



# **THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

## **Stations on Our Journey of Faith**



### **LEADER'S GUIDE**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

## **CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO**

### **Introduction to the Series**

*Catholic Update Video* is a video magazine resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacramental programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, and high school religious education.

*Catholic Update Video* is inspired by *Catholic Update*, the popular print resource from St. Anthony Messenger Press. Bringing that publication's popular approach to video, *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a "video magazine" format. An on-camera host guides viewers through four different approaches to the topic:

- 1) the story segment:** a fiction or non-fiction story highlights the faith-topic;
- 2) the witness segment:** real-life Catholics from all walks of life share their faith as lived in today's world;
- 3) the teaching segment:** an expert in a particular aspect of Catholicism presents a concise approach to the topic;
- 4) the musical reflection segment:** inspired by the popularity of the music video, Christian music and images re-present the theme.

The on-camera host provides a context for each segment, while on-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for group sharing.

### **How to Use the Programs**

*Catholic Update Video* is a flexible resource for group or classroom use as well as for individual viewing. As with any multi-media resource, a preview of the video will help the facilitator determine the best use of the program with a particular group.

- Each program stands alone and may be viewed from start to finish.
- The facilitator may stop the program after each segment. A question to use in personal or group reflection appears on-screen.
- Each of the four segments within a *Catholic Update Video* program is independent, and knowledge of material in an earlier segment is not presumed. The facilitator may show segments individually or even out of sequence.

*(To view a particular segment, the facilitator can fast-forward the VCR in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo which indicate the start of a segment. This study guide also gives approximate time locations within the program where each segment begins.)*

- The *story segment* can lead off an instructional session or prompt a group to discuss a theological concept previously presented. The story in itself may offer ideas for discussion.
- The *witness segment* models individual sharing in a small group or classroom setting.
- The *teaching segment* briefly highlights aspects of the topic. It is not intended to treat a particular topic exhaustively nor substitute for a thorough presentation of Church teaching or practice. For this reason, facilitators should preview the segment to plan their own content presentations. Careful preview will help the facilitator anticipate questions, consider ways to reinforce the on-screen teacher, and make plans to supplement the video material.

- The *musical reflection segment* need not be shown in sequence with the other segments. It might be used in the beginning of a group session to set the theme. It can be repeated later to review and reinforce the theme or to surface ideas and feelings experienced during the session. It may also be used in a prayer setting (see example given below). In some cases, scenes from the story segment are included in the musical reflection, but the music and images can stand on their own. Viewers need not have seen the story to benefit from the reflection.
- This guide offers summaries of each of the segments of this *Catholic Update Video*. Accompanying the summaries are suggestions for using the segment in various settings.
- Questions for group discussion are suggested throughout this guide. Facilitators should consider them as models for developing questions suited to their situations.
- Various resources for use with this video program are listed at the end of the guide.

## **THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

### **Stations on Our Journey of Faith**

#### **Overview of the Program**

From people's earliest experiences of responding to God in faith, *journey* has been a recurring theme. God asked Abraham to leave his home and travel to a place unknown to him. Jesus enlisted his disciples with the invitation, "Follow me." We too can relate to the concept of faith as a journey. We are pilgrims journeying to a sacred place; our lives are a movement toward God. We share our journeys with others who challenge and support us along the way. We in turn do the same for them. Our Church offers us tools and resources, maps if you will, to guide us. It celebrates significant moments with us in the sacraments.

Our liturgical year invites us to journey through an annual cycle of seasons—seasons we each visit at times during our personal faith journeys and which we revisit each year with our faith community. The practices our Church encourages for a particular liturgical season can be used anytime that we visit that season on our own. The season and spiritual practices of Lent, for example, invite us to return for a visit whenever we feel a need to sharpen our focus on the Lord—our destination.

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. We increase our efforts at prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lent is a special time of preparation for those who will be baptized at Easter. For those already baptized, Lent can be a time to rediscover the ongoing significance of our Baptism. Both catechumens and baptized focus on the need for conversion. We consider how to turn away from sin toward a renewed faithfulness.

The Way of the Cross or "Stations of the Cross" is a Lenten practice with roots in Scripture and the life

of Jesus. We travel from station to station—significant incidents on Jesus’ path to Calvary—to reflect and pray. We consider the implications of Jesus’ journey on our own faith walk. The Way of the Cross involves journeying—on foot from station to station, and in our hearts from selfishness to love.

We join a long line of pilgrims—our Jewish ancestors who made pilgrimages to their holy city, Jerusalem; our Christian ancestors who also journeyed to Jerusalem to retrace the steps of Jesus; and our own companions on our personal faith journeys.

