

# MARY'S WAY OF THE CROSS

Richard G. Furey, C.Ss.R.

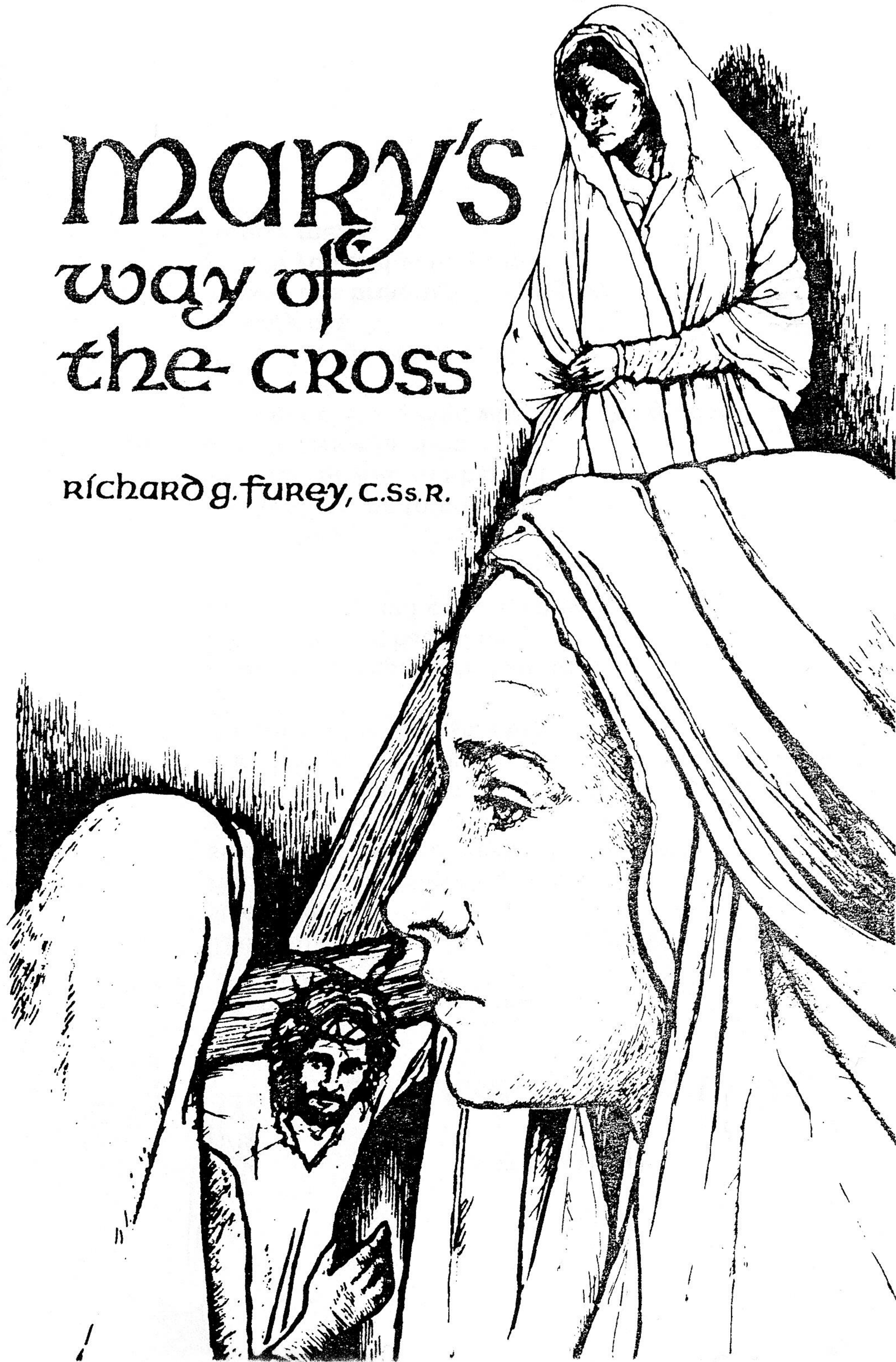
"I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you say." Those words, some of the very few that Mary speaks in Scripture, set in motion the process of our redemption. Those words also opened for Mary a life which she could never have imagined, one which must have certainly been blest with happiness, 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 20th 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.

