

STATIONS OF THE CROSS



"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

2 Corinthians 4:8-11

JESUS SHARES IN OUR SUFFERING

I was first introduced to the Stations of the Cross while studying abroad in Italy. Having grown up in rural Protestant churches in Arkansas, I had never spent enough time in a Catholic church to notice the artwork depicting Jesus' suffering and emphasizing distinct moments of his journey to the cross. I found it strange at first - how the Stations dwelled on the gruesome details of his death.

In my faith community, we remembered Jesus' death each week during communion, but the particulars of his suffering were spoken of only in vague terms. We never lingered on the physical and emotional torment Jesus endured. Perhaps we were uncomfortable with the reality of his pain. Maybe we avoided facing the dehumanization of Jesus because doing so might force us to confront our own complicity in his suffering.

But something essential is lost when we try to skip over the road to the cross. We lose a crucial part of the gospel - the good news - that Jesus, in allowing himself to be stripped, beaten, mocked, humiliated, and executed by empire, fully embraced human suffering in all its forms.

This year, I invite you to experience the Stations of the Cross by stepping outside and walking the streets of our community. Jesus' death was not a private affair; his torture and humiliation were public, unfolding in the very places where he once walked with his followers and taught the people. In the same way, suffering surrounds us every day and we must ask ourselves if we are willing to follow Jesus into the suffering of our community?

If you follow the route I've laid out in Tempe, you'll pass streets where unhoused neighbors seek shelter, apartments where international students and refugees struggle to support themselves and their families while living in fear of deportation. You'll pass schools where children and teens grapple with anxiety, fear, and overwhelming stress. You'll walk by a campus where students are confined by a loneliness epidemic. You'll pass a hospital where life-and-death decisions are made daily, reminding us how fragile our bodies and minds truly are.

No matter where you choose to walk with Jesus, know that he is there - on the streets, in jails and police stations, in emergency rooms, in crowded apartments, in the suburbs, in alleyways, in doctor's offices, in the grocery store, in the courtroom, in the bank. In every place where people suffer under powers that oppose God's vision of liberation, reconciliation, and redemption, Jesus is present.

