

JESUS

Hief  
PRIESTS

MANY  
of things.

**VIRTUAL LABYRINTH  
& STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

adore you, O Christ & we bless you because by your holy cross

The Stations of the Cross and the Labyrinth together, as a pilgrimage, offer an opportunity to experience the passion of Christ on a personal level in an ancient, yet new way. You are invited to come alongside Jesus as his friend. Imagine what it is like to companion Jesus as He goes through His suffering and death. You feel his pain and anguish. Visualize the scenes using all your senses, paying attention to what you notice. Before entering the pilgrimage, you ask the Lord to let you companion Him during last week.

Historically, the Labyrinth pre-dates the Stations by several hundred years. The Chartres Labyrinth was constructed around 1201 AD in the stone floor of Chartres Cathedral, France. Medieval Christians visited Chartres (and other cathedrals) and walked the labyrinth as an alternative to taking a hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the “footsteps of Christ.” Modern “pilgrims” walk the labyrinth path as one of many tools to enhance prayer, contemplation, meditation, and personal growth.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PILGRIMAGE**

- Walk the prayer labyrinth tracing the path with your finger. (*Located on page 4*)
- Journey through this at your own pace. You can make your pilgrimage through all Eight Stations of the Cross at one time or by doing one or two a day through Holy Week.
- The Eight Stations are distributed over the labyrinth path and indicated with Roman Numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII).
- At each station, pause, read the appropriate passage and prayer. Continue on your pilgrimage when you are ready. Spend as much time at each station as you choose.
- When you have completed the Eighth (VIII) Station in the center, you may choose to either complete your pilgrimage there or retrace the path back out, ending where you began.
- As an additional resource, Donell Seager, spiritual director has provided a written guide, leading you through each Station of the Cross with a guided meditation. These meditations can be found, *starting on page 5*. Again, you can make your pilgrimage through these all at one time or by doing one or two a day through Holy Week.
- Donell is available via cell phone or Zoom should you desire prayer or to talk with her about your experience. Call her at (850) 723-5781 to make appropriate arrangements.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that He embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.

### **STATION I : JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 25:36-41)

*Prayer: Lord, grant us your strength and wisdom that we may seek to follow your will in all things.*

### **STATION II : JESUS, BETRAYED BY JUDAS, IS ARRESTED**

Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. (Mark 14: 43-46)

*Prayer: Lord Grant me the courage of your convictions that my life may faithfully reflect the good news you bring.*

### **STATION III : JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY THE SANHEDRIN**

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us,” but he replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”

They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth." (Luke 22: 66-71)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me your sense of righteousness that I may never cease to work to bring about the justice of the kingdom that you promised.*

### **STATION III : JESUS IS DENIED BY PETER**

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly. (Matthew 26:69-75)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me the gift of honesty that I may not fear to speak the truth even when difficult.*

### **STATION V : JESUS IS JUDGED BY PILATE**

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabbas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified. (Mark 15:1-5, 15)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me discernment that I may see as you see, not as the world sees.*

### **STATION VI : JESUS IS SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS**

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. (John 19:1-3)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me patience in times of suffering that I may offer my life as a sacrifice of praise.*

### **STATION VII : JESUS BEARS THE CROSS**

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:6, 15-17)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me strength of purpose that I may faithfully bear my crosses each day.*

