



Where
Mercy is
Found

Lent 2016



Heart of Mary Women's Fellowship

About This Study

We hope that you'll dive in, grow in the Lord, and share with others what beauty God reveals to you through it. If you are doing this study independently, know that we at HOM are here for you & that you also have a LARGE community of women through our website and social media that are participating too! You are truly never alone!

If you are completing this study in a group setting - we are excited that you have found a local community to grow with, on top of our online sisterhood. Please use this study journal for your reference, resource, and more during your meetings and the personal time leading up to it.

Looking for a group? Please visit www.heartofmarywf.com/groups to find a meet up near you.

Are you already in one but not listed on our website? Looking to start one? Please contact us for more information about our "HOM Ambassador" program. We have team members available specifically to help you grow a local group and lead other women through community, prayer, and devotion. Their support is available at all times. We also want to help you grow! We will advertise your group on our website & social media! And we have free resources for you as well. Please email us at heartofmarywf@aol.com

Note: All written content has been reviewed by a Catholic spiritual director to cross check that all statements are align with the teachings and tenants of the Roman Catholic Church.

© 2016 Heart of Mary Women's Fellowship. The "Our Beginning" devotions, along with other bible studies, Marian Consecration, Catholic Talks, and other free downloads can be found at heartofmarywf.com,

The Lent Team



Writer

*Christine
Cooney*



Writer

*Catherine
Hernandez*



Writer

*Monique
Ocampo*



Graphic & Journal Design

*Rachel
Peñate*



Cover Designer

*Kristina
Markford*



Writing Director

*Michelle
Workman*

*all photography in this journal with the exception of the Sixth Station Part One (which is Stock imagery found on www.unsplash.com) is by Regan Ballin. The cover watercolor is by Vivian Imbruglia.

This journal can be printed and reproduced freely. This journal is not for sale or profit. If you would like to be an art, photography, or writing contributor, please contact us at heartofmarywf@aol.com



Just as the Israelites wandered 40 days in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land, and as Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness before being tempted by Satan, Catholics today spend 40 days preparing themselves for the celebration of and recommitment to our Baptism in Christ Jesus. The Church calls this penitential season "Lent."

Today, Ash Wednesday, marks the start of that journey. It's a journey which the Church encourages the faithful to make examination of their lives in a special way, that we might further our conversion journey and draw closer to Our Lord.

One of the traditional way the Church has helped her faithful in this journey is through the Stations of the Cross. It's an ancient practice, dating back to the 4th century. Back then, of course, Christians went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But now, we don't have to journey nearly as far. Thankfully, Catholic churches have some form of each of the stations displayed and the faithful can walk the Stations of the Cross nearly anytime and in their own neighborhood. This is especially true during Lent, where churches often reserve Friday nights for the church community to pray the Stations together.

We at Heart of Mary, then, found ourselves wanting to take a slower, scriptural look at the Stations of the Cross. We wanted to spend the entirety of Lent pondering it's goodness, so that we might draw ever near to him and "allow ourselves to be smitten by his love." 1

Following a scriptural reflection, we'll spend a day or so looking at a saint who, in a special way, gives witness to that particular station. We'll meet old favorites like St. Catherine of Siena and St. Teresa of Avila; and new favorites like Mother Teresa. But we'll also meet some of the lesser known saints, like Blessed Fr. Titus. All of this that we might be inspired by such a great "cloud of witnesses" and press ever onward toward Christ.

Saturday's we'll take a break from the stations and spend some time in consideration of a few popular Catholic hymns.

Does this sound like a lot to you? Because it's not. We're taking it all day by day, and to help you, we've put together a downloadable guide to work through right along with us. It's perfect for private and personal study, but will also provide plenty of contemplation for small group discussions.

Join us as we contemplate the cross. For, as Pope Francis says,

"The Cross of Christ contains all the love of God; there we find his immeasurable mercy. This is a love in which we can place all our trust, in which we can believe...Let us entrust ourselves to Jesus, let us give ourselves over to him." ²

**"The Cross of Christ
contains all the love
of God; there we find
his immeasurable
mercy." (Pope Francis)**

- *Christine*

Reflection:

1. Pope Francis. Way of the Cross with the Young People. July 26, 2013.

2. *ibid*

First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Death

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

Today's Scripture

John 3:16; 18: 33; 19:116, Isaiah 53:7,

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

On this second day of Lent, we stop at the first Station of the Cross. Here, Jesus is condemned to death. I'd encourage you to take the time to pray and read the Bible verses mentioned above, but most especially John 18:33 through John 19:16. It is the account of Jesus' condemnation and sentencing to death by Pilate.

I was raised in a Protestant tradition. First Lutheran and then I made my way through a series of nondenominational churches. There was an interlude in between where I found myself boarding a "church bus" every Sunday morning and

rode it to the small white "Bible believing" Baptist church. It was here that I came to memorize a copious number of Bible verses, the first and foremost John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

I can't remember a time where I did not know that God sent his son Jesus to this world, that through Him, I might have eternal life. I can't remember a time that this verse wasn't a part of my life, a part of me.

And yet, there is something about the verse that seems external everything. Almost as if I am watching a play. Cue the darkness...

First there is the day, and then a few days and Adam and Eve and on no! Look out Eve, it's a serpent. But heaven is at the ready with a salvation plan. And look! Here is Jesus waving his hand at his father. "God, send me! I'll go."

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Cue the poinsettias. A stable, a manger, a woman in blue and her old man husband. And there! A baby! Let's call him Jesus.

It has become so familiar to me, that I am tempted

to continue reading John 18 the same way. The baby has grown up now. He performs miracles and is followed by a large crowd, but especially by 12 men who never seem to want to leave his side. Eventually the people turn on him and now he is standing in front of Pilate inside the praetorium.

