

HE IS CHRISTEN

# Stations of the Cross

with St Eugene

# Stations of the Cross with St Eugene

## How to Pray these Stations

These stations have been written for use as a personal meditation on Jesus' journey to the Cross.

The reflection can be used in many ways:

As individuals - in any place that suits the reader

or

In a group with others but reflecting individually on the meditations.

## Each reflection includes:

- A passage from Scripture
- A reflection and a challenging question
- A thought from Oblate Tradition
- A prayer

## A way of using the reflections in a group

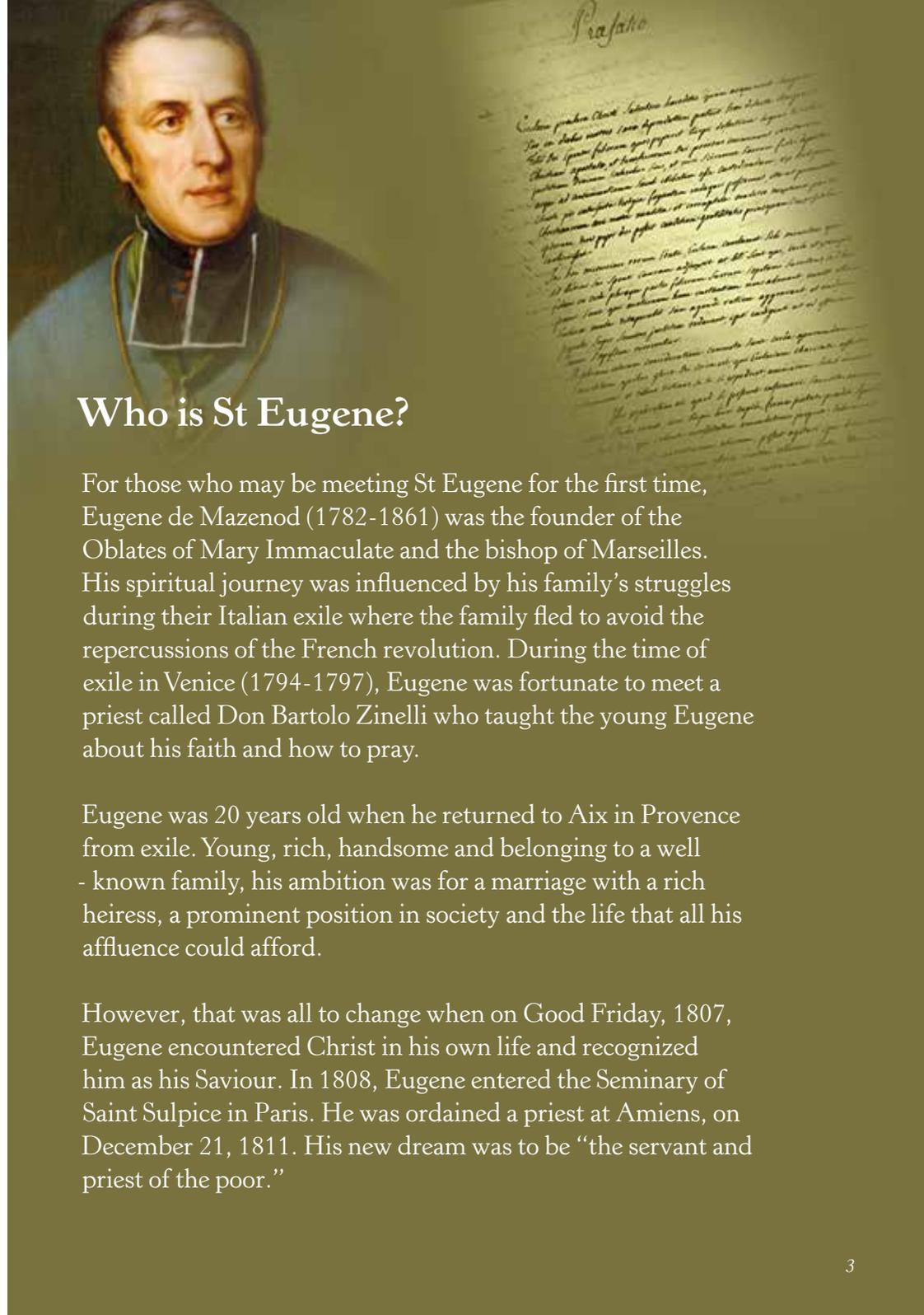
It is desirable that there are three voices as well as a leader:

1. A reader of the Scripture passage.
2. The reader of a reflection.
3. A reader for the thought from Oblate tradition.

The prayer is said together by the group with the leader.

People may choose to insert additional pauses for silence or music to suit the needs of the group. Also the leader might like to include the more traditional responses to the naming of the Stations or other traditional prayers.

An effort has been made to avoid out-of date language and to situate the stations in today's world.

