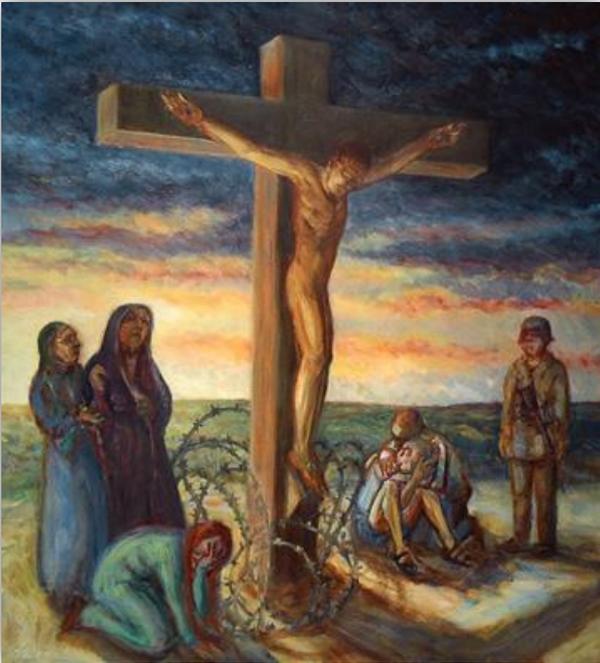


The Stations of the Cross and the Beatitudes, Week 7 2021ⁱ
Passion Week to Good Friday April 2nd

Beatitude Seven & Eight:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”



Station Twelve: Jesus dies on the cross.

The Christian narrative tells us that the death of Jesus was the turning point, the moment when salvation came to humanity. One traditional, biblical understanding of the death of Jesus was that he died as a blood sacrifice for the sins of humanity, which otherwise God would have to punish by death. The Bible offers another rather different interpretation.

In ancient times, homeopathy was the primary form of medicine, in which “a dose of that which ails you is the cure”. In the book of Exodus, the people of Israel, wandering in their desert, began to despair of their fate and were then punished with snakes that bit them and killed some of them. Moses cried out to God for help, and God told him to put up a bronze serpent on a pole and have the people gaze at their failure to be faithful, and in so publicly acknowledging their failures they found healing. The bronze serpent was a form of spiritual homeopathy. In the gospel of John, chapter 3, Jesus said that as the serpent was lifted on the pole to save Israel, so would Jesus have to be lifted

up in order to save humanity. The cross is spiritual homeopathy for the human condition of brokenness and mortality. By gazing at the death of Jesus and the reasons for which he was crucified, we see our own death and if we choose to we are thus liberated into life.

Questions:

- i) When and how have you been a peacemaker? What have you learned from other people who are peacemakers?
- ii) Have you ever been persecuted because you stood up for justice? What was that experience like? Was there any redemption in your suffering?
- iii) In what ways do you deny your mortality? How do you hide from it? Is this denial itself a kind of death?
- iv) How does your eventual death fit in your life? How does it motivate what you do, how does it shape who you are?
- v) What life, what liveliness, would come to you if you lost your fear and denial of death?
- vi) What social ills does our society avoid seeing – but if we looked, would lead us toward healing?

Meditation on your Lenten Action:

Where do you find resonance, meaning, and inspiration in this Station, and in these Beatitudes, in the course of your work of service or advocacy so far?

Artistic expression:

Paint, draw, or make a collage in the shape of the cross, with images that illustrate what needs to be healed in your life and in the world around you.

Lenten Action:

You are invited, as an individual or as a group, to commit to action for positive social change during Lent. This can take many forms: service to the homeless, working on a protest, or many other types of charitable and/or advocacy work for the common good, whether as a volunteer or as a professional. It can be an ongoing work of service, or a short-term commitment during the weeks of Lent.

ⁱ Recommended books to accompany this Lent study: adapted from [James Burklo](#)

Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary (Paperback)
by Marcus J. Borg (Harper One, 2008)

Campaign Boot Camp: Basic Training for Future Leaders (Paperback)
by Christine Pelosi (Polipoint Press, 2007)

The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem (Hardcover)
by Marcus J. Borg, John Dominic Crossan (Harper One, 2006)

Jesus: A New Vision by Marcus Borg (Harper One, 1991)

The Five Gospels: The search for the authentic words of Jesus, by the Jesus Seminar (Polebridge Press, 1993)