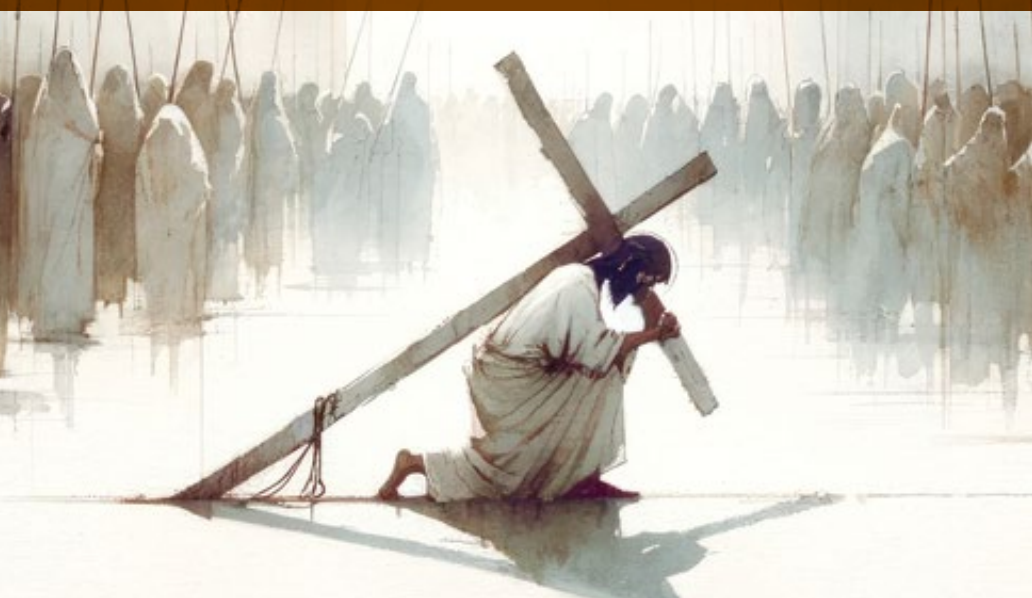


From Gethsemane to Golgotha



A Scriptural Stations of the Cross

STEVE GIVENS



To the Reader

The following Stations of the Cross are based on those celebrated on Good Friday in 1991 by St. John Paul II. Using these fourteen excerpts from the Gospels to represent Jesus' steps to the Cross, they are presented as an alternative to the traditional and familiar stations that many Catholics have come to know. These Scripture selections invite a way of reflecting deeply on the accounts of Christ's passion and death, as described in the four Gospels.

This booklet may be used to enhance one's personal prayer, or it may be prayed with a group. It is suggested that one not rush through the reading and meditating needed on each page, giving suitable pauses between each section for personal reflection and responses.

Introduction

The reflections in this booklet have been created following a prayer practice found in the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola. It invites us to enter into a Gospel scene and become part of it, to experience it as if we are there in it. To read the words of Scripture is one (very good) thing; to enter into the story and become part of it is quite another. In this devotion, you will be encouraged to not only find Jesus on the literal level by reading God's Word, but also to linger on the page and allow your imagination and prayer to invite Jesus to reveal himself and his passion and death to you in new ways.

At each station, you will have the opportunity to come face-to-face with Jesus. In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, we are encouraged to place ourselves with Jesus in his passion and death and ask three questions:

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Anywhere else and at any other time, these might seem like simple moments of reflection on our lives of faith. But here, walking with Jesus on his way to the Cross, these words take on an immediacy and importance that cannot be ignored. The moment is now. Jesus is waiting for you to join him on the journey.

—*Steve Givens*

Opening Prayer

Jesus, see us here, standing before your Cross.

Hear our prayers, and know our hearts.

Give us the courage to reach out to you from the crowd of onlookers.

