

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

COMPANION GUIDE TO
STATIONS OF THE CROSS WITH
REFLECTIONS & PROMPTS



The Stations of the Cross is an ancient meditative pilgrimage inviting the spiritually hungry to walk the “Way of Sorrow” with Jesus to his death on Calvary Hill. Traditionally depicted in fourteen visuals, the Stations highlight pivotal moments in Jesus’ final hours. This graphic art rendition of the Stations by Lauren Wright Pittman nods to tradition while imagining Jesus’ journey toward crucifixion through a modern lens. In twelve black and white images, this series condenses the version of Pope John Paul II introduced on Good Friday in 1991. Stripped down and textured, these visuals highlight the metaphorical and emotional layers of Jesus’ journey toward his last breaths.

We invite you to use these Stations and this Companion Guide to walk the path of our suffering Savior with your eyes and heart wide open. Walk along the road with the One who took on human flesh, stepping into the depths of betrayal, injustice, mockery, judgment, and pain in order to free us from their grip. Walk the journey of the One who chose nonviolent resistance as the means of redemption. Walk the path of the One who leads us to the tomb but hushes death before it can speak the last word. Walk in the footsteps of the One who proves that even crucified love still lives.

With every step, may you know—fully and freely—
that there is no place God won’t go.
Walk on, friends.

Artfully yours,

The Sanctified Art Creative Team

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—Station 1—
Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane



READ—Matthew 26:36-41 NRSV

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” ⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “I can only imagine how profoundly alone Jesus feels in this moment. All he wants is for the disciples to stay awake with him in the midst of his despair, and they can’t even do that. Instead, Jesus shakes with grief and shivers as the sting of death draws close, while his friends drift far away in their dreams. Jesus cries out to God, but his request for the cup to pass from him is denied. He is utterly alone. I imagine he feels like the garden is closing in on him, with vines twisting and turning around his body and flowers stretching their petals toward his bloody tears. As he throws himself on the ground, I imagine he feels the damp soil against his face, between his toes, and under his fingertips, and shuttered knowing the cold ground would soon be his dwelling place”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I stay awake to the suffering in the world and responsive when you call me to be present with those in need. Amen.

—Station 2—
Jesus is Betrayed by Judas and Arrested

READ—Mark 14:43-46 NRSV

⁴³Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “In the veil of the night, Judas attempts to obscure the intentions of his heart with the intimate and beautiful act of a kiss. This kiss images the affection that once bound Jesus and Judas together. But this kiss also unties trust and shatters relationship—it ushers in violence and murders love. Although Judas thinks his intentions are safely hidden, he wears the violence of his action like a shining crown.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May the actions of my hands and the intentions of my heart be in harmony with your own. Amen.



—Station 3—
Jesus is Denied by St. Peter

READ—Matthew 26:69-75 NRSV

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” ⁷¹ When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.



LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “Jesus is denied three times. He is mocked by the number of the Triune communion; he must feel as if the very holy community has abandoned him. I imagine this feels like the holiest of rejections. In the wake of Peter’s denial, the rooster cries out. The rooster’s crowing reminds me of the image of God as a mother hen protecting her young under her wing. I wonder if the rooster’s cry is a comfort to Jesus. I wonder if the sound at once voices the cry of Jesus’ own anguished heart and also reminds him that, though he is betrayed and denied, he is not alone?”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I resist the urge to deny you and have the courage to identify with you always. Amen.

—Station 4—
Jesus is Judged by Pontius Pilate

READ—Mark 15:1-5, 15 NRSV

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ² Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” ³ Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴ Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” ⁵ But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “The crown represents the misunderstanding of Jesus’ power. Many thought the Messiah was to be strong, powerful, militaristic rebellion commander. Kings and governors feared he would be a threat to the crown; a menacing, dethroning force. But Jesus was a servant leader. He spent his days with and serving the downtrodden, the poor, and the meek. Jesus was condemned to death for a crown he did not wear. Pilate’s hand points Jesus to his death, attempting to silence the truth he spoke to power.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I defy the attraction of earthly power, elevate the voices of the marginalized, and speak truth to the powers that oppress. Amen.



