

5th Station

Simon of Cyrene is ordered to carry Jesus' cross

Focus: We make Jesus present when we exercise mercy.

Action: Be merciful, doing whatever you can to relieve the suffering of others.



Leader

We adore you O Christ
and we praise you.

People

Because by your
holy cross, you have
redeemed the world.

Reflection

Many people have been spared suffering by being born in times, places, and to people who live well-off, in free, democratic societies. Others unfortunately, are born into poverty or in countries that do not respect human rights, and who as a result live in fear, enduring grave suffering every day. The Gospels make it very clear that 'mercy' was one of the hallmarks of Jesus' ministry. He was totally 'other-focused,' doing all that he could to relieve peoples' suffering.

This same ministry of relieving suffering was and remains what Jesus asks of his disciples: to be merciful like his Father, and he promised those who show mercy, that they would inherit the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 25: 33-46). Simon of Cyrene did not take up the cross of Jesus out of compassion; rather, he was forced to do so by the soldiers who accompanied Jesus along the way of the cross. He is not, therefore, the best example of discipleship. Instead, Jesus asks us to imitate his example, doing all that we can to relieve the burdens of those who suffer.

Prayer

Almighty Father, Simon of Cyrene was given the privilege, albeit reluctantly, to help relieve Jesus of his suffering by shouldering his cross for a while. Grant us the desire and the grace to do whatever we can to be merciful, as you Father are merciful, thus enabling people to experience Jesus' healing presence in their lives. Help us also, to realize it's not how great our acts of mercy are, but rather, it's the love with which we do them that matters most. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.