The people have delivered him to the priests. The priests have delivered him to Pilate. Pilate has delivered him to death.

But the Catechism of the Catholic church teaches us that we aren't to read John 18:19 as mere spectators. It wasn't the Jews of the time, or the priests, or the populace, or even Pilate.

Rather, the Catechism tells us that "all sinners were the authors of Christ's passion. That means, it was me. I am an author of Christ's passion.

Paragraph 598 goes on:

In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints, the Church has never forgotten that "sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured." Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself, the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus, a responsibility with which they have all too often burdened the Jews alone:

We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the Apostle, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds, we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him.

Nor did demons crucify him; it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins.

Of course, I am a sinner. It is my sin that has put him on trial. John 3:16 isn't just a nice story, and Isaiah 53:7 is not just about a man who is condemned unjustly. They are about the Lord God of heaven and earth. A God so mighty he humbled himself silenced himself as he was condemned to death.

For me. For my sins. For you. For your sins.

- Christine

Reflection:

1.) Do you have a crucifix in your home? Take a few moments and sit in silence. Wondering about the majesty of a God condemned to die for our sake.

2.) Is there a sin you continue to return to? Ask Him now for the grace to leave it behind.



One of the many wonderful aspects of our rich, Catholic faith is the Church's celebration of those who have gone before us. It's one thing knowing we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, it's quite another to be able to name and identify with a specific member of that cloud.

Yesterday we discussed the first Station of the Cross, Jesus in condemned to death, and so today we're going to take some time to further ponder the mystery and also what Catherine de Ricci can show us in relation to it.

By way of quick introduction, Catherine de Ricci (born Alexandria) was born on April 23, 1522. Her mother died when she was just 4 years old. Two months later, her father remarried. Alexandria's father and step-mother sent her to a Benedictine convent, where two of her aunt's were nuns, to be educated. When Alexandria was just 9 years old, she was scandalized by an argument between two nuns (over a book on piety) and begged to come home. When she was 11 years

old Alexandria had a chance encounter with a couple of Dominican nuns from a nearby convent. Her uncle was the confessor at the convent and, after a brief visit, Alexandria was convinced this would be the course of her life. At the age of 13, despite her father's pleadings, Alexandria took the Dominican habit and the name Catherine (after Catherine of Siena).

Catherine was welcomed immediately as her Uncle Fra Timoteo, was revered by the Sisters. The large dowry that Catherine brought with her and her family connections also made her a welcome addition to the community. But it wasn't long before the Dominican Sister's changed their mind about Catherine.

Her "antics" proved too much for them to bear. It seemed that Catherine would act silly and childish. When confronted, she would answer that she was sleepy. Thus, the good sister's would send her up to her room to sleep only to find her later propped up in bed and rigid, impossible to

arouse. It seemed there wasn't a cure to found. They tried private and public scoldings, and even resorted to whippings, but there seemed to be no cure for Catherine's weekly - for it was later realized these events would happen Thursday to Friday weekly - bouts of immature sleepiness. She was seen as a half-wit: stupid and imbecile.

As it turns out - as I'm sure you've guessed by now - that Catherine's weekly bouts of stupidity were nothing less than weekly ecstasies and these brought about by the contemplation of the Passion. And not just the contemplation of the Passion but a reliving of it. Indeed, later we would find out that on Wednesdays Catherine would enter into a state of rapture where she would see a city, a place, a monastery, a room, a cell, a person. And after waking from the rapture "the whole flood of evil, of rottenness, of faithlessness, remains stamped on Catherine's heart and she 'begged the subprioress to let her go away and pray for those sinners'" (XIV). All of this as if in preparation for her reliving the suffering of the Passion on Thursdays and Fridays.

Just as yesterday we pondered the condemnation of Jesus unto death and see in it our own part in this condemnation, we see the same today. Catherine de Ricci relived it weekly; seeing and feeling the full weight of this truth. "She sees the evil, the error, the wounds that are there, and she sees them not as a spectator, but as one who is partially responsible for them" (xiv).

So what are we to do with this? Indeed, some of us may even be tempted to view Catherine in much the same way some of her contemporaries did: an eccentric to be viewed with some skepticism. The answer is the same as it always is: to love God more. Indeed, as with all of the saints the point is not the ecstasies she entered, or the miracles that may be attributed to her.

We can look at Catherine's own life to see examples of this. We see in her letters more prayers and admonishments to love God more. She writes to her father, encouraging him to give himself completely to God, "think how much he has suffered for you! And he has done everything out of the great love he bears to his creatures, so that we may be prompted to strive to love him more" (letter to Pierre Francesco de' Ricci March 21, 1542).

Catherine de Ricci lived nearly 70 years on this earth, the majority of it spent inside the walls of a convent in Italy. Yet her soul reached the ends of the earth as the Lord allowed her to see - and then stamp upon her heart - the great sorrows of sin committed by his people. It wasn't just Pilate, wasn't just the high priests, wasn't the people of the time who condemned Jesus. It was us, too. Our sins reach to heaven and condemn Him. And yet his mercy moves towards us that we might be redeemed.

All quotes and letters taken from "St. Catherine de' Ricci: Selected Letters," ed. Domenico Di Agrestic, tr. Jennifer Petrie, Dominican Sources, Oxford 1985.

- *Christine*

Reflection:

As we sit at the foot of the cross and contemplate our role in it we should be careful not to despair. Rather, our response should be love. Too often, we are afraid of what this will mean to us. Will it cause us embarrassment? Too much inconvenience? Will we be forced to leave something behind? Whatever your fear is, look to God for the answer. Pray to God that he might show us to love Him as we ought and for the grace to actually do it.

St. Catherine de Ricci, pray for us!



Hymn Saturday

Shepherd me, O God

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

Four days into Lent. How are you doing?

