

Notre Dame University Australia

Fremantle, Western Australia.

The Way of The Cross.

Good Friday Stations Of The Cross

Readings & Meditations For Each Station

Adapted from St Mary's Seminary, Mulgrave, Victoria.

With new reflections from Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI www.ronrolheiser.com

**Scripture readings are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, copyright 1966 by
Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., & Doubleday and Company Inc. Used by permission (implied).**

Layout & Images © The University of Notre Dame Australia, 2009.

Reflections © Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI, 2002-2009.

Prayer Parts © The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1999.

Original Copy: Lent, 2009

Last Updated: Lent, 2009

The Thirteenth Station – Jesus Is Buried.

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

1st Reader: Scripture Reading (John 19:41-42)

At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Meditation: R Rolheiser OMI - The Jesus Code - Unravelling The Secret (22-05-2005)

We all love to unearth hidden things, to crack some puzzle or code. We need only to look at the hoopla surrounding *The Da Vinci Code* to see how true this is. Like children, we all still believe there's a buried treasure somewhere, a secret wisdom, just waiting to be found.

Interestingly, Jesus speaks of just such a hidden secret. The gospels tell us he spoke in parables and that these were only understood by those who were inside a certain circle, but they remained riddles to everyone outside that circle.

That, of course, begs the question: What is the hidden secret and who is inside and who is outside the circle of understanding? In the message of Jesus, what's the secret to be discovered, the code be cracked?

Mark's gospel takes this up explicitly. His Jesus makes it very clear that there is a hidden, secret wisdom that needs to be grasped if one is to understand the deep design of things. What is it?

In caption, it's the cross of Christ and the wisdom that's contained within it. The hidden secret is that love is most truly revealed in the brokenness of Jesus on the cross. What's hidden in the cross of Christ is the code that we have to break open if we are to learn the deep secrets of life. The cross contains a wisdom, the wisdom of the crucified, which is a prism through which all else is to be viewed.

More specifically, what is this wisdom? Unlike false, Gnostic teachers who are forever playing games and giving the impression that learning the deep secrets is a question of luck, brilliant intelligence, or of becoming their disciples, Jesus tries everywhere to reveal the secret in public and in a language open to everyone. His whole life and mission are an attempt to lay open for everyone the deepest secret of all and to make that secret accessible to everyone, as accessible as the nearest water tap or the village well. Since Jesus, the deepest secret is an open secret. What is it?

One entry into it is through the words Jesus speaks to his uncomprehending disciples on the road to Emmaus. In trying to explain this secret, he asks them: "Wasn't it necessary?" Wasn't what necessary? The secret is that there is a necessary connection between certain things: Isn't a certain prior suffering and humiliation always the condition for glory? Don't we all, like Cinderella, first have to sit in the ashes before the glass slipper will fit our feet? Isn't sublimation always the means to the sublime? Isn't it precisely when we are vulnerable and unable to impress or overpower others that we are finally open to intimacy, love, and family? Aren't self-sacrifice and self-denial, in the

end, the way real love manifests itself? Isn't the crucifixion of the private ego the route to empathy and community? Isn't forgiveness to those who hurt us the final manifestation of human maturity?

And, most graphic of all, isn't the way Jesus died – innocent, trusting, unwilling out of love to protect himself against suffering, absorbing hatred and sin, understanding and forgiving those who were murdering him, refusing to resort to any kind of superior physical power to overwhelm his adversaries, refusing to give back in kind, and refusing to give himself over to bitterness and cynicism – the paragon of mature human love?

Love is the deepest mystery within the universe. It lies at the base of everything, the cosmic, the biological, the emotional, the psychological, the sexual, the spiritual. There is no level of reality where one doesn't see the relentless deep pull inside of all things towards a unity, community, fusion, and oneness beyond self. Love stirs all things, speaking to every element in the language it can understand. Deep inside of us, we know too that this alone can bring us home.

And there is an inner code, a certain DNA, within love itself. It too has inner secrets, an inner structure, and a code that needs to be cracked if we are to properly understand its dynamics. And we don't crack that code all at once, at a weekend retreat or at religious rally. We crack it slowly, painfully, with many setbacks, over the course of a lifetime.

But Jesus gave us the keys to crack it. They can be named: vulnerability, the refusal out of love to protect ourselves, self-sacrifice, putting others before ourselves, refusing to give back in kind when someone hurts us, a willingness to die for others, the refusal to give ourselves over to cynicism and bitterness when things beset us, continued trust in God and goodness even when things look the opposite, and especially forgiveness, having our hearts remain warm and hospitable, even when we have just cause for hatred.

These are the keys to the wisdom that Jesus revealed and the gospels tells that we are "inside" or "outside" the true circle of love, depending upon whether or not we grasp this wisdom.

1st Reader: Thanksgiving

For the humility of your death and burial. **R/.**

R/. We give you thanks, O Lord.

For giving us eternal life. **R/.**

For the example of caring shown by Joseph of Arimathea. **R/.**

2nd Reader: Let Us Pray

Lord after the agony of your death,

the stillness of the tomb was the prelude to your final victory.

May we live always in your friendship

so that we may face our own death conscious of your redeeming power.

Build up our faith, Lord, so that we can see the mystery in this event –

that suffering and death, accepted out of love, is the meaning of life.

We ask this in Your name. Amen.