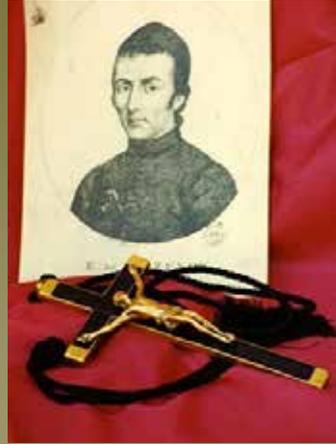
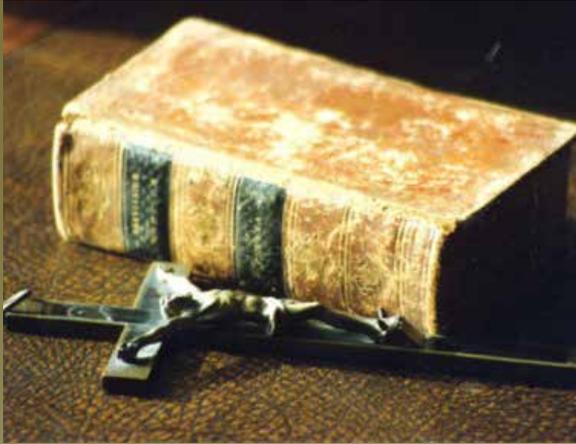


## Who is St Eugene?

For those who may be meeting St Eugene for the first time, Eugene de Mazenod (1782-1861) was the founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the bishop of Marseilles. His spiritual journey was influenced by his family's struggles during their Italian exile where the family fled to avoid the repercussions of the French revolution. During the time of exile in Venice (1794-1797), Eugene was fortunate to meet a priest called Don Bartolo Zinelli who taught the young Eugene about his faith and how to pray.

Eugene was 20 years old when he returned to Aix in Provence from exile. Young, rich, handsome and belonging to a well-known family, his ambition was for a marriage with a rich heiress, a prominent position in society and the life that all his affluence could afford.

However, that was all to change when on Good Friday, 1807, Eugene encountered Christ in his own life and recognized him as his Saviour. In 1808, Eugene entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris. He was ordained a priest at Amiens, on December 21, 1811. His new dream was to be "the servant and priest of the poor."



In 1815, Eugene recruited companions to share his apostolate, live in community, and commit themselves to God through religious vows. In 1816, Fr. de Mazenod and four companions made their commitment and sought out the poorest people in the land, reminded them of their human dignity, and announced the message of Jesus Christ. In 1826 they became the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

At Eugene de Mazenod's canonisation in December 1995, St. John Paul II said of him: "His influence is not limited to the age in which he lived but continues its effect on our time... What St Eugene wanted to achieve was that, in Christ, each individual could become a fully complete person, an authentic Christian, a credible saint. The Church gives us this great Bishop and Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as an example of heroic faith, hope and charity."

## St Eugene and the Cross

During the adoration of the cross at a Good Friday service, probably in 1807, Eugene had a special experience of the love and goodness of Christ for him. He wrote, "My soul was longing for its ultimate goal, God, the unique good whose loss I deeply felt."

Eugene became acutely aware of his own sinfulness yet he was filled with a sense of profound confidence in Divine Mercy. It was through this mercy that Eugene understood that in the shedding of his blood for the forgiveness of all sins, Jesus had died to save everyone, and yes, even him. It was then that Eugene made the decision to gift his life to Jesus, his Saviour.

## The Stations of the Cross

### Sign of the Cross

**Leader:** Let us glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

**All:** In whom is salvation, life and resurrection.

**Leader:** Let us pray.

Jesus' most profound message is contained in the Way of the Cross. Help us now to enter more deeply into the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection and to give witness to it in our lives. Amen.

## STATION 1

# Jesus is condemned to death



**Reader:** The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He said to him in reply, “You say so.” The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.” Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas... and handed Jesus over to be crucified. (Mark 15: 1-5, 15)

