

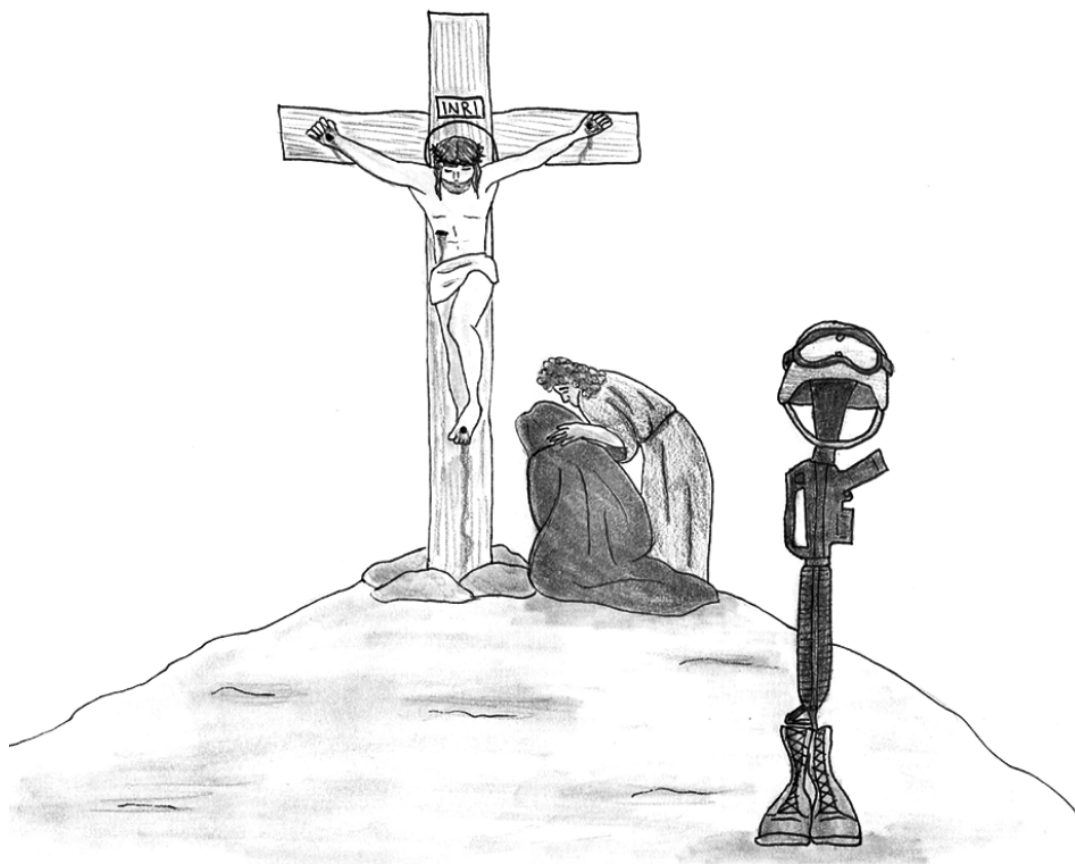
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# The Military

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## Way of the Cross

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Illustrated by Caitlyn Anderson

***Nihil Obstat:***

Rev. Christopher Armstrong

***Imprimatur:***

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio

Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

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## *Note from the Author*

This booklet, written and illustrated specifically for military Servicemembers and their families, is intended for both personal and public prayer. Originally released under the Military Council of Catholic Women - Worldwide, it is the fervent prayer of both the author and illustrator that this devotion of *The Military Way of the Cross* will lead all of its readers into a deeper, more meaningful relationship with Christ through the reflection and prayer at each Station. The Stations can be prayed fully, as recommended, with the additional prayers, or can be shortened to account for chapel activities.



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## *Opening Prayer*

Dear Lord,

You alone are perhaps the only Person who truly understands the cruelty of this world in which we live. You faced indescribable pained agony in Your final hours, as You suffered through Your Passion and Death.

Yet, You suffered for love of us.

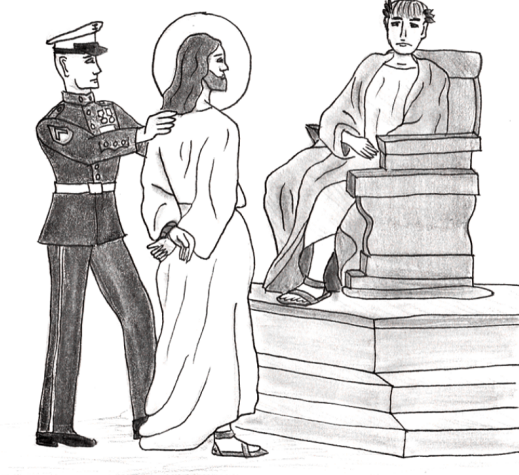
Allow our hearts to be open to Your Ultimate Sacrifice, and Your undying love for us, as we travel the Military Way of the Cross during this prayer time.