# MARY'S way of the CROSS

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# Foreword

Is 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, called *Mary's Way of the Cross*, 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 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."

Rev. Andrew Costello, C.Ss.R.

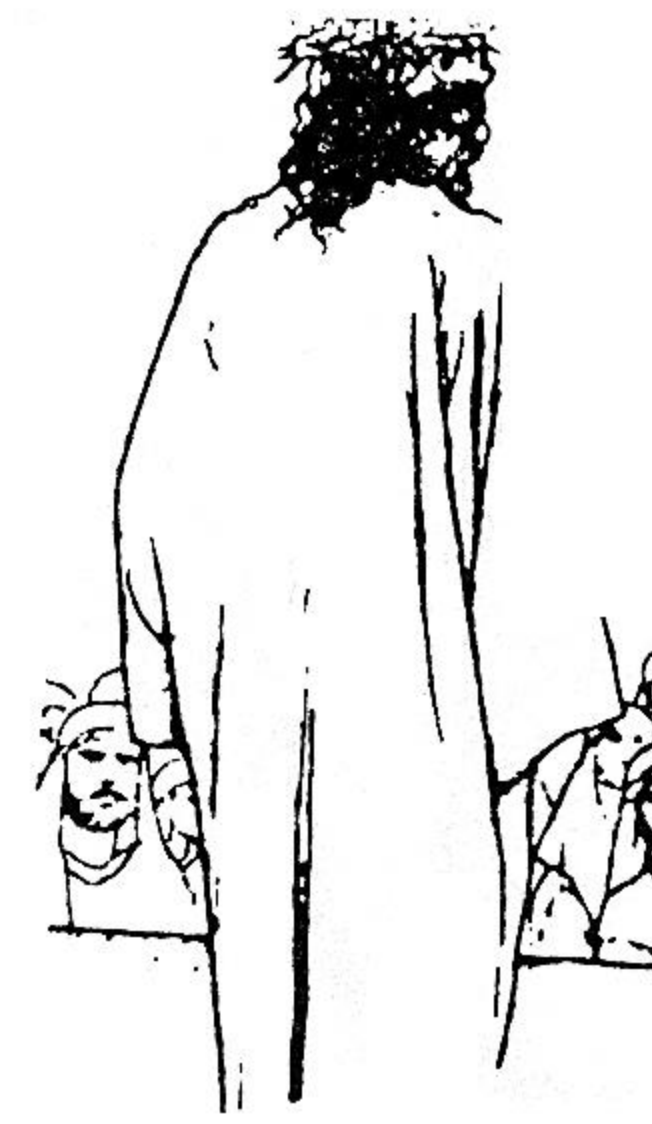
DEDICATION: To Mom and Dad, Mike, Andy, and Panky,  
And to Mary, most of all—thank you.