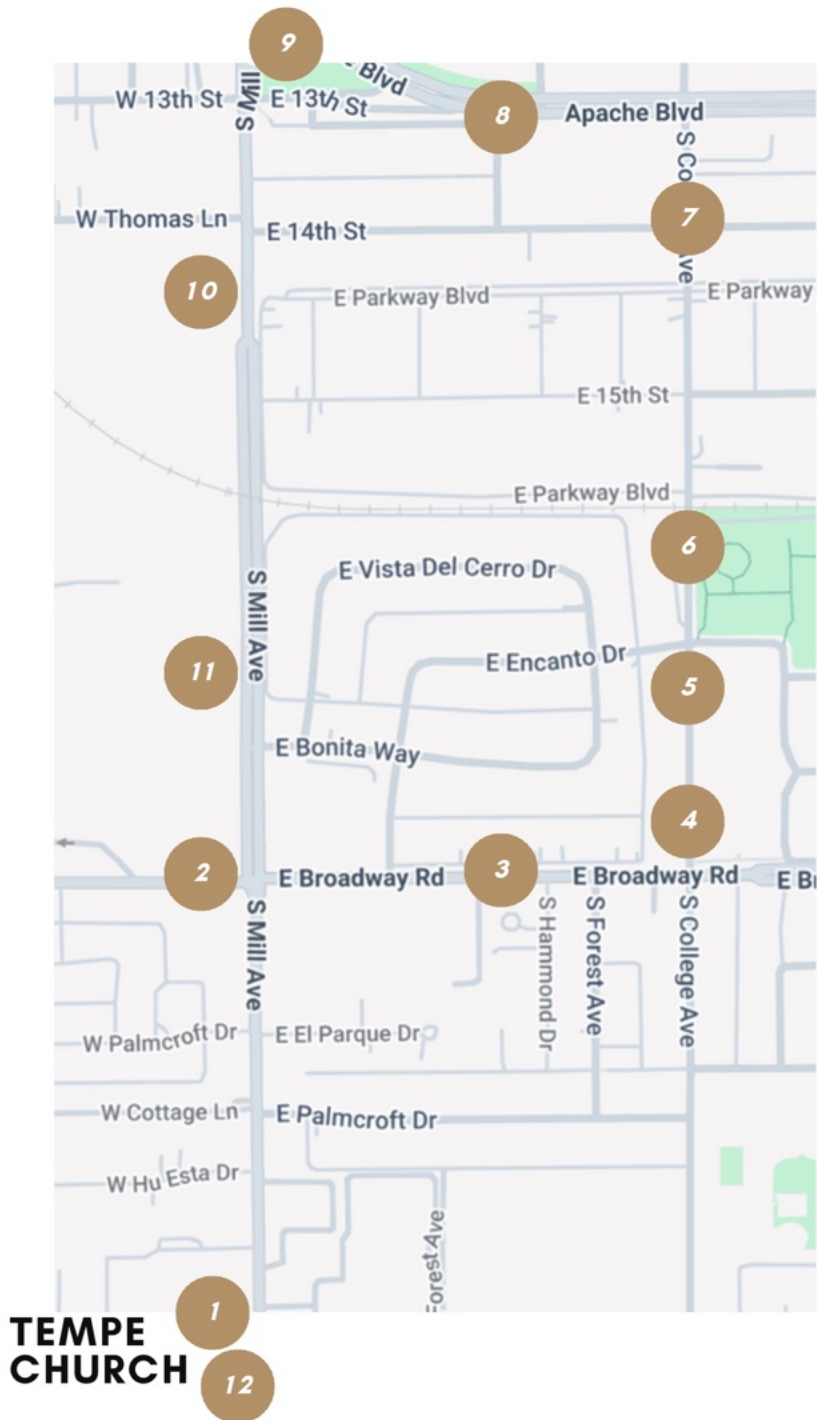
Claire Allensworth

DIRECTIONS

Choose a path to walk that is accessible for you. There is an optional path that starts at the Tempe Church. If you are unable to walk, consider driving to an area where you can observe your community like a park or mall.

At each station, pause and reflect on the scriptures and artwork with God. You can linger at a station for as long as you like.

There is space in the booklet for you to jot down anything you are noticing or insights you are receiving from God.



STATIONS

- 1 Foxtail Community Garden
- 2 Intersection of Broadway & Mill
- 3 Broadway 101 Apartments
- 4 St. Augustine's Episcopal Church
- 5 Heartprints Montessori Day Care
- 6 Daley Park
- 7 Intersection of College & 14th St.
- 8 Tempe Seventh-day Adventist Church
- 9 Intersection of Mill & 13th St.
- 10 Tempe St. Luke's Hospital
- 11 Tempe High School
- 12 Tempe Church

DIRECTIONS

From the Garden, Turn Left on Mill Avenue

Turn Right on Broadway

Turn Left on College

Turn Left on 14th St.

Turn Right on Forest

Turn Left on 13th St / Apache

Use the Cross Walk at 13th & Mill

Turn Left on Mill

Travel on the South on the Right Side of the Road

Arrive at the Church

JESUS IS TEMPTED

station one

READ

"Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Matthew 26:36-42

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called on the name of the Lord:
"Lord, save me!" **Psalms 116**

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork for this station? What stirs in you as you read the scriptures?
2. What are the prayers of your community? What are the longings, anxieties, and fears that you hear crying out for help and comfort?



This year, our artwork is by the early 20th century Flemish artist, Jos Speybrouck and accompanied by modern photos.

JESUS IS MOCKED

station two

READ

"Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, 'Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?' " **Matthew 26:67-68**

"Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they slapped him in the face." **John 19:1-3**

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!" **Luke 13:34**

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork for this station?
2. With God, you are safe to explore your own heart and attitudes. What perceptions or thoughts do you hold about others in your community? What do you unthinkingly think about the people you encounter?
3. If you lift these perceptions up to God, what message do you hear in response? What is God's invitation to you?



JESUS IS CONDEMNED

station three

READ

"Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!...From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement. It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified." **John 19:4-6;12-16**

"Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." **Luke 22:55-57**

REFLECT

- 1.What do you notice about the artwork for this station?
- 2.If you place yourself in this scene, how would you respond to the condemnation of this innocent man? Do you relate to Pilate, the crowd, the chief priests, or Peter?



JESUS IS GIVEN HIS CROSS *station four*

READ

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." **John 3:14-17**

"The cross was Jesus' voluntary acceptance of undeserved suffering as an act of total solidarity with the pain of the world. Reflecting on this mystery of love can change our lives." **Richard Rohr**

REFLECT

1. Why is it important that Jesus willingly took his cross.
2. How are you being invited to take up your cross and join others in their suffering?



JESUS FALLS

station five

READ

"Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

John 12:24-25

"Surely he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:4-6

REFLECT

- 1.What resonates with you as you read these scriptures or observe the image?
- 2.What songs, scriptures, thoughts, or images, do you think may have woven their way through Jesus' mind as he labored beneath the weight of the cross?
- 3.What are you willing or unwilling to release in order to find life? How would this releasing change the way you shouldered the burdens of others with Jesus?



JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

station Six

READ

"Simon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed". And his mother kept all these things in her heart." **Luke 2:34-35,51**

"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,^[a] here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." **John 19:25-27**

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork or the scriptures?
2. What do you think it was like for Jesus to encounter his mother throughout his crucifixion? Can you imagine Mary's perspective as the events unfolded?
3. Who among us is impacted by loss or lack of connection? How might God be inviting us to offer friendship and resources to those in need?



SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

station seven

READ

"Along the way, they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross of Jesus."

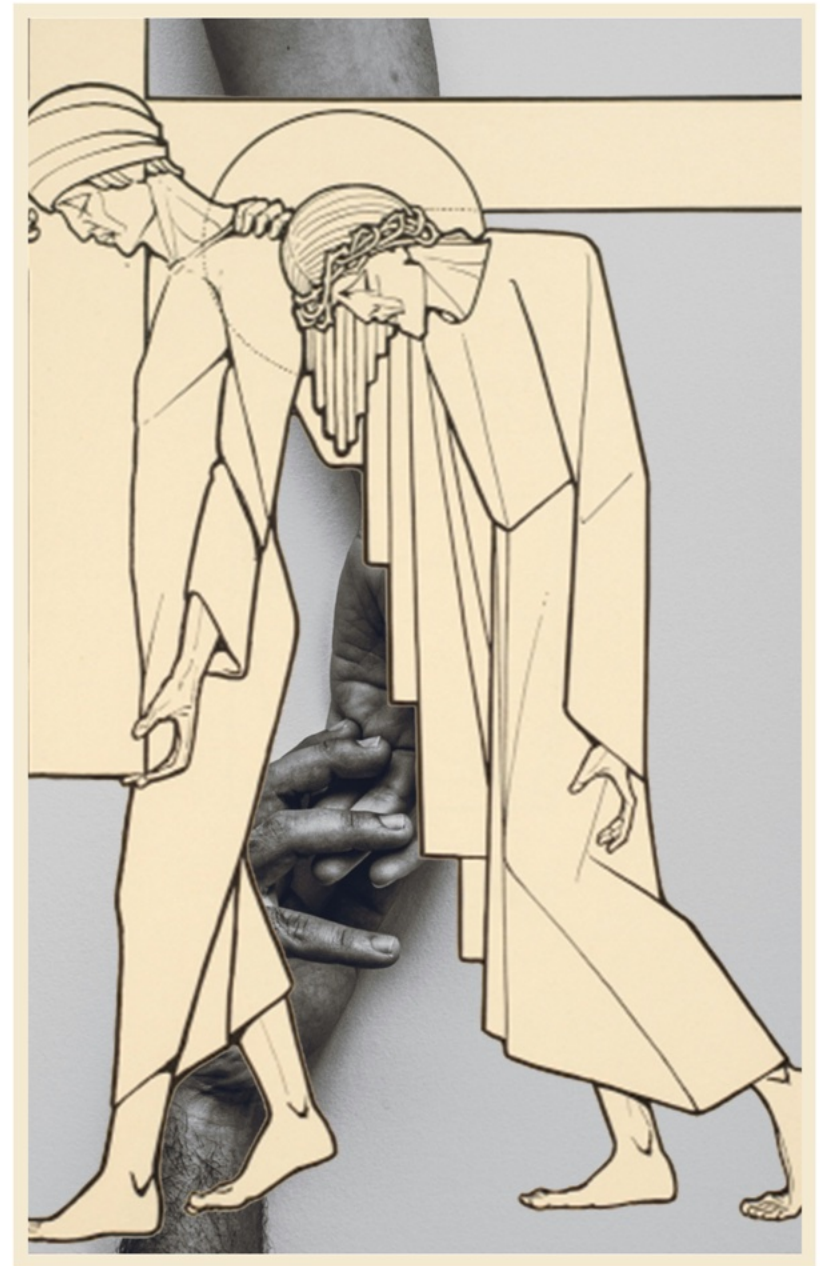
Matthew 27:32

"Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." **Matthew 16:24**

"So it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other." **Romans 12:5**

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork?
2. Imagine the weight of the cross on Jesus after being beaten and whipped repeatedly. What do you think he felt when his cross was taken by someone else?
3. What opportunity do you see to offer relief to the suffering of others? Are you experiencing suffering that you need to allow the family of God to bear with you?



JESUS IS STRIPPED

station eight

READ

"When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots." They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get." **Matthew 27:33-36**

"I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"

Matthew 25:36-40

REFLECT

1. What questions or feelings stir in you as you view the artwork?
2. What do you imagine Jesus was thinking and feeling as he was stripped of his last bit of dignity, his clothing?
3. Where are there opportunities to honor the dignity of others as beloved children of God, made in his image?



JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS *station nine*

READ

"Two criminals were nailed to crosses beside Jesus - one on the right and the other on the left. People walked by and shouted insults at Jesus. They shook their heads and said, "You said you could destroy the Temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross if you really are the Son of God!" **Matthew 27:38-40**

So the other disciples told Thomas, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." **John 10:25**

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork for this station?
2. If you place yourself in this scene, how would you respond to the condemnation of this innocent man? Do you relate to Pilate, the crowd, the chief priests, or Peter?