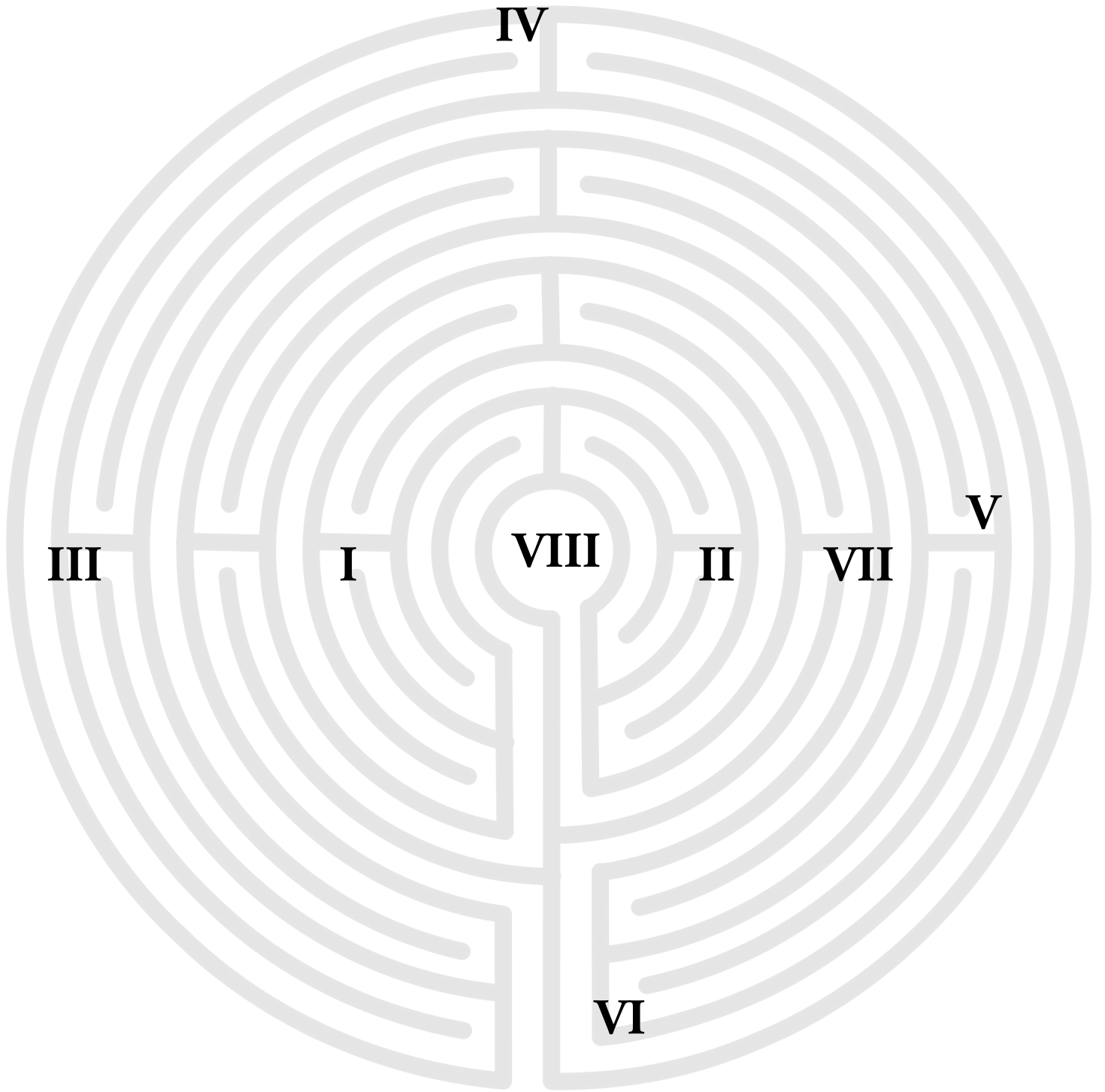
### **STATION VIII : JESUS IS CRUCIFIED**

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 33-34)

*Prayer: Lord, grant me a merciful heart that I may bring your reconciliation and forgiveness to all.*

\*Adapted from The Scriptural Stations of the Cross from the Church of the Nativity in Indianapolis, IN

**Prayer Labrynth on Next Page. You can find a *guided experince*, written by Donell Seager, Sprituaal Director on the following pages.**



# GUIDED

## VIRTUAL LABYRINTH & STATIONS OF THE CROSS

*By Donell Seager, Spiritual Director*

Hi! My name is Donell Seager. I'm a member of First Church and a trained spiritual director. As a spiritual director I companion people as they seek to see where God is at work in their lives and then I help them to co-operate with God in that work. Basically, I help people grow in prayer and discernment and to deepen their relationship with God.