The first few days of Lent always turn out differently than I plan. It's usually about this time that I realize my plans for Lent are not quite what He had in mind. Two years ago our family was living temporarily in a small apartment in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was five of us, a 70 pound dog, and the cat all living cosily in a 900 square foot apartment. I had none of the usual kitchen luxuries, the kids had one room to share, and we all managed to cram ourselves into the rest of the tiny living space. I arrived in Arkansas 3 days before Ash Wednesday with elaborate plans to read Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man* for Lent.

It was going to be great.

Turns out, it really wasn't great (and this had nothing to do with Chesterton!).

There was something about the plan I had painstakingly put together that just didn't feel right. Lent had barely begun and already I was ready to toss it out.

And then, through the magic of Instagram, I came across the then then recently published *Prayer Journal of Flannery O'Connor*. Suddenly, my plans for Lent took off in an entirely different direction.

That was the beginning of a wonderful Lenten retreat wherein I drunk deeply of Flannery O'Connor, Servais Pinckaers O.P., and A. G. Sertillanges. None of them books I would have chosen, several of them books I hadn't even heard of, and certainly not a group of books I would have thought to group together. And yet, there I was, some how corralled into the best Lent I had ever had.

**“Shepherd me,
O God, beyond
my wants,
Beyond my
fears, from
death into life.”**

I can only believe I was shepherded to that moment. We've all terribly familiar with Psalm 23. For my part, it is laced up in the memories of my childhood, dotting the pages of Sunday School “workbooks” my Lutheran grandmother bound and then mailed to me.

As an adult Psalm 23 has made a somber appearance at more than a few funerals. It was there with me in the sorrow of a distance relative's passing, and its familiarity held my hand in the passing of my dear mother-in-law.

But I can't recall actually pondering this Psalm entering into the Lenten season. How many times I have I entered into Lent with a checklist? Something to give up, something to add, something to read. Stir well and add a generous portion of prayer. Let simmer 40 days and then celebrate at Easter.

But here, in this hymn, I am reminded that I do have a Shepherd and that He is there to guide me not only through dark valleys but beyond.

“...beyond my wants,
Beyond my fears, from death into life.”
I only have to ask.

- *Christine*

Reflection:

Take a moment to reflect on your Lent so far. Pray Psalm 23 and ask the Good Shepherd if indeed you are on the right path, or if you need to make some adjustments. Is this the journey you picked, or He guided you to?

ADD SPOTIFY LINK/AD!!!

Second Station

Jesus is Made to Bear His Cross

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

Today's Scripture

Isaiah 53:4-6, Matthew 27:31, Luke 9:23

We're at the second Station of the Cross now. In the first station, Jesus was condemned to death. He was mocked, spit upon, and crowned with thorns. Now, they put his cross on his back.

Catholics aren't a stranger to this mystery - it shows up in the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary - generally prayed Tuesdays and Fridays. But we shouldn't let our familiarity blind us to the gravity of such an act of mercy by Our Lord.

"Surely he has borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows"

Nowhere is this more evident than here, when he not only bears the physical weight of the cross he is to be crucified on, but he bears the weight of our sins, as well. Bruised, exhausted, bleeding, tired - he carries them. For us and for our redemption.

Yes, it was for us that he picked up his cross.

And it is for him that we must pick up ours.

Christ bore the full weight of our sins, bruised, exhausted, bleeding, tired - he carried them.

It's easy to talk about - or even think about - in the theoretical. The small crosses that most of us come across every day are generally easy enough to hoist up and carry down the road. Even some of the larger crosses seem crafted to bear more easily; an elderly loved one dies and we mourn their loss but it hasn't come unexpected.

But what happens when the big crosses start falling into our paths; when a friend's child dies, or a loved one is stricken with a terminal illness? What will our response be? Will we shake our fist up at the sky and question why? Will we demand an answer from the Almighty?

Or will we pick up our cross and unite our suffering to that of Jesus Christ?

Our Lord didn't promise a life of ease. Nor did he offer a life free of suffering. Indeed, he

"took not away the pains and sorrows which in such large proportion are woven together in the web of our mortal life. He transformed them into motives of virtue and occasions of merit; and no man can hope for eternal reward unless he follow in the blood-stained footprints of his Savior. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."(7) Christ's labors and sufferings, accepted of His own free will, have marvelously sweetened all suffering and all labor. And not only by His example, but by His grace and by the hope held forth of everlasting recompense, has He made pain and grief more easy to endure; "for that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."(8)" (Rerum Novarum, para 21).

It's why he commanded us in the Gospel of Luke, to deny ourself. To pick up our cross, and follow him.

-Christine

Reflection:

Pope Leo XIII, in Rerum Novarum, tells us that Christ as "sweetened all suffering and all labor." Are we making it a habit to join even our small sufferings to that of Our Lord? Is there a cross - no matter how small or large - in your life right now that needs to be lifted? Take a minute to pray and ask Christ for the grace and hope to carry it. And then pick it up, uniting your suffering to his.



St. Catherine of Siena

A Life of Many Crosses

@heartofmarywf



heartofmarywf.com

They say that it is the saints who choose us, and not the other way. For today's study, I like to think that it was Catherine of Siena who wanted to share about the Second Station of the Cross. At the second station, Jesus is made to bear his cross. We, too, have crosses to bear. And St. Catherine of Siena is the perfect saint to show us how.

Born to a moderately wealth family, she was the second youngest of 25 children. At six years old, she had her first vision of Christ. St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John the Evangelist surrounded him. From that moment on, she seemed to be initiated into the way of life she would one day adopt - that of a Third Order Dominican, entirely devoted to the Love of God. Her crosses soon followed.

