

The Living Stations of the Cross: Walking with Jesus to Calvary Roxann Storms

More so than ever in these past few weeks, the Stations of the Cross have become for me a living walk with Jesus on his path to Calvary. As I've had the honor of chatting by phone with many parish and cluster members, I've been inspired and uplifted by their strength and resiliency of body, mind and spirit. So many have taken up their crosses of uncertainty and worry, loss of jobs or security or daily routines with perseverance and fortitude. Some shared that, at times like me, they have fallen into anxiety, sometimes over and over and over again, from the weight of fear, loss of control, boredom, or stress.

Yet I've heard wonderful stories of support and assistance: parishioners who are the Simons of Cyrene lending a hand by putting groceries outside an elder parent's door, working in health care or by driving bus, or especially lifting this heavy weight of our times through prayer. Others have been like Veronica and the women of Jerusalem, reaching out in creative ways to comfort and connect. One grandma said she reads a story over Skype each night to a grandchild. Another family shared how their children made loving signs and held them up outside their grandparents' nursing home window.

We have all been stripped of our inner garments of idealized independence and invincibility. Like Jesus, we might also have given fleeting voice to feeling forsaken. The losses are many: not being able to participate physically in the meaningful liturgies and rituals of our faith tradition, weaving palms, receiving the Eucharist, being together in communion with one another, and on and on. Sorrowfully, only a few have been able to be at the burial as a loved one was laid to rest – just as only a few were present as Joseph of Arimathea laid Jesus in the tomb.

But Jesus' journey didn't end at the Cross of suffering or the tomb. Certainly we will deeply miss the sacredness in being together at the Easter Vigil and the glory of sharing in person with one another Easter morning's joyous celebration. While the beautiful music and flowers and banners enhance the experience of the Risen Lord, none of these were at that first Easter morning when the three women and the disciples approached the tomb and found it empty. In the midst of their confusion, they still saw the signs of hope...and they believed.

As we travel this path of pandemic in all our confusion and uncertainty, we also walk in faith with Christ, knowing the path does not end at the Cross, but with the promise of Easter resurrection. When we emerge from this darkness, we will bear our scars, just as

Christ retained the five wounds of His crucifixion. But the glory of the Risen Christ is in His transfiguration; we, also, will be transformed in hope and faith. We are Easter people. Alleluia.