—Station 5—
**Jesus is Scourged at the Pillar
and Crowned with Thorns**

READ—John 19:1-3 NRSV

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³ They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “I’m floored by the boldness of violence in this passage. To strike someone across the face requires looking someone in the eyes and marring the most recognizable and identifiable part of the body. It requires facing the recipient of your rage and witnessing the consequences and destruction of your actions first-hand. It is a brazen and intimate act of violence. Continuing to misunderstand and mock Jesus’s power, the soldiers craft him a crown made out of pain—a crown made out of that which protects the beauty of the bloom. In this case, however, the thorns cannot protect the beauty they surround.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I recognize the ways I am complicit in the violence of this world and take a stand against it. Amen.



—Station 6—
Jesus Bears the Cross

READ—John 19:6, 15-17 NRSV

⁶When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.”

¹⁵They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.” ¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “Jesus not only bears the physical weight of the cross, he bears the weight of creation. I imagine his arms contorted behind him, grasping the edges of the cross, trying to balance the weight of it all on his back. Contemplating this great burden, I imagine his body twisted and tied to the cross by the vines of the Garden of Eden, but also held up and supported by the vines of the new creation.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman



PRAY: May I help carry the burden of the injustice in this world and work to usher in the new creation. Amen.

—Station 7—
Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

READ—Luke 23:27-31 NRSV

²⁷ A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. ²⁸ But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “When I consider the women beating their breasts and wailing for Jesus, I imagine the reasons I could be doing the same. Jesus doesn’t ask them to stop wailing; he asks them to redirect their grief. I can imagine grief upon grief spilling out of those faithful women. Sometimes I grieve for what is close to me—things that I can see with my own eyes, tragedy that I can reach out and touch. But Jesus asks the women to do more than that. He asks them to look beyond the immediate and tangible sorrow to the greater struggle that is to come. Sometimes we get stuck in our religious grief for Jesus. We narrow our focus on his death; we tuck in neatly to our calendars each Holy Week and place it on the far end of a faded timeline. But Jesus’ death has lasting, continual, real world consequences in the here and now. His death is a state-sanctioned, attempted murder of love and hope. Jesus is telling the women that their grief will be a journey, and they need to be prepared. We need to be prepared.”

—*Artist Lauren Wright Pittman*

PRAY: May I grieve, but may I also be prepared to move. Amen.



**—Station 8—
Jesus is Crucified**

READ—Luke 23:33-34 NRSV

³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “Jesus’ act of nonviolence in the face of such grotesque brutality—an act of protest against injustice—is astounding. I imagine him balling up his fists in unspeakable pain as the nails are driven into his wrists. His clenched fist symbolizes his resistance in the face of terror and state-sanctioned violence. His clenched fist signals solidarity with liberation movements that continue today and unity with those who follow his footsteps to speak truth to power and nonviolently resist oppression.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I follow in Jesus’ path and join my brothers and sisters in protesting the injustices of the world. Amen.



—Station 9—
Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

READ—Luke 23:39-43 NRSV

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?” ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “While speaking to the good thief, I imagine Jesus’ hand outstretched beneath the brilliant sun radiating oranges, reds, and yellows. It takes great strength to find beauty in the midst of such darkness and pain. What more can he do other than offer another hope and light on their journey? Jesus’ ministry on earth was about bringing the Kingdom of God into the here and now. He continues his ministry in his last moments by offering hope to the good thief. He assures him that they will be together beyond the pain, beyond the ceasing of their breath. The Kingdom of God is near—so close he can almost reach out and touch it.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I always strive to find, acknowledge, reflect, and create beauty in this world. Amen.



