

lectio for lent

‘Love was his Meaning’ Stations of the Cross with Julian of Norwich

Using Stations by Eric Gill (1882-1940), from St. Alban’s Church, Oxford. These were one of the last works by Eric Gill completed just before his death. The texts from Julian of Norwich (c.1342-1416) are taken from the Penguin Classics edition of the ‘Long Text’ of her ‘Revelations of Divine Love’. Scripture taken from the Revised Standard Version.

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It is traditional after the announcing of each station to repeat:

V. We adore You, O Christ, and Praise You.

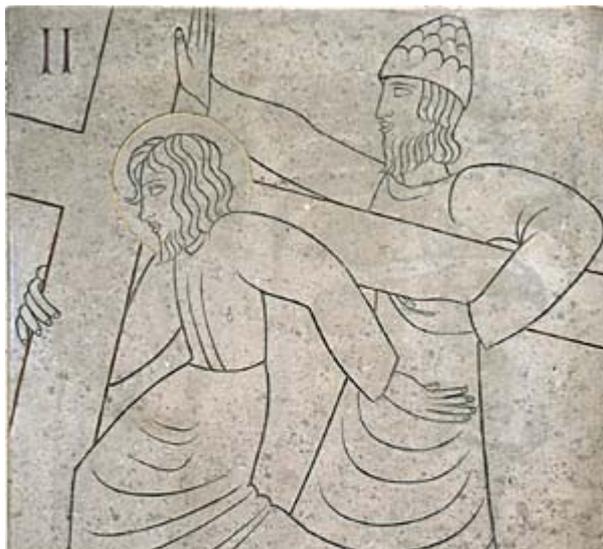
R. Because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.



Station 1: Jesus is condemned to Die

Pilate said to him: 'Do you know that I have power to release you and power to condemn you?' Jesus answered: 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.' (John 19.10)

Then said our good Lord Jesus to me: 'Are you well satisfied with my suffering for you?' And I said: 'Yes, good Lord, in your mercy. Yes, good Lord, may you be blessed forever!' Then said Jesus, our kind Lord: 'If you are satisfied: I am satisfied. It is a joy, a bliss and an endless delight to me that I suffered my passion for you. And if it were needful or possible that I should suffer more: I would suffer more.' (IX Revelation, Chapter 22)



Station 2: Jesus accepts the cross.

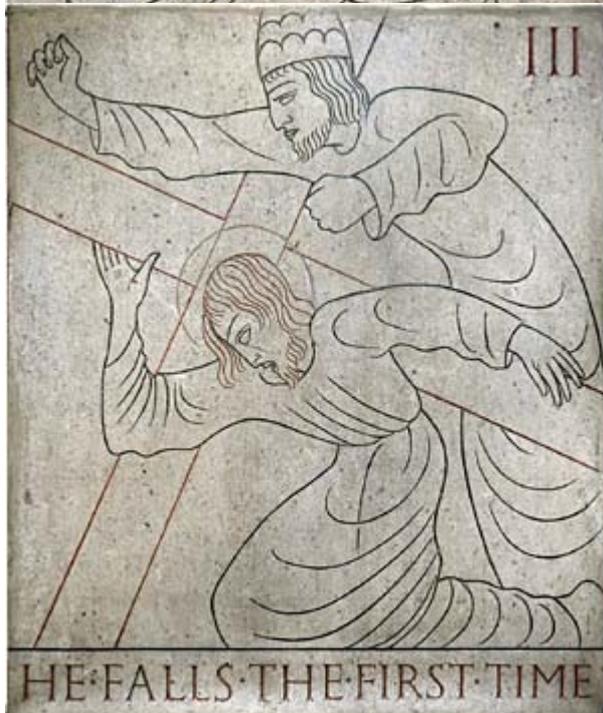
So they took Jesus and he went out, bearing his own cross to the place called the place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19.17)

And I saw that the love which made him suffer passes as far all his pains as heaven is above earth.