**Allow us the grace to challenge ourselves about what we have done,
what we are doing and what we should be doing for you.**

**Change us today, for by your Cross and resurrection you have
redeemed us. Amen.**



FIRST STATION

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
*Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

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 26:36-41**

Reflect: You arrive after night fall at Gethsemane, situated on the Mount of Olives just a few miles east of Jerusalem. It is dark, but the area provides a panoramic view of the city, and off in the distance, you see the flickering lights of homes, inns, temples and palaces. Jesus and a few of his disciples have just arrived, following their Passover meal in Jerusalem and a brief walk across the Kidron Valley. You have followed them the whole way, and now you stand in the shadows, leaning against an olive tree. Feel the rough and aged bark against your shoulder. A soft, cool breeze blows across your face.

In the quiet of the garden, it's easy to hear the voices, even the whispers of Jesus' prayer. He sounds sad and full of worry and confusion. You hear everything—Jesus' urging his disciples to stay awake while he goes off to pray, his mournful prayer to the Father asking to be relieved of the tremendous ordeal that he knows is soon to come, and later, his exasperation at finding all his friends asleep, unable to remain in prayer and supportive of him in this difficult time.

Perhaps your first response is disbelief in the whole thing. How can this be happening to the Son of God, and how can these friends and followers be so weak and shallow?

But slowly, you may begin to see yourself in them. You remember times you failed to show up for Jesus and those moments when you chose something else instead of time with him. You peek out from behind the tree and find Jesus watching you. He smiles and calls you by name. "It's okay," he says. "Just keep trying. Just keep coming back to me." What else might he say?

Consider: Remember times when you have been distracted in prayer or fallen asleep. How often have you given in to your tiredness and busyness and allowed your attention to go to other worries and concerns in your life? When and where do you accept Jesus' invitation to just spend time with him?

Pray: *Jesus, invite us again and again into your friendship and company. Give us strength and courage to remain awake and aware of all you want to share with us. Give us willing spirits and strong minds to follow you more closely. Amen.*



SECOND STATION

Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, Is Arrested

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
*Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

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**

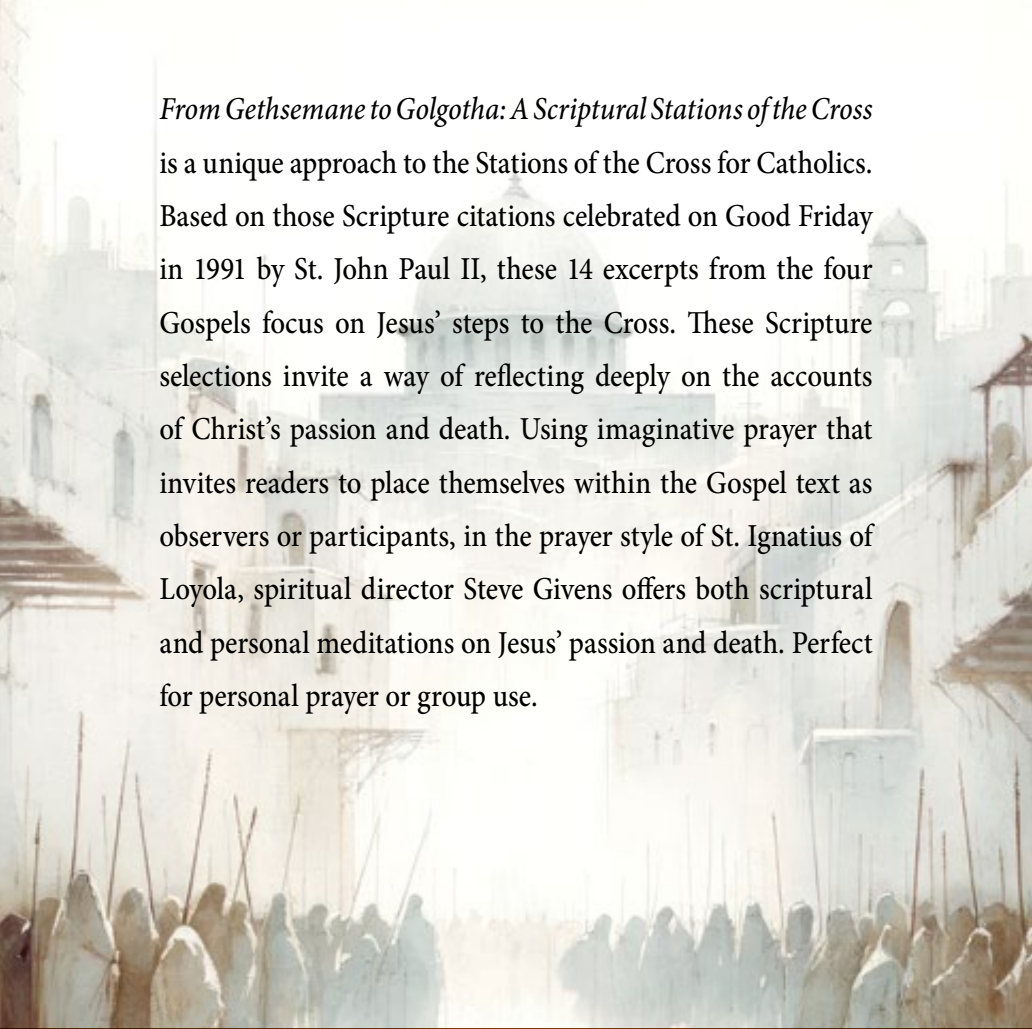
Reflect: Suddenly, your quiet is disturbed by the arrival of a mob bearing torches and weapons. Some have anger written all over their faces, others indifference, as if they are just doing their jobs. But it's clear to you that they have just one thing on their minds—to finally put an end to Jesus of Nazareth. You feel the heat of the torches as they pass near you and hear the marching feet and the sound of metal on metal as swords and shields and armor wield their way into the garden. At first, the soldiers just stand in silence and look at Jesus and his friends, as if wondering which one was the leader. After all, there is nothing about Jesus that shouts “leader.” But this innocent man is now confronted by a massive show of force. It doesn't seem to faze him.