I want to thank you for inviting me to companion you as you make your pilgrimage to the heart of Jesus during Holy Week. It is my joy and privilege to be your companion.

On this pilgrimage it is our goal to companion Jesus as he journeys towards Jerusalem—ultimately to his crucifixion on the cross.

This is a pilgrimage towards love—towards deepening our relationship with Jesus and towards deepening our friendship with Jesus (remember Jesus inviting us to be his friend in the Gospel of John?). It is also a pilgrimage towards deepening our intimacy with Jesus.

Our tools for this pilgrimage will be the prayer labyrinth. The labyrinth was born out of necessity when making the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem was no longer safe. Walking the labyrinth became a way of making a pilgrimage so you can now understand why it is an excellent tool for our pilgrimage through Holy Week. The other tool we will use is guided meditations. I will be leading you in eight guided meditations that you can use along with the scripture references and prayers in the booklet.

I've created a prayer altar in front to help create sacred space and to bring our attention to the presence of the Holy Spirit with us as we make our pilgrimage. I encourage you to create sacred space in your own home as you make this pilgrimage. You might want to set aside a particular chair in a particular room as your sacred space and then create your own altar. I believe this will enhance and deepen your experience through your Holy Week pilgrimage and maybe even enhance your prayer life going forward. My sacred space is in my prayer room/office this is my set apart sacred space for prayer.

***Guided Meditations begin on the next page.***

Before we begin our first meditation, you'll want to make sure you have your booklet and your hand-held labyrinth that was sent to you via email, as well as some paper and a pen or pencil for journaling.

Now I'd like to offer this blessing from Jan Richardson entitled "Beloved Is Where We Begin." I offer this blessing to you because it's vital that you know that you are God's beloved before you begin your Holy Week pilgrimage.

**Receive these words, this blessing:**

If you would enter  
into the wilderness,  
do not be gin  
without a blessing.

Do not leave  
without hearing  
who you are:  
Beloved,  
named by the One  
who has traveled this path  
before you.

Do not go  
without letting it echo  
in your ears,  
and if you find  
it is hard to let it into your heart,  
do not despair.  
This is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise  
this blessing will free you  
from danger,  
from fear,  
from hunger  
or thirst,  
from the scorching

of the sun  
or the fall  
of the night.  
But I can tell you  
that on this path  
there will be help.

I can tell you there will be rest.

I can tell you  
that you will know  
the strange graces  
that come to our aid  
only on a road  
such as this,  
that fly to meet us  
bearing comfort and strength,  
that come alongside us  
for no other cause  
than to lean themselves  
toward our ear  
and with their  
curious insistence  
whisper our name:

*Beloved.*

*Beloved.*

*Beloved.*

I'll keep all of you in prayer as you make your pilgrimage through Holy Week.

**STATION I : JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Now**, let us pick up our Labyrinth and place our finger at the entrance. Let us pause there and pray.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture**, you are invited to begin tracing the path of the labyrinth with your finger of choice. I use my pointer finger of my dominant hand. Slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger until you reach the point on the labyrinth labeled with the Roman Numeral I.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25, verses 36-41:**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

**Allow me to guide you as you enter this narrative, placing yourself in this scene of Jesus in the Garden.** Imagine yourself as one of the disciples accompanying Jesus on his walk to the Garden. What do you see? What do you hear? What conversation is taking place? How is everyone feeling? Is there tension in the air? How’s the temperature? Is it hot or cold? How does Jesus seem to be? What about you? How are you?

Continue on this journey until you hear Jesus say, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” You now witness Jesus walking away alone so that he can go pray. How do you feel right now? What are you doing? What can you see in this garden? What can you smell? What are you thinking? Notice your surroundings.