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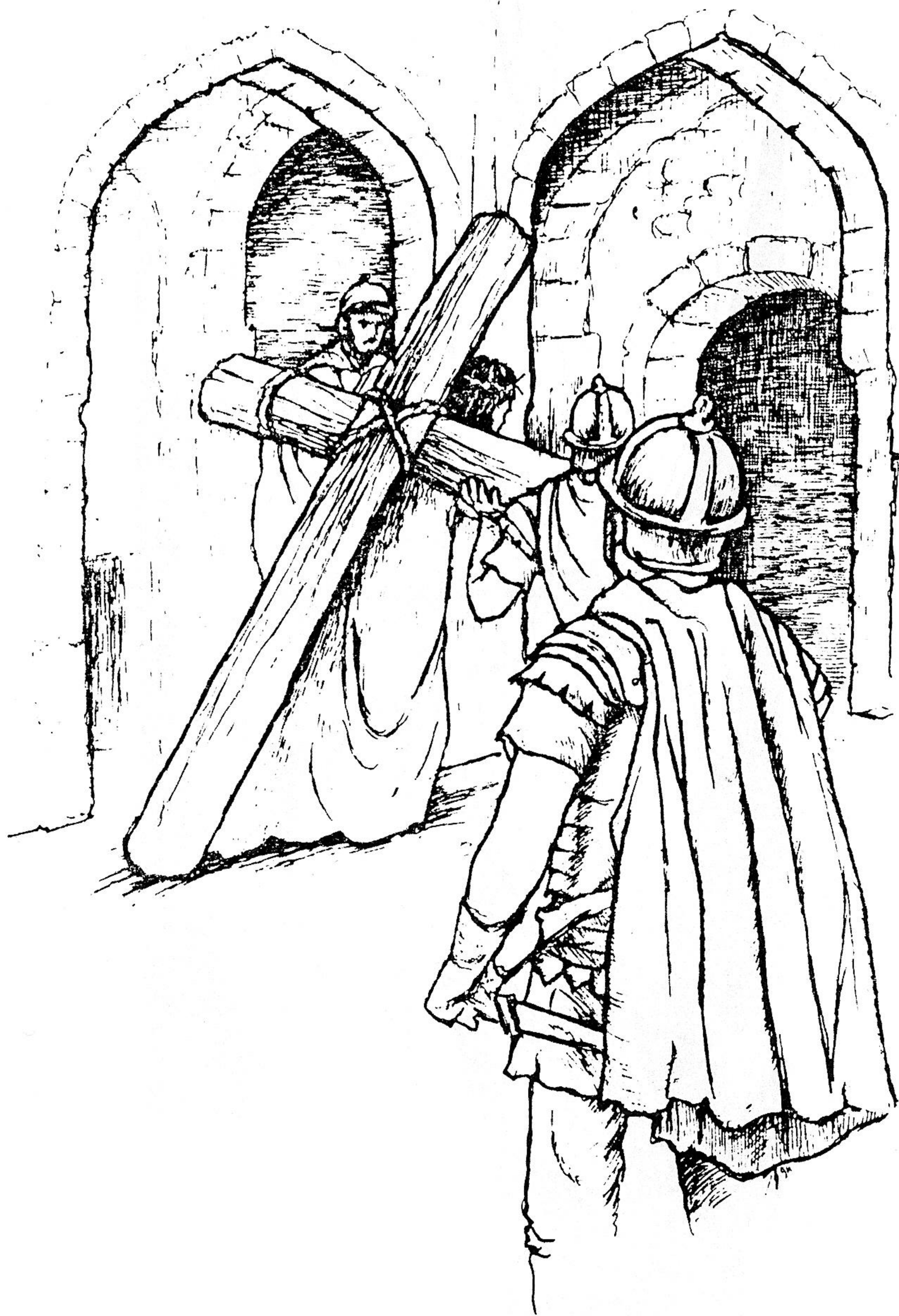