For his passion was a noble, precious and worshipful deed done in time by the working of love.

And that love was without beginning, is now, and shall be forever.

(IX Revelation, Chapter 22)

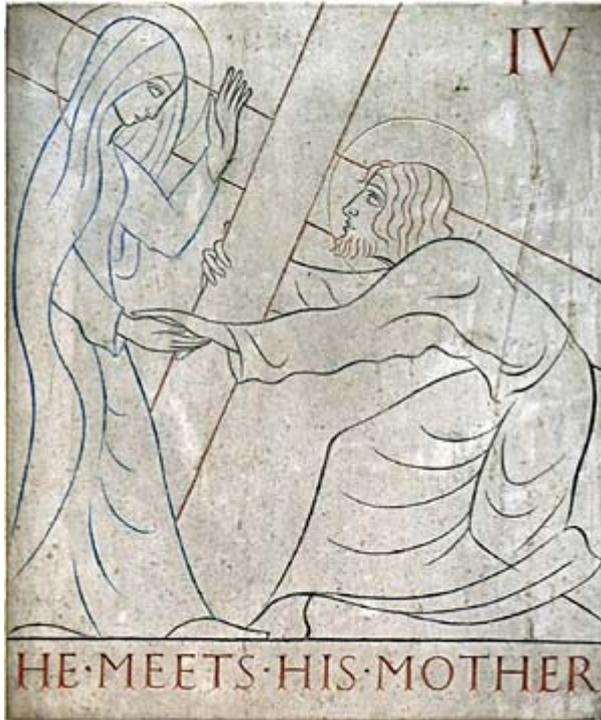


Station 3: Jesus falls the first time.

Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering, that being made perfect he might become the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. (Hebrews 5: 8-9)

When Adam fell, God's Son fell, as God's Son chose not to be parted from Adam. For Adam signifies to my understanding Everyman. Adam fell from life to death, into the vale of this retched world and after that into hell: God's Son fell, with Adam, into the vale of the

maiden's womb, who was the fairest daughter of Adam; and for this end: to excuse Adam from blame in heaven and on earth.
(XIV Revelation, Chapter 51)

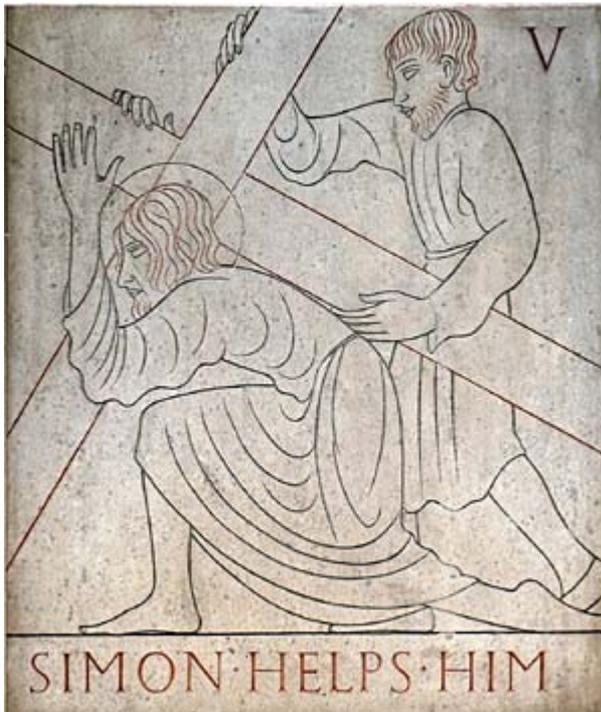


Station 4: Jesus meets his Mother.