One of the earliest crosses Catherine was introduced to was her family's response to Catherine's decision to live her life wed to Christ. Her mother, especially, wasn't happy and punished Catherine by forcing her to give up her room and to work day and night in service to

the family. But Catherine, still just 12 years old, made a game of this, her first cross she would bear as the bride of Christ. She set to work imagining that her father was Christ, her mother the Virgin Mary, and her brothers the apostles. Thus was her first cross born.

Another particularly heavy cross Cathrine carried was occurred after she had gone to stay at the priory with the other sisters. There was another Mantellata, Andrea, who had contracted breast cancer. The disease had spread so profoundly that it left an open and rotting wound on Andrea's breast. If anyone came to visit her, they held their nose - certainly no way to console a dying person! Catherine believed that taking care of Andrea was her work that God had given her, and began at once to take care of Andrea. She was patient with the woman and was careful to not let her face show any disgust or displeasure.

At first, Andrea was pleased. But as Catherine continued to come and nurse her, Andrea developed an ill-will toward Catherine that soon

“It is only through shadows that one comes to know the light.” (St. Catherine of

blossomed into hatred. When Andrea received visitors again she began to spread rumors about Catherine, suggesting that Catherine was involved in “shameful pleasures”

when she wasn't busy nursing Andrea. You can imagine how fast the rumors spread! But Catherine bore her shame, even when the prioress and sisters converged upon her with accusations. She said nothing but “In truth, I am a maiden. In truth, I am a maiden.” 1

Worse for Catherine, when Lapa discovered what Andrea had been saying, she flew into a rage. Not that she doubted Catherine's innocence, but Catherine was the recipient of the rage. “Now you can see the reward of your Christian charity! If you don't stop nursing her, if I hear that you have so much as been near where she lives, I will never call you my daughter again” 2

Again, Catherine bore the cross. She fell to her knees and pleaded with her mother. “Mother, dear, sweet mother, do you not know that the ingratitude of mankind has never prevented God from pouring His mercy out on all sinners every day?..jThe devil has seduced her, but God may still send her light so that she may understand that she has made a mistake.” 3

Papa repented, and Catherine continued to nurse Andrea as if none of the scandal had ever happened. Eventually, Andrea did

repent, and set about to correct the reputation she had so badly damaged.

Catherine suffered much during lifetime. But in the end, they were crosses worth bearing. Even on her deathbed, she counted the crosses all joy, and said as much. In her last days, she had the opportunity to speak with Fra Bartolommeo - her second confessor - and told him that God had allowed her to suffer for the Church. “So that the Church may be liberated I suffer happily, and would gladly die for it if necessary.” 4

Dear Lord,
Help me to remember
in these troubled times
The cross you carried for my sake,
So that I may better carry mine
And to help others do the same,
As I offer up (whatever your concern or
problem here) to you
For the conversion of sinners
For the forgiveness of sins
In reparation for sins
And for the salvation of souls. Amen

All Citations from: Undset, Sigrid. (2009). Catherine of Siena. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

-Christine

Reflection:

Jesus bore his cross for us, setting an example on how we might do the same; uniting our suffering to his for the good of others or, as in Catherine's case, the Church. Let's use today to develop the habit of offering our suffering to Christ. If you have a notecard handy, take a minute to write down the following prayer and then stick it in a pocket, or some other hand place that you might easily read and pray it when a cross presents itself to be carried.



Third Station

Jesus Falls for the First Time

@heartofmarywf *H.* heartofmarywf.com

Today's Scripture

Isaiah 53:3

Have you ever gone to the mall and accidentally caught sight of someone has they tripped across the travertine tiles? I have. And let me tell you, it's not something I paused and pondered. It my more severe (and younger) days I most likely chuckled or, sad to say, guffawed. But as I grew older I averted my eyes. I did not want to see another person's humiliation; wound their pride by acknowledging their shortcomings.

And yet, here we are at the foot of the third Station of the Cross and pondering just that.

Why did the church preserve such a small and humbling detail about Our Lord?

Isaiah tells us "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" - the weight of that cross had to be unbearable. That is, the weight of our sin caused our Lord to fall. And yet, we hold on to it, don't we? We not only commit the sin, but then we barrel through it, like the man in the mall who trips. He shuffles his feet, takes a quick

**“Come to me,
all who labour
and are heavy
laden, and I will
give you rest.”**

look around and continues walking like nothing happened.

Of course, there are others among us. This group of people still commits the sin - the cross is still heavy. But these people have a different response. Rather than shuffling their feet to move past it, unnoticed, this second crown of people let their arms and legs go flailing so they wind sprawled across the floor. And that's where they stay. Their pride too wounded to get up, too afraid that others might have seen they aren't perfect, hiding until "the coast

is clear."

Neither one of these were the response of Jesus. He could have not fallen. He could have had a host of angels supporting him lest he strike his foot on a stone. But he showed us the crushing burden of sin and the affect of its weight upon our shoulders. His love for us moved him to lift himself up.

Are we willing to do the same? Are we willing to rise up from our own falls - step onto the right path - and then continue. The good news is that "His yoke is easy, his burden light."

-Christine

Reflection:

Do you find yourself hiding your fall, or worse, paralyzed by it? It's Lent! Is there sin that you continue to hide afraid it might out you as "less than perfect?" Ask God to show it to you and then go to confession with it. Ask him for the grace to cultivate the corresponding virtue in your life.



Today's Scripture

Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 11:28-30

Did you know there are over 10,000 Catholic saints? There isn't a definitive number; no one is actually counting. But if we were, there would be more than 10,000.

All those people who loved God more than anything! Which isn't to say that they didn't sin. In fact, many of the saints had such excruciating awareness of their sin that they took to extreme forms of aesthetics and mortification.