The mounting of artistic renderings of the stations on church walls and outdoor shrines makes it possible to participate in the stations without making an actual pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Those who are unable to visit a church may gaze at a crucifix and pray this devotion on their own. We can “do the stations” in a group or privately—united with Jesus and a long line of pilgrims sharing the journey to God.

In this *Catholic Update Video* we present four different approaches to the Way of the Cross—each an invitation to deepen our understanding of this practice and draw greater meaning from it for our lives:

- We join Jesuit Father Richard Roos on an 800-mile Lenten pilgrimage along the California mission trail—a personal “Way of the Cross.”
- As we walk with the Way of the Cross/Way of Justice participants in a Good Friday procession through city streets, we connect Jesus’ journey to Calvary to the cross borne by those who experience injustice today.
- We hear the history of the Way of the Cross.
- And in the final segment, we join in its prayer.

The total running time of this video program exceeds the usual half-hour length of the programs in the *Catholic Update Video* series by approximately 18 minutes, with an expanded final segment, a “video Way

of the Cross.” Teachers and group leaders should take into account this expanded length when planning sessions. The producers strongly suggest using this program in shorter segments, with discussion questions as offered later in this guide.

This video can be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of audiences (see below). A three-part parish Lenten series drawing on the traditional practice of weekly stations during Lent could lead up to a Lenten Reconciliation service. One segment of the video could be used on each of three evenings, followed by discussion/sharing (see questions in this guide). Complete the first three gatherings with the Way of the Cross in your parish church—or, outside a church setting, use the last segment of this video to pray the stations. The last segment can also serve as a reflection during individual confessions at a Lenten Reconciliation service.

### **Audience**

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience, which may encompass several groups:

- RCIA participants preparing to be baptized or received into the Catholic Church;
- Lifelong Catholics who wish to deepen their understanding of the Way of the Cross;
- Residents of nursing homes and retirement communities, patients in hospitals, and the homebound whose mobility and thus access to stations in a church may be hindered;
- High school students in parish youth groups or religious education programs;
- Those suffering the burden of their life’s cross who seek to connect their suffering to Christ’s;
- Religious education catechists.

## STORY SEGMENT

*(Begins approximately :26 into program.)*

### Summary

“Christwalk: A Pilgrim’s Way of the Cross” is the story of Jesuit Father Richard Roos’s 800-mile personal way of the cross. On Ash Wednesday 1979, he began a six-week pilgrimage, walking the California mission trail, visiting each of the 21 missions founded by Blessed Junipero Serra. In doing this he was following a practice advocated by the founder of his order, St. Ignatius of Loyola, who in the 16th century sent novices out for a month of spiritual discipline as beggars and pilgrims.

Christians have made penitential pilgrimages since the early centuries of Christianity, and Father Roos felt that the season of Lent was an appropriate time for his own pilgrimage. It would be a way of participating in the passion of Christ; any suffering he would experience would further unite him to Christ.

Just as people like Veronica and Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus, Father Roos found help along the way. He was reminded of Veronica when a young gas station attendant offered him the only water available on a particularly hot evening.

Although his walk was physically demanding, Father Roos found his greatest challenges to be internal. The beginning of his trip was full of fear—fears for his physical health and safety and of being rejected by those he would approach for help. He learned something of God’s sense of humor when, after 10 days of making excuses not to beg lodging door to door, he decided to begin begging the *next* night. When he reached the mission where he had hoped to stay that night, no one was home. He had to begin begging *that very evening*.

Father Roos found himself learning about the role of a pilgrim in today's world. Many people today are caught up in building material "security." The pilgrim briefly enters their world with a different set of values. The pilgrim's presence invites them to look again at what is really important. Some people welcomed him in. Others felt too frightened or threatened to do so. Still others wanted to welcome him in but were unable to. He saw a connection of these responses to those Jesus received.

Father Roos learned a lot about trusting in God on his journey. When he would get uptight, afraid or anxious, he would hear God say, "Just trust me. Just trust me. Have I let you down yet?" He began to become more flexible, more able to let go and accept the Lord's providence.

Probably the most profound lesson Father Roos learned from his pilgrimage came as it ended. He had anticipated a feeling of completion or triumph when he reached the final mission on the route. Instead, he felt emptiness. It was Good Friday. He went home disappointed. The Easter Vigil liturgy he attended the next evening coincidentally had the theme of pilgrimage. The words of the homily spoke directly to his experience of the last six weeks and of his life. He realized as he received Communion that his pilgrimage had truly ended. In receiving Christ he was being welcomed home.

