



ST PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL

Stations

Stations of the Cross

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The stations appeared on this route as the early pilgrims prayed at places where it was believed that specific incidents took place as Jesus went to the cross.

The devotion may have originated in the late 4th century when pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land to visit the places where Jesus had been, but originally, there were no official prayers associated with each station, as pilgrims prayed them silently as they passed along the way. The way of pilgrims' processions, which began at the ruins of the Fortress Antonia (site of Pilate's Judgment Hall) and ended at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, ultimately became known as the Via Dolorosa, the "Sorrowful Way."

The devotion of the Via Dolorosa was probably developed by the Franciscans after they were given custody of Christian holy places in Jerusalem in the 14th century. In Western Europe wayside shrines – providing a miniature pilgrimage to those holy places – became commonplace with different phases of Christ's passion being portrayed depending on the benefactor of the particular shrine.

It was not until the 17th century that these outside devotional images were introduced inside the churches and arranged at intervals around the walls. The events along Christ's last journey were given names to fix the incidents in the ritual.

Today, the Way winds through crowded parts of Jerusalem's Old City and pilgrims still travel it in prayer. The stations can be prayed silently, using our hearts and minds, or aloud. The following of Jesus in his passion allows us to identify not only with his journey to the cross, but also with the hope of the resurrection. We are invited into the patience, courage, trust, love and hope of Jesus on this spiritual pilgrimage of prayer.

The Traditional Stations of the Cross

The number of stations, which at first varied widely, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The remaining six (numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 13) are based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend.

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus takes up his cross
3. Jesus falls the first time*
4. Jesus meets his afflicted mother*
5. The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene
6. A woman wipes the face of Jesus*
7. Jesus falls a second time*
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls a third time*

10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus dies on the Cross
13. The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother*
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

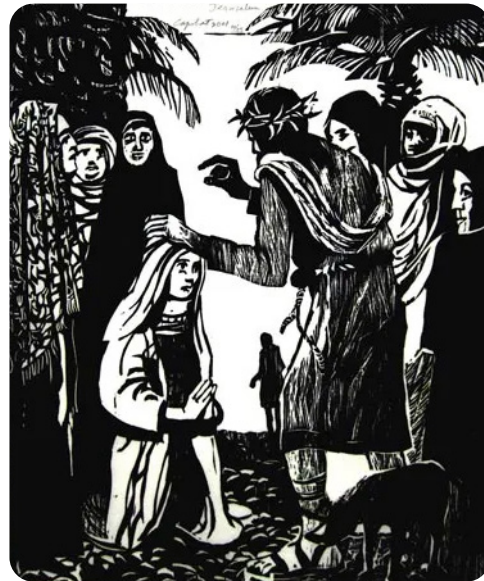
Sources: The Book of Occasional Services 2003; Kanuga, "Stations of the Cross in the Chapel of the Transfiguration."

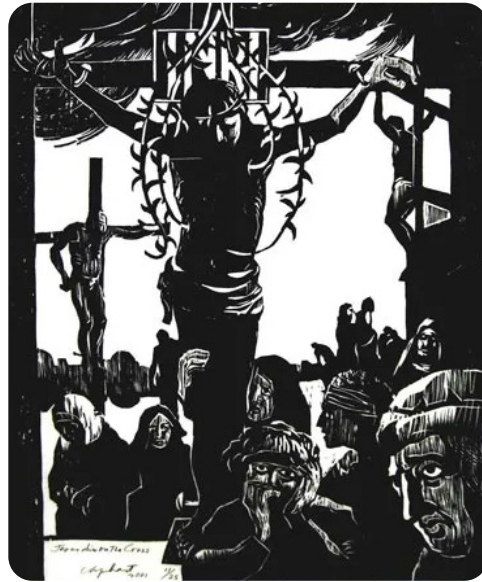
St. Paul's has two artistic representations of the fourteen Stations of the Cross: woodcuts by Noyes Capehart are displayed in the nave during Lent, and needlepoint panels are hung in the Chapel.

Woodcut Stations

Noyes Capehart taught studio art at Appalachian State University until his retirement in 1997. The limited edition woodcuts were done in 2001-2002 and also hang in the Church of the Holy Cross in Valle Crucis, N.C., where he is a member. "Walking the Way of Sorrows: Stations of the Cross," by Katsarka Whitley and illustrated with these woodcuts, is in the church library.







Needlepoint Stations

The needlepoint panels in the Chapel were designed by Connie Thompson for Grace Episcopal Church in Anderson, S.C., and worked by Carroll W. Bowie, M.D., who also made a set for Kanuga Conferences in Hendersonville, N.C. In 2014 Dr. Bowie gave the St. Paul's panels in memory of his wife, Melba Mackie Bowie, who grew up in the church. The Bowies were married at St. Paul's in 1949.





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