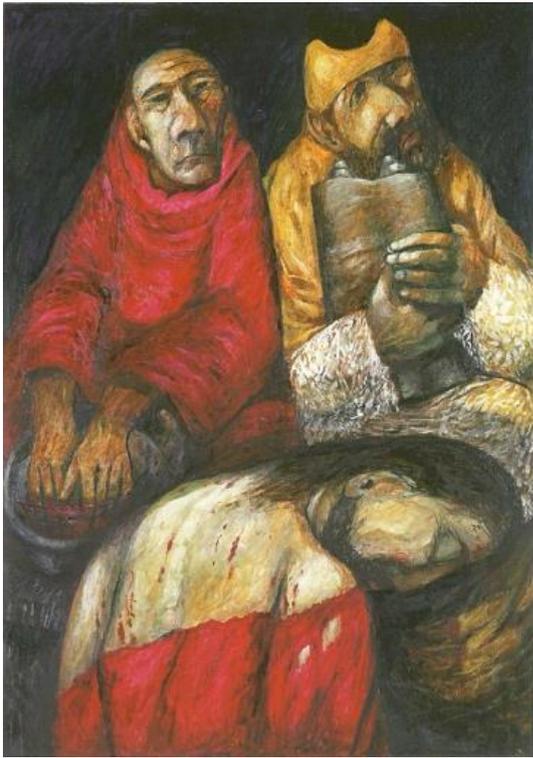


1. Jesus is condemned to die



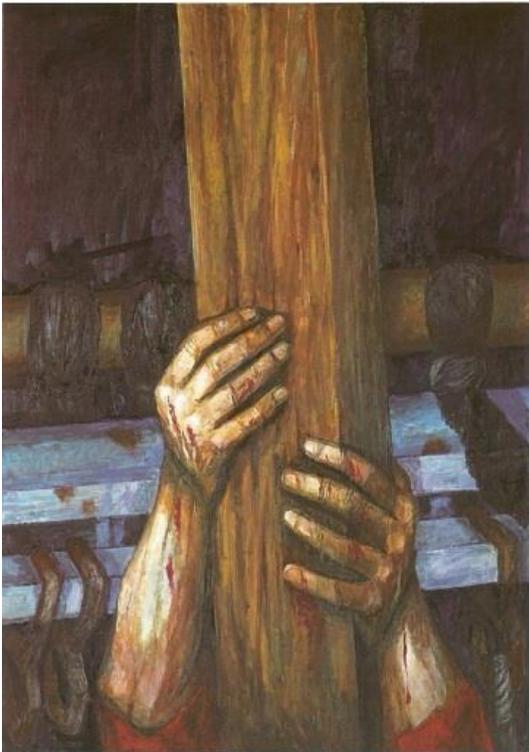
Jesus set out on his public ministry with a mission: to heal a broken world. He had a new way of thinking which didn't sit too well with the authorities and the religious leaders of his time. Jesus was critical of their narrow minded way of thinking. He tried to open their closed hearts. He stood up for the outsiders of first century Judea.

The outsiders of Jesus' time were the chronically sick who suffered from visible illness; they were widows and orphans plus sinners like tax collectors and prostitutes. Jesus loved them and tried to bring healing to those who suffered. His direct way of addressing the social problems of his day challenged the authority and power of the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus grew in popularity. It was only a matter of time before his threat to the status quo would come to a head.

How often are we quick to judge without bothering to get to know someone first? First impressions mean everything. Are we guilty of casting people aside when they don't measure up to our expectations? Dear Lord, forgive me for the times when I judge another person. We are all a part of God's Kingdom. Help me to look past appearances and see through to the heart of your

people. God is the loving father who loves all his children, regardless of what clothes they wear, what color their skin is, who they pray too and regardless of their sexual orientation or how much money they have.