### **Suggestions for Use**

With some preparation and reflection, this story can help viewers reflect on the idea of faith as a journey and begin to make the connection of Jesus' journey to Calvary to their own faith walks.

"Christwalk" is the story of one man's *pilgrimage*. Some viewers may conjure up images of

pilgrims wearing black clothes with big buckles eating a Thanksgiving meal. They may not be familiar with the broader definition of pilgrimage. Make sure to define it as a “journey to a sacred place.” Relate to them something of the tradition of pilgrimages throughout the history of Christianity and by people of other religions as well.

Father Roos’s journey, Christ’s journey to Calvary, and our personal faith journeys can all be considered pilgrimages. All involve movement toward a sacred place. All have a holy purpose, include stops along the way, involve trials as well as joys, and are not solitary endeavors.

Using Father Roos’s story as a model, help participants see that each person follows a unique path to God. Help them to make the connection that our lives and our faith are the same journey; choices we make, experiences we have and lessons we learn in life affect our faith experience and vice versa.

Before viewing the videotape, list the names of the stations on a chalkboard or easel pad for all to see. Briefly explain each event. Some participants will be more familiar with the biblical texts of Jesus’ passion and death than others. Some who come from a more literal scriptural background may be unfamiliar or struggle with those stations not found in Scripture. If you anticipate that a fuller understanding of the stations is needed before viewing this segment, consider using the *teaching segment* of this video before using this *story segment*.

Give each participant a sheet of paper divided into three columns with the headings *Station*, *Father Roos*, and *Me*. List the stations down the left-hand column. Invite them to jot down in the Roos column any connections that they see between Jesus’ journey to Calvary and Roos’s pilgrimage. It is not necessary to find a connection for every station.

After sharing their findings, participants can repeat the same exercise relating their own lives to Jesus' way of the cross. Questions such as "When have you felt as you imagine Jesus must have felt?" and "When has a similar, though probably less dramatic, experience happened to you?" may be helpful. Again, it is not necessary to find a connection for every station.

Once participants have had enough time to make several connections, invite them each to share a "station" from their own lives. It is important to present sharing in a non-threatening way, respecting the privacy of all concerned and the possibility that not all participants may be comfortable talking in a group at this point or ever. Stress that there is no pressure to share at all, while offering the value of participation for both the individual and the group. An alternative for those who feel uncomfortable sharing would be to suggest writing a personal journal for private use.

Respond to each person's sharing. Wherever possible, make the point that we can turn to God in times of struggle and be fully understood—God became one of us. Jesus can honestly say, "I've been there."

### **Questions for Sharing**

- 1) Do you find the image of faith as a journey or pilgrimage helpful to you? How/Why not?
- 2) Father Roos learned to trust God more through this experience, hearing God say, "Just trust me. Just trust me. Have I let you down yet?" In what areas of your life do you need to trust God more? Do you ever let anxiety or fear block your acceptance of God's help? Have you ever felt let down by God? What happened? What did you learn about yourself? About God?
- 3) Father Roos had to ask others for help along his journey. In what ways do others help you on your

faith journey? How are you or can you be of help to others?

- 4) What do you think of the final thing Father Roos said, “Home is where Christ is. You can be out on the road, you can be alone, you can be lost, but if you have Christ, you’re home”? What does it mean to you?

## **WITNESS SEGMENT**

*(Begins approximately 15:52 into program.)*

### **Summary**

In this segment we join a crowd of about 2,000 Christians on a Good Friday Way of the Cross/Way of Justice in Cincinnati, Ohio. Christians traditionally spend the hours between noon and 3 p.m. on Good Friday in prayer, remembering Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. These Christians are doing just that *on foot*—walking through a downtown city area and stopping at stations which relate Jesus’ suffering with the suffering of those who experience injustice. Our focus on Jesus’ suffering compels us to remember the suffering all around us. As one participant says, “We call it to memory so that we can be active in doing something about it.”

Led by volunteers carrying an eight-foot cross made from rough timbers, these pilgrims stop at stations where various groups interpret events from the traditional Way of the Cross to reflect a contemporary social problem.

The crowd is large, stopping traffic on busy downtown streets—giving people who are not participating pause to consider the significance of this day. The crowd provides a visible witness about Christianity and the heart of the Gospel—justice. The

pilgrims feel the strength of their numbers and know that they are not alone in their desire for and efforts toward justice.