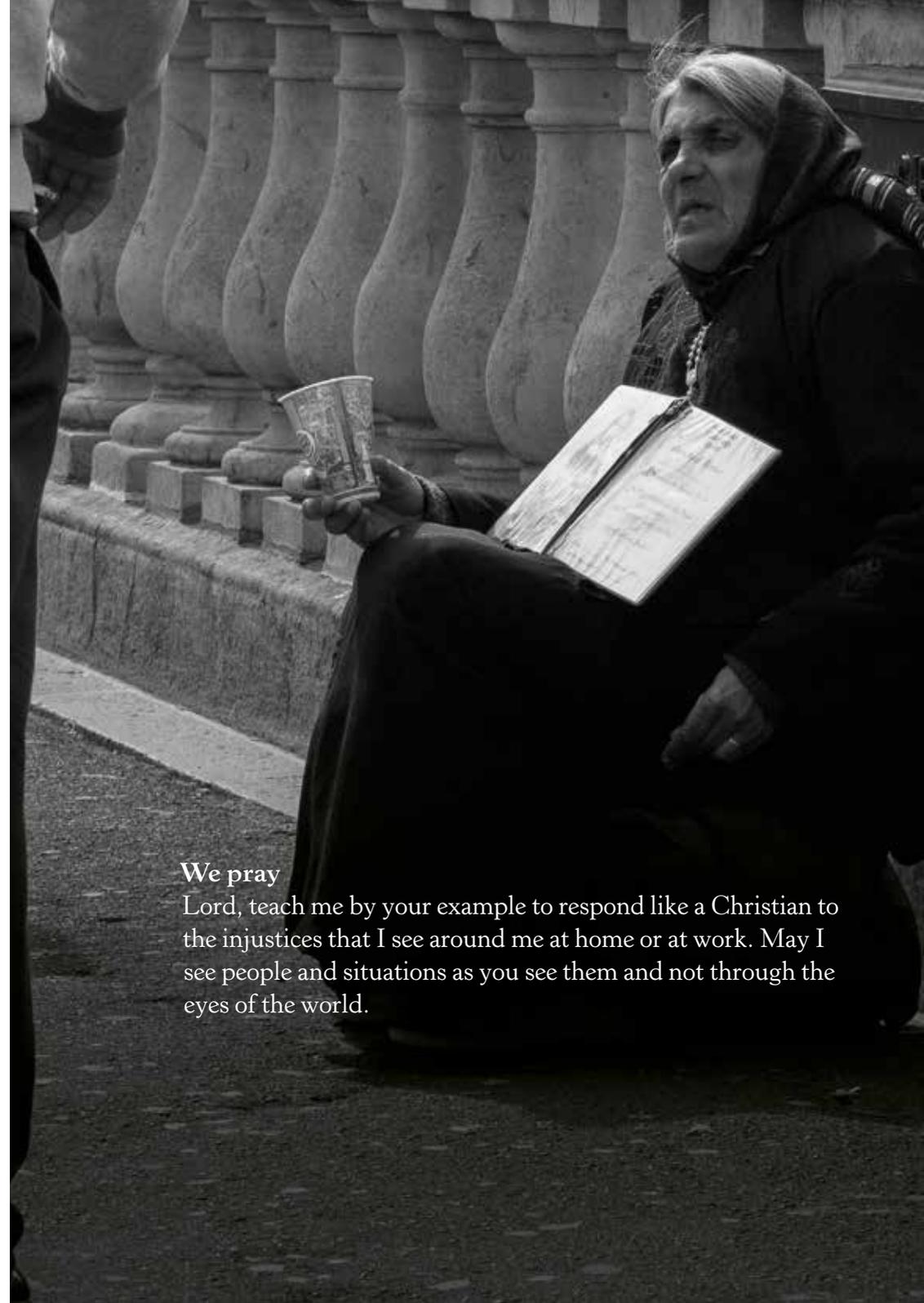
### Reflection

I see Jesus receiving his horrific and unjust sentence. What must he have felt to be condemned by Pilate? I see him choosing to be silent. When I feel or see an injustice how do I react? What do I do? What can Jesus be doing? Why does he react in this way?

Pause

### A thought from Oblate Tradition

Faced with the decadence of the French church and society in which he lived, St Eugene’s response was to form a band of missionaries and preach parish missions throughout the countryside. As a part of the mission there was a penitential procession. The missionaries always took part in this to draw down on themselves as well as on the people, God’s mercy of which they all felt such great need. St Eugene as leader – barefoot and with a rope around his neck - was offered on this day as a victim to God’s justice, a scapegoat, loaded with the iniquities of the whole people.



### We pray

Lord, teach me by your example to respond like a Christian to the injustices that I see around me at home or at work. May I see people and situations as you see them and not through the eyes of the world.



## SECOND STATION

### Jesus receives His cross



**Reader:** When the chief priests and the guards saw Jesus they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.” ... They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19: 6, 15-17)

#### Reflection

I know the cross takes many forms. Some sufferings I experience are invisible, such as loneliness, loss or chronic pain. I cannot always see the pain that others suffer - often in silence. How do I feel about the cross that I find myself carrying? What meaning do I find in it? Can I carry it up freely?  
Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

We are people ‘set apart for the Gospel’, ready to leave everything to be disciples of Jesus. The desire to cooperate with him draws us to know him more deeply, to identify with him, to let him live in us. [cf. C. 2]

#### We pray

Lord, help me to carry my cross with a free heart. Help me to be generous with my time and efforts to treat all people with gentleness and compassion and to ease the burden of others where and when I can.

## THIRD STATION

### Jesus falls the first time



**Reader:** But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

#### Reflection

I see Jesus falling out of sheer exhaustion while carrying his cross. Another humiliation. But he gets up and carries on. I learn that it is not failure when I am crushed and overwhelmed by my cross, when I experience embarrassment and humiliation.

Do I get up and carry on?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

I remember St Eugene's words; "We make the weak desperate when we have only reproaches to offer."

#### We pray

Lord, inspire me to be compassionate to those who stumble under the weight of their crosses. Help me not to be judgemental, but to welcome the opportunity to show your love to them.



## FOURTH STATION

### Jesus meets his mother



**Reader:** 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. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.” (Luke 2:34-35, 51b)

#### Reflection

Mary was a helpless bystander. Even her mother’s love was powerless to prevent what was to happen to her Son. A sword indeed pierced her heart. Today, I remember the many mothers who are helpless bystanders as their children suffer poverty or homelessness, sometimes very close to home in my parish or neighbourhood.

Where do I turn for help when things are very difficult?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

The Church places the Oblate Family under the protection of Mary. St Eugene wrote to Fr. Tempier “It will be consoling for us to be consecrated to her in a special manner and to bear her name.” May I find Mary at my side on my way of the cross.

#### We pray

Mary accepted God’s plan for her life with humility and grace, always trusting in God’s love and guidance. Lord, help me to trust you, even when the way ahead seems hopeless and bleak.



## FIFTH STATION

### Simon helps Jesus carry his cross



**Reader:** As they led him away, the soldiers 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)

#### Reflection

In his desperate need Jesus receives help from a stranger.  
How do I feel when others recognise my unspoken need for help and support me?  
How often do I come across unfair situations and say nothing for fear of getting caught up in the crossfire?  
Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

During the French Revolution, Eugene and his family were forced into exile in Italy. They were refugees depending on the goodness of others. Eugene knew suffering in his life – he endured poverty, the loss of status and a permanent home. He never forgot what he owed to the goodness and generosity of others experienced during his years as an exiled emigrant. “Kindness is a quality that is indispensable,” said St Eugene.