2. Jesus takes up his cross

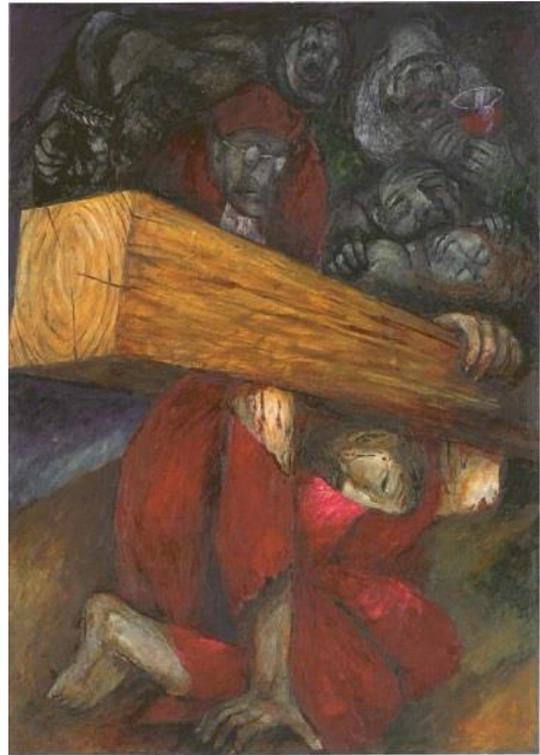


We all have a cross to carry. It is a saying that has been used and heard over and over again. But what does that actually mean? Jesus was condemned for loving others. He was bullied and beaten because he stood up for what was right. Jesus had a heart for people and now he was being denied. He was betrayed by one of his disciples and his closest friend denied knowing him. Surely this broke his heart. What did Jesus do? He didn't try to change the situation, he didn't try to talk his way out of it or run away. Jesus picked up his cross and carried it all the way to the end.

Dear Lord, for the times I wasn't honest about who I am or what I have done, I am sorry. I am sorry for the times when I was not a loyal friend. I am sorry when I didn't help someone who needed me. Forgive me for all the times when I was so wrapped up in my own life that I did not care about those around me.

3. Jesus falls

Crucifixion was an ancient method of capital punishment. After a severe beating the condemned person would begin a death march to the place of execution. The beating, which involved various instruments to rip the skin from the body of the condemned, was often a public event. Jesus had to carry a large cross beam which weighed almost 75 kilos. Given his physical

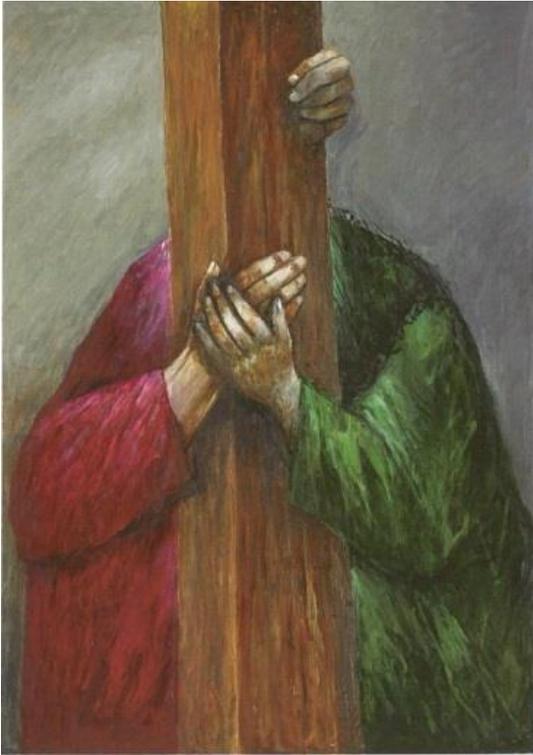


state, the weight of the wood, which was heavier than him, he was sure to fall. Jesus was so despised, as were criminals of first century Jerusalem, he was mocked and spat on. In falling, there was certainly no empathy. For those who did have compassion the fear of the Romans outweighed any expression of sympathy.