My Son, have pity on me, I carried you nine months in the womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up. I beseech you, my Child, look at the heavens and the earth and see everything that is in them and know that it was God who made them all out of nothing. Accept death now so that in God's mercy I may receive you back with your brothers. (II Maccabees 7: 27-29)

Here I saw a part of the compassion of Our Lady Saint Mary: for Christ and she were so made one in love, that the greatness of her loving was the cause of the greatness of her pain. In this, I saw an example of the natural love, strengthened by grace, that creatures have for him; which kind love was most fully and overpassingly shown in his sweet Mother. For ever the higher, the mightier, the sweeter

that the love be, the more sorrow it is to the lover to see that body in pain that is loved.
(VIII Revelation, Chapter 18)



Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus.

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

And all his disciples and all his true lovers then suffered anguish more than their own bodily dying. For I am sure by my own feelings that the least of them loved him so far above himself, that it passes beyond the power of my telling.

Here I saw a great oneness between Christ and us, to my understanding, for when he is in pain we are in pain.

(VIII Revelation, Chapter 18)

(Note: Cyrene was a Greek colony in North Africa.)

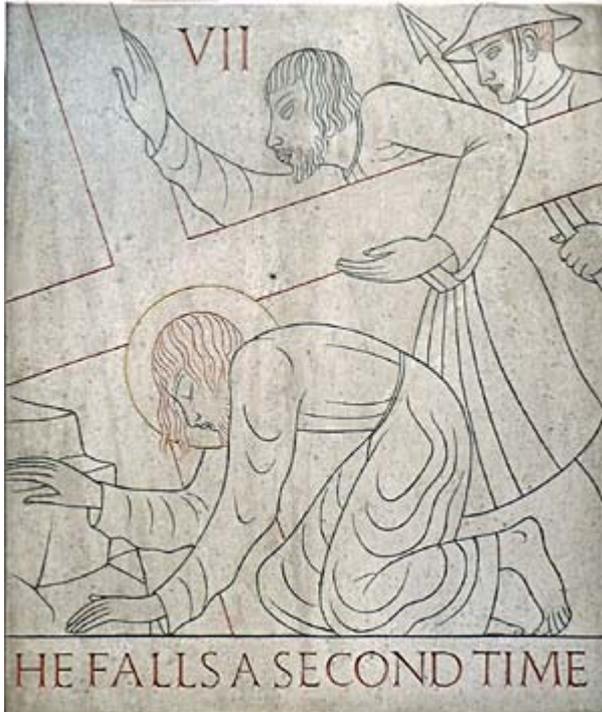


[Station 6:](#) Veronica touches the face of Jesus.

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and neglected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces. (Isaiah 53:2-3)

And I saw in the face of the crucifix that hung before me a part of his passion, and it made me think of the holy veil of Veronica which is at Rome, which he portrayed with his own blessed face when he bore his hard passion. Of the brownness and blackness and ruefulness of this image many have marvelled how it may be, since he portrayed it with his own blessed face, who is the fairness of heaven and the flower of earth and the fruit of the Maiden's womb. But it was shown me that it was the

image and likeness of our foul black deeds' shame in which our fair bright blessed Lord God was hid. Blessed may he be. (II Revelation, Chapter 10)



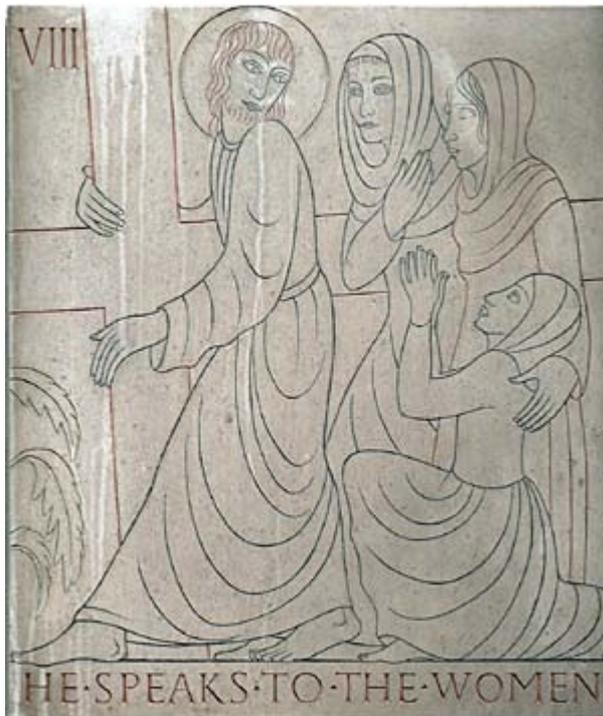
[Station 7:](#) Jesus falls a second time.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons and daughters of glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. (Hebrews 2:10)