Now you witness Jesus fall prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” What was it like to witness Jesus fall prostrate in prayer? What is the cup that Jesus is asking God to let pass from him? You are aware that Jesus is deeply sorrowful and having a hard time surrendering to God’s will for him. What is it like to witness this?

Now time is passing—a lot of time actually and you are finding it difficult to stay awake and keep watch over Jesus. You’re feeling sleepy but continue to try to keep watch over Jesus. More time passes, and you fall asleep, but are abruptly awakened by these words from Jesus, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” You awaken suddenly. What does Jesus look like as he says these words to you? How does it make you feel to hear these words from Jesus? How do you feel, having fallen asleep when all that Jesus asked you to do was keep watch as he prayed?

**Begin to gently return to this room.** How was it for you entering this scene in the garden with Jesus? Did you learn anything new about yourself or Jesus?

**Here’s a truth I want to share with you:** Even for Jesus it was very difficult for him to surrender to God’s will. We are human and part of the human condition is that we are ego-centric (we make our lives about us when our lives are truly about God). The beauty of this passage of scripture is that we get to see Jesus in his humanity and how difficult it was for him to let go of his will and move into choosing God’s will. So remember, we are human, and giving up our will and our desire for ourselves is not easy. Be gentle with yourself in this process. You are loved by Jesus beyond your imaginings, loved so very deeply even in the times when you let him down. There’s nothing you can do to change this fact.

**May these words from Hafiz touch you deeply:**

Know  
the nature of your  
Beloved.

In  
His  
loving eyes  
your every thought, word, and movement  
is always, always  
beautiful.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant us your strength and wisdom that we may seek to follow your will in all things.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station II.**

**STATION II : JESUS, BETRAYED BY JUDAS, IS ARRESTED**

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God.

**Now** breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture**, you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station I until you reach Station II.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 14, verses 43-46:**

Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

**Let's reflect on this passage of scripture.** Let's be honest in our reflection though. It's always so easy for me to say I could never betray Jesus as Judas did, judging Judas harshly for his poor (very poor choice). And yet if I'm honest, if we're honest, we must admit and acknowledge that, yes, we can relate to Judas because we've been Judas before. Maybe we didn't betray Jesus unto death, but I'm sure we've betrayed Jesus by turning our backs on him, by not following him as he has invited us to, and/or by not being the friend to Jesus that he asks us to be.

**Ponder for a moment these questions:**

- How have you betrayed Jesus?
- Have you, like Judas, betrayed a very dear friend or someone you love? How did it make you feel?
- Has someone you love betrayed you? How did it make you feel?

**Remember this truth, my friend:** Jesus deeply loves you anyway. What might help you now is the sacramental act of confession. Would you like to confess to Jesus the ways in which you've betrayed him and the ways in which you've betrayed those whom you love? Confession has a way of opening us and reorienting us to the truth of God's, of Jesus' deep love for us. I'll pause now so that in the silence you might make your confession.

**Hear this truth:** You are forgiven!

**Hear this poem by Prasanta Verma.** May her words bless you.



The kiss on the cheek  
planted swift, turns  
to thorny scratch, burns  
long and thin, drips  
red on black dirt.  
Fragile petals live a breath  
away, a thin vein from death.  
Roses keep distant,  
far from drawn swords  
ready to impale petal-skin.  
Repent and attempt  
to pluck stems of  
delicate short-lived beauty,

for arrangements in a vase,  
that fragrance may erase  
the scent of love's demise.  
But watch when red drips:  
seeds bloom anew,  
emit ethereal perfume, transform  
into wild, vibrant, hybrid,  
blood-red rose. Are you a rose?  
Are you a thorn?  
Or one scratched by scorn  
of deceiver's kiss?  
Show me your scar.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me the courage of your convictions that my life may faithfully reflect the good news you bring.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station III.**

### STATION III - JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY THE SANHEDRIN

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture**, you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station II until you reach Station III.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 22, verses 66-71:**

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

**Let's reflect on this passage of scripture.** Here we see Jesus being brought before the Sanhedrin, and we see him being tried. They ask Jesus, "If you are the Messiah, tell me," but Jesus replied to them, "If I tell, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond..."