Dear Lord, how many times have I fallen? Failing is humiliating. Most of the time, we all want to do what's right and not make mistakes. We want to be looked up to and we want our parents to be proud of us. It feels better to be praised than it does to be ridiculed. In falling, we learn how to get up and this strengthens us. In failing we learn how to see our mistakes and try to do better next time. Help me to recognize my weaknesses. Most

importantly help me to see when another person needs my help. Together we can do it!

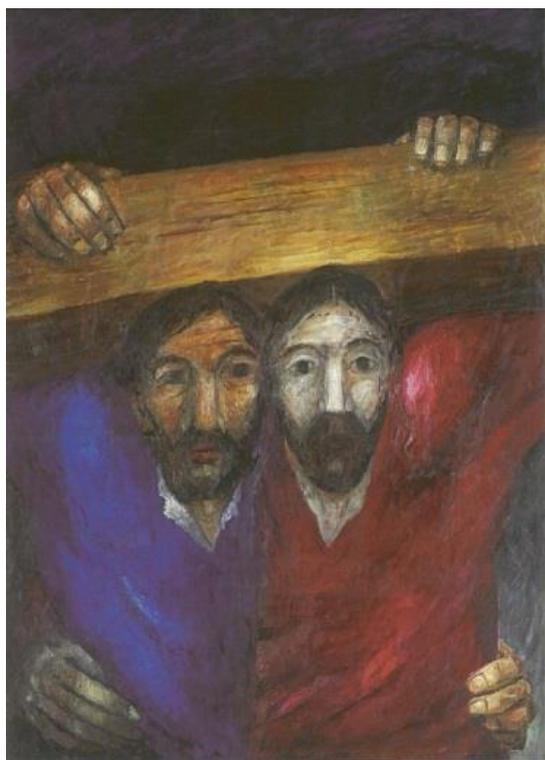
4. Jesus comes face to face with his mother



We love our parents and they want what's best for us. They don't want to see us hurt and they help us when we fall. Jesus had parents. His mother Mary was just a young woman when she said yes to God's plan for her. God as a man would be born to a young woman from Nazareth. I don't think Mary knew what was in store for her when she said yes. As all good mothers, Mary

took care of her son, fed him, cared for him when he was sick and watched him grow. It doesn't say in the Bible if or where Mary met Jesus during his march to death, but certainly she was there. Nothing could have prepared her for what she witnessed that day. Dear Jesus, the pain you were feeling must have been more unbearable than we could imagine. You knew your fate and so did your mother. In those tender moments, the last of many, you and your mother comforted each other. Sometimes I forget that my mother has feelings. She is always there for me and often I take her presence for granted. Forgive me for the times I ignored her and didn't take her seriously.

5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus



After he was baptized by his cousin John, Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert. There he fasted, prayed and was tempted. This strengthened Jesus and he was then ready to begin his public ministry. Jesus couldn't do it alone, so he asked twelve people to help him and they became his disciples. He taught them and showed them a new way of living. Jesus had a lot of

work to do and together they travelled throughout the country.

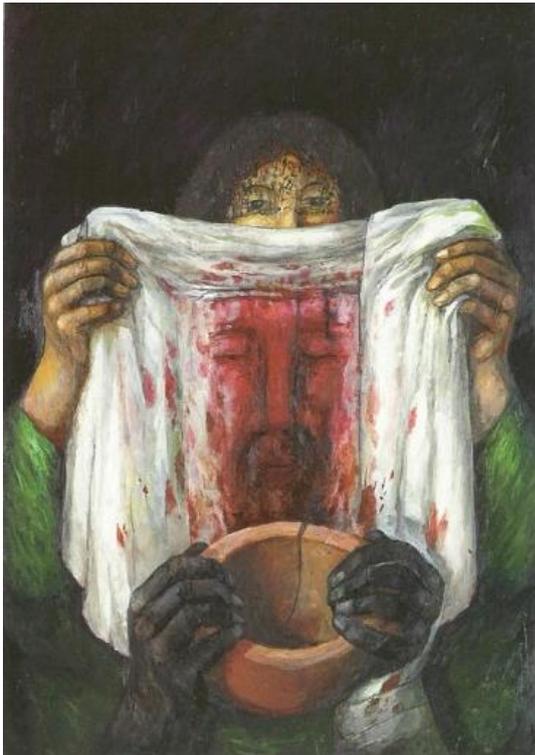
And now Jesus needed their help more than ever. But where were they? The cruel soldiers kept prodding Jesus, hitting him and yelling at him to move along. Jesus could barely stand much less move as fast as the soldiers wanted him to. So they grabbed a man out of the crowd. Simon was just a simple worker on his way home from the field. He was forced to help Jesus carry his cross. He didn't want any part of what was going on, but he had no choice as the soldiers pointed a sword in his face.

