



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

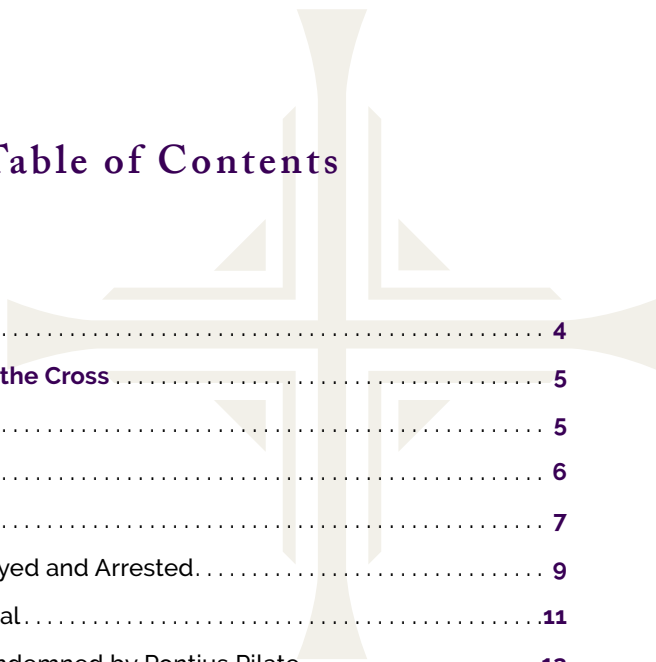
A Meditative Guide

Art by Brendan Rigdon & words by D.J. Marotta

"I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross.' In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in Godforsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross that symbolizes divine suffering.

—John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

Table of Contents



Artist's Statement	4
History of Stations of the Cross	5
Faith & Art	5
How do I Engage?	6
Opening Devotion	7
Station 1: Jesus Betrayed and Arrested.	9
Station 2: Jesus on Trial.	11
Station 3: Jesus Is Condemned by Pontius Pilate	13
Station 4: Jesus Is Beaten and Mocked.	15
Station 5: Jesus Wears a Crown of Thorns	17
Station 6: Jesus Carries His Cross	19
Station 7: Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross.	21
Station 8: Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem	23
Station 9: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross.	25
Station 10: Criminals Speak to Jesus	27
Station 12: Jesus Dies on the Cross.	29
Station 12: Jesus' Side Is Pierced	31
Station 13: Jesus' Body Is Removed by Joseph of Arimathea	33
Station 14: Jesus' Body Is Laid in the Tomb	35
Closing Devotion	36
Invitation to Easter	37

Artist's Statement



I am an oil painter with a minor in Fine Art from Western Kentucky University. Richmond has been home to my family and I for eleven years. One of the greatest joys of my life is to bring my faith and art together. My process is to study Scripture in-depth in order to paint the message that lies within the details of the ancient text. It is a meditative practice. I use my imagination to dwell in the respective story in order to create a space where the viewer can engage and inhabit the narrative as well. As a person with emotions often larger than life,

I like to use all of the tools at my disposal to evoke the same emotion in others. I most enjoy painting the human figure occupying a space. I tend to lean towards accurate proportions while taking artistic liberties with color and texture. My work is best described as the residue that's left after many marks made and many marks removed. In this way, my paintings are somewhat sculpted. All of my paintings are drawings first. In the drawing phase my aim is to accurately depict the subject in the space. The next phase is the underpainting. Finally as I paint, I am dealing with the mystery of the space I am creating with many thin layers of pigment and medium.

I am so glad you are here regardless of where you're coming from. God has brought you, and I have prayed for you throughout the tumultuous year of 2020 as I painted the fourteen Stations of the Cross. It was good medicine for me to spend a year of my life meditating on Jesus' willingness to suffer for us. It may seem strange to offer Jesus' death visually as a means of comfort after such a year. However, he willingly endured torture and death in order to be alone with you; in order to redeem you. His love for you has no rival or equal. He does not want you to go to your death alone, bearing the burden of sin. Thank you so much for coming by. Drop me a line sometime. I'd love to hear from you!

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History of Stations of the Cross

The practice of retracing the final steps of Jesus dates to the fourth century when, for the first time, Christians were legally allowed to worship in the Roman Empire and thus allowed to openly make pilgrimages to Jerusalem. As the practice of observing the season of Lent in preparation for Holy Week and Easter was established throughout the global church, many Christians who were unable to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem opted to set up artistic recreations of the final scenes of Christ's passion in their own towns. These were installed either as statues in prayer gardens, stained glass windows, or paintings.

Today, the practice of employing works of art as an aid in meditating on the passion of Jesus is common amongst Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christian churches alike.

Faith & Art

A work of spiritual art gives visible form to an invisible aspect of reality. In this sense, the work of art is a “word” spoken to us. If the word is beautiful, then it will stir the human heart and remind us of what is true—perhaps a truth that has been long forgotten, ignored, or dismissed by contemporary culture. A canvas beautifully painted, a piece of music skillfully played, a sculpture masterfully shaped—these works of art carry the potential of speaking a true word to us if we have the ears and eyes to hear and see it. The best art moves us to ask the most essential questions of our existence: Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is my value?

Christian art takes this a step further by imaging not only “a word” but “The Word” who is Jesus, the Word made flesh. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we find the best, most gloriously hopeful and satisfying answers to these essential questions.

Note: For further reading on Christian Faith and the Arts.

- *Art & the Bible* by Francis Shaeffer
- *Art in Action* by Nicholas Wolterstorff
- *The Faithful Artist* by Cameron Anderson

How Do I Engage Stations of the Cross?