Perhaps our invitation in this scripture passage is to ask Jesus what the Sanhedrin did: "If you are the Messiah, tell me."

**And so I invite you to sit with and ponder and reflect upon these questions:**

- Is Jesus the Messiah?
- Beyond giving you salvation, what exactly does it mean to you that Jesus is the Messiah?

**Receive this blessing.** May it guide you into discovering who Jesus is for you.

Blessed is the One by Jan Richardson

Blessed is the One  
who comes to us  
by the way of love  
poured out with abandon.

Blessed is the One  
who walks towards us  
by the way of grace  
that holds us fast.

Blessed is the One  
who calls us to follow  
in the way of blessing,  
in the path of joy.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me your sense of righteousness that I may never cease to work to bring about the justice of the kingdom that you promised.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station IV.**

**STATION IV - JESUS IS DENIED BY PETER**

*Guided Meditation*

Make yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture,** you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station III until you reach Station IV.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 26, verses 69-75:**

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them;

even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.

### **Let’s pray this passage of scripture using the ancient prayer practiced *Lectio Divina* \***

**First**, read the above passage twice out loud slowly listening for a word or phrase that strikes you, that seems as though it is addressed to you, or feels like it is shimmering for you to notice. This might be a word that stands out from all the rest, causes a visceral reaction or brings about a deep sense of resonance or resistance. After the second reading, there will be a brief period of silence in which you are to remain in the word, savoring it and perhaps repeating the word or phrase softly to yourself without trying to figure out what it means or why it was given.

#### **Silence for about one minute.**

What word or phrase did you hear?

**Now, read the passage out loud again**, and in the silence that follows the reading of the passage you are invited to reflect on the way in which your life has been touched by this word. You might ask yourself: What in your life needed to hear this word today? The reading is followed by a brief period of silence in which you are asked to stay present with God with whatever comes. Rather than thinking too much about the passage (this is a real discipline), keep coming back to the word or phrase that has been given.

#### **Silence for one or two minutes.**

What in your life was touched by this word or phrase? Where does this word or phrase intersect your life today? What is God trying to say to you through this word or phrase?

**Read the passage out loud again**, and this time you are invited to listen for an invitation that might be contained in what you are hearing. Is there an invitation or a challenge for you to respond to? What is your response? This should be your first, most spontaneous response to what you have heard, and it may be expressed directly to God in the prayer that comes most naturally. Perhaps the passage has touched a place of pain, frustration or anger, and you pour out your feelings in the safety of this moment. Perhaps there is a flash of self-knowledge, and you are convicted of some sin. In the silence you feel your remorse and make your confession. At this point you are entering into a personal dialogue with God, “sharing with God the feelings the text has aroused, . . . feelings such as love, joy, sorrow, anger, repentance, desire, need, conviction, consecration.” This is an invitation to pour out your heart in honesty and authenticity. Listen for any invitation from God inviting you to act or respond in some way in response to the word God has given you. Whatever your response, let it find its full expression in the moments of silence that follow.

#### **Silence for a couple of minutes.**

What was your invitation or challenge from God? What was your response to God?

**Finally, read the passage one last time**, out loud slowly, and the invitation is for you to simply rest in God. Like the weaned child in Psalm 131 who has received what it needs from its mother and can now rest with her in peace and quiet, so you rest in God and simply enjoy his presence. Part of what enables this resting is the assurance that God is the One who will enable you to actually do what God is inviting you to do. In the silence that follows this final reading, you simply rest in what you have heard. Marjorie Thompson in her book *Soulfeast* says, “When our response has been played out in all its fury, angst, or exuberance, we come to a place of rest in God. Here there are no expectations, demands, no need to know, no desire but to be in the Divine Presence, receptive to what God desires to do with us.”