—Station 10—

Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

READ—John 19:25-27 NRSV

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: "In this moment, I imagine if Jesus could, he would come down off of the cross, walk up to his mother and hold her in his arms, thanking her for her courage, persistence, and bravery for bringing him into the world. I imagine he would hold her face, seeing his whole life dance in the shades of green and brown of her eyes. I imagine pain welling up in her glossy eyes as he wipes her tears away. In the midst of his great pain, in the last moments of his life, Jesus takes care of his mother."

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I care for my own family with the tenderness and warmth you extend to us all. Amen.



—Station 11—
Jesus Dies on the Cross

READ—Luke 23:44-46 NRSV

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “The sun has to go away; light is not welcome in this moment. The curtains of the temple tear like the clothes of a mother rent in inexplicable sorrow over the loss of her child. I wonder if Jesus’ countless tears change the character of his face, shifting the contours that his mother and father knew so well. I wonder if his voice becomes distorted and weathered after enduring such betrayal, denial, and torture. I wonder if they can see the light in his breath as it escapes from his lips and swirls up into the dark sky.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman

PRAY: May I remember, even in the darkness, that crucified love still lives. Amen.



—Station 12—
Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

READ—Matthew 27:57-60 NRSV

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

LOOK: Observe the visual qualities of the image: line, shape, movement, and texture. How do the visual elements connect to the scripture text? What emotions emerge for you as you observe the art?

REFLECT: “When I consider this moment in Joseph’s life, I think about the normalcy and strangeness of burying a loved one. The ritual act of burial is a physical reminder of our own fragile mortality and also an affirmation that we are more than our bodies. This is a completely natural and wholly unnatural experience. We grasp onto the hope that our loved one is with God in death, and at the same time, everything fights with us to hold on to the physicality of those we love. The contrast within the act of burial makes the duality of Jesus, the humanity and divinity of Christ, very tangible. I imagine Joseph, filled with despair, fights to hold onto Jesus’ body, afraid to let go. I imagine he also feels grounded in faith that Jesus will not be contained.”

—Artist Lauren Wright Pittman



PRAY: May I work to break free of all that is entombed within and around me. Amen.

—Station 13—
Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

For further reflection

REFLECT ON THE STATIONS AS A WHOLE

- ◆ What visual patterns and motifs do you identify?
- ◆ How do the Stations shift and change as they progress?
- ◆ Which Station is the most moving for you to view, and why?
- ◆ What assumptions or expectations did you bring to each image, and how were your assumptions and expectations challenged?
- ◆ How did the Stations help you see and experience Jesus' journey to the cross in new ways?

REFLECT ON YOUR JOURNEY

- ◆ What was it like to reflect on the visual qualities of each image?
- ◆ What insights did you glean from this practice of seeing?
- ◆ Which Station was the most difficult for you to visit?
- ◆ What emotions emerged for you as you walked through the Stations?
- ◆ How did your emotions shift and change along the way?
- ◆ What, if any, personal experiences or memories did you recall as you walked?
- ◆ Which character(s) in the story did you relate to the most?
- ◆ Which character(s) are the most difficult for you to relate to?
- ◆ Consider the emotions, thoughts, and meanings evoked for you along this journey—how do you connect them to your personal journey?

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshipping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God.

Learn more about their work at sanctified.org.

All Stations and reflections by Lauren Wright Pittman. Based in Atlanta, Georgia. Lauren is an artist, graphic designer, and theologian. She uses visual art to image the tension, joy, sadness, beauty, and energy she experiences in scripture.

—Stations of the Cross—
Final Prayer

Walk through.
 Walk to.
 Walk on.



Walk despite.
 Walk amidst.
 Walk singing.



Walk in protest.
 Walk in hope.
 Walk in love.



Walk with your hands up.
 Walk with your soul.
 Walk with your neighbor.

Walk to the tomb.
 Walk into the light.
 Walk toward the dawn.



And when it's dark,
 And the road is hard,
 God, help us walk.

Walk on.

Amen.

—prayer by Sarah Are

