

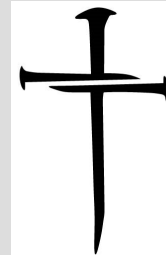


JUSTICE STATIONS OF THE CROSS Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

Closing Prayers:

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way of sacrificial love in your living and your dying and you have shown us the promise of the Kingdom of God in your glorious resurrection. G, give us the courage to live and sacrifice our lives, if need be, die as you did, in the service of others, and give us faith that we will share in the new life that is promised in the Easter we prepare for and patiently await. Amen.

The stations of the cross are a devotional practice in which the steps of Jesus' suffering and death during the last week of his life are remembered prayerfully, most especially during the season of Lent and Good Friday. Jesus spoke of his fulfilling Isaiah's words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus himself suffered unjust condemnation, humiliation, suffering and death even as his life and death served to set captives free and loose the bonds of injustice. This stations of the cross collection (or series) names particular places and injustices in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia that invite us to lament and pray as well work as the body of Christ to seek justice in our own community.



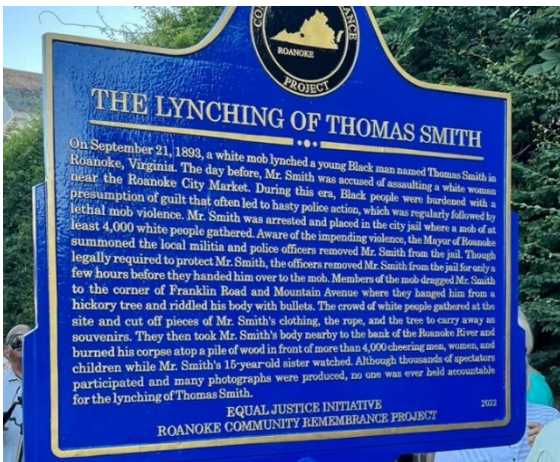
FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him to Pilate....Then the chief priest accused him of many things... Pilate spoke to the crowd, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!". Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, ...after flogging Jesus handed him over to be crucified....They clothed him in a purple cloak and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on him...They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him... After mocking him, they led him out to crucify him. Mark 15: 1-20

Lynching of Thomas Smith, Franklin Road SW Historical Marker, Roanoke



In 1893, Thomas Smith was accused of assaulting a woman. On Sept. 21, after news broke out about his arrest, an angry mob of nearly 5000 people removed Smith from his jail cell, lynched, and hung him. His body was later taken down by the Roanoke River and burned. An historical marker there notes that now when people drive by and look at this, they will know that we're honoring, not accusing somebody, not hating somebody, but honoring the death of one who died horrifically. He

had had no trial, had not been convicted, and after his death authorities later determined after his death that he had played no role in an assault on a white woman for which he was accused. Like Jesus, he was unjustly condemned and brutally murdered.

Let us pray:

For all who have been unjustly accused, condemned, and hurt. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the families of those who were traumatically and horrifically imprisoned, tortured, murdered, or lynched in our diocese and in the world. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our hearts to have courage to speak up for injustice and defend the rights of the oppressed. **Lord hear our prayer.**

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

And Joseph 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 rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mark 15:46

Old Lick Cemetery, Roanoke

The Old Lick Cemetery was the first cemetery available for the African-American population living in Roanoke's Gainsboro/ Old Lick area and was used between 1870ish-1930ish. It was mainly cared for by the Old Lick's First Baptist Church and was the primary burial ground for that congregation. It was a well-maintained and beautiful place until 1955, when the City of Roanoke began evicting a large population of African

American citizens, living and dead, from their homes. A good three-quarters of the cemetery needed to be cleared to make way for the planned Interstate 581. The family members of the deceased were given the option to re-inter their beloved dead at their own expense (I'm not sure where) but, as you have just read, no one in that neighborhood had the financial wherewithal to rebury their dead; they weren't even sure where they could house the living. So almost 1,000 people were unceremoniously scooped up and placed in a mass grave at Coyner Springs, Roanoke's Potter's Field at the time. The remaining graves were largely abandoned, and nature took over the cemetery. The revitalization of the cemetery began in 2019, first with a gathering of names and next with the 2021 creation of Friends of Old Lick Cemetery, which has been slowly reclaiming the cemetery. Among those helping with this project have been the youth of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.



