

STATIONS OF THE CROSS 2026

Charcoal and Red – Images, Reflections, Prayers



Jeremy Holt

FOREWORD

There is a deeper question at the heart of the Stations: Why do they still matter in a world that feels splintered, cynical, blood-marked, and endlessly conflicted? The truth is, the Stations do not become less relevant in our fractured age. They become more so.

The *Way of the Cross* is not sentimental piety. It is a sacred counter-story. It names what our age often disguises: power washing its hands while harm spreads (Pilate is never only Pilate); truth bartered for convenience and stability; crowds instrumentalised and weaponised; bodies reduced to collateral; suffering rendered invisible; empathy outsourced or glibly dismissed as weakness – while the innocent are crushed beneath systems that still dare to call themselves necessary, even just.

And still, the *Via Crucis* is not only a mirror held up to violence. It is also a gallery of costly mercies: Simon compelled into solidarity; Veronica risking kindness in a riotous public space; Mary standing where love has no leverage; the women of Jerusalem refusing the numbness of spectatorship; Joseph of Arimathea daring to honour the dead when honour carries risk. These are not melodramatic cameos. They are small acts of resistance that interrupt the machinery of harm and hate, and insist that suffering must be seen, touched, carried, and mourned.

The stations also name what we disguise in ourselves: the quiet reign of narcissism, the slow drift into solipsism, the ease with which hypocrisy passes for conviction. They expose our double standards – how quickly we excuse what benefits us and condemn what threatens us. They confront selective morality: outrage without cost, compassion without proximity, justice performed at a distance while real wounds bleed off-screen.

The *Via Crucis* refuses the lie that pain is ‘over there’. It insists: *This is human. This is us.* And yet it also refuses despair. It does something metamodern in the deepest sense: it holds the contradiction without collapsing into cynicism. It shows a God who does not solve suffering remotely, but enters it – and by doing so, redefines power as self-giving and reimagines holiness as co-presence.

In a time of propaganda and performance, *The Way* becomes a practice of truthfulness. Not truth as argument, but truth as *presence*: staying with what is real, with what hurts, with what we would rather scroll past.

In our age of emotional exhaustion and spiritual dissonance, *The Way* is also a practice of endurance. It teaches us to keep moving forward when we cannot see the ending, when the stone is still sealed, when the world feels like Good Friday with no Easter Sunday on the calendar. When moral confusion, religious bigotry, and a lack of discernment prevail, the *Via Crucis* emerges as a practice of conscience. It trains the heart to recognise the patterns: who big-notes themselves and who gains from the suffering of others; who gets condemned and who gets stripped; who gets silenced, and who gets forgotten. And it asks, quietly, relentlessly: *Where are your hands? Where are your feet?*

The Way’s fourteen pauses are ultimately a meditation on integration. They refuse the split between belief and action, prayer and justice, beauty and grief. They bind them together – with red thread – not neatly, not cleanly, but in good faith.

In this age of rupture, the *Way of the Cross* remains a classroom of silence in the school of attention. It challenges us to recognise suffering without turning away; to name complicity without despair; to practise kindness with embodied empathy. The stations do not offer an escape from the world’s violence; they inspire us to walk through it truthfully – hands shaped for mercy, feet steadied in truth – until even the sealed tombstone feels like a threshold.

jwh
February 2026

The background of the page is a charcoal drawing of a hand, likely representing a station from the Via Crucis. The hand is rendered in shades of grey and black, with a single, prominent red line indicating a wound on the palm. The hand is positioned as if grasping a vertical wooden post. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

Walking the Way

This is a road of fourteen pauses.

It is not a performance to be watched from a distance,
but a pilgrimage to be entered – step by step, hand in hand, breath by breath –
until the story reads us back.

The Stations of the Cross do not ask us to romanticise or fixate upon suffering.
They ask us to remain present to love –
where love is resisted, stripped, fastened, silenced.

In these pages, the traditional *Via Crucis* is honoured,
yet approached through a metamodern and theopoetic lens:
a way of seeing that refuses both scepticism and certainty,
and chooses instead a fierce attentiveness –
to paradox, to fracture, to mercy,
to the sacred beckoning beyond the spaces of what we can name.

Each station begins and ends with a refrain –
a red thread of prayer that returns, deepens,
and gathers weight as you walk.

The images are rendered in charcoal – dust and shadow –
with a single red trace: not spectacle, but focus;
not violence, but witness;
a thread that runs through the sequence like a pulse beneath the skin of the world.

Hands and feet recur throughout:
hands that wash, bless, strike, restrain, receive;
feet that stumble, stand, falter, and finally fall still.
They remind us that faith is not only belief – it is embodied response.

The *Via Crucis* is not a ladder out of pain. It is a way through.
Through denial, through violence, through hate, through the human instinct
to wash our hands clean while the blood-dimmed tide keeps spreading into the world.

This *Way of the Cross* ends at a sealed stone.
We do not force it open. Nor do we rush the dawn.
We wait – because waiting, too, is prayer.

How to Pray These Stations

Move slowly. Read the Gospel echo. Sit with the image.

Read the reflection and prayer. Let one phrase remain with you. Pray the refrain.

Then continue – without haste.

I wish you well on your journey to the place of your skull – your threshold, your holy ground.

FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned

Jesus, we come with open hands and unsteady feet.

By your cross, teach us to remain in the wound that heals.

Matthew 27:24–26

When Pilate saw he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said. 'It's your responsibility.' All the people answered, 'His blood is on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas... and delivered Jesus to be crucified.



Reflection

Water runs over skin,
but the world is not rinsed.

A basin, a gesture, a performance –
and still the red remembers.
It slips from the bowl,
finds the cracks in the stone,
crosses thresholds, flows where it wants.

Hands washed –
And still the heart is not;
still the will resists truth.

Some things defy cleansing.
They can only be borne.
And Jesus stands silent in the verdict's shadow –
receiving what we disown,
bearing what we would rather call *not mine*.

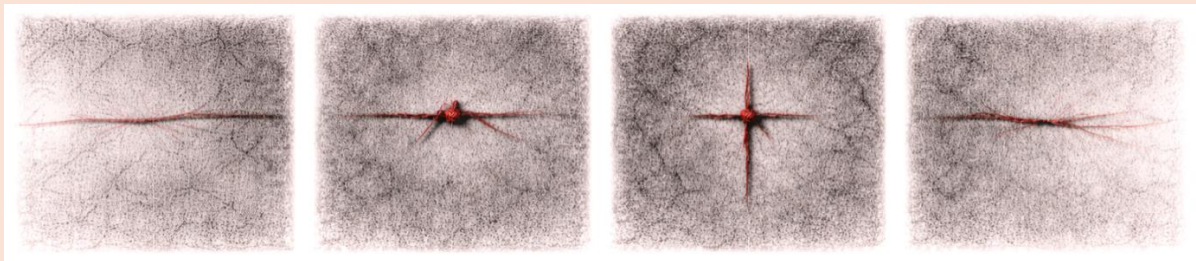
Prayer

Christ of the threshold,
meet me where I pretend to be clean.
Unmask the small evasions
I bless as innocence and virtue.
Teach me to stay with what is true,
even when it implicates me.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



Note: Four red threads in a tetraptych run through these pages – one knotted, one taut, another cruciform, the fourth frayed. This visual refrain, an emblem of the Way of the Cross, suggests that suffering does not erase what is borne; instead, it gathers, transforms, and threads it into the silence of waiting.

