

*Passion of Christ, as one of the holy women who accompanied Him to Calvary, offered Him a towel on which he left the imprint of His face. She went to Rome, bringing with her this image of Christ, which was long exposed to public veneration..... These pious traditions cannot be documented, but there is no reason why the belief that such an act of compassion did occur should not find expression in the veneration paid to one called Veronica..."*

Finally, Station 13 which depicts Jesus' body taken down from the Cross and laid in His mother's arms is not specifically in any Gospel account. For example, Luke 24:53 tells us that Joseph of Arimathea took down His body, wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid Him in a rock-hewn tomb. Nevertheless, it would be inconceivable if His mother, who had followed Him and was at the foot of the Cross when He died, would not spend those final moments with Him once He was taken down. The Pietà, an artistic representation of a sorrowful Virgin with the dead Christ in her arms, developed in Germany about 1300 and quickly spread to Italy. One of the most famous Pietà sculptures, that of Michelangelo, is to be found in St Peter's Rome. Whatever the strict scriptural basis of some Stations all of them are reminders that Jesus suffered more than we can even imagine, because of His love for us.

- **Stephen S.**

**Entrance Antiphon: Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.**

**First Reading: Genesis 22: 1-2, 9-13,15-18**

**Responsorial Psalm: 115 Response: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.**

**Second Reading: Romans 8 31-34**

**Gospel Acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ! From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

**Gospel: Mark 9: 2-10**

**Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**

**Communion Antiphon: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.**



## **Second Sunday of Lent, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection):**

**The Stations of the Cross (2): The Traditional Stations:** Last week we considered a short historical overview of the Stations and established that the 14 with which we are familiar crystallised in 1731. Before then the

number of Stations and their depictions varied substantially. Yet from these 14 only 8 are specifically scripturally based. What of the other 6? First, Stations 3,7 and 9, the three falls of Jesus, are not found in sacred scripture. The Gospel accounts of Christ carrying His Cross (Station 2-9 inclusive) are brief. Matthew (27:31-35), Mark (15:20-24) and John (19:17-18) tell us that He was led away to be crucified and then they came to Golgotha where He was crucified. Matthew and Mark add that as He was marched out Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the Cross. Luke (23:26-31) is in similar vein but adds that Jesus was followed by a great multitude and Jesus spoke to the women of Jerusalem (Station 8). Among other things He said: *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children"*.

Station 4 (Jesus meets His mother) is not in the Gospels. The first scriptural mention of Mary on the Via Dolorosa is when she is at the foot of the Cross to which He has been nailed and before He dies. John 19:25-27 states: *"..standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene"*. This presence of Our Lady would be between Stations 11 and 12, since Jesus is nailed to the Cross but is alive and speaks to His mother and to the disciple Jesus loved. That said, there is every reason to believe that Mary followed Her Son on his Way along with the others on her way to the foot of the Cross. Hence the perfectly understandable tradition that He spoke to Our Lady near the beginning of His procession while she stood and observed His sufferings. Station 6, Veronica wiping Jesus' face, is not mentioned in scripture. The Catholic Encyclopaedia says of St Veronica: *"In several regions of Christendom there is honoured under this name a pious matron of Jerusalem who, during the*