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Stations for Teens

G A R Y E G E B E R G

Meditations
on the
Death and
Resurrection
of Jesus

Stations for Teens



Kristin Feüss, 17, Pope John XXIII Regional High School, Sparta, New Jersey



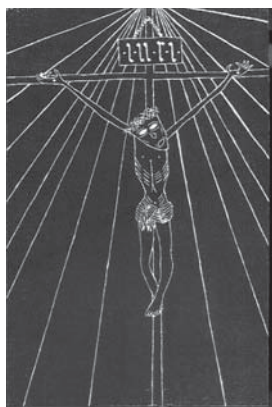
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Lauren Fuchs, 15, Mercy Academy, Louisville, Kentucky (right)

Stations for Teens

Meditations on
the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Gary Egeberg



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For young people throughout the world who are hurting emotionally, spiritually, or physically. I hope and pray that you will be able to sense God's loving and healing presence in your life. Know that our God cares for you.

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Nihil Obstat: Rev. William M. Becker
Censor Librorum
9 March 1999

Imprimatur: †Most Rev. Bernard J. Harrington, DD
Bishop of Winona
9 March 1999

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The publishing team included Marilyn Kielbasa, development editor; Mary Duerson, copy editor; Alan S. Hanson, production editor; Hollace Storkel, typesetter; Cindi Ramm, art director; pre-press, printing, and binding by the graphics division of Saint Mary's Press.

Thank you to my editor at Saint Mary's Press, Marilyn Kielbasa, for her sharp editorial eye, friendliness, and professionalism. Thanks to the students whose artwork adds to the meaning and prayerfulness of each station. And deepest gratitude to my wife, Peggy, for her gentle criticisms, kind affirmations, and timely wisdom.

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Printed in the United States of America

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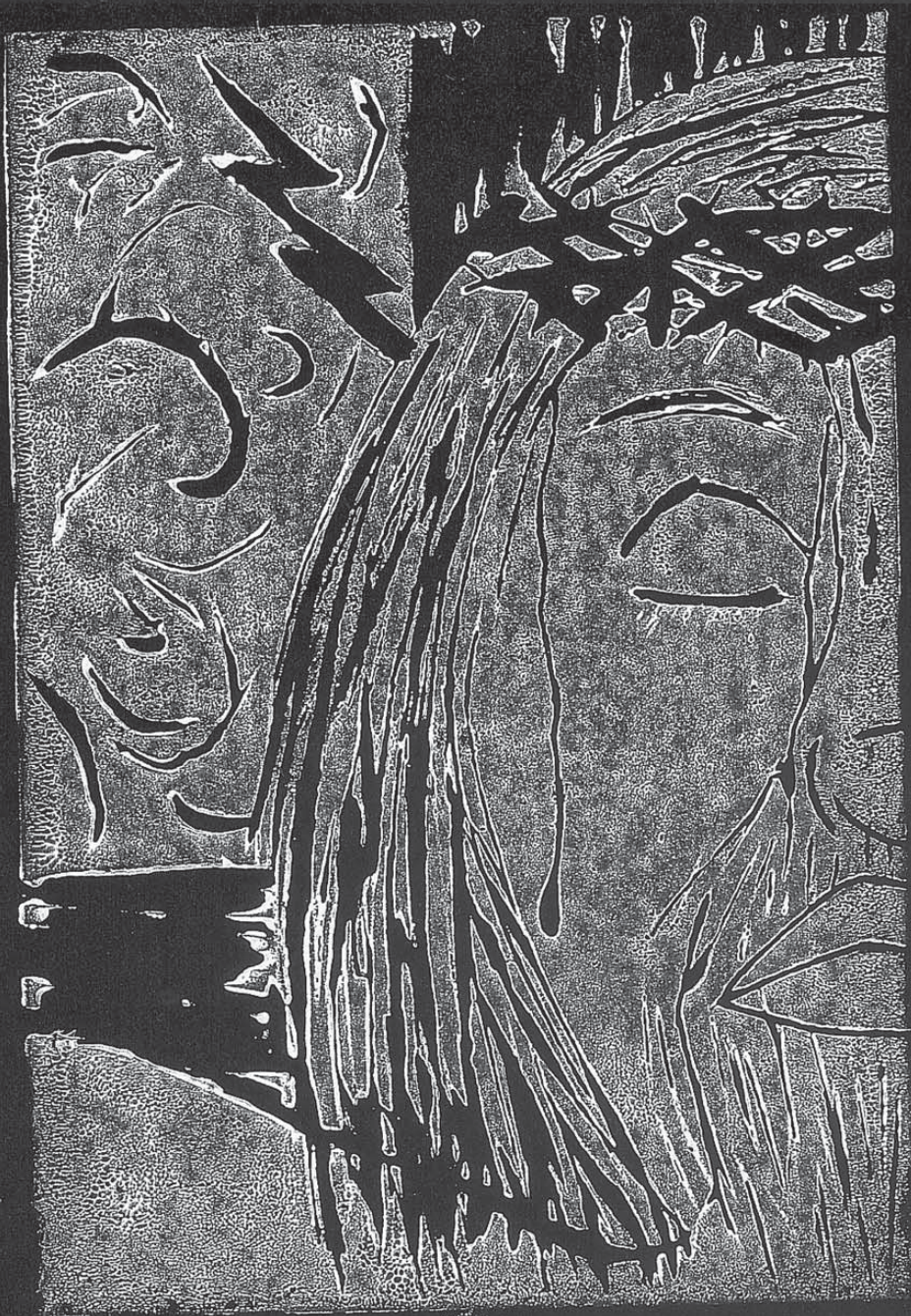
ISBN-13: 978-0-88489-512-1