Give us the courage and strength to walk with You through these 14 Stations, in order that we may be brought into deeper union with You.

Amen.

# *Station One*

## *Jesus is Condemned to Death*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, every day I turn to You and re-commit myself to Your will. Yet, when things don't go according to *my* plan, I have a tendency to blame You. I condemn You all over again with my thoughts, words, or actions. I am deeply sorry.

*Prayer:*

Lord, help me to recognize, accept, and embrace Your will for my life without complaint or argument. Help me see—as plans change—Your hand in my life, and instead of condemning You, grant me the strength of spirit to praise You.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Two*

## *Jesus Bears His Cross*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, being part of the military community can be burdensome, lonely, and difficult at times. As a Servicemember, I feel the weight of caring for my family and friends, and also the weight of caring for my country. As a family member, I feel the weight of caring for my family and friends, and also the weight of caring for my Servicemember.

*Prayer:*

Lord, help me to recognize when the burden is too heavy to carry, and grant me the strength to ask for Your help. Grant me the courage to seek and accept help from others when that burden is more than I can handle.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Three*

## *Jesus Falls for the First Time*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, the weight of the Cross was too heavy for Your human form. Just like You, sometimes I stumble, falter, and fall while trying to carry the weight of my burdens. I let others down, and I fear I let You down in letting others down.

*Prayer:*

Lord, help me to recognize the suffering which You bore for me, and to turn the moments in which I may fall, into moments where I can receive Your grace, love, and forgiveness. Grant me the desire to praise You, and to recognize Your grace and love in the actions of those people I fear I have failed.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Four*

## *Jesus Meets His Mother*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, all-too-often, military service separates family members from each other. There are tears, there are tugs on the heartstrings, and there is difficulty. Sometimes, I forget You know what it is like to be separated from family. I try to endure the separation I face, alone.

*Prayer:*

Lord, when I am struggling with inevitable separation from my family members, help me to turn to You and Your blessed mother. Grant me the grace to feel the consolation the Blessed Mother offers all her children. Remind me that the most comfort I can ever receive is when I place my burdens, cares, and concerns in Your gentle arms.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*



# *Station Five*

## *Jesus is Helped by Simon*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I want to carry my cross alone. But the military community knows the value of teamwork. Others may see I am struggling, but my pride does not allow me to either seek, or accept help. I insist on trying to carry my burdens on my own shoulders, even if accepting help would make the team operate more efficiently.

*Prayer:*

Lord, help me not only to recognize when I need a “Simon” in my life, but also teach me humility to accept that offer to help me carry my cross. Allow me to remember I am enabling that person to act as Your hands toward me. Give me the wisdom to know when to accept the offer of love, kindness, and help.

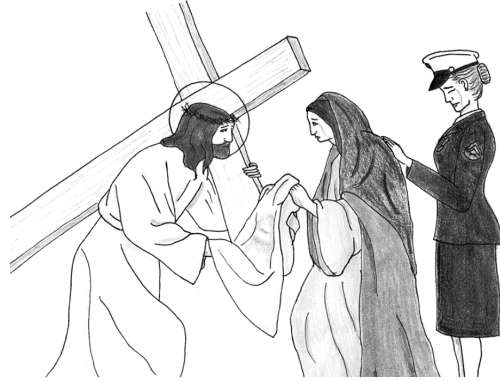
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Six*

## *Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I see someone else struggling with their cross. I don't want to reach out to help, or, I am afraid to reach out. Sometimes, I want to reach out to help, but I don't know how to do so. I know that offering to help ease their burden increases morale, cohesion, and effectiveness in our mission, but sometimes I am just too tempted to find excuses.

*Prayer:*

Lord, help me to be like Veronica, and be Your hands to another person struggling with their cross. Remove the excuses from my mind and heart, and grant me the compassion to reach out to another person. Grant Your Spirit move me to assist in whichever way needed at the time, and in the moment.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Seven*

## *Jesus Falls the Second Time*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, as I try to be the perfect person for everyone around me, the burden can become too heavy. I may buy into temptations which drive me far from You and Your embrace. I may even be tempted to put down my cross altogether, denying those closest to me in those moments.

*Prayer:*

Lord, in the moments I am tempted to leave You or my obligations, help me to see Your love and to accept the love You offer. When I fall into temptation, grant me the courage and strength to return to You through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Grant me the desire to return to my obligations, perfectly committed to using the gifts You have graciously bestowed upon me.

