

THE PARISH OF GREENFORD MAGNA

**NEW  
STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

designed by

**Cate Templeton**

Installed in Holy Cross New Church  
on Palm Sunday, 1996



The Parish Church of the Holy Cross,  
Ferrymead Gardens, Greenford, Middx. UB6 9JS.

This booklet is an Introduction to the Stations, a short description of how they were conceived and created, and a record of the words which appear behind the images.

## What are the *Stations of the Cross*?

The Stations of the Cross are a series of 14 pictures or carvings, designed for devotional purposes, and depicting the incidents which took place in the last journey of Jesus Christ from his sentencing to death in Pilate's house to his entombment.

They may be seen in Roman Catholic Churches and Church of England Churches of the Catholic tradition all around the world, fixed to or hanging from the walls. And especially in Lent and Holy Week, they are the centre of a popular devotion which, through prayers, hymns and readings, takes the worshipper back to the final hours in the life of Jesus, in Jerusalem, and makes the events seem so much more real and meaningful.

It is thought that the Stations of the Cross arose out of the ancient practice of pilgrims in Jerusalem, who prayerfully followed the route through the streets from Pilate's house to Calvary, stopping at various points in the journey, *Stations*, to say prayers and read readings from the Bible or other sources.

Between 381 and 384 AD, a nun called Egeria, who came from the Atlantic sea-board of either Spain or France, travelled to the Holy Land and wrote a travel diary which still exists. In it, she recorded what she saw of the religious goings-on in Jerusalem and other places. Although not a modern scholar's precise record, her diary is an important source of information about Christian practices in the 4th century. She described what she saw, and in particular, what caught her attention - the unusual and the new. It is from the writings of Egeria and others like her in later years that we can build up a picture of how pilgrims marked the events of Holy Week, and out of the study of these practices and happenings, came not only the Stations of the Cross but also much of the impetus for reforming the whole Liturgy in the 20th century, recovering the integrity of the best early liturgy and making it available for use by modern worshippers.

In the 4th century, as indeed nowadays, most people were unable to manage a pilgrimage and travel to Jerusalem. The idea of a *Stations of the Cross* in every Church in every town and village in Christendom rapidly became popular. By the late Middle Ages, the Franciscans had made a big impact in bringing Christian piety to the ordinary people. It was the Franciscans who really popularised the Stations of the Cross. Remember, St. Francis himself is reputed to have introduced a Nativity scene at Christmas too, making the human content of the story that much closer to the home experience of ordinary Christians.

In a nut-shell, that is the main reason for the popularity of the Stations. They take us away from our world and back to hear and see the terrible events in Jerusalem. But, as you will see if we follow the Stations with appropriate prayer and devotion, the scenes also bring us closer to our own day, with its terrible suffering and dreadful executions. At their best, the Stations of the Cross hold together the death of Jesus and the Christian vocation to be his Body in the world of today. He is our inspiration and paradoxically, his death brings hope and peace and life because we believe it reconciles humanity to God.

# THE NEW STATIONS OF THE CROSS

in Holy Cross New Church, Greenford  
1996

At the Annual Parochial Church meeting of 1991, an enquiry was raised about the Stations of the Cross that used to hang in the New Church, especially during Holy Week. From this enquiry, a whole stream of activity came forth, and on Palm Sunday, 1996, fourteen new Stations of the Cross were installed and dedicated as part of our worship of God that morning.

In between 1991 and 1996 were five years of thought and action. I went to look at various Stations of the Cross in our area, but nothing seemed quite right for Holy Cross. To buy them *off the peg* is very expensive, and what I really wanted was something specially designed with our Church building in mind, something unique to us.

In the summer of 1992 and 1993, we were lucky enough to be offered some art work for display in the New Church. It was the exhibition work which Cate Templeton, a local artist whom I have known since 1987 when she Chaired the Holy Cross Playgroup Committee, had completed during her B.A. Illustration degree at Harrow College. The work was excellent and looked good in the Church. It was seeing her work in our Church that made me wonder if she could be persuaded to make a new set of Stations for us. In the autumn of 1993, I decided to discuss the project with Cate, and to my delight, she responded positively. I don't know why, but having seen her other work, I just knew that her Stations would be right for us, if only we could persuade her to make them, find the money to pay for them and persuade the Chancellor of the Diocese to provide us with a Faculty for it all!

We went through all the normal preparatory stages of petitioning for a Faculty, and Cate undertook to make one complete Station to demonstrate her

style of work. Fortunately, the Diocesan Advisory Committee had the sense to visit the Church and see the first Station *in situ*. They approved of it, rather eagerly, I thought, and so having already gained the approval of the congregation and PCC, we gave Cate the go-ahead for the whole set.