Let us pray,

For all who both in life and death were not treated with the dignity of a beloved child of God. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For all who seek to honor those whose graves have been dishonored. **Lord hear our prayer.**

THIRTEENTH STATION: THE BODY OF JESUS IS PLACED IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother" and from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. John 26-27, 38, 40

Mothers Grief of for Slain Black Men



The names of black men slain from police abuse of power have become all too widely known since the death of George Floyd in 2020 to the most recent death of Tyre Nichols. Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white men. Mothers bear this pain and carry the fear for their children, especially their sons.

Let us pray:

For young black men and women unjustly killed at the hands of police. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For their mothers, families and friends who grieve their untimely painful death. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the determination to reform police systems so they will work to provide safety to all. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

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

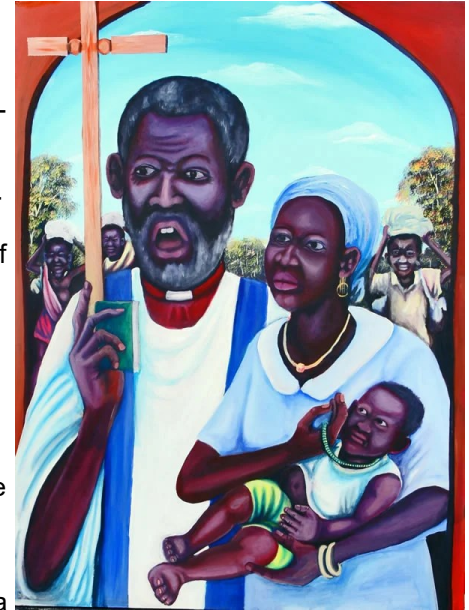
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. John 19:16-17

Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a lamb before its shearer, he remained silent. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Acts 8:32-33

Martyrs of Sudan

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," wrote the 3rd century North African teacher Tertullian. Many Christ followers have taken up their own crosses for the sake of the gospel. We remember each year the martyrs in Sudan. In May 16, 1983, when the government decreed that Christ should no longer be proclaimed, a small number of Episcopal and Roman Catholic clerical and lay leaders declared they "would not abandon God as they knew him." Possibly over two million persons, most of them Christians, were then killed in a two-decade civil war. Yet, Sudanese Christianity, which includes four million members of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, has continued providing steadfast hope in an often desperate setting. Marc Nikkel, ordained a deacon in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, was a missionary to the Sudan for 20 years where he was later ordained a priest. In July 1987, he was kidnapped and held for two months. His work led to widespread awareness of the plight and suffering of the Sudanese among the Episcopal Church.



St. James Episcopal Church in Roanoke welcomed a Sudanese congregation which included many refugees and some of the Lost Boys. In 2023 The Rev. Samson Mamour from that congregation was ordained a priest in the diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

Let us pray:

For all who have died as martyrs confessing Christ crucified. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For your beloved sons and daughters in the war-torn country of Sudan who continue to suffer from conflict and war. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those who following Christ who have taken up their own crosses in His name. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For grace and strength to live out our faith amidst opposition in hard situations. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death -- even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. Philippians 2:5-9

Lylburn Downing School, Lexington, Virginia



While white children had schools from the beginning of the American colonies, enslaved black children were rarely given educational opportunities. In Lexington, Lylburn Downing School was opened in 1927 to offer education for black children, although they still had to walk for miles to go to this one school rather than being

allowed an education at schools nearer their homes. In 1965, when schools were desegregated, Lylburn Downing was closed and black children went to the white schools. However, most of the black teachers lost their jobs and had to move away leaving black children with few teachers of color. Lack of educational opportunities have a long term effect on achievement, welfare, and wealth.

Let us pray:

For those who, for generations, have lacked equal access to education, that your wisdom will grace their lives. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all children to have teachers who look like them to model possibility.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the will to fight for full educational equity in our day. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "it is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:28-30

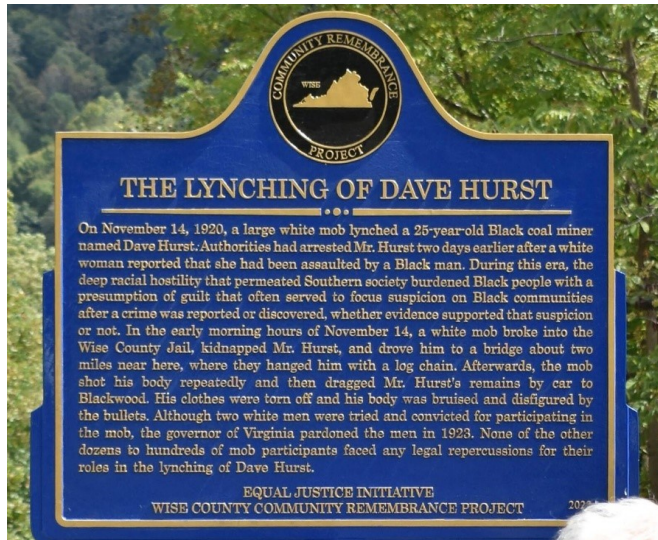
Let us pray silently for a few minutes, remembering the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ for all whom he created and remembering all those who currently are suffering in our diocese and around globe.