#### We pray

Lord, take away my uncertainty; make me bolder to act when others need my help, so that, like Simon, I can share or ease the burden of others in some small way as a sign of my solidarity with those in need.





## THE SIXTH STATION

### Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



**Reader:** Of you my heart has spoken: “Seek his face.” It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face. (Psalm 27:8)

#### **Reflection**

Veronica gently wipes the face of Jesus with her veil; eases his suffering with a loving gesture; a small act of kindness in a world bound up in hatred and cruelty.

How does the suffering I see around me almost every day make me feel?

Do I have the confidence to go against the crowd and make friends with someone who is unpopular or unloved?

Or do I neglect to do the little things I can do?

Pause

#### **A thought from Oblate Tradition**

Eugene wandered the alley-ways of Marseilles usually dressed simply as a priest and not in his Bishop’s robes. In his ministry Eugene sought to see Christ in the many faces of the poor.

#### **We pray**

Lord, give me the strength of purpose to stand up for the truth and not be troubled about the consequences for myself. May I never use my age, gender or prejudices as an excuse to do nothing. Help me to do something, however small, to help others in their distress.

## THE SEVENTH STATION

### Jesus falls the second time



**Reader:** All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. Do not leave me alone in my distress; come close, there is no one else to help. (Psalms 22:8,12)

#### Reflection

Weak from the beatings; struggling to pick himself up and carry on, Jesus shares in the hopelessness and misery endured by so many people in the world. Today, there are about 59.5 million people who are forcibly displaced worldwide. So many people are uprooted from family and neighbours, and have to begin again building community or even being accepted in a new country.

How would I feel having to leave everything and everyone I know and love?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

In his first sermon, as a priest on Ash Wednesday 1813, in the Madeleine church, Aix -en -Provence, Eugene spoke in the local dialect. This very early morning Mass was attended mainly by the poor and marginalised people of the area. Eugene's words shocked the local wealthy people including his mother.

I recall some of the words of that sermon, "Come now and learn from us who you are in the eyes of faith. Poor of Jesus Christ,... all you who are oppressed by misery... listen to me. You are God's children,... heirs to his eternal kingdom, chosen portion of his inheritance; you are, in the words of St. Peter, a holy nation,... you are children of the Most High."



#### A prayer

Lord, grant me the gift of sensitivity that I may always act with kindness and compassion. Help me to love unconditionally and to offer support to others who are in need of help.



## THE EIGHTH STATION

### Jesus speaks to the women



**Reader:** A crowd of people followed him, including many women who grieved and lamented over what was happening to 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 23:27-28)

#### Reflection

Our world is full of suffering women. Many are mothers whose dignity has been wounded, abused by discrimination and injustice. Often these mothers find themselves getting deeper and deeper into debt to provide for the basic needs of their family. They are being forced into the hands of loan sharks or pay-day lenders. Many turn to food banks to feed their families.

What do I do to ease the wounds and fears of suffering women?  
Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

Eugene had many friends among the fishwives of Marseilles and exercised a special ministry to them. St Eugene encourages me to do what I can with his words, “Be grateful for all the good the Lord helps us to accomplish.”

#### A prayer

Lord, give me the grace to see through your eyes so that I may respond to the cries of my brothers and sisters with generosity and compassion: to love as you love. May I live more simply that others may simply live.

## THE NINTH STATION

### Jesus falls the third time



**Reader:** Lord, I know you will never stop being merciful to me. Your love and loyalty will always keep me safe. May all who come to you be glad and joyful. May all who are thankful for your salvation always say, “How great is the Lord!” I am weak and poor, O Lord, but you have not forgotten me. You are my saviour and my God - hurry to my aid! (Psalm 40)

#### Reflection

The third fall of Jesus shows me again the crushing power of the cross in my own life and in the lives of others.

Today, many innocent men, women and children are made to bear the cross of other people’s faults. I know many suffer injustice, poverty and degradation through the excessive greed, arrogant pride and lack of respect evident in the world today. Do I place burdens on the shoulders of others?

Am I careful to buy goods from factories or companies that work in an ethical way so as not to inflict more discomfort and danger on the workers for my own gain?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

Eugene knew many dark moments in his lifetime. One of these was the constant pain of his parents’ separation. He knew depression and rejection from people in whom he had placed his trust. His faith sustained him. Throughout these difficult times his was mantra was, “All our trust is in God.”

#### A prayer

Give me a compassionate heart so that, when my brothers and sisters are suffering, I do not add insult to their injury and increase their troubles but seek to ease their wounds by prayer and loving actions.