How often do we see injustice going on and don't want any part of it? How many times have we witnessed someone being picked on or being accused of something we know they didn't do?

Dear Jesus, people laugh at you, they hit you and even spit on you.

Forgive me for the times when I made fun of someone else or didn't include them because they were different. Help me to raise my voice and stand up for those who don't have one.

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



Woman in first century Judea didn't have much of a voice. They held no positions of power and they were subordinate to their husbands.

Married women were required to wear a head covering and her daily tasks were mainly household chores. Along with children, women held a low position in society.

Women in ancient Old Testament times were held in high regard but

by the time of Jesus, their role and place in society had declined.

Jesus' teaching and words fell on to the ears of anyone who would listen. He included everyone, regardless of man or woman, slave or free, sick or healthy, Greek, Samaritan, Jew or Roman. This empowered people and it is one of the things that got Jesus into trouble with the authorities. Veronica was one such empowered woman. She ventured outside her home to meet Jesus. She brought him something to drink and a cloth to wipe his bloody, sweaty face. She risked public shame and humiliation to do this one act of kindness. Jesus repaid her dearly by leaving an imprint

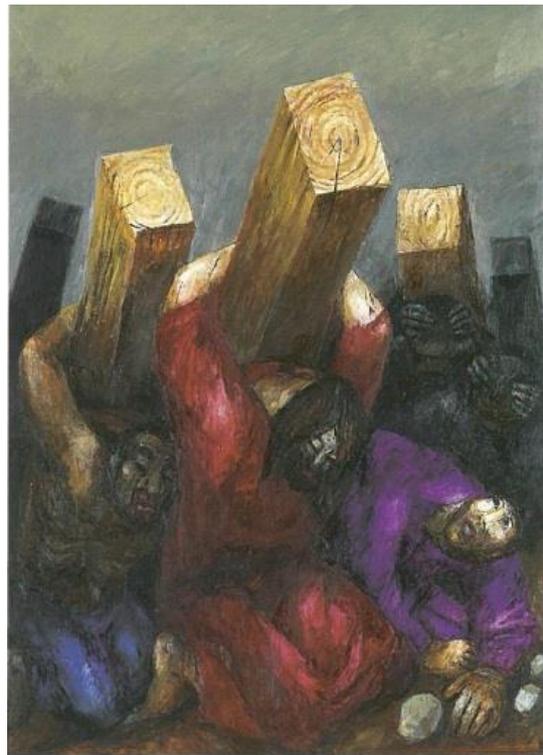
of his face on the cloth which she used to wipe him.

Are we bold enough to go against the crowd and make friends with someone who is unpopular and unloved? Or do we go along with everyone else so as not to lose face?

Lord, forgive me for all the times when I didn't reach out to offer comfort or kindness to another who was not accepted by society. Give me the strength to stand up for what is right and not worry about what other people will think.

7. Jesus falls for the second time

The Via Dolorosa (latin for "Sorrowful Way") is the name of the route Jesus took through the Old City of Jerusalem on his way to Golgotha. We could call it a death march. He walked, carrying a heavy cross, to the place where he would be executed. He knew what was coming and he carried his cross anyway. He carried it through the streets of Jerusalem.