The Fourteenth Station – Jesus Rises From The Dead.

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

1st Reader: Scripture Reading (John 20:1-9)

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.' So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Meditation: R Rolheiser OMI – Finding our Loved Ones after their Deaths (21-11-2004)

As Christians, we believe in the "communion of saints". We believe that those who have died are not only still alive but that they are, as well, still in a real relationship with us.

But how? How do we find our loved ones after they have died? It is interesting to note that Christianity, unlike some other religions, has never had a significant cult around dead bodies or cemeteries. We respect them, reverence them, but we do not try to mummify our dead (as the ancient Egyptians did) nor do we have much in the way of special ceremonies or religious rituals around cemeteries. There's a reason for that.

On Easter Sunday morning, Mary Magdala and some other women, armed with spices in view of embalming his dead body, went Jesus' grave. But they didn't find him there, instead they found an angel who (in effect) asked them: "Why are you looking in a cemetery for someone who is alive?" "He's not here," the angel added, "go instead to Galilee and he will meet you there."

That instruction is still valid today: When we are looking to meet our loved ones who have died we will find them in "Galilee" more so than in any cemetery. Where and what is "Galilee"?

Galilee, for Mary Magdala and the contemporaries of Jesus, was more than a place on a map, the Northern-part of Israel. It was also, and especially, the place where Jesus' spirit had flourished, the place they had first met him, the place of his key miracles, and the place where their own spirits had been stretched, enlarged, and warmed by contact with him. Galilee represented the place of their innocence, their first fervour, their initial learning, their first falling in love. Now, after Jesus' death, they were being asked to go back to that place as the privileged spot where Jesus would meet them again.

And our faith says the same thing to us: Like Mary Magdala and the early Christian believers, we can meet our deceased loved ones by going back to "Galilee", namely, by going to those places where their spirits flourished and where our own spirits were instructed, stretched, and warmed by contact with them. What, practically, does that mean? Allow me an example:

My own parents died thirty years ago and are now buried, side by side, in a little cemetery in the rural countryside where I grew up. Sometimes when I'm home, I visit their graves, say a few prayers there, and remind myself of what each of them gave me. It's nice, but it's not where I really meet my mother and father. I meet them, more deeply, in "Galilee", that is, in those places where

their souls most flourished and where they took God's boundless, beautiful, colourful, life-giving energy and enfleshed it.

For example: My mother was a woman of great generosity, kind- hearted and selfless to a fault. When I go to that place, when I'm generous and kind-hearted, I feel my mother's laugh, sense her consolation, and find myself again warmed by her warmth. Conversely, at those times when I'm petty and selfish it does me little good to adorn her grave with flowers or prayers. She's there too, of course, like God's presence, faithful when we're unfaithful, but, when I'm not in her "Galilee", it's harder for her to meet me and give me what she once gave me as my mother.

It's the same with my father: His great quality was his integrity, his moral stubbornness, his refusal to compromise, his unrelenting insistence that one should always take the high road, the one less- travelled. When I prove myself his son in this, I feel his presence, his humour, his intelligence, his solid hand on my shoulder, his trustworthiness. Conversely, when I make moral compromises, he's still present, but his humour, intelligence, and trustworthy hand, can no longer nurture me in the same way.

There's both a deep truth and deep challenge in the words the angel spoke to Mary Magdala on Easter morning: "Why are you looking for a living person in a cemetery. He's not here. Go instead to Galilee and he will meet you there."

Where do we find our loved ones after they have died? Where will others find us after we have died? In "Galilee", in those places where we most give our own unique expression to God's boundless energy.

We should honour our dead and honour the cemeteries where their bodies now rest, but we meet our deceased in "Galilee", in those places where their spirits flourished and where our own souls were stretched and instructed and warmed in our contact with them. More than honouring their graves, we need to honour their lives, we need to honour the wonderful energy that they uniquely incarnated and which, in turn, nurtured, instructed, stretched, cajoled, consoled, warmed, teased, humoured, steadied, and blessed us.

When we do that our relationship with them does not just continue, it deepens.

1st Reader: Thanksgiving

For teaching us to let go of our fear, hurt and anger. **R/.**

R/. We give you thanks, O Lord.

For the new life given to us by your death and ascension. **R/.**

For your presence with us today, in our sufferings and celebrations. **R/.**

2nd Reader: Let Us Pray *from New Saint Joseph Sunday Missal*

Father in heaven, our minds were prepared for the coming of your kingdom,
when you took Christ beyond our sight,
so that we might seek him in glory.
May we follow where he has led,
and find our hope in his glory, for he is Lord forever. Amen

The Way Of The Cross.

Leader: Conclusion

Having relived again the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, our Redeemer, let us now go forth filled with the joy, the hope and the peace that He gave us when He spoke to His apostles:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled
Trust in God still, and trust in me.
There are many rooms in my Father’s house;
if there were not, I should have told you.
I am going now to prepare a place for you
and after I have gone and prepared you a place,
I shall return to take you with me;
so that where I am
you may be too.”

I invite you to spend this Good Friday and Holy Saturday in sombre reflection of our lives and those whose suffering has made our blessings possible, especially our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let us be filled with awe and wonder that God chose to suffer for us.

Let us now depart in silence to continue the Paschal mystery with Jesus as he enters into his suffering and death, until we gather again to celebrate His Resurrection.