## THE TENTH STATION

### Jesus is stripped of his garments



**Reader:** When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfil what the scripture says, “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” And that is what the soldiers did. (John 19: 23-24)

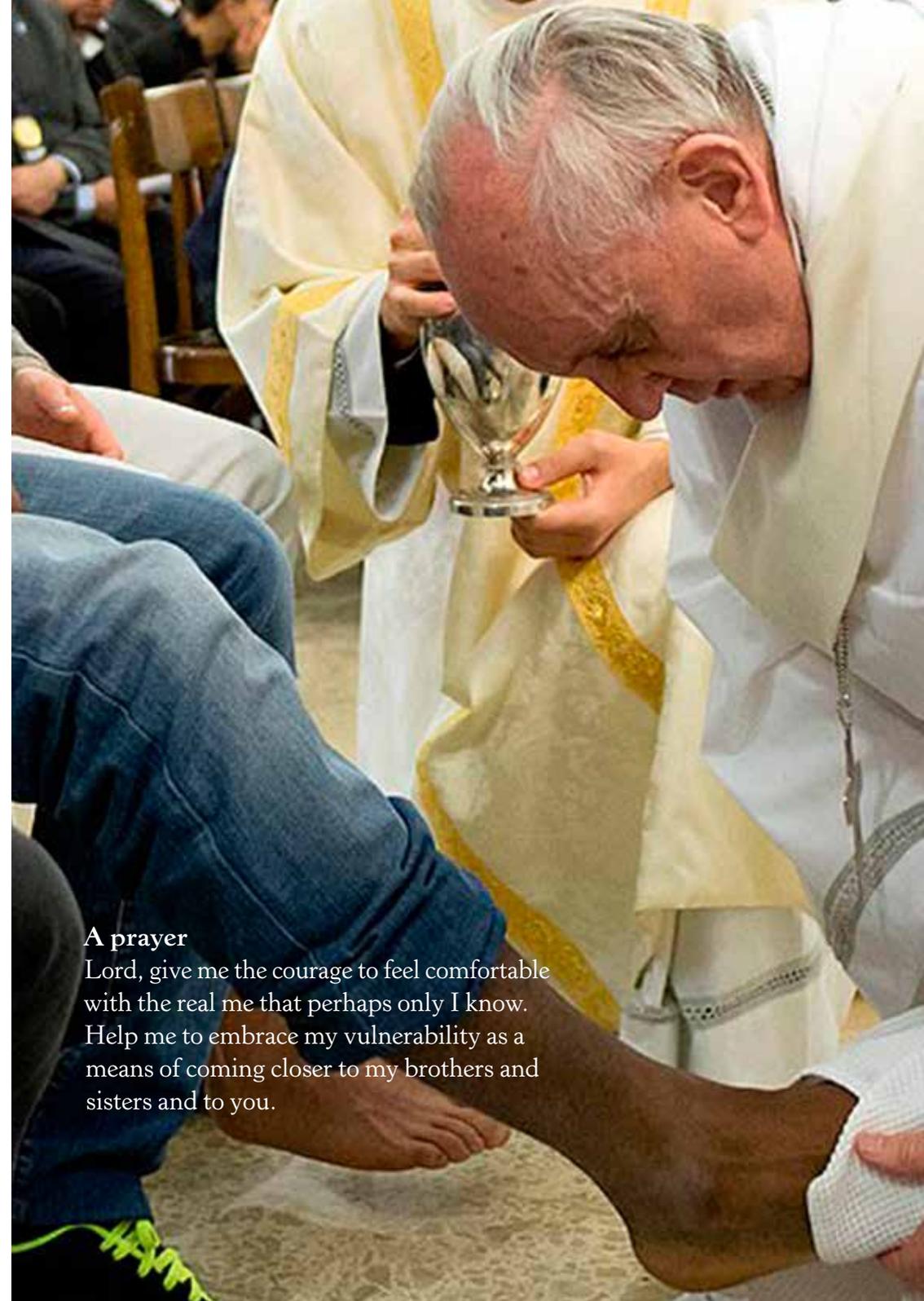
#### Reflection

Crucified people in the time of Jesus were stripped of all of their clothes. It was one more step in the process of ultimate humiliation. I can only imagine the embarrassment of being so exposed and demeaned. But I can be sure that whenever I am subjected to humiliation and disgrace: Jesus knows how I feel. Do I know the humiliation of being stripped of my dignity? Have I ever suffered the pain of being completely exposed, my inner self and secrets laid bare for the world to see and maybe reject the real me.

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

It was St Eugene’s hope that those who followed in his footsteps would, “Strive to imitate the virtues and example of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”



#### A prayer

Lord, give me the courage to feel comfortable with the real me that perhaps only I know. Help me to embrace my vulnerability as a means of coming closer to my brothers and sisters and to you.

## THE ELEVENTH STATION

### Jesus is nailed to the cross



**Reader:** Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."  
(John 19: 17-19)

#### Reflection

The pain of Christ's passion reaches its climax and his suffering is at its most intense. It is the prelude to his death. We are surrounded by many people 'nailed' as it were by the pain and suffering of sickness, injustice and starvation. It is this reality that Jesus shares as he remains nailed to the Cross.