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Luke 23:33

Lynching in America



On September 24, 2022, an historical marker was unveiled along Kent Junction Road in Wise County, Virginia to memorialize the 1920 racial terror lynching of 25 year old Dave Hurst. Hurst was arrested after a white woman reported an assault by a black man. Hurst was subsequently jailed before being kidnapped by an angry mob, lynched, and after

his death, dragged behind a car. Lynching emerged as the most public and notorious form of racial terrorism, intended to intimidate black people and reinforce racial hierarchy and segregation. Many African Americans were lynched for exercising economic freedoms, perceived violations of social customs and accusations of crimes without fair trial or due justice. Opposition to this truth telling about injustice continues, as the historical marker in Wise County was discovered to be missing not long after it was erected.

Let us pray:
For all victims of hatred, racism and injustice. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For repentance and conviction of the sin of racism in all its forms. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too." Luke 2:34-35

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. John 19:25

Children Lost to Gun Violence

In the U.S., thousands of mothers and fathers have lost their children to gun violence. Unsettling statistics from the CDC show that nationally firearm-related injuries were the leading cause of death for children and teens in 2020. Data from the Virginia Department of Health showed the total number of firearm-related deaths for kids and teenagers jumped 68 percent from 2019 to 2020. Camden Brown, 8, died after being shot in Roanoke on Monday, August 2, 2021. One of the most infamous mass shootings to occur in the United States was in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. On April 16, 2007, 33 children of God (32 victims and the perpetrator) died at Virginia Tech. Each statistic is a beloved son or daughter, like Camden. The parents of those who died have hearts pierced, like Mary's heart.

Let us pray:
For all who have lost their lives to gun violence. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all mothers and fathers and families who mourn the loss of a loved one from gun violence. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For personal and political will to change laws to make our streets, schools, and homes safer for life. **Lord, hear our prayer.**



FIFTH STATION: THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

As they led Jesus away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country and they laid the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. Luke 23:26

Homelessness -The Roanoke Rescue Mission and Miriam's House in Lynchburg



MIRIAM'S HOUSE
SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

Over 300 in Roanoke and nearly 500 in Lynchburg experience homelessness. Lack of equitable availability of education, healthcare and economic opportunity can cause vulnerable men, women, and children to fall into homelessness. The Rescue Mission and Miriam's House are among the organizations in our diocese that have taken up the cross of caring for those in need of housing security.

Let us pray:

For all who are experiencing homelessness in our diocese. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who willingly carry some of this burden of those without housing or basic necessities, especially in our own community. **Lord hear our prayer.**

For the will and wisdom to take up the crosses of injustice and need in our own communities and work for change. **Lord hear our prayer.**

TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

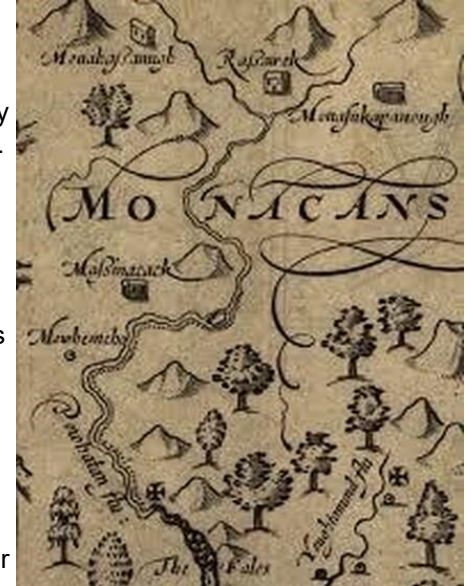
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the Place of a Skull), they offered Jesus wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots. Matthew 27:33-