St. Rose of Lima comes to mind. At a young age she fashioned a crown of thorns. Later, when her confessor instructed her to quit whipping herself with chains, she fashioned it tightly around her waist and threw away the key.

Surely there is a special kind of grace God gives those he calls so young. And most definitely this is not the kind of "get up after you fall and run to confession" that we are talking about when we look at the third station of the cross. The pen-

ance your confessor gives you is enough - no need to wrap yourself in chains and wear a crown of thorns.

A more relatable example of picking ourselves up after we sin might be St. Jerome, a Church father and Doctor. He was "one of the most learned, most difficult, most restless and combative of all the saints." 1

He was born in 342 to a Christian father who made sure that he

"Keep doing some kind of work, that the devil may always find you employed." (St. Jerome)

provided a good education at home for his son. He later sent Jerome (at the time, Eusebius) to Rome to further his education under the pagan instructors.

For a time, Jerome forgot his piety, adopted the worldly ideas he was surrounded by and did little to exercise any self control with respect to his worldly pleasures. Still, in 360 he was baptized by Pope Liberius. And from there he just seems to grow in intellect in piety. He's famous for giving us the original Vulgate, and for his many commentaries on the scripture.

He wrote letters, too. It's the letters that give us crystal clear inside into Butler's earlier observance about the good St. Jerome who, it turns out, had a rather biting pen. So biting that one pope, commenting on a picture of St. Jerome beating his chest with a rock, "You do well to carry that stone, for without it the Church would never have canonized you." 2

Of St. Blesilla's decision to abandon Roman society, he defender her thus: "those who paint their cheeks with rouge and their eyelids with antimony; whose plastered faces, too white to be human, look like idols, and if they forget and shed a tear it makes a furrow as it rolls down the painted cheek; who...enamel a lost youth o the wrinkles of age, and affect a maidenly timidity in the midst of a troupe of grandchildren." 3

It's easy to see how he might offended!
Or consider what he wrote about priests (he himself ordained, but with the desire to be a monk and not a priest):

"The only thing they worry about is their clothes - you would think they were bridegrooms rather than clerics; and their one concern is to know about the names, the houses and the activities of rich women." 4

And he could get downright nasty when he set about to make more personal insults. He said about a particular man, "If he would conceal his nose and and keep his mouth shut, he might be taken for both handsome and learned." 5

St. Jerome, arguably one of the most learned and wisest of Church history was far from per-

fect. And, just as we are able to see and judge his actions, Jerome was intensely aware of his own inadequacies. He wasn't a moderate man - in virtue or against evil. And while he was quick to anger (especially for righteousness sake), and perhaps too quick with a sharp pen, he was quick to repentance, too. And if he was severe towards others and their failings, how much more severe he was on himself.

And when Rome was sacked in the year 404, Jerome put aside the Ezekiel commentary he was working on, and nearly almost all study. "For today we must translate the precepts of the scripture into deeds; instead of speaking saintly words, we must act them." 6

St. Jerome knew, indeed, the meaning of our Lord's words when he told us "my yoke is easy and my burden light." He loved Our Lord vehemently and was sometimes too quick to point it out. But he loved Our Lord vehemently and was quick to repent of his temper.

Citations 1-5: Butler, Alban and Burns, Paul. Butler's Lives of the Saints: September. Liturgical Press. 274

6: Catholic Online. Web. January 2016.

- *Christine*

Reflection:

We're still pondering the Third Station of the Cross - that Jesus fell under the weight of our sin. In his humbleness, he demonstrated that we might too get up after our fall and continue. St. Jerome, a doctor of the Church, knew this better than perhaps any other saint that we have been given as an example. Do you, like St. Jerome, find yourself practicing the same vice over and over and over? Ask God for the grace to help you replace that vice by practicing it's opposite virtue.



Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother:
Mary did you know?

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

When did it all start? As I reflect on Mary's life with her son that's the first thing I ask. At what point in her life did she realize that God had called her to live an extraordinary life? I wonder if she just always knew in her heart that she was special. Who knows? However, I do know that she was always obedient. When the Angel Gabriel came to Mary with the news that she was chosen to be the Mother of God she said yes in obedience to God's will for her (Luke 1:26-38).

In station four she is obedient unto the cross, just like Jesus. How could things be any different at this moment since this virtue was always cultivated at home? When we meditate on her meeting Jesus after his first time falling, that's what I see. She was obedient with Jesus to the Will of the Father. If you've ever had the opportunity to see The Passion of Christ, you can see this depicted in the scene where they meet. Their meeting shows how they do not run from the cross, but embrace it together beautifully. Mary's eyes are constantly on Jesus throughout his passion. Their eyes are speaking to each other, saying things we can only imagine.

In *The Way of The Cross* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori we read, "Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly." Maybe you've experienced something like this. You have a friend or family member who has suffered more than you both can bear. When your eyes meet you're saying, "I am here with you. You can do this."

You have my love, my compassion, and my support. I am here with you. I am here for you. Your pain and suffering are mine as well. Let me be your strength. Let me help you bear this pain." We need each other so much to get up after our falls, during our losses, and when temptation looks so sweet. We need to encourage each other. If it weren't for my friends, I know I wouldn't be able to carry my crosses without collapsing and giving up. Praise God for His mercy in giving us each

other! Mary is the perfect disciple because she demonstrates how to do this as she strengthens her son on His journey.

We need each other so much to get up after our falls, during our losses, and when temptation looks so sweet. We need to encourage each other

Mary, the Queen of the Saints and Angels, teaches us how to be disciples and living saints in many ways. She does this through her praise and thanksgiving to God. In her Magnificat she says, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden...And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts...(Luke 46-48, 50-51)." This song of praise "introduces the theme of God's mercy" (Luke 1:50,54) (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible). I bring this up because we as a Church are celebrating a Jubilee Year of Mercy! Which spiritual or corporal work of mercy do we encounter in station four? The spiritual work of mercy that I find here is Mary praying for her living son who is moments away from death.