SECOND STATION

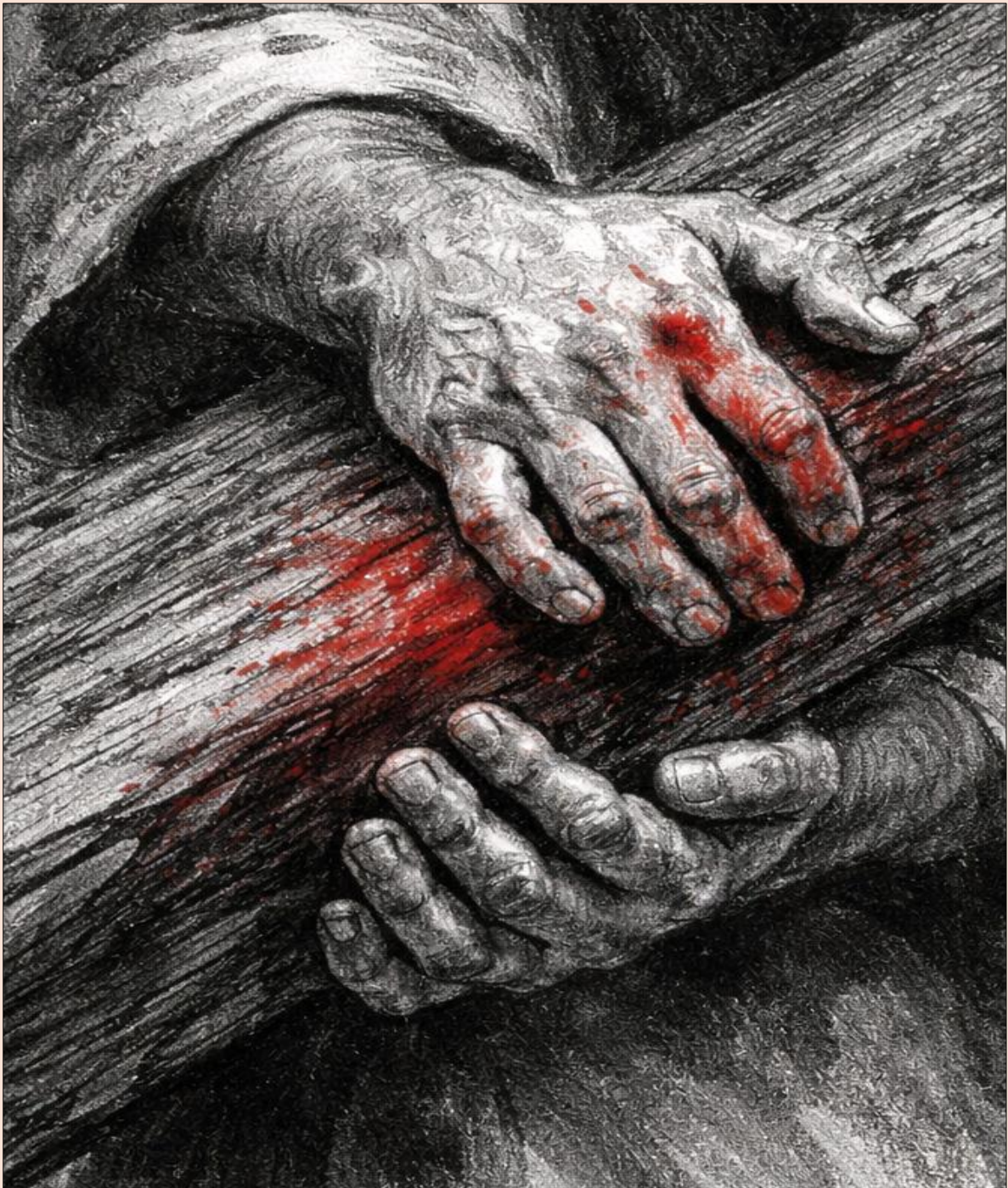
Jesus takes up his cross

Jesus, you lift what we refuse.

By your cross, help us bear love's weight.

Gospel – John 19:16–17

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull.



Reflection

The wood is not only weight – it is a *yes*.
Not agreement with injustice, but a consent that costs:
love that will not abandon
even those who seek to break it.

His hands find the grain of the timber –
splinter, knot, roughness –
as though the world's cruelty
has become suddenly tactile,
inescapably close.

And still, he lifts it.
Not as spectacle. Not as heroism.
But as holy acceptance –
a burden borne
so that pain is no longer endured alone.

The cross is forced upon him,
and something in the world shifts:
not because suffering begins,
but because love refuses to turn its back.

Prayer

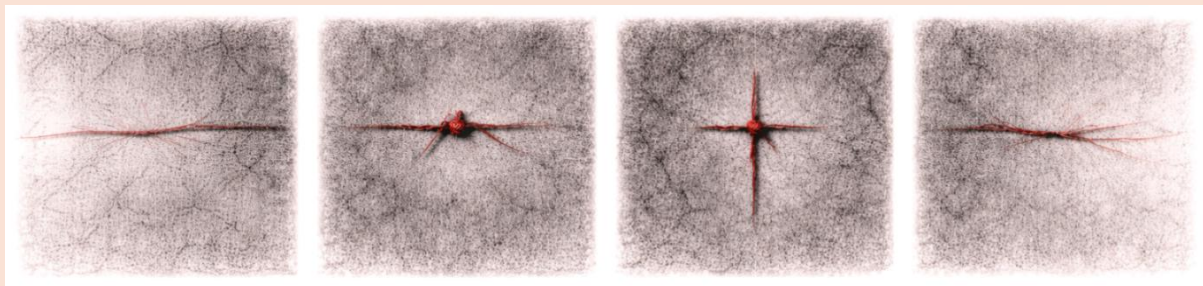
Jesus of the first step,
when the burden arrives and the air changes –
keep me from closing my hands.
Keep me from fleeing.

When my cross is set upon me,
grant me courage to lift what I can,
and grace to carry it without bitterness,
with no need to blame.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

Jesus, you stumble beneath what should not be yours.
By your cross, meet us where strength fails.

Gospel Echo – Mark 14:38

The spirit is indeed willing... but the flesh is weak.



Reflection

The first fall is not failure.
It is flesh telling the truth.

The world has its myths of strength –
its polished faces,

its speeches about resilience –
but the road is rough,
and the timber is real.

He stumbles into the dust
without exclamation, without drama,
without the comfort of being understood.
Knees bruise stone.
Hands scrape grit.
The cross meets the earth.

And for a moment, the story
narrows to this:
weight, breath, silence –
No lesson.
No metaphor.
Only a body refusing to lie.

There are falls we hide,
falls we transfigure or glorify;
falls we avoid or sanitise.

But Jesus does not bypass the fall.
He enters it. And the ground itself alters
by the grace of a love that stays.

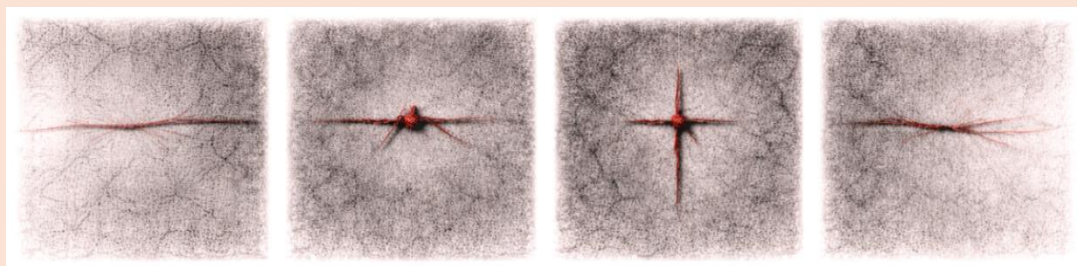
Prayer

Jesus who falls,
meet me in my first collapse –
the moment I cannot keep up appearances.
When I hit the ground of my own limits,
do not let me turn it into shame.
Teach me the humility of dust,
and the courage to rise again
without pretending I never fell.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his mother

Jesus, love meets love amidst the crowd's malice.

