



CROSSROADS

STATIONS OF THE CROSS
FOR TIMES OF CHANGE



STEVE GIVENS

✧ DEDICATION ✧

For Fr. Timothy Vowels

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Sample**



STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR TIMES OF CHANGE

As I walked and prayed with the outdoor Stations of the Cross, I did so with both a prayer book and a camera. The White House Retreat sits high atop the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River just south of St. Louis, Missouri. The booklet guided me from one station to the next and led me in prayer, while the camera allowed me to stand still and be amazed and moved by what I was seeing through the lens.

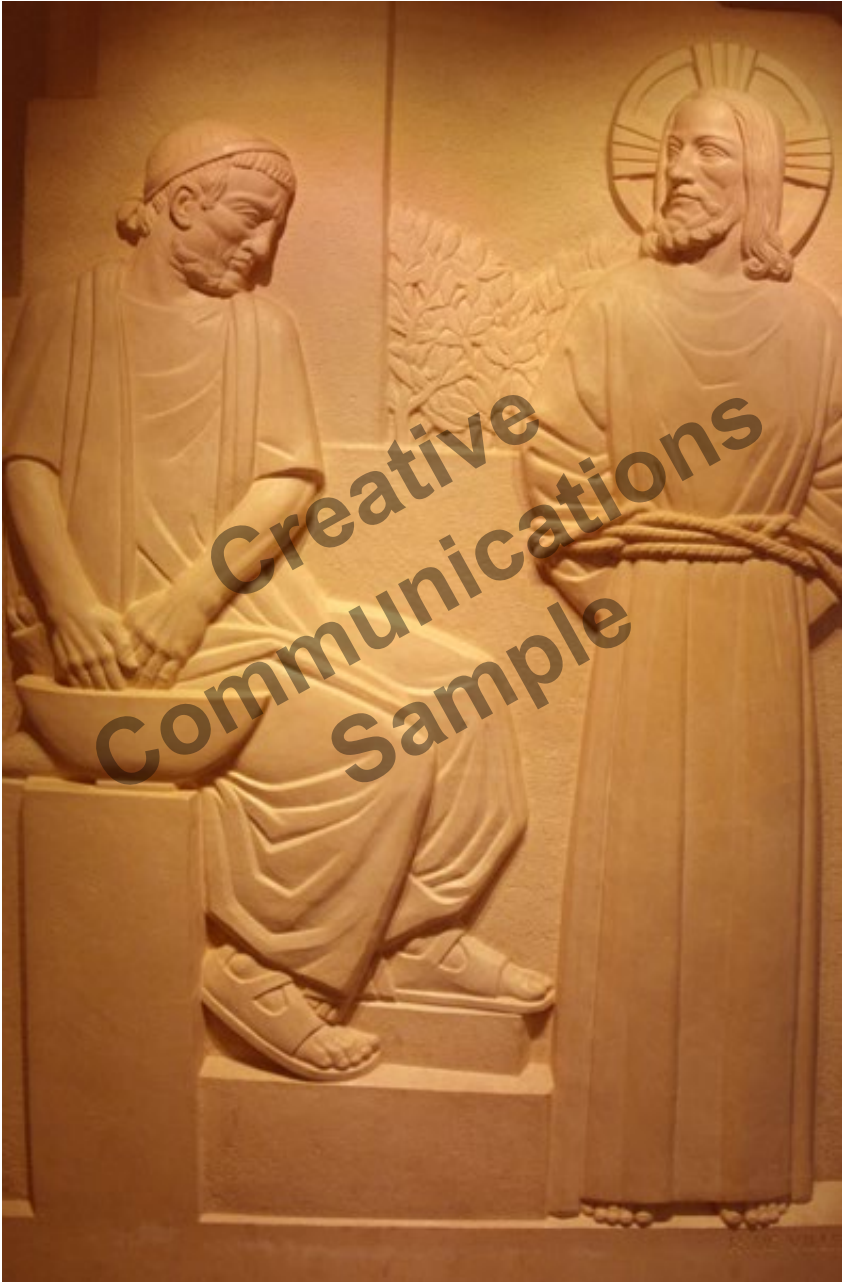
It was biting cold on that January day in 2017. And yet I continued, enthralled by the vision and the story unfolding before me. I knew what it meant in the life of Jesus, of course. It was the bitter end. I knew what it meant for me. As a Christian, I have the freedom to embrace the cross and not shrink from it. For it is both a murder of an innocent man and the source of eternal life.