#### **Silence for two minutes or so.**

How was your experience of resting in God?

**How was your experience of praying scripture using the prayer practice of *Lectio Divina*?** Praying scripture in this way makes scripture come alive, and it allows us to give God space to speak directly to us the word we need to hear. This prayer practice also teaches us to be silent with God, a much-needed spiritual discipline, and it also deepens our relationship with God.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me the gift of honesty that I may not fear to speak the truth even when difficult.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station V.**

*\*Directions for Lectio Divina written by Ruth Haley Barton but adapted by Donell Seager.*

**STATION V - JESUS IS JUDGED BY PILATE**

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture,** you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station IV until you reach Station V.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 15, verses 1-5 and 15:**

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again, Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified.

**Let us reflect on this passage of scripture.** Most often when I am with this scene in scripture, I so want Jesus to defend himself and to tell the Truth about who he is. Often, I honestly just don't get that Jesus doesn't defend himself. What about you? What strikes you in this passage?

In its commentary on this passage, Theology of Work Project says, "The truth is God's passion to save us runs through what seems like a hopeless and contrived situation before a human judge named Pilate. What Pilate doesn't realize is this: In the eyes of God, the Truth needs no defense because for our sake, this perfectly innocent King makes us perfectly innocent, too."

**Read that quote again. Let it sink deep into your heart.** "The truth is God's passion to save us runs through what seems like a hopeless and contrived situation before a human judge named Pilate. What Pilate doesn't realize is this: In the eyes of God, the Truth needs no defense because for our sake, this perfectly innocent King makes us perfectly innocent, too."

**Reflect on the following questions:**

- When you think about this scene, what comes to your mind as you realize that Jesus chooses to not defend himself?
- Does this passage of scripture change how you feel about Jesus? If so, how?
- Have you ever been in a situation similar to this? If so, how did you respond?
- Should you ever find yourself in a similar situation again, would your response be different? If so, how?

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me discernment that I may see as you see, not as the world sees.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station VI.**

## **STATION VI - JESUS IS SCOURGED & CROWNED WITH THORNS**

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture,** you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station V until you reach Station VI.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of John, Chapter 19, verses 1-3:**

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

**Let us reflect on this passage of scripture.** Jesus, who is God made flesh, who is Love and who exemplifies Love, is scourged and wounded beyond our imaginings. He then endures having a crown of thorns pushed upon his head. Jesus takes on this pain and suffering so that we might know that he knows and understands all our pain and suffering. Love suffers so that we might know Love even more deeply.

Jesus suffers still—every time a child goes without food, every time an innocent person is convicted, every time we believe our justice serves the common good but instead causes more suffering and more oppression. Every time we choose anything over love, Jesus suffers still.

Indeed, Jesus is suffering today as people all over the world are suffering and dying because of COVID-19.

Suffering is not what God intended for us; however, it happens and will continue to happen until God's kingdom finally reigns forever.

**Here's the good news about what's happening in the midst of our suffering:** Jesus is very near, very present to those who are suffering. And, in fact, Jesus is weeping with those who are suffering. Jesus is hoping that the suffering of others will break our hearts enough that we might come alongside those who are suffering and be present to them as Jesus is—that we might be Jesus' hands and feet to them.

**Questions for reflection:**

- Look back over your life, especially those times when you've suffered. How was Jesus present with you through it? Who was Jesus' hands and feet to you in the midst of that suffering? Take time now to give Jesus thanks for his presence with you through your suffering and for those who were his hands and feet.
- How might you be a conduit for Love in our world today, especially those who are suffering because of COVID-19?

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me patience in times of suffering that I may offer my life as a sacrifice of praise.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station VII.**

## **STATION VII - JESUS BEARS THE CROSS**

*Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

**Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture,** you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station VI until you reach Station VII.

**Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of John, Chapter 19, verses 6 and 15-17:**

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

**Let us reflect on this passage of scripture.** On Palm Sunday we were the people who cried out, "Hosanna!" as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey, and now, just four short days later, we are those who cry out, "Crucify him!". Gone are the crowds praising him. Jesus must walk this lonesome valley by himself.

**I invite you to pray the words to the hymn *Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*, listening for a word or phrase God is giving you:**

*Jesus walked this lonesome valley,  
He had to walk it by Himself;  
O, nobody else could walk it for Him,  
He had to walk it by Himself.*

*We must walk this lonesome valley,  
We have to walk it by ourselves;  
O, nobody else can walk it for us,  
We have to walk it by ourselves.*

*You must go and stand your trial,  
You have to stand it by yourself,  
O, nobody else can stand it for you,  
You have to stand it by yourself.*

### **Questions for reflection:**

- What word or phrase caught your attention in this hymn?
- Why do you think that word or phrase caught your attention?
- Is there anything in particular you'd like to say to Jesus about your experience of praying this hymn? If so, do that now.

**Hear this truth:** While Jesus had to carry and bear the cross on his own, that is not the case for us. Jesus is always with us and gives us whatever gifts and graces we need so that we are able to carry and bear our crosses.

### **Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me strength of purpose that I may faithfully bear my crosses each day.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

**When you are ready to continue your pilgrimage, simply continue tracing the path on the labyrinth with your finger until you reach Station VIII.**

## **STATION VIII - JESUS IS CRUCIFIED**

### *Guided Meditation*

**Make** yourself comfortable in your chair and relax your body. Let's take a few deep breaths, breathing in God's light and love and breathing out any anxious feelings or any obstacles that inhibit our ability to be present to God. Now breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply through your nose God's light and love; breathe out through your mouth all that keeps you from being present to God in this moment. I just love how breathing deeply like this helps ground me, helps center me in God and God's deep love for me. I hope it did the same for you.

### **Let us pray:**

*God our Creator and Lord, I beg of you that I may truly be a friend to your Son and enter into His sufferings that he embraced for me and all people to bring wholeness and reconciliation. Amen.*

**Maintaining this prayerful posture,** you are invited to continue to slowly and deliberately trace the winding path of the labyrinth with your finger from Station VII until you reach Station VIII.

### **Listen with the ear of your heart to this passage of scripture from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 23, verses 33-34:**

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

**Let us reflect on this passage of scripture.** How can there be love so deep in Jesus that on the cross, he, being completely innocent, could set aside his own pain and suffering to ask God to forgive the criminals being crucified on either side of him? What a selfless act of love!

**Reflect on this truth:** Jesus' love for us is beyond our comprehension. He loves not just when we are right with him, but equally so when we our behavior does not look like love—when we do not do as Jesus would have done and/or when we do not love God, ourselves and others well.

### **Question for reflection:**

- Does reflecting on what great lengths Jesus would go to prove his love for you change your devotion, your love towards Jesus? If so, how?
- Do you desire to have a merciful heart like Jesus' so that you can bring Jesus' reconciliation and forgiveness to the world? If so, take a moment now to ask Jesus to give you a merciful heart so that you can bring his reconciliation and forgiveness to the world.
- Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? Holy Week is the perfect time to forgive this person.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, grant me a merciful heart that I may bring your reconciliation and forgiveness to all.*

**You are now invited to rest for a few moments in Jesus' deep, abiding love for you.** Let Jesus' love pour over every fiber of your being, soaking the whole of you just as water pouring gently over the top of your head would.

You have now completed your Holy Week Pilgrimage through the Stations of the Cross. May the gift of this pilgrimage be that you have drawn closer to the heart of Jesus—that you love him more dearly, see him more clearly and follow him more nearly for all the rest of your days.

Thank you for allowing me to companion you.