JESUS IS HUNG ON THE CROSS *station ten*

READ

The final sayings of Jesus on the cross:

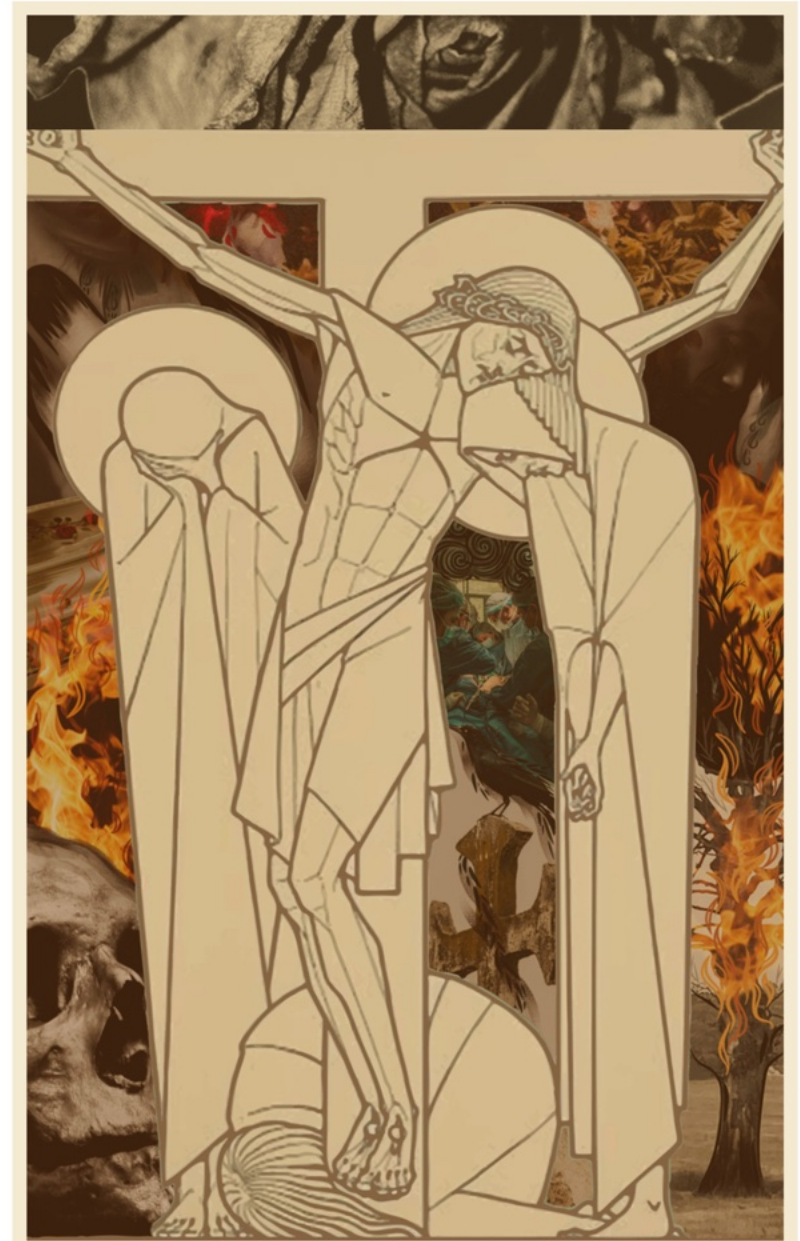
- "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." - Spoken to those who crucified Jesus.
- "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." - Spoken to the criminal who was crucified next to Jesus.
- Woman, behold thy Son." - Spoken to Jesus' mother.
- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- "I thirst."
- "It is finished."
- "Father, into your hands I commend My spirit."

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

African American Spiritual

REFLECT

1. What do you notice about the artwork at this station?
2. Why do you believe these were the words that Jesus chose to speak on the cross? What do they reveal about his heart?
3. What do you want to say to Jesus if you were able to stand at the feet of the cross?



JESUS DIES

station eleven

READ

"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" **Matthew 27:50-54**

REFLECT

- 1.What emotions rise in you when you think of Jesus' death?
- 2.For those at the cross, the very air was saturated in death. How could they bear to remain with Jesus until his final breath?
- 3.How do we live among death and grief without closing our eyes to it's presence? How do we remain at the feet of the cross when the same darkness of that day comes into our community or into our own lives?



JESUS IS BURIED

station twelve

READ

"Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.

Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there." **John 19:38-42**

REFLECT

1. What do Joseph, Nicodemus, and the others' who attended Jesus' body reveal about their connection to Jesus?
2. How do we respond to the loss of human life?
3. How do we honor Jesus' death in our response?