But then one of his followers steps forward. You've seen him before. He's the one who handles the money. You hear coins jingle from a small leather pouch that hangs at his side. Without a word, he embraces Jesus and the soldiers lunge forward to capture and bind him. Jesus, who moments before stood courageous and silent, now seems crushed by the weight of this betrayal by a friend. You can see that in his face. You know that you will never forget it. As he is led away, he comes very near to you, as you lean against the olive tree. He stops for just a moment, nods and whispers, “Keep following me. I need you to see all that is going to happen. I need you to help tell my story.” What else might he say?

You shrink back into the shadows of the garden, away from the eyes of the soldiers. You do not want to be seen. You wonder why he would talk to you, why he would ask for your help. And even as you doubt you have the strength to do what he asks, you know you cannot deny him. You cannot say “no” to this man.

Consider: When have you hidden your faith from those around you and doubted your ability or courage to tell the story of Jesus? What is it about Jesus that continues to draw you to him?

Pray: *Jesus, see us, even when we hide in the shadows, afraid of how we might need to change our lives if we respond with a strong and wholehearted “yes” to your invitation to follow you. Knowing that we can be weak and hesitant in responding to your call, fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit, for we know we cannot do this on our own. Amen.*



From Gethsemane to Golgotha: A Scriptural Stations of the Cross is a unique approach to the Stations of the Cross for Catholics. Based on those Scripture citations celebrated on Good Friday in 1991 by St. John Paul II, these 14 excerpts from the four Gospels focus on Jesus' steps to the Cross. These Scripture selections invite a way of reflecting deeply on the accounts of Christ's passion and death. Using imaginative prayer that invites readers to place themselves within the Gospel text as observers or participants, in the prayer style of St. Ignatius of Loyola, spiritual director Steve Givens offers both scriptural and personal meditations on Jesus' passion and death. Perfect for personal prayer or group use.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

By Steve Givens. Design by Jamie Wyatt. Cover image: Adobe Stock/Faith Stock. © 2025 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