By your cross, teach us the courage to stay the course.

Gospel Echo – Luke 2:34–35

Then Simeon said to Mary, 'This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many... so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'



Reflection

There is a pain that cannot be healed –
only witnessed.

No miracle interrupts this meeting.

No speeches. No explanations.
No rescue.

Only presence.

A gaze that holds
what cannot be fixed.
A love that has no leverage.

A mother's hands,
aching to lift him,
unable to change the road –
and yet refusing to leave it.

The cross passes between them
like a shadowed threshold.

This is the terrible holiness
of staying close.

In their silence, the world learns a different strength –
not triumph, but communion.

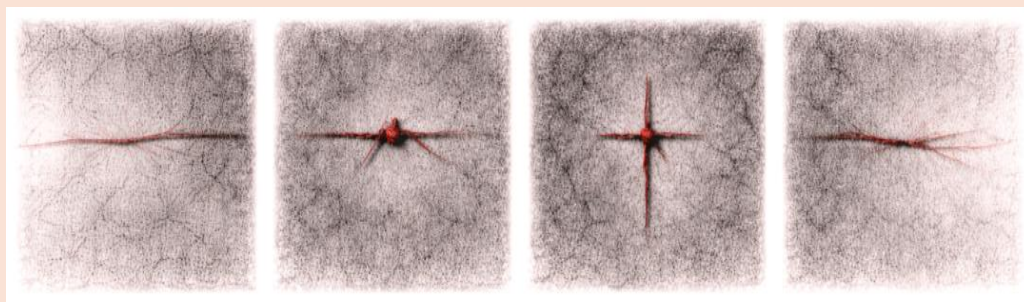
Prayer

Mary, Mother of Sorrows,
teach me the courage of presence.
When I cannot change what is happening,
keep me from fleeing into numbness or noise.
Help me to love without control.
To stand near with no need to solve.
And when my heart is pierced,
hold me in God's mercy.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



FIFTH STATION

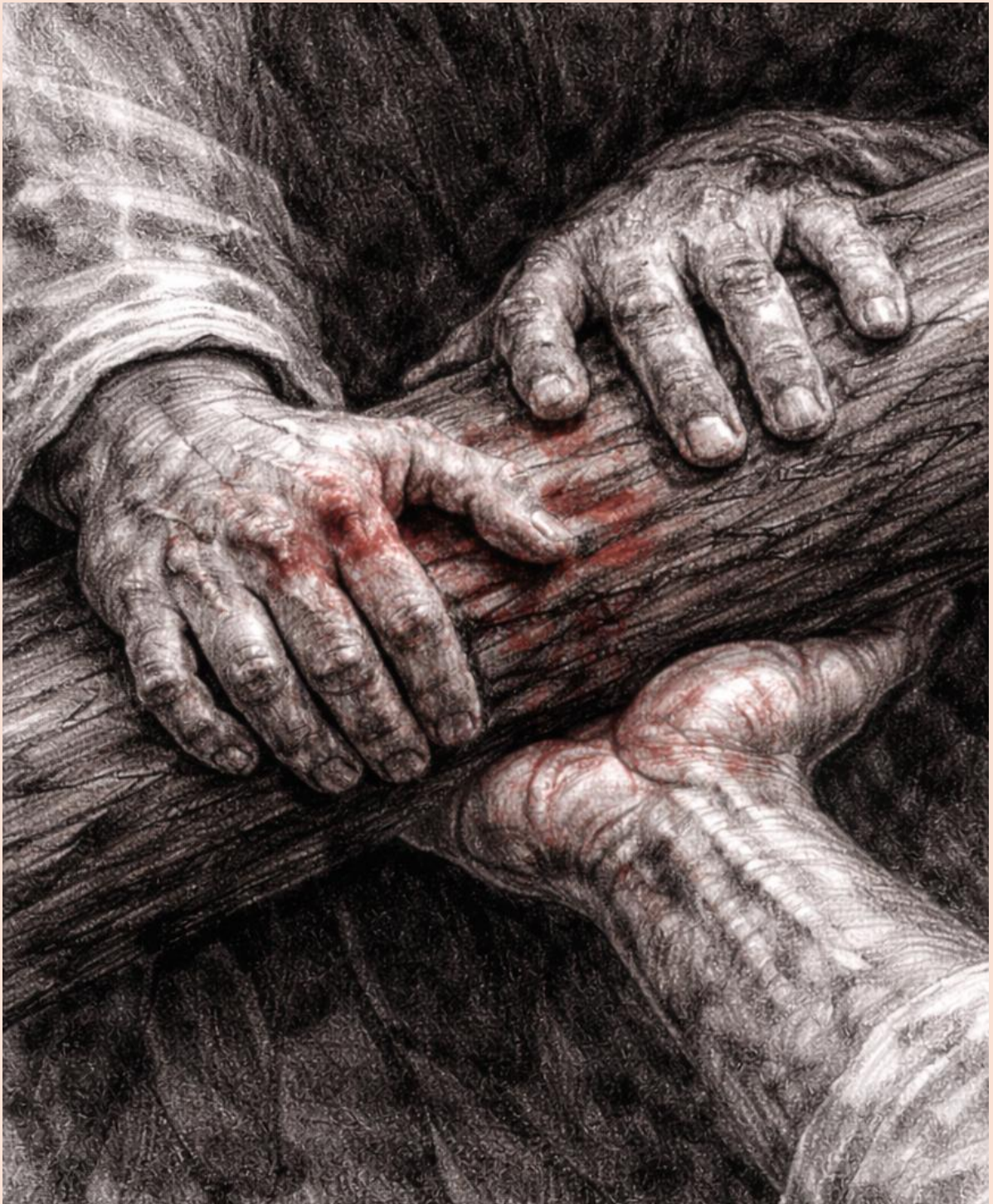
Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

Jesus, you receive help without protest or shame.

By your cross, draw us into sharing the burdens of those around us.

Gospel – Mark 15:21

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, was on his way in from the country, and they compelled him to carry his cross.



Reflection

He is not asked. He is seized.
A stranger pulled from the edge of the road –
from his everyday life –
into the raw centre of suffering.

The wood is thrust into his hands
like a decree.

And yet –
in the strange alchemy of mercy –
compulsion becomes communion.

Two bodies beneath one beam.
Two breaths held in the same strain.

The cross does not become lighter;
it becomes shared.

And somewhere between reluctance and resolve
a human heart learns
what it did not come seeking:
that love sometimes begins
as inconvenience, as disruption,
as a burden never chosen –
and continues because it has taken hold.

Prayer

Jesus, when compassion feels like an interruption,
meet me there.

When love costs time, comfort, reputation –
steady me.

Give me Simon's hands:
hands that take hold,
even when the will is late.

Help me carry the load with you.