Monacan Indian Nation

Members of the Monacan Indian Nation are descendants of the Virginia and eastern North Carolina Sioux. Since 1831, Bear Mountain in Amherst County has been home to the Monacan people. In 1908, the Episcopal Church established the Bear Mountain Mission and has walked with the Monacan Nation from oppression and injustice, such as the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, to the victory of federal recognition, which was achieved in 2018. In 1995, the Diocese restored the deed of 7.5 acres of property where the church, St. Paul's Mission and the museum are situated. Chief Kenneth Branham recently shared this perspective: "May all people, Monacan and others, remember that in Jesus, the Gospel is placed in the Center of this Sacred Circle through which all creation is related. As federal recognition proceeds and unfolds for the Monacan Nation centered in Amherst County, Virginia, may the Monacan people model the Sacred Circle and act in generosity, compassion, and respect toward one another and toward their neighbors. May centuries of distrust, suspicion, and abuse of power cease now and a new era of deep and true community begin."



Let us pray:

For the strength and perseverance of the Monacan Indian Nation and all who have endured the stripping of so much of their dignity and power over many years. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the thriving of the heritage, culture and dignity of the Monacan Nation. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the dignity to recognize and honor those who have lived before us on the land where we now reside. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Like sheep, we have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He Jesus was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53:6-7

LGBTQ+ Rights



For years, brothers and sisters were silenced for fear of ostracism, scorn, spiritual condemnation, and acts of hatred due to their sexual orientation or gender expression. Still in our communities and even churches, LGBTQ+ friends face discrimination and sometimes acts of hatred, such as the murder of EJ Boykin aka Novaa Watson, a 23-year-old Black transgender man who was killed in Lynchburg, Virginia on June 14, 2021. The National Archive of Criminal Justice Data reports that LGBTQ+ people are more than twice as likely to be a victim of gun violence than their cisgender and straight peers. The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia held its first Pride Worship Service June 25, 2022 at Christ Church in Roanoke.

Let us pray:

For all LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters who face discrimination. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the members of our diocesan churches to be welcoming to all, especially those who have in their lives faced discrimination and hatred. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our own hearts to be freed of fear and opened to welcoming neighbors different from ourselves. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

SIXTH STATION: A WOMAN WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Matthew 8:20

Tradition suggests that as Jesus was walking by, his face stained with sweat and blood, he was approached by a woman who stepped out and with great tenderness wiped his face with a large handkerchief.

Trail of Tears

On September 6, 1834, a "coffle" of about 300 enslaved people were forced to cross the New River near what is today the I-81 bridge just east of Radford, Virginia. The 100 women and children were ferried across, while the 200 men shackled perilously together waded across. These were

but a few of the estimated 1 million people, many separated from their loved ones, who and were forced to make the march from Virginia to the Gulf Coast to support the burgeoning cotton trade on Slavery's Trail of Tears.



Let us pray:

For families and descendants of those who were forced to march in the trail of tears. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all in our day who live shackled by fear, inequity, and injustice. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our contrition and reparation for injustices in which we and our own ancestors have participated. **Lord hear our prayer.**

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases, yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities and upon him was the punishment that made us whole and by his bruises we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5

Gainesboro, Roanoke



The historic Gainesboro community in Roanoke was once a thriving black community full of businesses, homes, and community life. Interstate 581 was built right through the community, cutting off homes, relationships and busi-

nesses. One woman, Kathleen Ross, refused to leave her home as the civic center was constructed around her property. The livelihoods and community life fell dramatically due to the lack of regard for the welfare of this black neighborhood.

Let us pray:

For those that have suffered in the cause of “progress” or “urban renewal” for the benefit of the more fortunate. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the thousands of people in our diocese who, because of systemic racism and marginalization, suffer in poverty while others have the benefits of generational wealth. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

That we may be your hands in the restoration of justice. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

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

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” Luke 28: 27-28

Black Maternal Health

Black women in America are three times more likely to endure death related to pregnancy and childbirth than white women, regardless of their education or financial means, according to the CDC. For women over 30, the risk is five times higher. The Virginia Department of Health reported that the maternal mortality rate for Black mothers is more than double that of white mothers. In 2021, former Governor Ralph Northam released the Maternal Health Strategic Plan to eliminate racial disparities in maternal deaths by 2025.



Let us pray:

For greater equity of education, prenatal care, and health services for black mothers and children. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For health care providers to particularly attend to those who might be overlooked for care. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For politicians and citizens to have the will to change factors that contribute to black maternal deaths. **Lord, hear our prayer.**