I have absolutely no doubt in my heart that she was praying for him every moment of his passion. I believe he knew this and that he had the strength to continue because of his mother's loving prayers. May we imitate Mary through this spiritual work of mercy today as we lift up prayers for every person in our lives (both the living and the dying).

- Catherine

Reflection:

I challenge you to pray with someone today. Don't let fear or awkwardness keep you from doing such a beautiful work for God's glory. God bless you sister.

"Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You." -Saint Alphonsus Liguori



Hymn Saturday

40 Days

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

Today's theme song is the hymn 40 Days by Matt Maher. It's a beautiful and inspiring song about Jesus' time in the desert. Right after John, Jesus' cousin baptizes him the Holy Spirit leads him into the wilderness, "to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter came...(Matthew 4:2-3)." Matthew has one of the longer versions of Jesus' temptation in the desert. It goes into detail about how the devil tempted him and with what he was tempted.

So why did Jesus have to go to the desert? It seems kinda counterintuitive at first. Jesus is about to start his public ministry and then he goes to the last place where people would be! However, God does not think as we do. The Holy Spirit led him into the desert to be strengthened for the coming years of ministry (Matthew 4:1). "Cause in the desert of temptation lies the storm of true conversion where springs of living water drown and refresh you. And as the Jordan pours out change your true self is all that remains where springs of living water bind and break you. Bind and break you" (40 Days).

In the Ignatius Study Bible commentary we read about the similarities between Jesus going into the desert and the old testament Israel going into the desert. "Matthew's temptation narrative recounts Jesus' spiritual preparation for ministry. The event contrasts the disobedience of ancient Israel with the obedience of Jesus, representative of the new Israel:(1) Israel and Je-

“In the desert of temptation lies the storm of true conversion where springs of living water drown and refresh you.”

Jesus and Israel are both called God's son (3:17; Ezekiel 4:22); (2) the temptations of both Israel and Jesus are preceded by a baptism (3:13-17; 1 Corinthians 10:1-5); (3) Israel was tested for forty years, Jesus is tempted for forty days and forty nights (4:2); (4) Israel failed its wilderness testing, while Jesus triumphs over Satan through obedience....”

Wow! The Old Testament and New Testament line up beautifully here. We see Jesus being strong where Israel failed and making all things NEW. Thank you Jesus.

- Catherine

Reflection:

So how does this connect to Matt Maher's song? In 40 days we hear Matt singing, "Forty days to wander; forty days to die to self." During Lent we are called to deny ourselves of our usual comforts. We can mortify ourselves and offer up these comforts in order to be closer to Jesus. This is how we can love him better. "Forty days to grow stronger as faith breaks open the gates of hell. The jubilee is over but grace is far from gone. In the hearts of the faithful broken on the wheels of love" (40 Days). Jesus gives us this time every year to strengthen ourselves in the desert as he did in order to live out the greatness he calls us to. We shouldn't take this time lightly. Let's make this Lent count ladies! Let's allow this Lent to change us. Jesus' passion calls us to new life. I pray we have the docility and courage to accept this great gift. God bless you sister.

Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You.
-Saint Alphonsus Liguori



V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

I recently renewed my consecration to Our Lady this past month with the devotional 33 Days to Morning Glory. During those thirty-three days I was able to meet my Mother again. It reminds me of how Jesus met his mother during his passion. She has always been there for me just like she was there for Jesus. I know she is here with us now as well. But are we aware of her presence in our lives? It is through meeting Mary during my walk with Jesus to Calvary that I've been able to say I have her as a mother. When have you met Mary your Mother? Has it been during suffering? Has it been in a joyous encounter, like when Mary and Elizabeth met each other during their pregnancies?

I especially love Mary's title, "Our Lady of Sorrows," because it is in this devotion to Mary that we see not only her joy at being the Mother of God, but also all the sorrow that comes with that joy and how she perseveres through it. We see this when she brings Jesus to the temple forty days after his birth. She and Joseph are there presenting Jesus to the prophet Simeon, when suddenly Simeon shouts out, "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" (Luke 2:33-35). Mary teaches us not to run away from the good, even though we see that there will be swords that will pierce our hearts. There is a saying in Spanish: No hay rosas, sin espinas (There are no roses without thorns). Let us not be afraid to say yes to the good in our lives, even if it means

**There are no
roses without
thorns.**

there will be some suffering mingled with it. It is said that Our Lady grants seven graces to the souls that honor her daily by praying seven Hail Mary's and meditating on her tears and sorrows (dolors). Just like the stations of the cross, a devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows is a beautiful way to cultivate a love for Jesus and for our Mother.

Another one of her seven sorrows is meeting Jesus on his way to be crucified. She was strong for him when he most needed her to be. During the passion she sees and feels all the ugliness, evil, and hatred of the world that is directed at her little boy. And do you know what? She doesn't run away. She doesn't say, "This is too hard for me to see or bear, I'm leaving." No. She stays with Jesus until the very end, which is yet another sword that pierces her heart. She is at the foot of his cross when he takes his last breath. In John's Gospel we read, "When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:26-27). Jesus is asking us to do what John, his beloved disciple, did at the cross: to take his mother into our home (heart). How can we say no?

- *Catherine*

Reflection:

Mary loved more than any other mom could love. Why wouldn't we want a mother like this?! As a woman who desires to be a mother one day, I hope and pray I can love as she did. I hope and pray that today, I can love all those in my life as she loves. God bless you sister.

Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You. -Saint Alphonsus Liguori



Fifth Station

Simon Helps Jesus to Carry The Cross:
Will you bear your brother's burden?