Preface

Centuries ago Christians expressed their love for Jesus by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during Holy Week to walk and pray along the way of the cross. As Christianity grew, and as it became more impractical and difficult to travel to Jerusalem, this devotional practice spread to Christian shrines and churches located closer to the people. Today most Catholic churches have pictures or carvings portraying the stations of the cross hanging along the walls where the community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist.

Catholics can meditate on the stations at any time, but this devotion to the memory and meaning of Christ's Passion is especially popular during the season of Lent, when many parishioners gather together to walk and pray the stations of the cross.

Jesus' suffering and death on the cross is only part of the story; the other part of the story is the good news of Jesus' Resurrection. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we can be less afraid of death and more confident that it is but a passageway to eternal life! After Jesus rose from the dead and before he returned to his Abba God (the name he used to address God the Father), he appeared many times to his grief-stricken and confused disciples. These men and women struggled to figure out who he was and what his life, death, and Resurrection were all about. In this book we are introducing the stations of the Resurrection, which shed some light on their struggle—and on our struggle—to truly believe the good news that sin and death have been conquered, that Jesus has been raised, and that his spirit, the Holy Spirit, is very much with us today. Although these stations are not an official devotion of the Catholic church, they are based on one of the church's surest foundations: the stories of Jesus' Resurrection



appearances to his disciples as recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

How to Use This Book

The meditations in this book can be used in a variety of settings, and they allow for a great deal of flexibility in how you use them. For example:

- Use them alone or with a group of your peers. (If you are alone and a particular station touches you, stay with it as long as you like. If you are in a group and would like to spend more time with a station, do so after your group meditation is over.)
- Focus on the stations of the cross during Lent (traditionally a period of forty days) and on the stations of the Resurrection during the season of Easter.
- Meditate on an entire set of stations in one session (it could take less than one hour).
- Prayerfully reflect on a different station for a few minutes each day for a couple of weeks.

However you choose to use this book, open yourself to the stations and have a dialogue with Jesus. Allow God's love to penetrate your heart and mind through the meditations and through the artwork, which was done by young people like you. Trust the spirit of God to speak to you and with you through your thoughts, feelings, and insights.