"Works of art can die as a result of being looked at by too many dull eyes, and even the radiance of holiness can, in a way, become blunted when it encounters nothing but hollow indifference."

—Hans Urs von Balthasar. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*

There is more than one good reason to engage the Stations of the Cross: open curiosity, search for hope, desire to fill the inner void, affection for Christ, and many more. Why are you here? What do you want to happen to you (and within you) as you gaze on these paintings?

Here is one good way to engage: Plan on at least 20 or more minutes. Ideally one would spend a full hour or more.

For each station:

1. **First Look:** Take a minute and look at the painting. Notice your first impression. Then work your eyes slowly over the details of the piece.
2. **Read:** There is a brief liturgy to accompany each station. This can be read silently or aloud with a group of people.
3. **Second Look:** After reading the liturgy and scripture passage, return your eyes to the painting. Do you notice anything new or different this time?
4. **Pray:** There is a prayer to accompany each station.

One final word of advice: no matter what faith or creed you profess, the final moments of Jesus' life demand to be taken seriously.

You may revere them as holy.

You may recoil from them in disgust.

You may mock them as absurd.

But whatever they are, they are not inconsequential. They are not "neat" or "cool."

Our conviction (mine and the artist's) is that these scenes are both historically accurate and of ultimate significance. They really happened and they really matter. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the fulcrum on which the fate of the world turns. Here we see the consequence of human sin and the only hope for redemption—Christ suffering and dying in our place. In my place. In your place.

Thanks be to God.

Opening Devotion

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. *Amen.*

Call: We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus christ:

Response: In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray *(silence)*

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.





STATION 1



Jesus Betrayed and Arrested

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Luke 22:47–53

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?" ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Call: Surely he has borne our griefs

Response: *And carried our sorrows.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 2



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Luke 22:66–71

⁶⁶When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, ⁶⁷“If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, ⁶⁸and if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” ⁷⁰So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” ⁷¹Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

Call: He was led like a lamb to the slaughter

Response: *And like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 3



Jesus Is Condemned by Pontius Pilate

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Mark 15:1–5,13–14

¹And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. ²And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." ³And the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." ⁵But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. . .
¹³And they cried out again, "Crucify him." ¹⁴And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him."

Call: God did not spare his own Son:

Response: *But delivered him up for us all.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 4



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—John 19:1

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him.

Call: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted

Response: *Yet he opened not his mouth.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 5



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Matthew 27:27–31

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.

²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

Call: All we like sheep have gone astray

Response: *We have turned every one to his own way.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.



STATION 6



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—John 19:17

So they took Jesus, ¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

Call: The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Response: *For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 7



Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Matthew 27:32

³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

Call: Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me

Response: *Cannot be my disciple*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 8



Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Luke 23: 27–31

²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Call: Those who sow with tears

Response: *Will reap with songs of joy.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 9



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Mark 15:22–25

²² And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). ²³ And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. ²⁵ And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

Call: They pierce my hands and my feet

Response: *They stare and gloat over me.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Lord Jesus christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you into the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your name. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 10



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Luke 23:39–43

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Call: But as for me, I am a worm and no man

Response: *Scorned by all and despised by the people.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 11



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—John 19:28–30

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Call: Christ for us became obedient until death

Response: *Even death on a cross.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and forever.
Amen.

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 12



Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—John 19:31–37

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

Call: He was pierced for our transgressions

Response: *He was crushed for our iniquities.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother: Mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns forever and ever.
Amen.

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 13



Jesus' Body Is Removed by Joseph of Arimathea

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Mark 15:42–45

⁴² And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Call: Her tears run down her cheeks

Response: *And she has none to comfort her.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*



STATION 14



Jesus' Body Is Laid in the Tomb

Call: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Response: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture—Matthew 27:59–60

⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Call: You will not abandon me to the grave

Response: *Nor let your holy One see corruption.*

Let us pray *[silence]*

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

*Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.*

Closing Devotion

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

Let us pray *[silence]*

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. *Amen.*

Depart in peace.

Invitation to Easter

The story of Jesus' death on the cross two thousand years ago was not the end of the story. Rather, three days later, Jesus was resurrected to new life and bodily walked out of the tomb to the amazement of hundreds of eye witnesses. His resurrection was not only his personal conquest of death, but also a precursor of the new life that all can experience who give their allegiance to him by faith. Therefore, the resurrection of Jesus (celebrated on Easter Sunday) becomes a beacon of hope for all of us who know the suffering of this world and the despair that we will one day die.

Contemplating the stations of Christ's cross is vitally important because it shows us the love of God for us in the very real pain, anguish, and death of Jesus (God-in-the-flesh) who came to rescue us. However, please don't let it be the only thing you contemplate. Death does not have the final word. There is resurrection! Both for Jesus and also for you if you are willing to give yourself to him.

*It is always darkest before the dawn.
Night will give way to break of day.
Weeping may endure for the night,
But joy cometh in the morning!*

Come join the resurrection family of Jesus that is the church—that unimpressive, uninspiring community of broken people who are desperate for redemption. You will be welcomed with open hearts and open lives.

"In the Cross is salvation;
in the Cross is life;
in the Cross is protection against our enemies;
in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness;
in the Cross is strength of mind;
in the Cross is joy of spirit;
in the Cross is excellence of virtue;
in the Cross is perfection of holiness.
There is no salvation of soul,
nor hope of eternal life,
save in the Cross."

—Thomas à Kempis





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