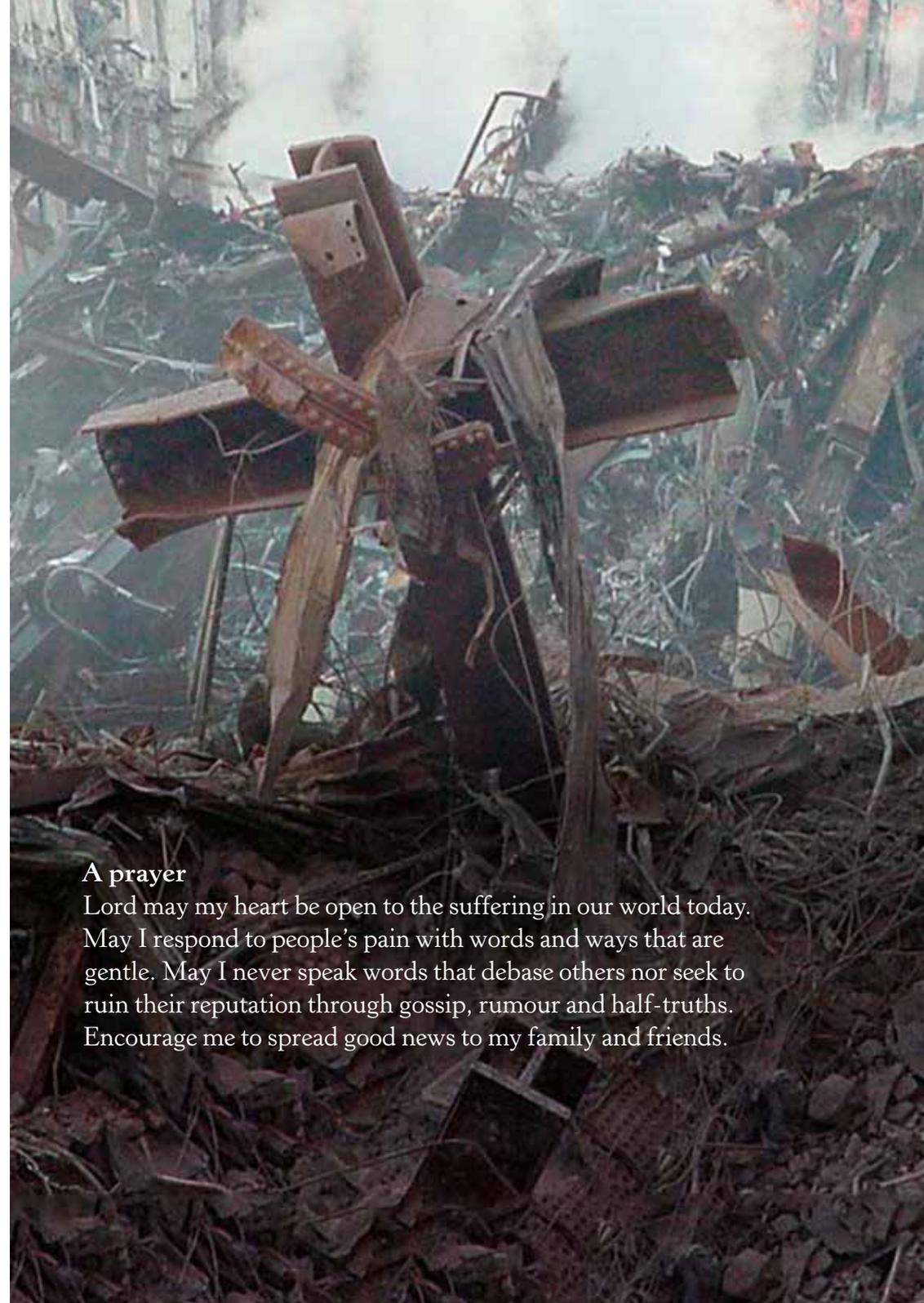
Am I present to the suffering around me?

Am I God's ambassador of love, joy and peace building a better world where and how I can? Or do I add to the barrage of abuse towards those less fortunate than myself?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

'We will always be close to the people with whom we work... Awareness of our own shortcomings humbles us, yet God's power makes us confident as we strive to bring all people – especially the poor – to full consciousness of their dignity as human beings and as sons and daughters of God.' [from C. 8]



#### A prayer

Lord may my heart be open to the suffering in our world today. May I respond to people's pain with words and ways that are gentle. May I never speak words that debase others nor seek to ruin their reputation through gossip, rumour and half-truths. Encourage me to spread good news to my family and friends.