The crowd is diverse, but all have their personal crosses to bear. They realize that living a Christian life includes living it in the streets of your hometown. They recognize and respond to the call to live their faith in the world. Just as Jesus' suffering led to resurrection, the prayer and commitment of these pilgrims is that human suffering caused by injustice might be transformed to hope and new life.

### **Suggestions for Use**

Personal witness is important in most, if not all, groups where faith topics are being discussed. It is especially important in the RCIA process. In any group, as participants share their stories, they can begin to shape a small faith community among themselves. By supporting the personal journeys of others, they can better reflect on their own journey.

This video segment involves the witness of individuals within a large gathering. The collective group is a witness all its own. Showing this segment to a group can be used as a way to raise awareness of our social responsibilities. It might be a way to stimulate individuals to reflect on and share about their personal faith experience and responsibility to others.

Encourage participants to identify the social ills mentioned in the segment. Ask them to add others that they see in their own community. Use the questions below as discussion starters on this theme.

### **Questions for Sharing**

- 1) Have you ever participated in something within a large group and experienced the "power in

- numbers"? What was the occasion? How did it make you feel?
- 2) One of the participants referred to justice as the "heart of the gospel." Find support for this statement in the Bible.
  - 3) What situations of injustice most trouble you?
  - 4) In your opinion, what situations of injustice most trouble our Lord?
  - 5) What are you doing about injustice in your world? What more can you do?
  - 6) The participants in the Way of the Cross/Way of Justice were making a public witness to their faith. How do/can you make your faith visible to others? How are you called to make a public witness to your faith?

## **TEACHING SEGMENT**

*(Begins approximately 22:18 into program.)*

### **Summary**

Gloria Hutchinson, who has written extensively on the spiritual life, is the featured teacher for this segment. She leads us through a brief history of the Way of the Cross beginning with St. Helena in the fourth century and continuing through the various traditional and contemporary practices in use today.

St. Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, was a zealous convert to Christianity. She traveled to the Holy Land where she verified the sites of key events in the life of Christ. She also saw to it that churches or shrines were built on those locations. From that time on, Christian pilgrims began to journey to Jerusalem to retrace the steps of Jesus as he made his way to Calvary.

The Crusaders carried this custom home to Europe where Christians set up images depicting the

stations. The faithful walk from one station to the next, stopping at each to reflect and pray. Most of the stations are scriptural; others are based on legendary accounts that are consistent with the life and person of Jesus.

Franciscan missionaries spread devotion to the Way of the Cross throughout the world. The 18th-century Franciscan, St. Leonard of Port Maurice, set the number of stations at 14. Some churches have recently added a 15th station for the Resurrection and Ascension, a reminder that the journey does not end in death. The stations—painted, sculpted or simply marked with a wooden cross—now appear in most Catholic churches.

The value of praying the stations is implied by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “Christian prayer loves to follow *the way of the cross* in the Savior’s steps. The stations from the Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb trace the way of Jesus, who by his holy Cross has redeemed the world” (#2669).

There are a variety of ways to pray the stations. Many parishes offer the stations as communal prayer on the Fridays of Lent. These consist of a meditation on the event in Christ’s life, petitions directed to Jesus, and a group response. Others use contemporary prayers relating the suffering of Jesus to the suffering in our world. Pope John Paul II has written scriptural meditations on the Way of the Cross.

The Way of the Cross can also be prayed privately. Walking with Jesus to Calvary can be especially helpful in times of trouble, loss or grief. Gloria guides us in a private praying of the stations with the video pausing at a simple depiction of each.

## **THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

THE FIRST STATION: Jesus is Condemned to Death

THE SECOND STATION: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

THE THIRD STATION: Jesus Falls the First Time

THE FOURTH STATION: Jesus Meets His Sorrowful  
Mother

THE FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry  
His Cross

THE SIXTH STATION: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

THE SEVENTH STATION: Jesus Falls the Second Time

THE EIGHTH STATION: Jesus Meets the Women of  
Jerusalem

THE NINTH STATION: Jesus Falls the Third Time

THE TENTH STATION: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

THE ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

THE TWELFTH STATION: Jesus Dies on the Cross

THE THIRTEENTH STATION: Jesus is Taken Down From  
the Cross

THE FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

*(This page may be reproduced.)*

## Suggestions for Use

Learning the history of a practice—whether it’s one with which we are familiar or one that is new to us—helps us find deeper meaning in it for our lives.

Those for whom the stations are a common practice may find here some “secrets about an old friend.” In addition to learning the history of the stations, they might find new meaning in them by relating them to their personal faith journeys (*story segment*) and connecting them to the woundedness of our world and our responsibility to do something about it (*witness segment*).