Introduction to the



Stations of the Cross

The stations of the cross can help us meditate on the tremendous faithfulness Jesus had to truth, love, and justice. He was totally committed to doing his Abba's will no matter what it cost him. And we all know it cost him his life. He knew the religious authorities were threatened by the way he spoke about God. He was aware the political authorities feared he would cause an uprising among the oppressed Jewish people, especially during the Passover, when Jerusalem swelled with throngs of people. Jesus knew his life was in danger, but he stayed true to his mission to reveal to us the truth about God. In Jesus' day the cross was an instrument of torture and death, but for Christians it has become a symbol of the depth of God's love for us.

Although we do not know the pain of crucifixion, we have all experienced suffering. It hurts! And it's not easy to deal with. As Christians we strongly believe that God does not give us the pain and suffering we experience in life. Instead God promises to be with us and to help us through it.

When we reflect on Jesus' suffering, maybe we can better understand the meaning of our own suffering and that of others. We come away with more compassion for those who are hurting throughout the world due to poverty, homeless-

ness, natural disaster, or war. We develop greater sensitivity for those who are suffering in our own schools and neighborhoods because of rejections, put-downs, low self-esteem, or family problems. We come to a deeper realization of how interconnected the human race is and of how hard we must all work to alleviate some of the needless suffering. Donating to a food shelf, volunteering, being a friend to someone who is lonely or left out, sticking up for someone, speaking a word of forgiveness or encouragement—those are some of the ways we can make a difference.

While you meditate on the stations of the cross, let God's love support you as you become aware of your own suffering and the suffering of others near and far. Think about specific ways you can become more loving in your daily life. Take comfort in knowing that our God is eager to forgive us for the times we fail to love. Take strength from the spirit of Jesus, who lives within each of us, to forgive yourself and try again, for it has been said that a saint is a sinner who keeps on trying. Let's encourage one another to keep on trying to follow Jesus' challenging and rewarding path of love.



Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Leader. Saving and forgiving Lord, we love you, we need you, and we trust you.

All. Give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Leader. Lord Jesus, you came into this world to reveal the tremendous depth of God's love for each of us. You invited everyone to follow you. You healed the sick, forgave the guilt-ridden, included the excluded, and taught people how to live and love. Yet a handful of political and religious authorities rejected you and condemned you to die on a cross.

All. Forgive me, Lord, for the times I condemn you again by not honoring your presence in others and in myself. Forgive me for the times I judge my brothers and sisters harshly. I am so quick to find fault in others and in myself. Too often I criticize people for how they look or act or dress. Too often I see only my weaknesses. Too often I am blind to the goodness you see in us all. Sometimes, Lord, others have rejected and condemned me. It seems like I'm either condemning or being condemned. Surely there must be a better way!

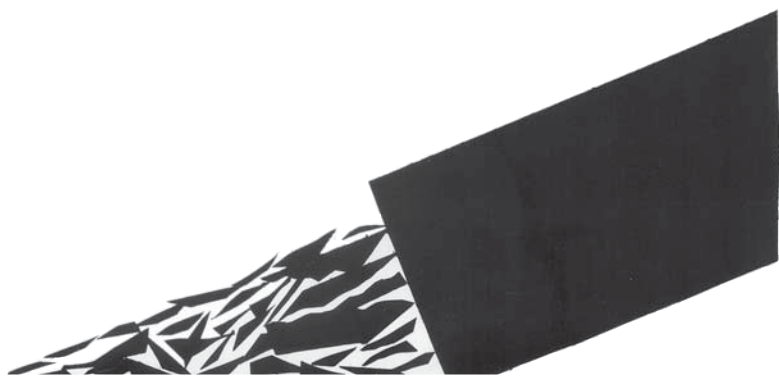
Silent reflection. Who are the people—individuals or groups—you look down on and condemn, either in the silence of your mind or in the words you speak?

All. Jesus, by the power of your spirit, who lives within each of us, help us to look for and find the good in others and in ourselves. Help us to forgive those who have rejected and condemned us, just as we need others to forgive us for the times we have rejected and condemned them. Lead



Leanora Porter, 14, Saint Henry Parish, Monticello, Minnesota

us along the path of acceptance. Help us to respect the uniqueness of each person, for we are all created in God's image and likeness. Teach us to love. Amen.



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