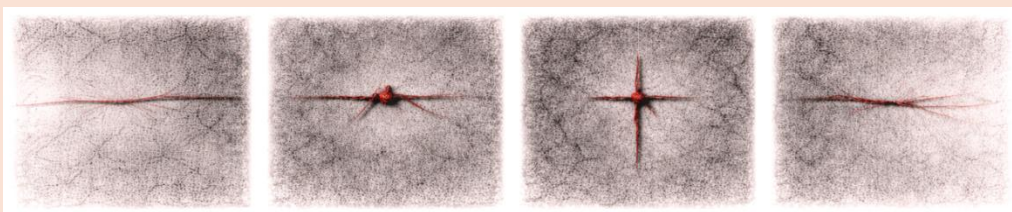
And to discover in the carrying
a mercy deeper than my consent.

Amen.

Refrain

Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.

Draw me into the wound that heals.



SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Jesus, violence does not erase your face.

By your cross, grant us the mercy of touch.

Gospel Echo – Matthew 25:35–40

'I was... naked and you clothed me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me.'



Reflection

A woman steps forward
when doing so is dangerous.

Not with a speech. Not a strategy.
Nor with the illusion of fixing.
Only a cloth and trembling courage.

She lifts her hands
toward the face struck,
spat on, misunderstood, condemned.

For a moment, the machinery of violence pauses
at a single human act:
the refusal to let suffering remain faceless.

Cloth touches skin –
and what is carried away is not only blood and dirt,
but the lie that pain is impersonal.

And in that brief exchange
a mystery opens:
that compassion is not a feeling
but a threshold,
and the holy arrives
as a small, defiant gentleness
amid cruelty.

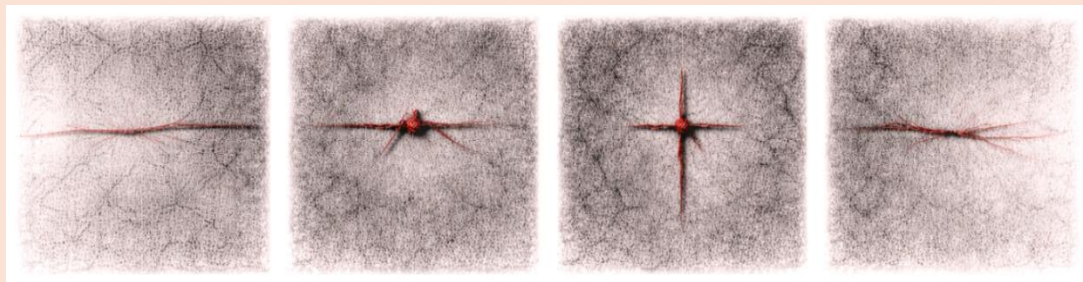
Prayer

Jesus, when I want to keep my distance
from what is broken and unbearable,
draw me nearer.
Give me Veronica's fortitude –
a courage of quiet compassion.
Help me touch the wounds of the world
without turning away, without making it about me,
with no need for applause.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls a second time

Jesus, we come with open hands and unsteady feet.

By your cross, teach us to remain in the wound that heals.

Gospel Echo – Psalm 22:14–15

'I am poured out like water... my strength is dried up like a potsherd... and my tongue sticks to my jaws.'



Reflection

The second fall is different.

The first fall surprises – a sudden crack in the will.

But the second arrives as recognition:

This is what the road is now.

The body remembers pain.

Breath shortens.

The heart hammers.

The ground rises

as though it has been waiting.

Dirt and dust enter the mouth.

The world blurs at the edges.

The cross drags its dark smear

across stone.

And still –

in the place where strength runs out,

something refuses to let go:

a quiet refusal to abandon what is human.

He falls again into the same earth.

And the ground does not reject him,

as if to say:

there is no depth of exhaustion

where God will not go with you.

Prayer

Jesus, who falls again,

meet me in the repeat of my weakness –

in the same temptations, the same addictions,

the same griefs,

the same failures I thought I had outgrown.

When I am tired of myself,

do not grow tired of me.

Give me the grace to rise without despair,

and to keep moving forward

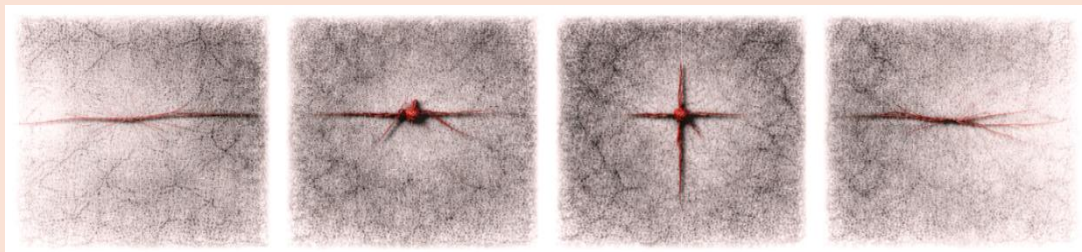
without pretending I am strong.

Amen.

Refrain

Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.

Draw me into the wound that heals.



EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Jesus, you turn toward grief and compassion.

By your cross, help us remain in the wound that heals.

Gospel – Luke 23:27–28

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'



Reflection

They do what love does when it cannot intervene:
they weep.

Their hands rise to their chests – not as performance,
but as the body’s honest language when words fail.

Even under the cross’s weight, even in exhaustion,
Jesus turns toward them –
toward grief, toward witness,
toward the reckoning
held inside their tears.

He does not reject their sorrow.
He deepens it, draws it outward
from sympathy into prophecy,
from the present wound
into the wounds that are coming.

Not from indifference, but from truth:
love refuses sentimentality.
There is a grief
that stays safely at the roadside –
and there is a grief that awakens us.

He calls them
not only to mourn him,
but to see the world
that keeps crucifying the innocent.

And still – he lets their tears be part of the journey,
keeping pace with his own.

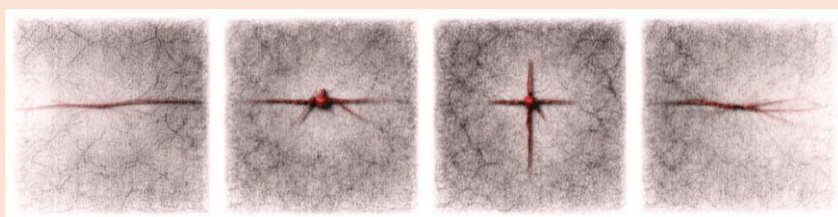
Prayer

Jesus, when I weep only at a distance, draw me closer.
When my sorrow is safe, make it brave.
Help me grieve what is broken
without turning grief into theatre,
and to let lament become love in motion –
a kindness that acts,
a truth that refuses denial.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



NINETH STATION

Jesus falls a third time

Jesus, when strength is spent, you do not let go.

By your cross, help us trust when we can no longer stand.

Gospel Echo – Isaiah 53:3–5

He was despised and rejected... a man of suffering... he has borne our infirmities... and by his wounds we are healed.



Reflection

The third fall is unsurprising.
It is the end of strength.

The road has taken everything – breath, balance, dignity –
and still it demands more.

Here, the body stops negotiating.
It simply yields to gravity, to earth,
to the terrible honesty of limits.
Hands spread wide on the ground –
not in defeat,
but because there is nothing left to give.

And the cross presses down
like the full weight of the world's refusal
to love.
Yet even here – at the lowest point of the road –
Jesus does not turn away from being human.

He falls into the earth
as if to meet us where we finally admit
we cannot save ourselves.
And in that yielding, a strange mercy begins:
not the mercy of escape,
but the mercy of accompaniment –
God refusing to leave
even when we cannot stand.