Cate researched the project thoroughly before starting. She read traditional devotions, and looked at other examples of Stations like the set in the garden at Harrow Vicarage and at The Visitation Church in Greenford. She made a study of Stations in several of the French Churches visited whilst on holiday. Then she decided that throughout the whole series, drawings of hands would be used to tell the story of each Station. Hands that lifted and supported, hands that washed away guilt, hands that were crucified and so much more.

Women also play a major role in the drama, although not much is spoken by them. There are the hands of Veronica that wiped away tears, the hands of Mary who held Jesus in life and death, and the hands of the Women of Jerusalem, who not only covered their faces in grief, but who joined together in support of Jesus and each other.

It was to be some two years before the works were nearing readiness, and during the time Cate worked on the Stations, several members of the

congregation volunteered to pay for one each, and slowly all the money came in.

The Stations are unique and designed especially for the space they now occupy in the Church. They are **"collaged silk screen prints on hand-made, hand-dyed paper and fabric."** Continuous design features throughout the series such as dyed paper and gold script behind the images of hands, providing a unifying sense of wholeness.

The framing was also crucial, but proved a major design problem. The work is transparent and originally intended to be hung between two sheets of glass so that the changing light would affect the appearance of the gold and fabric. Glass, however, was too heavy and dangerous for a public area and Cate, after much discussion, eventually decided on polished perspex held together by small brass bolts. She then worked closely with May Frames of Hayes, who undertook this unusual framing project.

But who is Cate Templeton? She was born Catherine Scott in Lanarkshire and graduated from Glasgow University in 1971 with an M.A. in the History of Fine Art. Shortly after that she moved to Manchester with her husband. Cate has lived in Greenford since 1973 and her three daughters all go to local schools. In 1989, when her youngest daughter started school, Cate decided to return to College and in 1993, completed her

degree in Illustration at Harrow College, now the University of Westminster.

Cate spells her shortened name Cate, rather than Kate and she is the only person I know who does. At first, it seemed odd, but it is in fact quite logical, and shows individuality, flair and lateral thinking all at the same time - rather like the person herself.

Cate believes in art as a community activity, and so she asked members of the congregation to become involved by writing a contemplative piece on a Station of their choice. These words appear in gold script behind the art work and Cate is very grateful to those who contributed their time and enthusiasm.

Cate wishes her Stations of the Cross to work at various levels. They will stand a lot of contemplation, offering a challenge to the mind as well as being stunning to look at! Whatever your feelings, these Stations will provoke a reaction because they demand attention and lead the viewer out into the modern world as well as back into the life of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Cate, for your Stations of the Cross. They look magnificent and they will inspire regulars and visitors alike to deeper and richer experiences of God.

**Neil Richardson**  
**Neil Richardson**

# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

## The text behind each image

There is a text behind the artwork in each of the stations. Some is from biblical sources, some from other volumes, and some was written by members of the congregation. The full text is as follows:

### 1. Jesus is condemned to death



"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."  
Then answered all the people, and said, " His blood be on us and on our children."

MATTHEW 27: 24 and 25

### 2. Jesus receives his Cross

Crucifixion is not a death for criminals who were citizens of the Roman Empire. It is reserved for slaves, outcasts, foreigners and all those for whom the State has contempt. It is not a form of capital punishment so much as a public warning to the riff-raff: this is what we will do to you, if you step out of line. Prisoners are simply fixed to a cross, naked, without food and water, and left to die. It is death by exposure, in all senses of the word.

Because the prisoners to be crucified are considered beneath contempt, they are forced to carry their own cross to the place of crucifixion, as a symbol of their slave status. This indignity is not reserved to this particular Jewish prisoner, or to Jewish prisoners 2000 years ago. As Jesus was made to carry his cross, many other have been forced to dig their own graves before execution, in Nazi Germany, Idi Amin's Uganda and Pol Pot's Cambodia, and sadly, this brutality seems destined to continue.

His cross, his suffering, are accepted and received with purpose and determination, for his sights are now set beyond the cross and the grave. He leads us in the way.



NEIL RICHARDSON

### 3. Jesus falls for the first time

You carried the burden, the heaviness of our circumstances, the load of material things. You accepted the difficulties that sometimes overwhelm each one of us. You took to yourself the painful humiliation of our first fall.

Turn the humiliation caused by our vanity into your humility, and lift us up in your power and with your courage to take the cross and to start again on the way trusting now, not in ourselves but in you.