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Yesterday in station four we went over how Mary faithfully stayed with Jesus through his passion. She felt his pain. His passion was her passion. Today we arrive at station five where Simon the Cyrenian helps Jesus carry his cross. In Matthew chapter twenty-seven we read, "As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it" (v.32-34).

In *The Way Of The Cross* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori he considers that Jesus was on the point of expiring. The Roman soldiers saw that Jesus was weak, dripping blood and sweat, dehydrated, and in need of help. They didn't think he would make it to Calvary on his own so they found someone to carry the cross with him. In the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible it says that, "Roman garrisons [the troops stationed in a fortress or town to defend it] in NT Palestine claimed the right to recruit Jews for temporary service," and this is where Simon comes in. At first glance we don't get much information about Simon. It doesn't say anywhere in scripture what he did as a profession, who his friends were, or why exactly he was in Jerusalem during this time. However, when we dig a bit deeper it does say in Mark's account that he had two sons: one named Alexander and the other Rufus. We also know that Simon was from a town called Cyrene, which today is in modern day Libya, North Africa. In the Catholic Bible Dictionary edited by Dr. Scott Hahn we read that, "There was a Jewish community at Cyrene from the time of Ptol-

**Dear Jesus You
go to die For
very love of me;
Let me bear you
company; I wish
to die with You.
(St. Alphonsus
Liguori)**

emy I (1 Macc 15:23; 2 Macc 2:23), and the Jews of Cyrene had their own synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9) and were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost" (Acts 2:10). Simon was most likely a pilgrim to the Passover in Jerusalem.

After reflecting upon all of this, we begin to see a theme that is happening in Jesus' passion. He is meeting people along the way and they are helping him fulfill God's will for his life. How humble Jesus is. He is God, yet he has us help him make his journey to the cross. Even now, years later, he still wants us to be by his side in these intimate and agonizing last moments of his life. He humbly asks us to be there to encourage and comfort him when he needs a friend the most- at the moment of death.

- *Catherine*

Reflection:

In divine providence Simon was the one called upon to help Jesus when he was most in need. Can you relate to this? Who has God put in your life to help you carry your cross? I can think of the people who are in my life now who are helping me. The friends, family, and co-workers in your life are not coincidental. Ask God to reveal to you how you are called to be Simon to them and vice versa. God bless you sister.

Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You.
-Saint Alphonsus Liguori



Fifth Station

Simon Helps Jesus to Carry The Cross:
All is Grace.

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Simon helping Jesus carry his cross is not only mentioned in Matthew's Gospel, but also in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. It seems that Simon must have been kind of important to have been mentioned by name in three of four accounts of the passion. Some biblical scholars say that, "his son Rufus may have been a well-known member of the early Roman Church" (Rom 16:13) (Ignatius Catholic Study Bible). Perhaps he was familiar with Jesus then?

In Luke's account of Simon helping Jesus we read a line that is not mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew. Luke writes, "And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus" (v.26). This extra line, "to carry it behind Jesus," is a symbol of faithful discipleship. Earlier in Luke chapter nine there is a similar emphasis on picking up one's own cross in order to be a follower of Jesus. We read, "And he said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it'" (Luke 9:23;14:27). Spiritually speaking, Simon was a sinner like us all, and therefore not one hundred percent innocent. But from what we gather from the Gospel accounts, it doesn't really say what he was doing when he got pulled into contact with a convicted criminal. Jesus was the first innocent man accused and condemned and now Simon is sharing in that condemnation. Here we have two innocent men walking together in solidarity. I wonder if they spoke to each other. What words were exchanged- if any?

Simon had no idea that he would meet his Creator that day. I think it absolutely changed his life. Simon, like Mary, didn't run away from Jesus on the cross. Maybe he wanted to at the very beginning. I like to think that at first Simon was angry and confused when the Roman soldiers ordered him to carry the cross with Jesus. But as time went on, he had a change of heart. He embraced the cross with its splinters. He was able to share in the pain that Jesus endured willingly. Spit was on his face, he was being whipped by the lashes that missed Jesus, he felt the weight of the cross, and he even endured the screaming and hitting. What did Simon do to deserve such treatment? Well, he was walking...

Do you ever feel like Simon? Like, you somehow happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and everything seems to be going wrong that could be going wrong? The Why Me Pity Committee starts to whisper in your ear. It's just a downward emotional spiral after that of, "Poor me, boo hoo." But then once you take a step back from the emotional rollercoaster you realize that the seeming unfairness of the situation was actually a blessing in disguise.

- Catherine

Reflection:

We can look at life in one of two ways. We can take our sufferings as a punishment or curse and cry about them or we can view them as grace. St. Therese says, "All things are grace," and I agree. The Holy Spirit reminds me of this daily. Simon being forced to carry the cross behind Jesus was a blessing in disguise. His life was saved because of it. I pray we can love and embrace our crosses with this attitude of gratitude. God bless you sister.

**Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You.
-Saint Alphonsus Liguori**



V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Today we continue our walk with Christ at station six where he meets Veronica. I have been familiar with this story ever since I was a little girl; praying the stations of the cross during Lent with the Church. However, I never knew that it wasn't from the canonical Gospels which made me wonder...where did it come from? I personally love when I can go back to the Bible and point out why we believe what we believe as Catholics. I love when I can confidently say, it's in Scripture, yay! But we are not a Church that teaches sola scriptura (bible alone theology). We value tradition just as much as we do scripture. I came to find out that the legend of Veronica wiping the face of Jesus with her handkerchief/veil (also known as a sudarium which means sweat cloth) has been around for centuries of tradition!