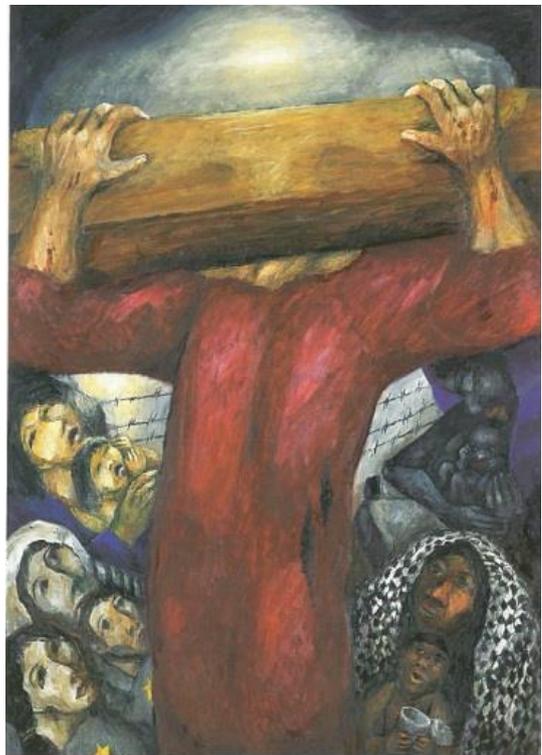
Streets that were often times narrow and steep. Streets that would have been busy and filled with people, pushing and shoving, screaming and yelling. The humiliation...the pain...Jesus falls a second time.

We all want to win. We want to be successful and admired. Failing

and falling is embarrassing and it hurts. It hurts our ego. But what is our ego anyway? It is that part of our mind that controls self-esteem and feeling important. Jesus was important and popular without making himself big in front of others. In his humility he was glorious. Forgive me for all the times when I bragged and made myself important and great in front of others. Help me, Lord, to help build others up and give them confidence, especially when they fall.

8. The women of Jerusalem cry for Jesus

Jesus was loved by many people, especially women. God made man and out of the flesh of man he made woman. He created man and woman in his own image and he made them equal. During the time of Jesus' ministry and up until even today, woman oftentimes don't have a voice that is heard. In some societies

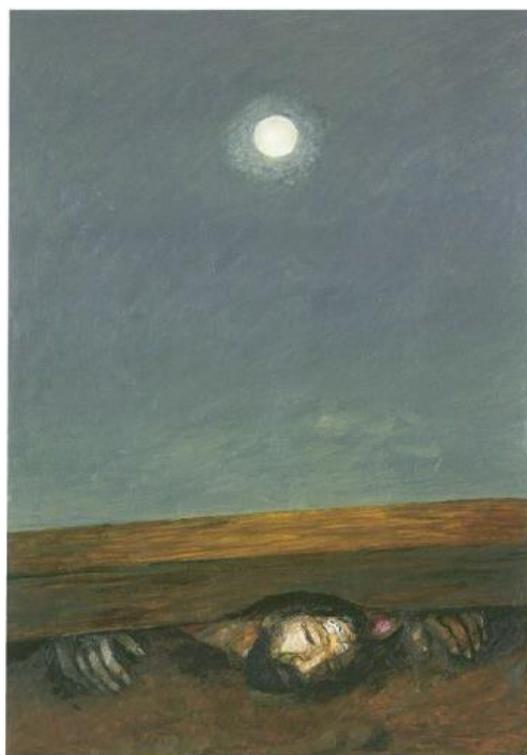


women are treated different than men. Of course men and women are different, but as children of God, we are all loved the same. Women bring children into the world. The first contact a baby has to love is with their mother. Everyone has a mother. Why do men sometimes make fun of women? Why do men sometimes put them down simply because their hormones are different than theirs?

There is a saying, “boys will be boys.” This is used as an excuse for a group of boys who do and say naughty things. There is no excuse for making fun of someone because she is a girl. There is no excuse to laugh at someone because she has a period every month. There is no excuse for staring at a girl’s breasts. It makes them feel uncomfortable. Jesus loved women and he empowered them. We must do the same.

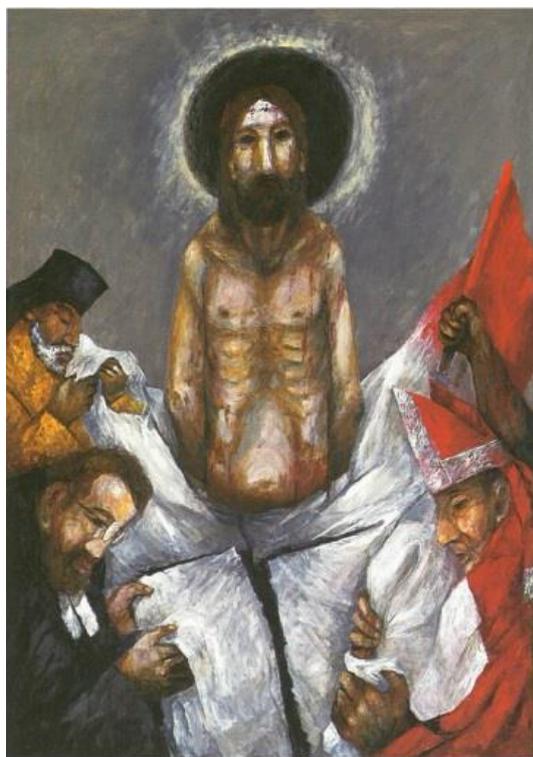
9. Jesus falls for the third time

Dear Jesus, you know what it means to lie on the ground, beaten, broken and alone. How could you go on? Sometimes I feel broken and beaten. Sometimes, when I think it can’t get any worse, it does. But I have to put a smile on my face and try to make it through the day. I have to face my friends and my family. They have no idea what I



am going through. Jesus, you were there for others and you are here for me. When I feel alone and beaten and can’t get up, I know you will carry me.

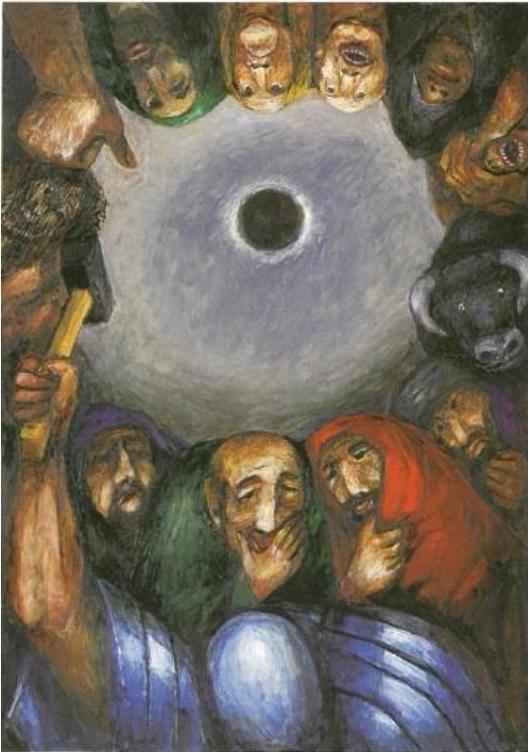
10. Jesus is stripped of his clothes



Why do we wear clothes? We came into the world naked. When God made Adam and Eve, they were naked. And then they ate from the tree of knowledge and realized they were exposed. Throughout the ages, clothing has always made a statement. From uniforms to royalty, from poverty to designer labels. What we wear says something about who we are. Is it

important to use fashion to make a statement? I can change who I am by the clothes I wear. I can hide behind my make-up, hat or hairstyle. Why are we afraid to let our true self shine through? When Jesus had reached his destination – Golgotha, the place of the skull, the place where he would be executed, where he would die, the Roman soldiers ripped the clothing off his body. His robe was blood soaked and had dried in the hot sun. When they tore it off it ripped some skin off his body. Jesus was left bloody and naked. Such pain, such shame and humiliation. Lord, help me to not place so much importance on what I wear and how I look. It doesn't matter, because I am beautiful the way I am.