CARYLL HOUSELANDER



### 4. Jesus meets his mother



He stands before her. They embrace and soon she must let him go. Surely she is in the wrong place, the wrong time, the wrong part of the story. Yet her job did not finish amongst the dirt and glory of Bethlehem. Now she must watch as he is delivered into the hands of the law, the state, the church. She is not alone. She stands with all those other women who throughout history have watched powerless and bereft as their daughters and sons have suffered at the hands of the oppressor.

It is a complete communion with him. They are as completely one now as they were when he was the child in her womb and her heart beat was the beating of his heart.

It is love that redeems, love that can heal the world, love that can save it.

JOSS KNIGHT

## 5. Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross



Is there any spectacle more harrowing than a Roman crucifixion? The dismal procession approaches and I wonder at the exclusive relish of humanity to inflict on its own kind such a level of degradation and suffering. The victim has been scourged; his back is torn and covered in blood; on his head is a mockery of a crown, made of thorns. As he stumbles on under the weight of the cross that will later carry him to death, the soldiers and the crowd taunt him still.

he falls, and in watching his despair I fail to notice my danger. The soldier roughly summons me and orders me to carry the prisoner's cross, for he has no strength left. Reluctantly, I move towards the gruesome burden, and bend to lift it from the bloodstained figure. As I lean towards him, his eyes

catch mine and I am enfolded in something as deep and powerful as it is unexpected. I have seen dying men before, and have seen in their eyes the glint of fear, bitterness, anger or despair. But here is something else - great sadness, yes, great rolling depths of sorrow, yet through it all shines love. No other word will meet the need for that is what is there. Pure love for me, and all who share with him this nightmare journey.

His eyes hold mine, and it seems that what is there transcends the horror that he bears. Mockery, torture and betrayal have not killed it, and I know that death will not.

We have no need of words. He knows me as I do not know myself, and I know him, knowing nothing of his life. In that glance I find a meaning and a purpose to my life. As I lift his cross I feel that this is the greatest service I will ever give - no other task can ever mean so much. The rough wood leaves its splinters in my hands and cuts the softer skin of my shoulders, but I treasure the pain because it eases his.

As we move forward to the place of death, I sense within myself a new beginning. These burdened steps are the first on a journey to freedom, for they have brought me hope - a hope that I can seek and know and live a love so great, that it is there when every hope is lost.

A love whose power shines out through powerlessness. A love that loves on in the midst of the worst that people can do.

PENNY PEDLEY

## 6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



She comes with a veil in her hands, a cloth on which to wipe the poor disfigured face. She kneels as we kneel to wipe the tears from the faces of little children. Gratefully, the head bowing over her sinks into the clean linen cloth, and for a brief moment is covered by it.

It is the Veronicas of today who wipe away the ugliness from the face of Christ living on in man. The Veronicas of today are all those in whom compassion overcomes fear and repulsion, all those who seek and find the lost and the forsaken, the downtrodden and the lonely. The merciful hands of Veronica wiped the blindness from his eyes. Then, he raises his head, and she, kneeling there, sees the face of Christ looking down at her and behind it the great beam of the cross.

CARYLL HOUSELANDER

## 7. Jesus falls for the second time

Jesus Christ, exhausted on the long road to Calvary, fallen for the second time under the weight of the cross. Allow me to be among those who come forward out of the crowd, to heave back the great load that crushes you.

And when I fall, send me those who lend their hands to lift my burden and enable me too, to follow you to Calvary.

CARYLL HOUSELANDER



## 8. Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

And there followed him a great company of people and of women which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning unto them said:

*"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."*

LUKE 23: 27-28



## 9. Jesus falls for the third time

Lord, fallen under the cross for the last time, grant to me and to all those whom you identified yourself in the third fall, your courage, your humility to rise in your strength, and in spite of failure upon failure, shame upon shame, to persevere to the end.

Do not let us despair. Let us go on in your power. When those who believe in your presence in us are disillusioned, give us courage to go on in your name even when your enemies discredit you because of us.

Let us rise in your strength even in this extremity when we are alone before God. Because in your third and last fall under the cross, in the sight of God and men, you identified yourself with us.



CARYLL HOUSELANDER

## 10. Jesus is stripped of his garments



*After they had finished crucifying him, they shared out his clothing by casting lots to see what each should get.*

Mark 15:24

In fulfilment of the scriptures:  
*they divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothes.*

Psalm 22:18

*Two men went through my pockets and took my jacket and my shoes at the same time. One relieved me of my watch. They took away my clothes.*

*Blindfolded, I became helpless, humiliated.*

John McCarthy, Beirut, 1986.