## THE TWELFTH STATION

### Jesus dies on the cross



**Reader:** From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" (Matt 27:45-46, 50, 54)

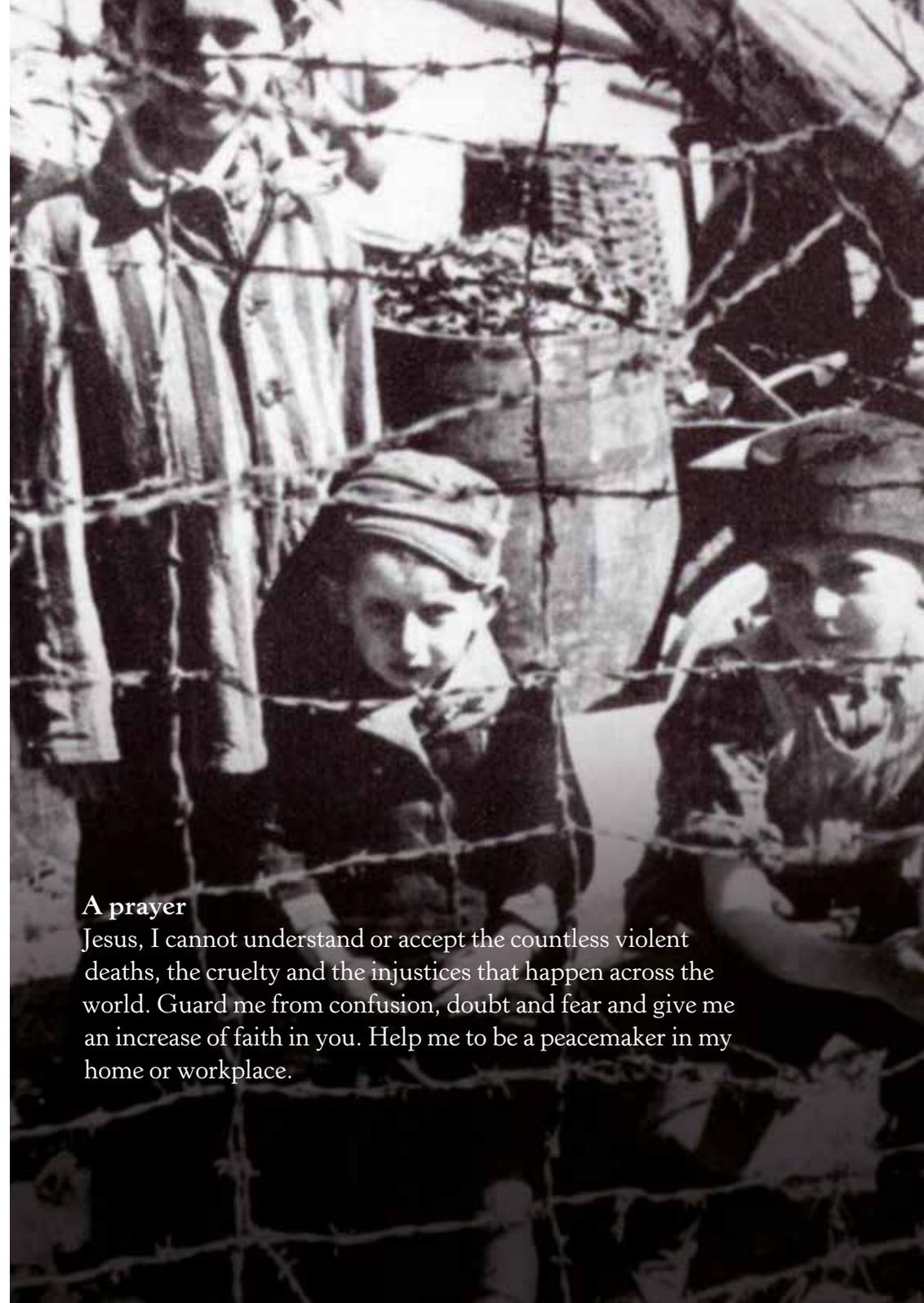
Silence for two minutes

#### Reflection

Where can I find help to believe in God's presence even in circumstances where my faith is challenged by doubt and disbelief? Where can I find help but at the foot of the cross?

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

It was during the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, probably in 1807, that Eugene experienced a grace of "conversion" - a special experience of the love of Christ. From that moment Eugene knew that Jesus had shed his blood for not just other people but also for Eugene's own personal sins. He was filled with a sense of profound confidence, gratitude and joy in the mercy of God. After experiencing the gaze of love from Jesus on the Cross, Eugene sincerely believed, "We must spare no effort to extend the Saviour's work."



#### A prayer

Jesus, I cannot understand or accept the countless violent deaths, the cruelty and the injustices that happen across the world. Guard me from confusion, doubt and fear and give me an increase of faith in you. Help me to be a peacemaker in my home or workplace.

## THE THIRTEENTH STATION

### Jesus is taken down from the cross



**Reader:** After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. (John 19:38)

#### Reflection

In the aftermath of Jesus' death life had somehow to go on. The dead have to be mourned and buried. There are no words to express how it feels when someone you love dies. So it was for the mother of Jesus and those of his followers who stayed to help remove his body. But, they were not afraid to show they cared, or were associated with Jesus. Sometimes, it is difficult to "pour myself out" to help those who are marginalised or to stand with those who suffer because of intolerance, discrimination or rejection.

Do I mourn for those who suffer in our world today?

Is there anything that has died in me that I have not yet grieved over?