Let's go over some basic points. Firstly, why a handkerchief and not a cloak or canvas? Well, "the people of Palestine in Greek-Roman times were generally provided with handkerchiefs, used especially to wipe off the perspiration. The fashion was derived from Rome, whence the name of these napkins became soudarion, Latin sudarium"

(Biblestudytools.com). It's interesting to note that Paul's handkerchief was also used to cure people like Veronica's. In Ephesus the handkerchiefs of Paul were carried to the sick, and achieved miraculous cures (Ac 19:12). Knowing this is really helpful because we see a connec-

**Seek the face
of Jesus.**

tion with culture, history, and scripture which makes this legend clearer. Since it was a common practice to carry these pieces of sweat cloth around since the Jews during this time were under Roman rule it makes it more likely that there really is a true image of Jesus on a cloth.

What can we learn from this tradition? I would say that Veronica is giving us an example of mercy. How perfect since we are in the Jubilee year of mercy! She saw someone suffering and she did something about it. She risked her comfort of being unassociated with a hated man. Instead she gave comfort to him.

- Catherine

Reflection:

Can we go out of our comfort zone and visit the sick like she did? Can we seek the face of Jesus in everyone the sick? I know it's hard, so hard, but we must do as she did. Saint Veronica, pray for us. God bless you sister.

**Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You.
-Saint Alphonsus Liguori**

Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus:
We Seek Your Face (Part 2)

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Relics. Why do we love them so much? The veil of Veronica was one of the most sought after relics until the end of the 15th century. Growing up I loved my faith and I would wonder to myself, "Why do people care so much about these things that came from a dead person who lived hundreds of years ago? Weird!!! Also, we have Jesus in the Eucharist, so who cares about anything else!" Nail clippings, lockets of hair, flesh, pieces of habits, anything that a holy person touched, etc...It all seemed pretty unnecessary and bizarre to my middle school mind. I admit, now as an adult my view on relics and sacramentals has evolved. Now I see the beauty, goodness, and necessity of them. They point us to Christ. The point of this stream of consciousness is: I think the fascination with relics comes from the desire to be close to someone/something that was close to God. To further that idea, we want to be as close to God as possible while here on earth. God is love and we want to be with Love and in Love.

I recently watched a short video from Father Dave Pivonka's series The Wild Goose. In the very first video he was talking about how we constantly need to be reminded that God is Love and He loves us. This is evident in one of the oldest traditions about Saint Veronica. She is said to be the same woman who was bleeding for twelve years. "And a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years, who [had spent her whole livelihood on doctors and] was unable to be cured by anyone, came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped. Jesus then asked, 'Who touched me?' While all were denying it, Peter said, 'Master, the crowds are pushing and pressing in upon you.' But Jesus said, 'Someone has touched me; for I know that power has gone out from me.'

“Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 8:43-48).

When the woman realized that she had not escaped notice, she came forward trembling. Falling down before him, she explained in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been healed immediately. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 8:43-48).

It's said this is the same woman who received the veil from Jesus himself as an answer to her desire to see Jesus' face again. If this healed woman was the same woman who wiped the face of Jesus, how beautiful to think she was able to stop his bleeding face for a second while putting pressure on the cloth that

touched his wounds. She was able to love him the same way he loved her.

- Catherine

Reflection:

Saint Alphonsus Liguori writes in his meditations on The Way Of The Cross, “My beloved Jesus, your face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and the wounds and blood have disfigured it.” Let us wipe his face with gentleness and stop the hurt for a moment as Veronica did.

Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You. -Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Hymn Saturday

In This Place

@heartofmarywf  heartofmarywf.com

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

R. Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

The past few weeks have felt heavy for various reasons. I can relate to the following scripture from Deuteronomy: "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness..." (Deuteronomy 2:7) Many times I feel like I am in the middle of nowhere without any distractions for comfort, yet this wilderness has been such a blessing. Thomas Merton writes, "Let us never forget that the ordinary way to contemplation lies through a desert without trees and without beauty and without water." This reminds me of yesterday's reflection of Jesus wandering in the desert for forty days and of the song for today. Robert Kochis begins his calm and comforting song In This Place with the lines, "We are one hungry people. We need shelter and strength. We are one in our hurting. We are one in our pain. In our suffering and sadness we are saved by the grace of the power and the Spirit that is here in this place."

**May my words
become your
words.**

The first time I heard this song my mind jumped to work. I am a Catholic school teacher in a small town of less than 20,000 people. Our town is quiet, simple, and it borders Mexico (a beautiful desert yet, seemingly lawless corrupt place). I never imagined that being a young teacher here would be so hard. I was naive to think, just less than two years ago, that teaching meant playing and singing all day. I laugh and shake my head at myself now. I began teaching because I thought I could

help inspire kids to be the best versions of themselves. I wanted to teach because I felt like I had so much life experience to offer these little ones. But now I realize how much they have been teaching me about myself and how I can change to better love them. Every time a kid acts out I see that they are hungry for love and my prayer is; Jesus love them through me. When my students are hurting; Jesus comfort them through me. When they're on the verge of tears, I'm right there with them. Jesus wipe their tears through me. May my words become your words. They have my heart and that's scary but also so beautiful.

When Kochis sings, " All our lives are a mystery, We see not where they lead. We are asked now to trust you and we know we must believe," I am convicted about my own life. I never saw this as my future yet here I am. I trust and believe that this is where I need to be now. In a desert, on a border town where there is so much spiritual hunger. I must believe that despite my shortcomings as a teacher and the shortcomings of my students, that God will give us His grace to start anew the next day. I must believe that each day is a resurrection and new beginning for all of us. For this Lent, let's simply trust that God is a Father who keeps his promises and ALWAYS wills our good. "It is Jesus who fills us. He is here in this place." May we keep this in the forefront of our hearts. God bless you sister.

Dear Jesus You go to die For very love of me; Let me bear you company; I wish to die with You.
-Saint Alphonsus Liguori

- Catherine

Reflection: