

Station 5: Jesus dies and is buried

Mark 15: 37-47

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council ... bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Reflection:

In Mark's telling of the death and burial of Jesus, the respect shown him in death cuts across all members of society: marginalized women, a Roman soldier, and a wealthy man are all struck with the desire to honor Jesus, each in their own way. Nobody is excluded who wants to be included.

Indeed, the Temple itself becomes part of the story—the rending of the curtain reminds us of when the heavens were torn open at the Baptism of Jesus: "And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'" (Mark 1:10-11)

The Beloved has died.

We have come full circle.

Jesus rose up out of the water in the rebirth of baptism and now Jesus is laid in the earth at the time of death.

All of the elements of Creation are part of the story of Jesus: water, air, earth, stone. All of Creation partakes in this dance of life, death, and rebirth. We are part of this story, too.

Jesus was there at the beginning, as the Word, and Jesus is fully present even in death. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

All of the elements of Creation are part of our story, too. And so is Jesus. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Action:

If you have been carrying stones with you, now is the time to unburden yourself and lay them to rest. Please leave the stone at the foot of the redwood tree, below the three crosses. You may wish to say a prayer asking for release, or even a prayer of gratitude for what your burden taught you. Perhaps it is even now being transformed into a deeper wisdom.

If you wish, you may place a handful of soil over the stone, much as we cast earth upon a coffin during the Burial service. This is a way to return the person to their beginning—earth to earth. It is also a time of blessing and release.

Before you go, please take an olive-wood hand cross with you as a keepsake and a reminder. Throughout this walk today you have seen many representations of the Cross and you have read or heard many ideas about what the Cross can represent. As you hold this hand cross in the future, you get to choose what it means...solidarity, comfort, courage, liberation. May it be a gift to your heart and your spirit.

Prayer: 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 our Lord. Amen