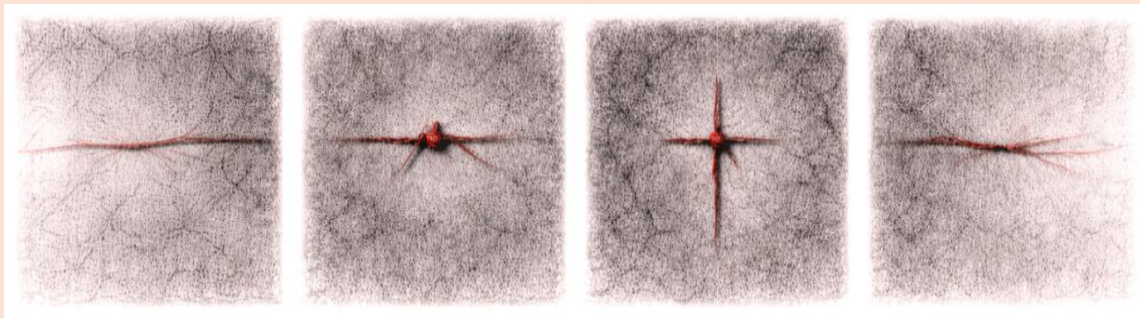
Prayer

Jesus, when I reach the end of my strength,
meet me there.
When I can no longer carry what life has placed upon me,
hold me – not with answers,
but with presence.
Help me surrender without despair,
and to rise again by your grace.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



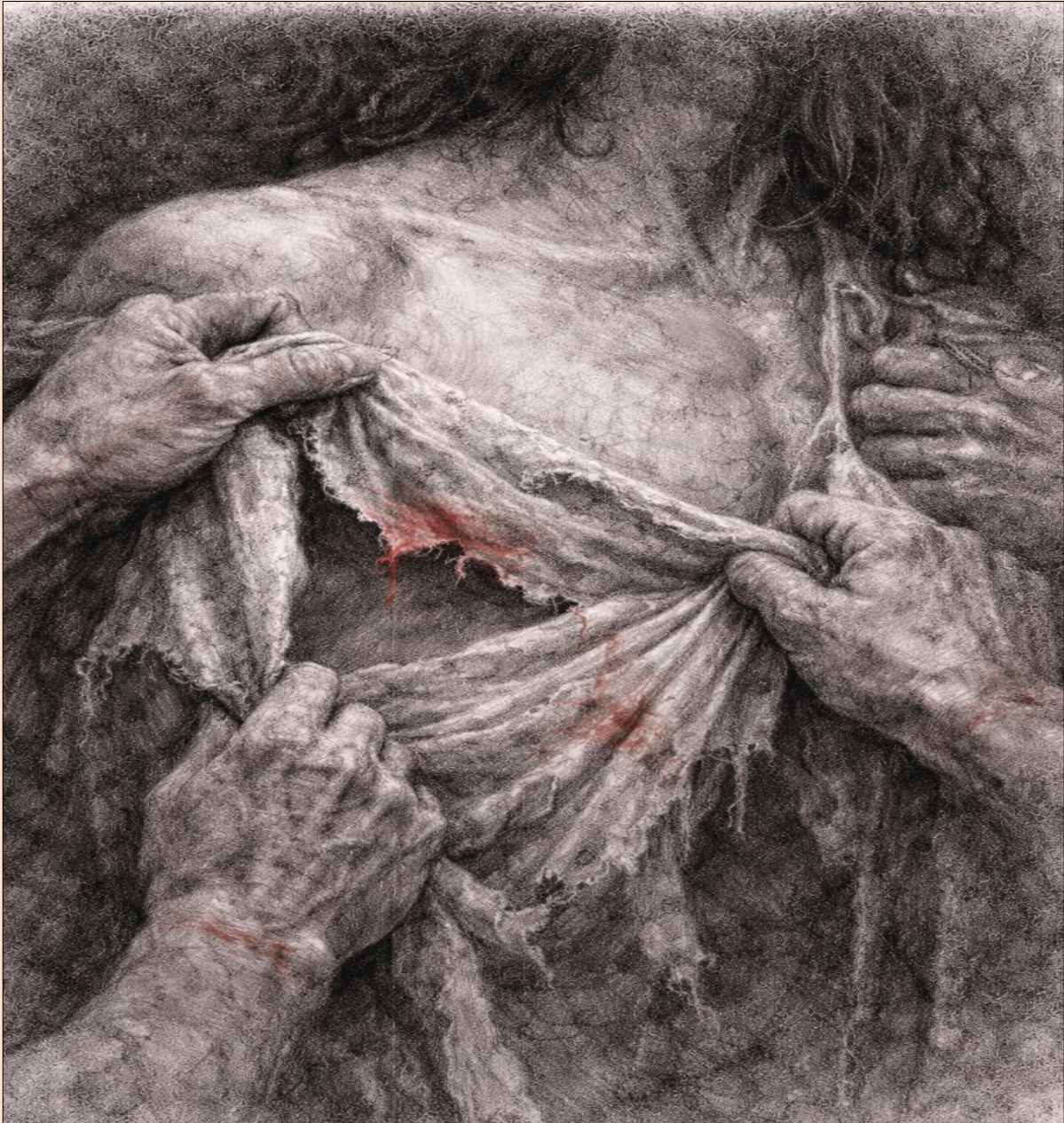
TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

Jesus, you are stripped - and still you do not withdraw.
By your cross, teach us dignity without disguise.

Gospel – Mark 15:24

And they... divided his outer garment among them, casting lots for them to decide what each one should take.



Reflection

They take what is left.
Not only cloth – but privacy, dignity,
and the last thin veil

between the suffering body and the world's stare.

This is the violence beneath violence:
to turn a person into an object,
a spectacle, a thing to be divided.

Even here, suffering becomes commerce.
They gamble beneath him,
as though pain were divisible,
and bodies could be owned.

Hands pull fabric away
as if stripping can erase holiness,
as if exposure can undermine love.

But Jesus does not retreat
from being seen.
He stands in the open air with nothing to hide behind –
no titles, no defence,
no armour of explanation.
Only skin. Breath.
Only the human laid bare.

Here, in this place where shame expects silence,
an unfamiliar truth burns through:
God does not save us by staying untouched,
but by entering the very wound
we spend our lives covering.

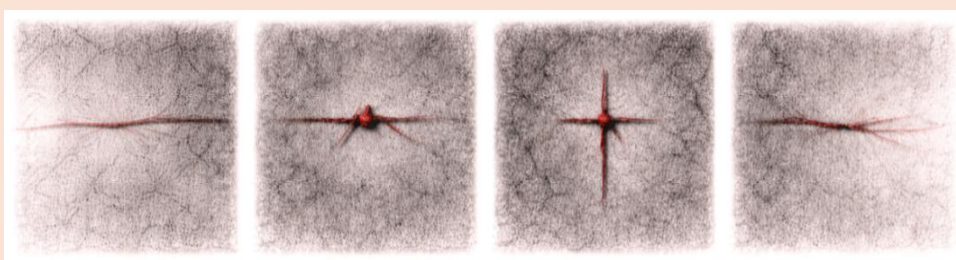
Prayer

Jesus, when I am exposed – when my coverings fail,
when I cannot curate my image –
meet me without turning away.
Strip away what is false without stripping away my worth.
Help me stand in truth without shame.
To trust that love remains
even when there is nothing left to hold.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