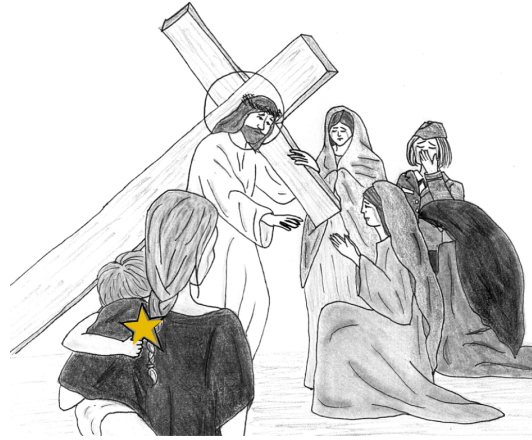
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Eight*

## *Jesus Speaks to the Women*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, our military community knows the hard truth about the sanctity and fragility of life. When one family mourns the loss of a Servicemember, I too, join them in their suffering and mourning. I then turn my focus back on the mission at hand, trying to move forward as best I am able. Sometimes, I forget to keep in mind those who are still mourning, or I expect them to put aside their suffering more quickly than they are able.

*Prayer:*

Lord, as I continue to carry out my mission and duties, continue to remind me to support those who continue to mourn, and not place any expectation on a timeframe for mourning. Grant me the patience to continue to provide support, even in the form of prayer, long after those around me may have forgotten the tragedy. Lord, help me to always remember those who have fallen, and the family and friends they left behind.

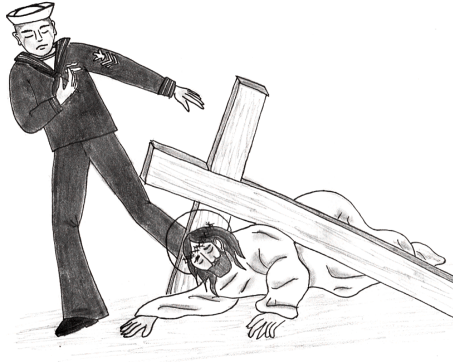
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Nine*

## *Jesus Falls a Third Time*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I lack the strength to carry out my duties. I get too stressed, too burnt out, too overcommitted, and in trying to be everything to everyone, I make the decision to do only the bare minimum. I know this decision can negatively impact those around me through broken promises, missed deadlines, or last-minute work. Yet still I fall with my burdens, making excuses instead of acknowledging the weight upon me has become too heavy to bear and seeking Your help or that of others to help me lift it once more.

*Prayer:*

Lord, in the moments I am at risk of falling again—or have fallen—grant me the wisdom to turn to You and recognize Your will for my life. Grant me also, the strength to obediently follow my orders so that I may complete my duties in a manner which will make You proud. Remind me of the value and importance of teamwork, and help me contribute enthusiastically to my team.

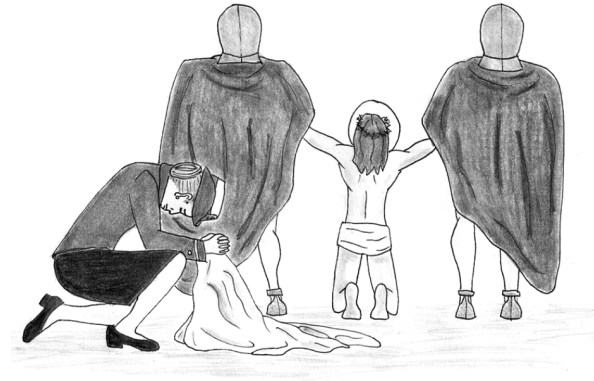
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Ten*

## *Jesus is Stripped of His Garments*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I am humiliated by failure even when I am trying to do my best. I feel stripped down and bare to the world. I don't know how to continue forward. I may become embarrassed, ashamed, and even angry. I may become defiant and obstinate, instead of continuing to focus on performing my duties to the best of my ability.

*Prayer:*

Lord, in those moments when I am laid bare, I pray for Your intervention. Teach me humility, patience, and love. Help me to recognize my part in what confronts me. Allow me to express my feelings in a manner that will draw me closer to You. Grant me the strength to continue performing my duties in a manner which will please You.

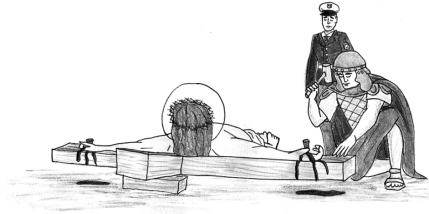
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Eleven*

## *Jesus is Nailed to the Cross*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I complain about the pain I am suffering, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual. However, I readily acknowledge I have no way to compare my suffering in this life to the suffering You endured for love of me. My pain pales in comparison to the pain You felt as nails drove into Your flesh, or the pain You feel today when I sin. I forget that my pain is only temporary. I become focused on the negativity in my life, instead of trying to find Your steadying presence that surrounds me each and every day of my life.