Those who are learning about the stations for the first time, as would often be the case with RCIA participants, might find a new way to pray. Hearing of its development over time and learning its variety of forms will give these people a good understanding of the Way of the Cross. They will also gain a good sense of the times when praying the stations might meet their needs—not only in Lent, but anytime they want to unite their suffering to our Lord’s.

This segment can be used alone or with other segments of this video. It could be shared and discussed before leading a group through the stations. The following questions may be useful in such discussions.

As is the case with all *teaching segments* in the *Catholic Update Video* series, this segment can also be used for catechist enrichment and formation.

## Questions for Sharing

- 1) What are some of the various forms of the stations and different ways that they are used in prayer?
- 2) St. Helena was “zealous” in her faith. Have you ever been “zealous” about sharing your faith with others? If not, what holds you back?

- 3) Just as the stations involve movement, so does the development of the stations show movement and change through different stages in history. How can you use the stations to help you as you *move* along on your faith journey?
- 4) Lent is a time to focus on our conversion, our turning to God. This never happens in one step—it is usually a process, a journey. How can you use the stations to help you in your personal process of conversion?

### **MUSICAL REFLECTION SEGMENT**

*(Begins approximately 30:13 into program.)*

#### **Summary**

The musical reflection segment for this program is an actual Way of the Cross adapted by Father Jeremy Harrington, O.F.M., from a popular traditional version of the stations (*The Way of the Cross for Congregational Use* by Jeremy Harrington, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press, B16220). Life-size outdoor stations, a variety of other artistic images of the stations and contemporary scenes make up the visual meditation.

The leader/response format allows people viewing and praying this privately to feel connected with a community, represented by the recorded voices.

After each description of the event in Jesus' life, a connection is made to the viewers' lives, almost as an examination of conscience.

A reflective musical score taken from the traditional Lenten Marian hymn, *Stabat Mater*, underlies this meditative piece.

## **Suggestions for Use**

This reflection can be used in a variety of ways and settings. On its own, it stands as a complete Way of the Cross especially useful in situations where people cannot easily get to a church—nursing homes, hospitals, retirement communities or the homebound. Used with other segments of this video, it can be the culminating response.

In a Lenten Reconciliation service, it can be used as a visual reflection during individual confessions.

Within a group, it can be a tool for sharing—after reflecting on each station, a member of the group could be invited to comment on that station as it relates to personal feelings or experiences suggested by that moment in the life of Christ. This approach might be used within support groups of people sharing a common difficult experience.

An outline for a Lenten Reconciliation service might be as follows:

- 1) Opening Song
- 2) Greeting and Opening Prayer
- 3) Scripture (Suggestions: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-16; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Psalm 25:1-7; Psalm 25:8-15; Psalm 16:7-11; Matthew 11:28-30)
- 4) Homily/Reflection on Scripture
- 5) Examination of Conscience
- 6) Act of Contrition
- 7) Individual Confessions (video meditation)
- 8) Lord's Prayer
- 9) Sign of Peace
- 10) Song of Thanksgiving

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

### 1) Scripture references:

Scripture frequently uses the “journey” image in stories of people of faith. The story of Abraham (Genesis 12-24) is especially rich in meaning, as is the account of the sojourn of the People of God through the desert (Exodus 12ff). In the Gospels, St. Luke particularly highlights the theme of journey in his account—portraying the journey of Jesus and his disciples to Jerusalem and the missionary journeys of the apostles in Acts. Jesus’ invitation, “Follow me,” was his call to the apostles (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27-28). St. Paul’s treatment of faith in his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:6-7) describes the journey of the believer who “walks by faith.”

The Passion Narratives (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, John 13-19) provide us with the scriptural bases for many of the stations in the Way of the Cross.

We find many references to justice throughout the Bible. Micah 6:8, Wisdom 8:7, Psalm 92:13-16 and Leviticus 19:15 are good Old Testament references. Jesus’ preference for the poor and outcast is a theme running throughout the Gospels. Jesus speaks of our responsibility for others in Matthew 25:31-46.

References to “the cross” each Christian must bear are found in Matthew 16:24; 1 Peter 3:14, 17 and 4:12-19; and James 1:2-4.

### 2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* treats several of the topics found in this video: Way of the Cross (1674, 2669), Abraham (145-146), Justice (1807, 2401, 1928-1942), Faith Trials (164), Conversion/Repentance (1490), Witness

(863, 905, 2472), Social Reform (1896), and Responsibility and Participation (1913).

**3) Resources for further study from St. Anthony Messenger Press and Franciscan Communications:**

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