ELEVENTH STATION

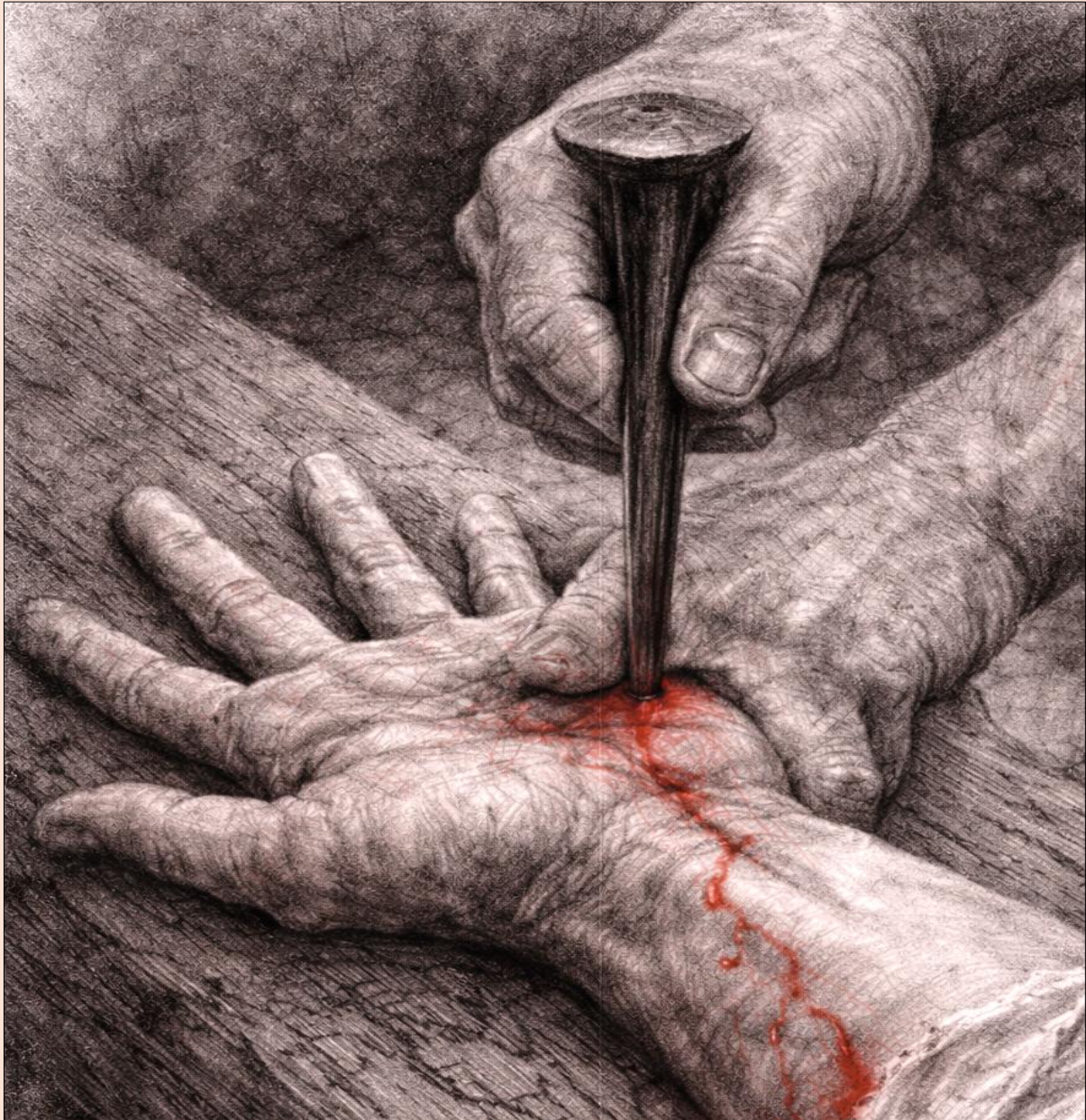
Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus, your hands are nailed open in love.

By your cross, help us forgive despite the cost.

Gospel – Luke 23:33–34

When they came to the place called The Skull... they crucified him... Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'



Reflection

There is a sound the world can never forget:
metal piercing flesh, wood meeting body,
the blunt finality of the nail.

Pinned open are the hands that healed.
Restrained are the hands that once blessed.
Now other hands hold the palm steady,
as if mercy must be restrained
to fit the world's ferocity.

Nothing left to shield him.
Only the human exposed.
Ecce homo: behold the man.

The red does not stay small.
It spreads – a thin trickle finding the grain of timber,
etching its witness into the wood.
The thread is no longer hidden.
Violence believes it has had the last word.

Yet words rise from the wound
that no empire can translate:
forgive them.

The nail enters. Love does not retreat.
The wound opens,
and God does not leave.

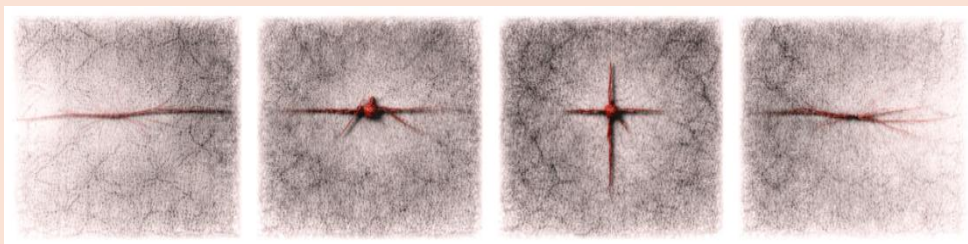
Prayer

Jesus, when I am held down
by fear, by force, by circumstance –
meet me.
When my life is stripped of choice,
do not let shame become my shelter.
Open my hands –
not to surrender to evil, but to refuse its shape in me.
And when the wound spreads beyond what I can contain,
let it not become resentment.
Make my mercy real, my truth steady,
my forgiveness daring.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the cross

Jesus, you give your breath into the Father's hands.

By your cross, teach us to submit our breath to your grace.

Gospel – Luke 23:44–46

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the entire land... Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

Reflection

There is a silence that is not peace
but absence.

The air thickens. The sky turns strange.
Even the world seems to flinch.

Breath leaves him.

Not taken by force alone but given –
as if the last act of love is release.

Hands that were held down
are now held open in the only freedom left:
the choice to let go.

Feet that walked the road
no longer move,
and the dust settles
as though time itself has paused to listen.

This is not the triumph of suffering.
This is the grief of God
entering a human end.

And still – in the heart of this undoing –
a strange faithfulness remains:

into your hands.

Not certainty. Nor explanation.

Only trust placed like a seed into dark soil.