## FIRST STATION

### 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.

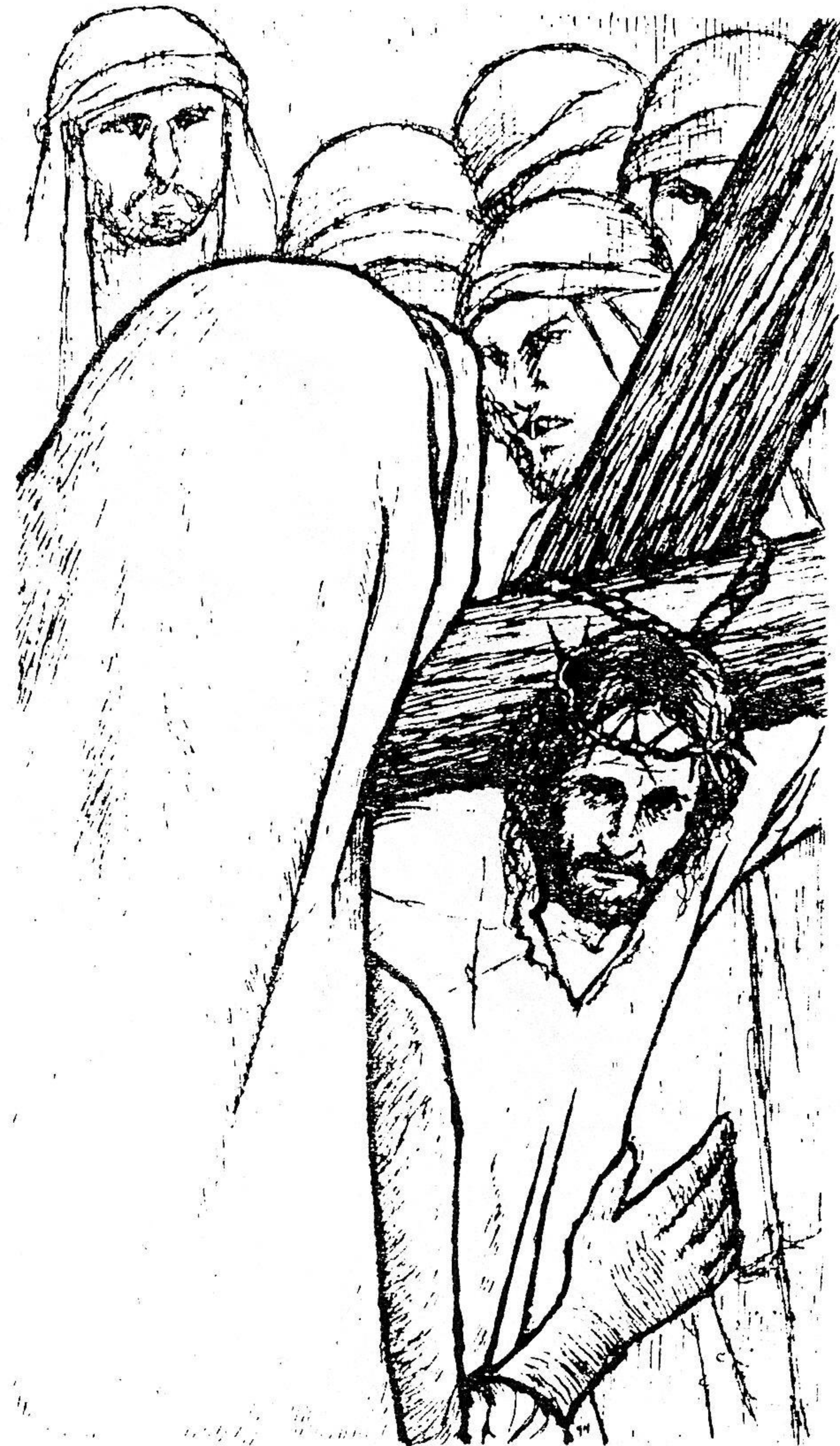


### THIRD STATION

## 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.

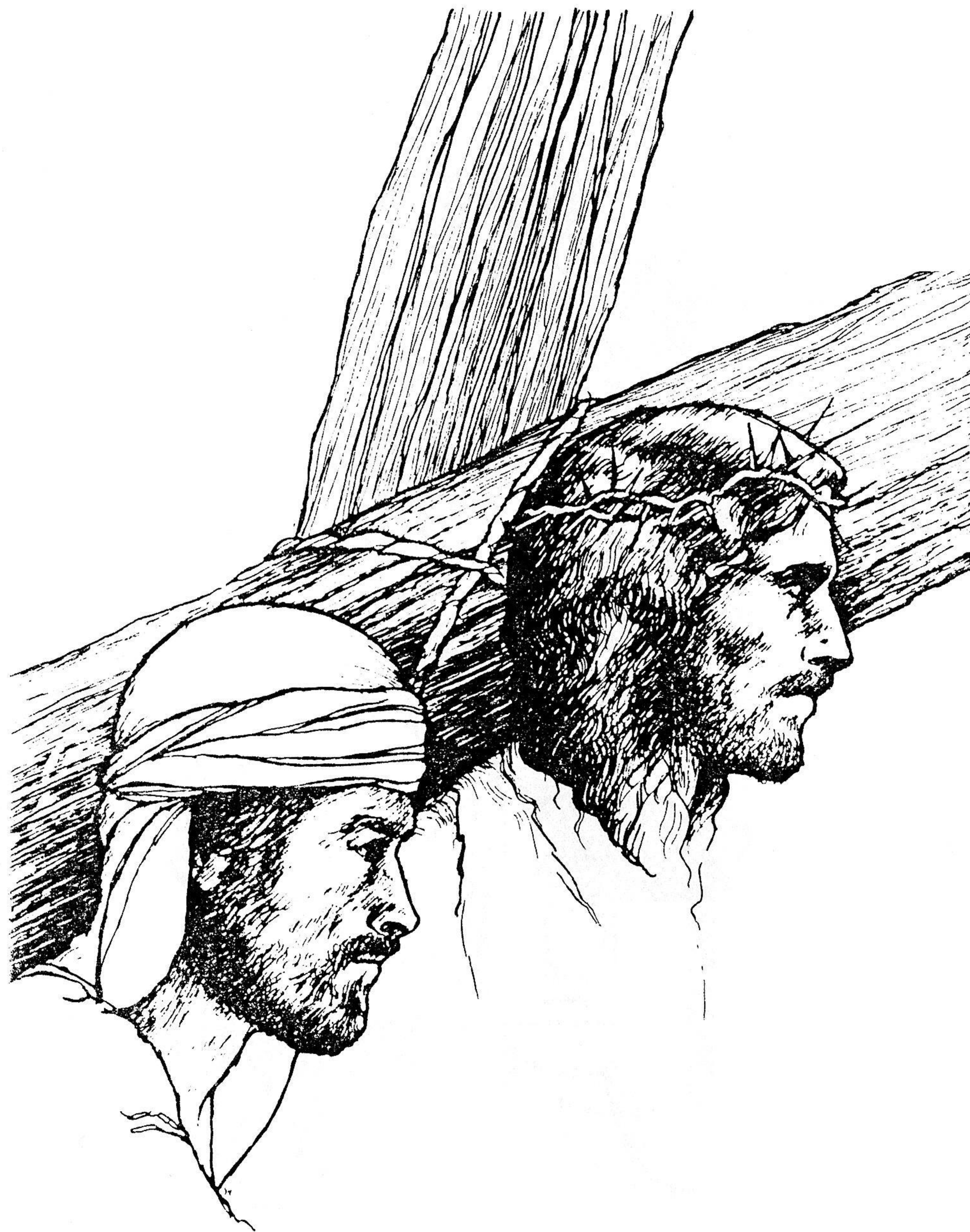


#### FOURTH STATION

### Jesus Meets His Grieving Mother

I had 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.



### THIRTEENTH STATION

## Jesus Is Taken From the Cross

The crowd had gone;  
the noise had stopped.  
I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends  
and looked up at the dead body  
of our savior,  
my son.  
Then two men took the body from the cross  
and placed it in my arms.  
A deep sorrow engulfed my being.  
Yet, I also felt  
deep joy.  
Life had ended cruelly for my son,  
but it had also brought life to all of us.  
I knew this had to be,  
and I prayed silently.

Lord,  
your passion has ended.  
Yet, it still goes on  
whenever I choose sin over you.  
I have done my part in your crucifixion  
and now, my savior,  
I beg your forgiveness with all my heart.  
Help me to live a life  
worthy of you and your mother.



#### 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.