

I managed to break through the crowd
and was walking side by side with my son.
I called to him through the shouting voices.
He stopped.
Our eyes met,
mine full of tears of anguish,
his full of pain and confusion.
I felt helpless;
then his eyes said to me,
"Courage! There is a purpose for this."
As he stumbled on, I knew he was right.
So I followed and prayed silently.

Lord Jesus,
forgive me the many times
our eyes met and I turned mine away.
Forgive me the times
things did not go my way
and I let everyone know about it.
Forgive me the times
I brooded over little inconveniences
or became discouraged
and did not heed your call to courage!
Yes, Lord,
our eyes have met many times,
but fruitlessly.



FIFTH STATION

Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

I could now see almost complete helplessness
on the face of my son
as he tried to carry his heavy load.
Each step looked as if it would be his last.
I felt his every pain in my heart
and I wanted the whole thing to end.
Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus.
The guards had pulled a protesting man
from the crowd.
They forced him to pick up the back of the cross
to help lighten my son's load.
He asked the guards why this had to be.
I knew, and so followed silently.

Lord Jesus,
I have many times
refused to help you.
I have been a selfish person
who has often questioned your word.
Don't let me remain like Simon,
but help me to be like your mother, Mary,
who always silently followed and obeyed.

SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

As I continued close by Jesus,
a woman pushed past the guards,
took off her veil,
and began to wipe my son's sweating, bloody face.
The guards immediately pulled her back.
Her face seemed to say,
"Why are you doing this to him?"
I knew,
so I walked on in faith, silently.

Lord,
this woman gave you the best she could.
On the other hand,
I have wanted to take more than I give.
So many opportunities arise every day
for me to give to you
by giving to others—
but I pass them by.
My savior,
never let me ask why again,
but help me to give all I have to you.

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Second Time

Again
my son fell,
and again my grief was overwhelming
at the thought that he might die.
I started to move toward him,
but the soldiers prevented me.
He rose and stumbled ahead slowly.
Seeing my son fall,
get up again,
and continue on
was bitter anguish to me.
But, since I knew this had to be,
I walked on silently.

Lord,
of all people
Mary was your most faithful follower,
never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt
for you.
I have many times turned away from you
by my sins
and have caused others to turn away from you.
I beg you to have mercy on me.

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Speaks to the Women

I was walking a few steps behind Jesus
when I saw him stop.
Some women were there
crying for him and pitying him.
He told them not to shed tears for him.
They had the opportunity to accept him
as the messiah;
like many others, they rejected him instead.
He told them to shed tears for themselves,
tears that would bring their conversion.
They did not see the connection between that
and his walk to death.
I did,
and as he walked on, I followed silently.

My savior,
many times have I acted like these women,
always seeing the faults of others
and pitying them.
Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness
and asked your pardon.
Lord, you have taught me through these women.
Forgive me, Lord,
for my blindness.

NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

This fall of Jesus was agony to me.
Not only had he fallen on the rocky ground again,
but now he was almost at the top of the hill
of crucifixion.
The soldiers screamed at him and abused him,
almost dragging him the last few steps.
My heart pounded
as I imagined what they would do to him next.
But, I knew this had to be,
so I climbed the hill silently behind him.

My loving Jesus,
I know that many times
I have offered my hand to help people
but when it became inconvenient
or painful to me
I left them,
making excuses for myself.
Help me, Lord,
to be like your mother, Mary,
and never take my supporting hand
away from those who need it.

TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

With my son finally relieved
of the weight of the cross,
I thought he would have a chance to rest.
But the guards immediately started
to rip his clothes
off his blood-clotted skin.
The sight of my son in such pain
was unbearable.
Yet, since I knew this had to be,
I stood by and cried silently.

Lord,
in my own way I too have stripped you.
I have taken away the good name of another
by foolish talk,
and have stripped people of human dignity
by my prejudice.
Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended you
through the hurt I have caused others.
Help me to see you in all people.