Prayer

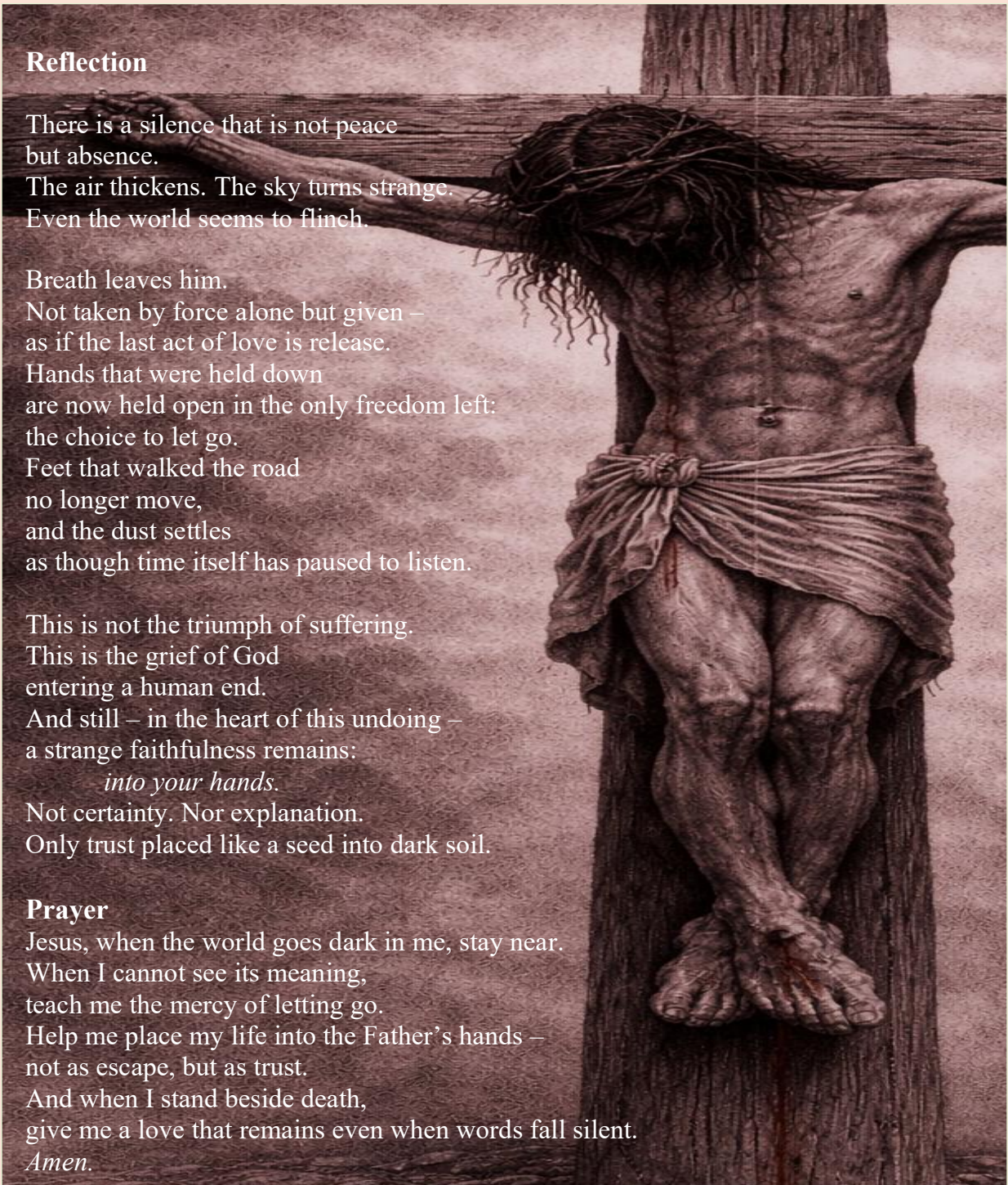
Jesus, when the world goes dark in me, stay near.

When I cannot see its meaning,
teach me the mercy of letting go.

Help me place my life into the Father's hands –
not as escape, but as trust.

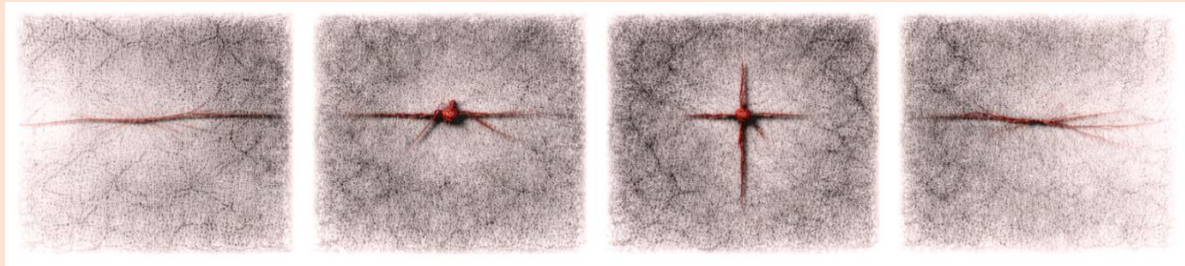
And when I stand beside death,
give me a love that remains even when words fall silent.

Amen.



Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus, you are received into human hands.

By your cross, teach us that kindness does not release its hold.

Gospel – Mark 15:42–46

Joseph of Arimathea... went boldly to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus... Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that this was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So, Joseph bought some linen cloth and took down the body.



Reflection

Now the hands return –
not to strike, not to fasten, not to hold down.
Only to receive.

The body is lowered with the care of grief –
slow, trembling, reverent –
as if love must learn again
how to touch after so much harm.

Blood and dust, weight and wound –
the ache of what cannot be undone –
all gathered into arms that can only hold
what they could not save.

This is the mercy that arrives after the ending,
yet refuses to abandon the one who suffered.
And here, in the aftermath,
the sacred is not thunder.
It is linen. Hands.
The unbearable tenderness
of carrying what is gone.

The cross is empty. The world exhales.
And sorrow becomes a prayer spoken with extended arms.

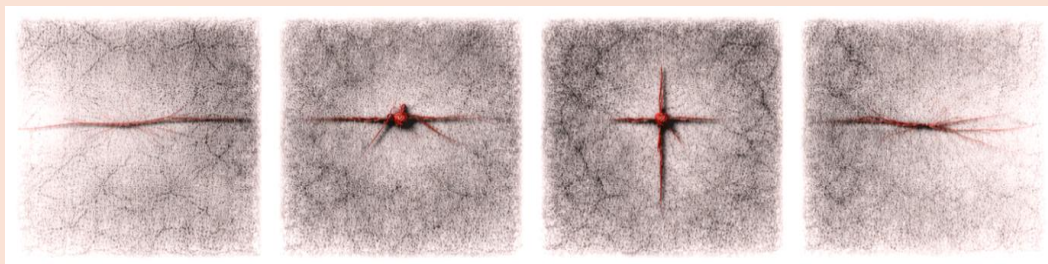
Prayer

Jesus, teach me the mercy of aftermath –
the love that stays when nothing can be fixed.
When the crowd has moved on
and the risk is no longer shared,
Grant me the courage – like Joseph – to step forward anyway.
When I stand in the ruins of what has been lost,
give me hands that do not close,
arms that can carry grief without desolation,
and a heart that remains open even when it breaks.

Amen.

Refrain

*Jesus, shape my hands for mercy; steady my feet in truth.
Draw me into the wound that heals.*



FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Jesus, we lay you in the tomb, and we do not rush the laying.
By your cross, teach us the faithfulness of waiting.

Gospel – Luke 23:53–56

Then he wrapped Jesus' body in a clean linen cloth and laid it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no-one had yet been laid.



Reflection

The hands have learned a new gentleness.
Not the tenderness of beginnings,
but the gentleness of endings – slow, careful,
as if love must move softly
in the presence of death.

Linen is folded, and
stone receives what it cannot keep.

Into the earth's dark keeping,
into silence, into the sealed pause
between promise and fulfilment,
the body is placed.
Here the world says: *finished*.
Here the heart says: *gone*.

And yet love does not withdraw.
It does not explain or hurry:
it tends to what remains.

The tomb is a threshold no one chooses –
and still they cross it, bearing grief like a small flame
into the dark.