And in this woe he suffered seven great pains. The first was the sore bruising he took from his falling, which was to him a pain proper to his human condition; the second was the heaviness of his body; the third was the feebleness following from these two; the fourth that he was blinded in his reason and stunned in his mind, to such length that he had almost forgotten his own love.; the fifth was that he might not rise; the sixth was most marvellous to me, that he lay all alone and I saw none to help him; and the seventh was that the place where he lay was hard and grievous.

And I marvelled how this servant might

meekly suffer there all his woe. (XIV Revelation, Chapter. 51)



Station 8: The Women of Jerusalem mourn for Jesus.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turned to them and said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' (Luke 23:27)

But specially and highly and with full lovely manner of look, it was shown to me that we shall meekly bear and suffer the penance that God himself gives us in life with a mind to his blessed passion.

For when we have a mind in his blessed Passion, with pity and love, then we suffer with him as did his friends who saw it. Flee we to our Lord and we shall be comforted.

(XVI Revelation, Chapter 77)



Station 9: Jesus falls the third time.

For we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that, by the grace of God, he might taste death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9)

And I saw that it is right and fitting by virtue of the Lord's greatness and his own worship that his dearworthy servant, whom he loved so much, should be truly and blissfully rewarded, above all that he would have been if he had not fallen.

Yes, and to such a length, that his falling and his woe shall be turned into high and overpassing worship and endless bliss.

(XIV Revelation, Chapter 51)



Station 10: Jesus is made naked for the Cross

Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

(Philippians 2:6-8)

Our good Lord showed me in the spirit a sight of his homely loving. I saw that he is to us everything that is good and comfortable to our help. He is our clothing that for love is wound round us and wraps us up and shrouds us, and all encloses us and is twined about us for tender love, that he may never leave us.

For as the body is clad in cloth and the flesh in the skin and the bones in the flesh and the heart in the whole, so we are clad and enclosed in the goodness of God. Yes, and he is yet more homely, for all these vanish and pass away but the goodness of God is ever whole and more near to us without any comparison. (I Revelation, Chapter 5 & 6)



[Station 11:](#) Jesus is nailed to the cross.

And when they came to the place which is called the skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said: 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'

(Luke 23: 33-34)

We pray to God by his holy flesh and by his precious blood, his holy passion, his dearworthy death and worshipful wounds. For all the blessed kindness and endless life that we have is through all this: it is all the goodness of God.

For the blessed wounds of our Saviour be open, and enjoy to heal us. (I Revelation, Chapter 6 & XIV Revelation, Chapter 61)



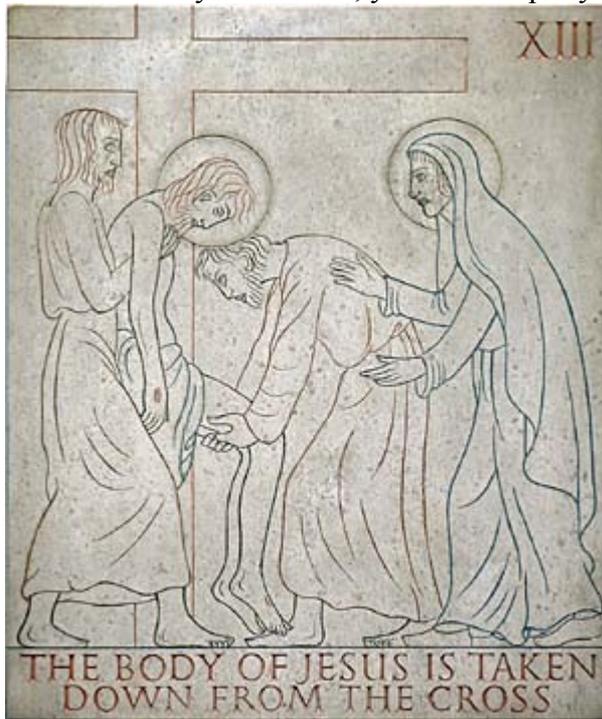
[Station 12:](#) Jesus dies on the cross.