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross



Crucifixion was one of the most dreaded and painful forms of execution in ancient times. It can be traced back to about 500 years before Christ. The victim would be suspended from a tree and then beaten to death. Over time the ancient Romans developed it into a much more severe form of death. Crucifixion was reserved for serious criminals. In Jesus' time, Roman

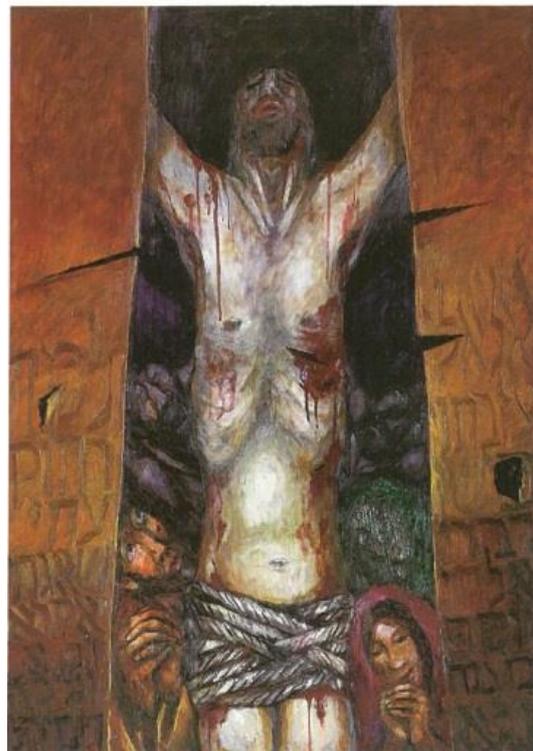
executioners had developed this practice to induce the most amount of pain in the longest amount of time. Cause of death was usually suffocation, loss of body fluids (water and blood) and eventually organ failure. Jeremy Ward, a physiologist at King's College London said this about death by crucifixion, "The resultant lack of oxygen in the blood would cause damage to tissues and blood vessels, allowing fluid to diffuse out of the blood into tissues, including the lungs and the sac around the heart." The pressure around the heart would disrupt its pumping. This made the lungs stiff and breathing became difficult. Jesus accepted this death, even though he was not a criminal. As Jesus was being nailed to the cross, he prayed. He prayed to God to forgive those who tortured him.

And what about us? Are we able to forgive? Sometimes we are so hurt or mad that we are not able to forgive. Lord, help me to forgive those who do me wrong. And help me to accept forgiveness when someone says they are sorry.

12. Jesus dies

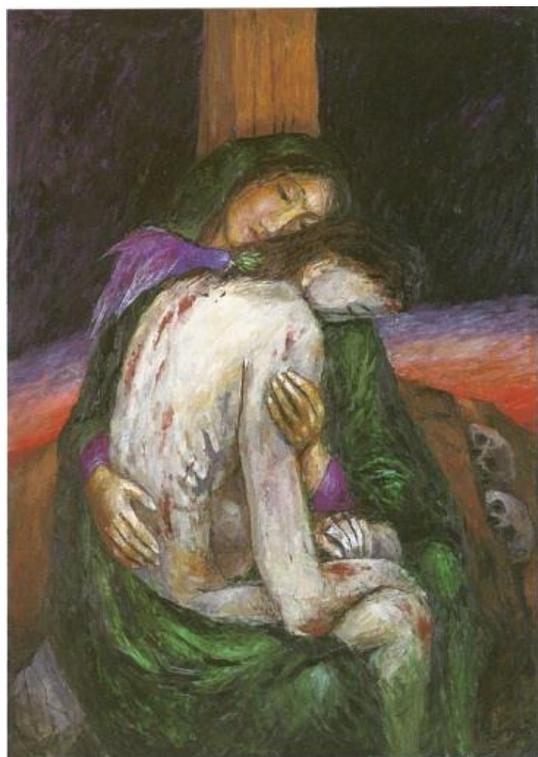
Here is what the Gospel of Luke (23:44-46) says about the death of Jesus: “It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’; and when he had said this he breathed his last.”