We identify our worth by our possessions, achievements or place in society. The clothes we wear are statements of ourselves. Measuring our own or other peoples' worth by appearance, occupation or title is subtly destructive of ourselves and of them, for it prevents us from appreciating who we really are. Each of us has a worth which is our own, God-given, which neither clothes nor status nor wealth can change.

Lord, may we be stripped of our pretences to become vulnerable and open to you. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and clothe us in your strength and love that we may live in love, peace and justice with one another.

ANN CLARRIDGE

## 11. Jesus is nailed to the cross

*"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

Luke 23:34

The word of forgiveness was undoubtedly uttered as the crucifixion took place, when the hammer blows fell and those sacred hands and feet were pierced by the cruel nails. As we approach the outer circle of the crowd on the hilltop we hear the blows of the hammer and we ask ourselves can it really be that those hands which were always stretched forth in loving kindness are now being pinned to the cross. Like many another in that dense crowd, including his mother, his beloved disciple and the women who stood afar off, we have no sight, nor do we wish to have of that execution. But we are amazed there is no cry of anguish, no cry of resentment, but instead we hear a sentence from his lips which becomes more audible as the cross is raised and we catch the vibrating "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."



CARYLL HOUSELANDER

## 12. Jesus dies on the Cross

*"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."*

Luke 23:34

Your people have walked for too long in this night of pain. Your crucified people. The violence of suffering pierces my hands and feet. The violence of indifference pierces my heart.



Please hear my cry.

I am thirsty. I am the child who has no more tears to cry. I am hungry. My old people have no song of joy to sing. Your people. My pain overwhelms me and still it goes on.

Biafra, Angola, Ethiopia. Why have you forsaken me? The cry from the cross is heard to the ends of the earth. Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Sharpeville.

The pain in my hands is carried by the tortured and oppressed. Terrible thirst is in the mouths of the forgotten. Too many women mourn the loss of their children. All the earth is another Calvary.

I cry for peace.

You cry for peace.

Forgive them.

If we do it to the least of our brethren, we do it to you, and you cry out in pain. The crucified people. The crucified God. Father forgive us, we know what we do.

My God, my God, why have we forsaken you?

MARGARET BANNISTER

### **13. The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross**

Death has finally claimed him. His body hangs limply from horrific moorings, and although dead, it is impossible not to imagine that this pains him still. His mother and friends anxiously wait for his body to be brought down and handed over to them, at last. Wracked with grief, they hope that the final disengagement from the cross does no further damage to his already torn body. What greater grief than that of a mother who beholds her dead child?



As gently as possible, they reclaim their loved one, and start the preparations for his burial. Thorns are gently removed from his bleeding head. His death agony is gently caressed by his mother, not doubt remembering his childhood pains and bruises. Torn flesh is smoothed away and he is gently wrapped in winding sheets as once he was wrapped in swaddling bands. The memories of his mother are excruciating. Her hopes and ambitions are now brought to nothing in her defeated and lifeless son.

Beyond burial, nothing makes sense, nothing beckons, nothing pleases, not ever could again. Burial means the end of hope.

NEIL RICHARDSON

## 14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Evening has come and the body must, according to the Law, be removed by nightfall. Especially because the next day is a Sabbath, the work has to be organised and carried out quickly, or the company who attend him will be breaking Sabbath laws. The soldiers hang around. There is a bit of a wrangle about what should happen to his body, with the Jewish authorities concerned that his disciples might play tricks with him and make out he was still alive. The women take charge of his burial arrangements. The men have mostly fled and remain in hiding. Pilate orders a close guard to be mounted outside the tomb, and the scene is set for the next stage of the story.



Men, women and children are all picked up, from time-to-time, from the floors of prisons, torture chambers and charnel houses of history. They are gently lifted and prepared for decent burial by the heart broken. What worse experience than to care for the broken, useless body of your own child? Yet what better person to do it than his mother, supported by his faithful women followers who, at the end, are his closest companions?

Their labour is pain and grief, but nonetheless, it is a labour of love, the only thing left to do, the best they can offer him now. They leave him in the tomb with plans to return after the Sabbath, to perform for him the last burial rites that human dignity demands. Yes, they will come to him again, very early, on the first day of the week. But for now, evening has come.

NEIL RICHARDSON

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### **Postscript:**

I hope that everyone will enjoy reading the words in the background of our new Stations. The Stations make a tremendous addition to the appearance of the New Church, and many people have remarked on their beauty and depth after visiting, often with a real sense of unexpected pleasure.

Thanks to Cate Templeton and to all of you who had a hand in this project.

Neil Richardson

Rector  
15th September, 1996

The photographs of the Stations were taken by Toby Vandavelde