But I also wondered what this ancient prayer and these stone images had to say to me. I was a 50-something man approaching retirement from my professional career and was seeking to discern what should come next. What were these images saying to me and others of my Baby Boomer generation? Was I willing to “find God in all things,” even when the “things” of my daily life might not always be happy and healthy? Could I be truly open to what and where God might be leading me in this next stage of my life?

Ironically, as we grow older, just as we begin to get comfortable, we are asked to reshuffle our lives. We are faced with retirement. We find ourselves in an “empty nest” after years of a bustling family life. We begin to realize that our bodies don’t allow us to do many of the things that we once enjoyed so much. And, more and more, we are faced with death: the loss of family members, colleagues, friends and maybe even a spouse.

It is indeed a time of challenge, the beginning of a new journey. Thankfully, Jesus is present to walk with us. This Stations of the Cross is written as a companion for readers who are walking and praying in their times of change.

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Jesus Is Condemned to Death

As I discern my future and my next steps, you are my model of living and loving. I adore you, O Christ, and I bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus stands before Pilate, as I stand before my future, unsure of what it all means. Jesus is unafraid. I am fearful. Pilate asks him if he is a king. He answers that he is, brave and secure. I ask myself if I am ready for what lies beyond today, and I turn my head, afraid at times to even look in that direction. “Crucify him! Crucify him!” the crowd shouts, and Pilate trembles, unsure of what he should do. He is a coward with all the power in the world. He hands Jesus over to be crucified. I stand speechless, not sure which way to turn. I want to embrace Jesus, just as I want to embrace the time unfolding before me. But I understand the indecisiveness and fear of Pilate. He’s not a bad man; he just doesn’t fully understand what he’s doing. And who does?



Jesus, see my fear and indecision about what lies before me. Give me the strength and courage to begin, one step and one day at a time, my eyes ever on you. Amen.



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Jesus Carries His Cross

As I discern my future and my next steps, you are my model of living and loving. I adore you, O Christ, and I bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

The sharp wooden angles and the weight of the cross bite into Jesus' skin. He grimaces in pain. There's no easy out for him just because he is the Incarnate Word of God. He is flesh and bone and nerve and muscle. This all really hurts him deeply—physically, emotionally and spiritually. It is a burden that will later make him cry out, “Why have you abandoned me, Father?” The burden of the decisions before me don't match Jesus' suffering by a long shot. Nevertheless, they are a cross, of sorts, that I must bear. Amid the changes and losses of my life, I seek the guidance of God in prayer. Additionally, I look to my mentors and friends for support and advice. But at the end of the day, the decisions I make and the responses I give to my challenges and opportunities are mine to bear.



Jesus, you know the crosses I bear and the decisions that float before me like something I must reach out and grasp. Give me the courage to lean into my future and accept it with faith and a willingness to find you at every turn. Amen.



Praying the Stations of the Cross, a signature Lenten tradition, asks us to recall Jesus' suffering and to reflect upon our own lives. *Crossroads: Stations of the Cross for Times of Change* is tailored to those who are facing a major transition in their lives. Whether facing retirement, an "empty nest" or some other dramatic change, *Living Faith* author Steve Givens reminds readers that Jesus, our "suffering servant," walks with them. With this booklet, allow yourself to be led through your transitions, enjoying your new life with greater joy because of having grown closer to our risen Savior.

This book, along with many other Creative Communications for the Parish products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#).

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