The family and friends of Jesus who witnessed his execution were devastated. It was over. God had deserted Jesus and them. But it wasn't over. God did not desert them. Without his death there would be no resurrection.



Without resurrection there would be no eternal life. But right now we are sad. In our sadness and disappointment, help us Lord to remember that tomorrow is another day.

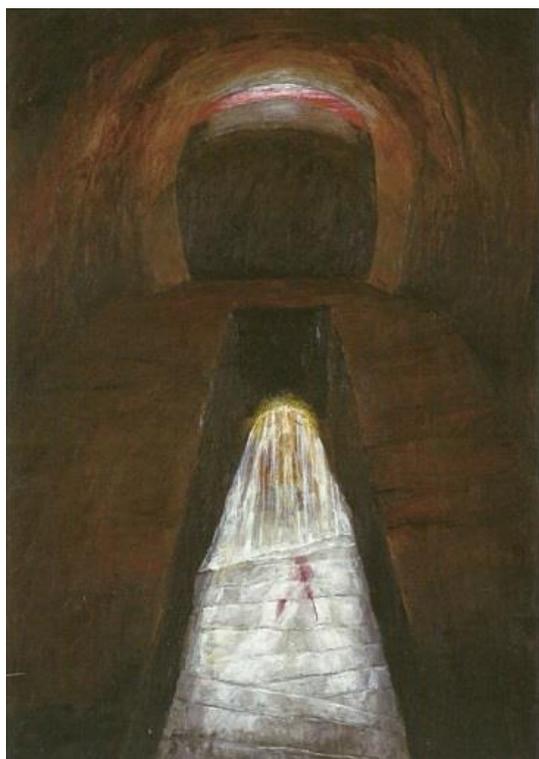
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross



According to ancient Roman guidelines regarding crucifixion, the body of the deceased victim was left on the cross. There on the cross, the body would decompose and be eaten by wild animals, usually birds. Imagine that, the precious body of our Jesus hanging in the hot sun? Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin, which was a group of Jewish

leaders of the court of Jewish law. He was a rich man and a respected member of society. He was also a secret follower of Jesus. He didn't want to see Jesus be further mutilated so he went to Pilate and asked for the body of our Savior. "Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock" (Matthew 27:59-61). Joseph knew that Jesus was not guilty of the crimes charged against him. But like many people, he was afraid to speak out. He wanted to protect himself. He was a witness to the torturing of an innocent man. Then something happened that changed everything: Jesus died.

14. Jesus is placed in the tomb



Jesus was born in the year 7 AD. He grew up in a small village called Nazareth. He was born to Jewish parents and he was raised with Jewish traditions and customs. He would have studied the Torah.

Every year he would have made the journey to Jerusalem for the Passover. Around the year 28 AD he began his public ministry.

Astrologers and scientists claim that Jesus died on April 7, 30 AD. Modern research shows that the probable cause of death would have been cardiovascular collapse from profound shock. After he died, he was placed in a tomb and a large stone sealed his lifeless body in. The next day, some women came to anoint his body. They found that the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. Later some of his disciples went to the tomb. They too found nothing. In finding nothing, they found everything.

Stations of The Cross for Young Adults

Text: Karen Curjel

Pictures: Sieger Köder as found in St. Stephanus Church in Aalen-Wasserfingen, Germany