This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, that a man or woman should lay down their lives for their friends... And Jesus said: 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and gave up the spirit. (John 15:12-13,19:37)

And with this our good Lord said blissfully: 'See how much I love you', as if he had said: 'My darling, behold and see your Lord, the God that made you, and your endless joy. For now I have died for you and suffered all that can possibly be suffered, all my bitter pain and hard travail are turned into endless bliss and joy for you and for me. See what satisfying bliss I have in your salvation, and for my love rejoice with me.' (X Revelation, Chapter 24)

Note: The inscription at the top abbreviates the Latin *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*, 'Jesus

of Nazareth, King of the Jews'; the Greek inscription held by John means 'love me', part of John 14.15 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments'.



Station 13: THE BODY OF Jesus is taken down from the cross.

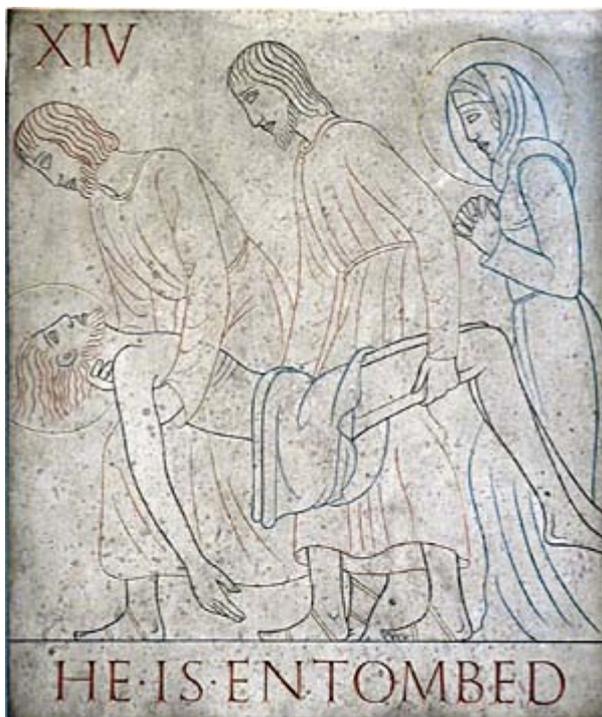
Since therefore the children share in the same flesh and blood, he likewise partook of the same nature that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. (Hebrews 2:14)

And his body being slain and dead, he yielded his soul into the Father's hands with all mankind for whom he was sent.

At this point he began first to show his might, for he went into hell and there uprooted Adam from the bitter valley and rightfully knit him to himself in high heaven.

His body was in the grave until Easter morning, but from that time he was never more to be counted among the dead. For then was

rightfully ended the struggling and the writhing, the groaning and the moaning. And our foul deadly flesh, which God's Son took on him – which was Adam's old serving robe – was then by our saviour made fair, new, white and bright and of endless cleanness. (XIV Revelation, Chapter 51)



Station 14: The body of Jesus is entombed.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation of our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

Would you learn our Lord's meaning in this thing?

Learn it well:

Love was his meaning.

Who showed it to you?

Love.

What did he show you?

Only love.

And for what reason did he show you?

For love.

Hold on to this, and you will learn more of the

same. But you will never, without end, learn in it any other meaning. (Chapter 86)