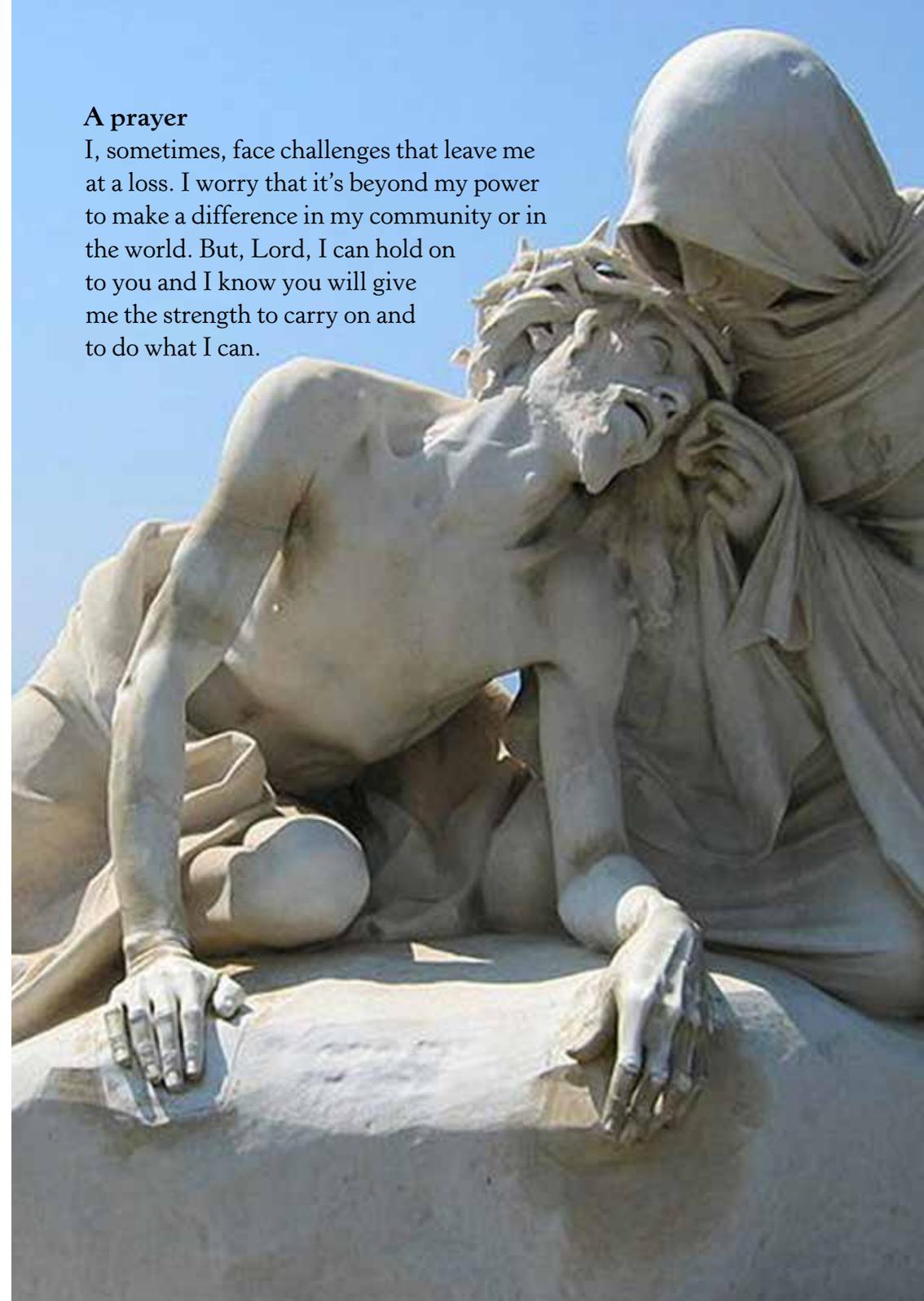
Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

At evening prayer each day, the Oblate family gathers before the Eucharist in communion and remembers all its members living and dead.

#### A prayer

I, sometimes, face challenges that leave me at a loss. I worry that it's beyond my power to make a difference in my community or in the world. But, Lord, I can hold on to you and I know you will give me the strength to carry on and to do what I can.



## THE FOURTEENTH STATION

### Jesus is placed in the tomb



**Reader:** Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (John 19:41-42; Luke 23:55-56)

#### Reflection

I remember Jesus said: “Even the foxes have holes, but I have nowhere to lay my head.” Jesus didn’t even have a grave. But someone had prepared a grave for himself and now he gave it to Jesus! Once again the Way of the Cross shows me an act of generosity. How do I show generosity to those in my community who have nowhere to lay their heads?

Am I generous to the living?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

‘When faced with the demands of our mission and the needs to be met, we may feel weak and helpless. It is then that we can learn from the poor, especially making our own their patience, hope and solidarity.’ [From C. 20].

#### A prayer

Lord, I know that you have promised to be there for me, always, no matter what happens. It can be hard to believe that promise when I feel utterly abandoned and alone: I can only put my trust in you.

## FIFTEENTH STATION

### The Resurrection Of Jesus



**Reader:** “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25)

#### Reflection

The life of Jesus does not end at the Cross. If it did my faith would be in vain. His resurrection gives me new hope. The joys of that Easter day of Resurrection gives me hope that no matter how much I suffer in this life, there is the promise of eternal life with God in heaven. As I go through my life, living as a disciple of Jesus, I will seek to imitate him by loving God and loving my neighbour too.

“We are an Easter people” – is that how I live?

Pause

#### A thought from Oblate Tradition

‘Whoever wishes to become one of us must have an ardent desire for his own perfection, and be enflamed with love for our Lord Jesus Christ and his church and a burning zeal for the salvation of souls.’ [From 1853 Constitutions]

#### A prayer

Alleluia! Jesus is risen! “This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it.” He’s alive! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia forever!

May all my days be Easter days united in the love of the risen Jesus with all God’s people and creation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.



## St Eugene - Patron of the Wounded Family

Born during a time when divorce was rare, Eugene de Mazenod had far from an ideal family life. Prayers to St. Eugene can be supportive for people who feel overwhelmed, by interceding for them as they endure the pains of divorce and troubled family life.

The breakup of a relationship can destroy all sense of security and open the way to a world of uncertainty. Adults often feel humiliation and a sense of failure, while children may feel inappropriate guilt and a deep fear of parental abandonment. St. Eugene can provide hope and encouragement for those trying to recover from the myriad disappointments of a divorce together with support for the survivors of wounded families, as he himself was the son of parents whose marriage ended acrimoniously.

### **Prayer for Wounded Families**

Almighty and loving God, You led St. Eugene through the sufferings and challenges of a broken family to a life of holiness. Through his constant intercession bless those whose relationships are damaged and broken. Grant them the gifts of understanding, patience, love and courage to overcome the problems of life. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.



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