*Prayer:*

Lord, in the times I am experiencing pain, allow me to join my suffering with Yours. Remind me to offer my pain and suffering for the betterment of myself and others. Grant me the grace to remember my pain is temporary. Place within me the confidence and knowledge that, although I may feel alone, You are traveling with me.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Twelve*

## *Jesus Dies on the Cross*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, You sacrificed Yourself for my sins. Servicemembers and their families intimately know the willingness to sacrifice for others - even paying the same ultimate price You willingly paid. I join with John, and with Mary and the other women, at the foot of Your cross each time a Servicemember has taken that final breath.

*Prayer:*

Lord, in those difficult moments, allow me to join Your mother and Your disciples in suffering. Bring us closer to Your heart, Your love, and Your mercy. Grant us the strength to honor the ultimate price of freedom, paid by our fallen Servicemembers. Grant me the courage to turn to You during those moments and to seek the comfort only You can provide.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*



# *Station Thirteen*

## *Jesus is Taken from the Cross*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes it is my duty to be the bearer of bad news to another person. Other times, I am the recipient of bad news. No matter which side I am sitting on, the task of delivering or receiving the news can be difficult. The role I must play can be heartbreaking and unbearable.

*Prayer:*

Lord, remind me in these difficult moments and tasks, to extend compassion and mercy toward those around me. Allow me to see and feel the love You have for all of us, even in the darkest moments. Grant me the strength to convey or receive news in a manner which will impart Your love to all.

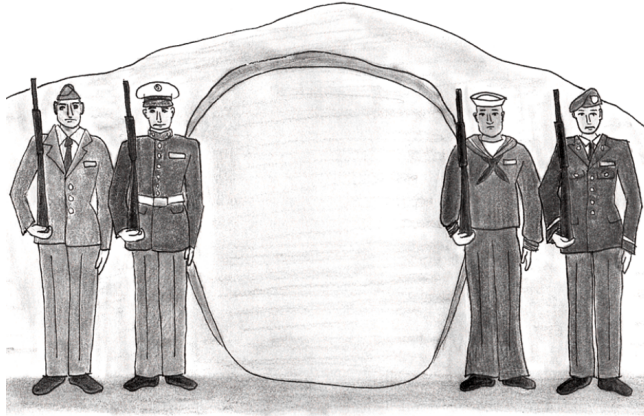
*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

# *Station Fourteen*

## *Jesus is Laid in the Tomb*



*Leader:*

We adore You, O Christ, and praise You...

*All:*

Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

*Reflection:*

Dear Lord, sometimes I am called to a task which is unsavory, difficult, or not to my liking. I may grumble and balk at what I am asked to do; I may even feel despair or disgust.

*Prayer:*

Lord, be with me as I confront the tasks before me. Help me to turn to You in every moment of my life, especially those moments which I find most difficult. Help me to always remember Your love for me, no matter where I am in my relationship with You. Remind me You are with me, no matter what happens in my life.

*Our Father...*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory Be...*

## *Closing Prayer*

Holy, Almighty God,

Too often, we complain of being alone. However, in walking these 14 Stations of the Cross with Your Son, we realize we are not alone at all.

Open our heads to understand and know the depth of Your love for each of us.

Open our mouths that we may be able to speak to Your love when assisting others.

Open our hearts to truly believe and feel the love You extend to each of us, through Your Son's sacrifice on the cross.

Allow our hearts to seek and find a connection with You, as we continue to lead our own military lifestyle, devoted to emulating Jesus Christ as we commit to duty, service, and loyalty, not simply to those immediately around us, but to our country as a whole.

May all that we continue to do, in both our personal and professional lives continue to please You, who gave us the opportunity of everlasting life, and lead us closer to You.

Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, we ask this.

Amen.

## *About the Author*

AnnAliese Harry is a proud Army wife, and a mother to human puppies and fur-children. When she is not attending to her vocations as wife and mother, and not working in her current chapel community, she is a blogger at [www.beautifulcamouflage.com](http://www.beautifulcamouflage.com). She can be found on Facebook at “A Beautiful, Camouflaged Mess of A Life” and on Instagram at “@beautifulcamouflagedmess”. She has been active in her local military chapels and Catholic Women of the Chapel groups. She extends a special thank you to CH (MAJ) Fr. Paul-Anthony Halladay for overseeing the reflections and prayers associated with this booklet.

## *About the Illustrator*

Caitlyn Anderson Caitlyn Anderson is a proud Navy wife and fur-mother to her dog Remington. She is a blogger at [www.mrsandyanchored.com](http://www.mrsandyanchored.com) and can be found on Facebook at "Mrs. Andy, Anchored By Faith" and on Instagram at "@mrs.andy\_". When not blogging about her faith and life as a military spouse, she enjoys sharing her knowledge about Young Living Essential Oils, adventuring with her friends, and volunteering with her civilian parish's youth group.