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

As they threw Jesus on the cross,
he willingly allowed himself to be nailed.
As they punctured his hands and his feet
I felt the pain in my heart.
Then they lifted up the cross.
There he was, my son,
whom I love so much,
being scorned as he struggled
for the last few moments of earthly life.
But I knew this had to be,
so I stood by and prayed silently.

Lord,
what pain you endured for me.
And what pain your mother went through,
seeing her only son die for love of me!
Yet, both you and she are ready
to forgive me
as soon as I repent of my sin.
Help me, Lord,
to turn away from my sinfulness.

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies on the Cross

What greater pain is there for a mother
than to see her son die right before her eyes!
I, who had brought this savior into the world
and watched him grow,
stood helplessly beneath his cross
as he lowered his head
and died.
His earthly anguish was finished,
but mine was greater than ever.
Yet, this had to be
and I had to accept it,
so I stood by and I mourned silently.

My Jesus,
have mercy on me
for what my sins have done to you
and to others.
I thank you for your great act of love.
You have said
that true love is laying down your life
for your friends.
Let me always be your friend.
Teach me to live my life for others,
and not fail you again.

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

We brought Jesus' body to a tomb
and I arranged it there myself,
silently weeping,
silently rejoicing.
I took one more look at my loving son,
and then walked out.
They closed the tomb
and before I left, I thought,
I knew this had to be...
it had to be for you!
I would wait in faith
silently.

Yes, my Lord,
this had to be
because you love me,
and for no other reason.
All you ask is that I live a good life.
You never said such a life
would be easy.
I am willing to leave sin behind
and live for you alone,
in my brothers and sisters.

FIFTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Raised From the Dead

I could only be most grateful
for the sacrifice of my son for us.
Yet, what emptiness I felt
trying to live without him whom I loved so!
But, only two days later,
that emptiness was filled beyond belief—
he had risen!
Our savior had opened the doors
to a new life.
That is the way it had to be—
because his undying love for you
would not stop at anything less.
I could rejoice forever,
but not in silence.

My savior, thank you!
Thank you for such endless love
that helps me to rise
out of my own sinfulness.
I will try again
to live a better life.
Help me to always remember that love.
Mary, mother of our risen savior,
teach me to be like you,
and in my love for others,
love him in return.

Epilogue

"I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you say." Those words, some of the very few that Mary speaks in Scripture, set in motion the process of our redemption. Those words also opened for Mary a life which she could never have imagined, one which must have certainly been blessed with happiness, as well as great sorrow. Simeon told Mary at the very beginning of her child's life that "a sword of sorrow" would pierce her heart. With so little written about Mary in Scripture, one can only wonder about these joys and sorrows. What was it like for the one person who was perhaps closer to Jesus than anyone else as she daily came to understand her son's life? What can we learn from her experience of this process of redemption?

This book attempts to enkindle within the reader a sense of both prayerful repentance and grateful redemption as it lets him or her walk Jesus' last steps with his Mother. To feel with her the "sword of sorrow," the confusion, the feelings of helplessness, as well as her ever-present faith, will hopefully lead the reader to a personal experience of redemption, one which may bring about conversion where it is needed. Hence, the second part of each Station is designed to point out a practical way of rooting out of one's life those areas which one has not yet allowed redemption to touch.

Mary stood by her son throughout his passion and, in her faith, experienced the joy of his resurrection. This booklet allows the twenty-first-century Christian to do the same in hope that he or she will, with Mary's assistance, deepen his or her faith and allow Jesus to rise once more in his or her life.

Dedication

To Mom and Dad, Mike Andy, and Panky,
And to Mary, most of all—thank you.

Thirty-fifth printing 2013

TWENTY-THIRD PUBLICATIONS
A Division of Bayard
One Montauk Avenue, Suite 200
New London, CT 06320
(860) 437-3012 or (800) 321-0411
www.23rdpublications.com

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ISBN 978-0-89622-198-7
Printed in the U.S.A.

Imprimi potest: Joseph T. Hurley, C.Ss.R., Provincial of Baltimore Province Redemptorists.