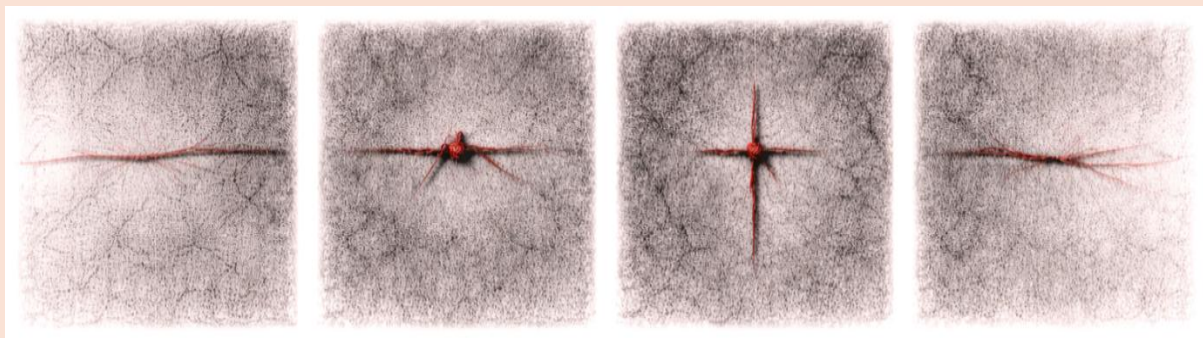
The stone will close.
The silence will deepen.
But the sacred is not absent here –
only hidden, like a seed beneath soil,
waiting.

Prayer

Jesus, when all I have is silence, teach me to stay.
When grief seals the mouth of hope,
keep love alive in me –
not as certainty, but as faithfulness.
Bless the places in my life that feel like tombs,
the endings I cannot undo,
the darkness I cannot interpret.
And in the sealed spaces of waiting,
grant me the courage to trust
your hidden work.

Amen.

(A moment of silence)



A FIFTEENTH PAUSE

Waiting

We have walked the old road again –
not as reenactment, not as theatre or escape,
but as encounter:
a remembrance that changes
the one who remembers.

Love does not become less holy in the dark.
It becomes more honest.



Here, before the tomb,
the sacred is not an idea held at a distance,
but held as it is:
a body given to earth,
hands under strain,
feet that have learned the cost of love.

Christ's way refuses abstraction.
It gives grief a face, gives compassion substance,
and conscience, a place to stand.

We have watched love beaten, stripped,
pierced,
wrapped in a linen shroud,
laid behind stone.

This is the strange grace of the road:
it tells the truth about what the world does to goodness –
and what God will carry
rather than abandon.

So, we pause here, at the sealed threshold –
not with answers or questions,
but awake. Ready.
Attentive.

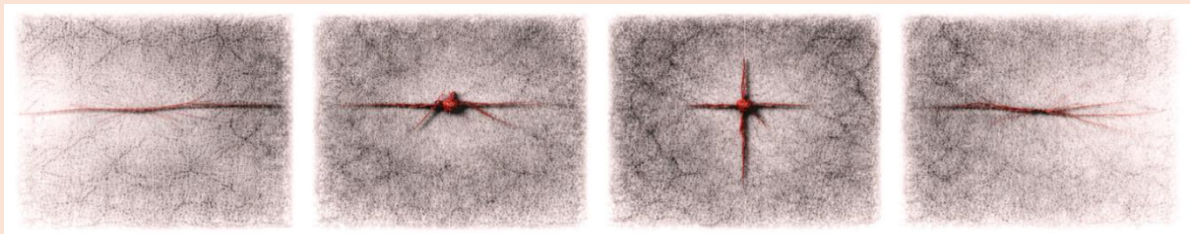
The tomb is closed.
The silence is real.

And we wait
as those who have learned, step by step,
that even in the dark night of the soul,
God does not leave.

Good Friday is not the last word.
But neither is it a detour.
It is the wound that tells the truth –
and the love that stays.

Sometimes hope hides itself –
quiet as breath in cold pre-dawn air,
alive beneath what looks final.

And so, we wait –
hands shaped for tenderness,
feet steadied in truth –
until the world begins, almost imperceptibly,
to turn toward morning.



Concluding Prayer

Jesus,
you have walked into the depths of our world
and made even the dust
a place of meeting.

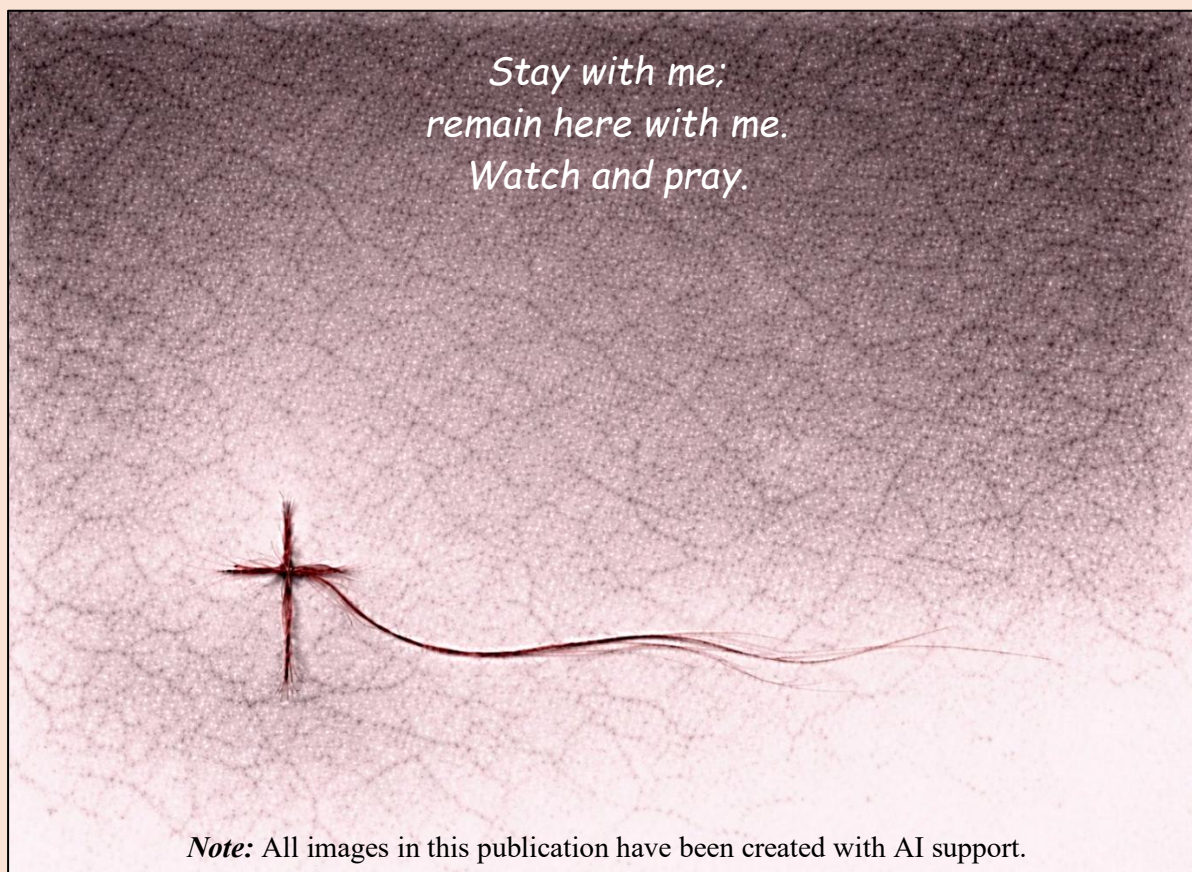
In the dark hours when nothing stirs,
when the sky gives no sign,
keep us faithful in the waiting.

Help us grieve
without hardening our hearts;
to love
without dictating an ending.

In the long, liminal hush between tomb and dawn,
hold our hands in grace.
Steady our feet in truth.

And when dawn arrives –
in its own time –
help us recognise you.

Amen



Jeremy Holt — 2026