



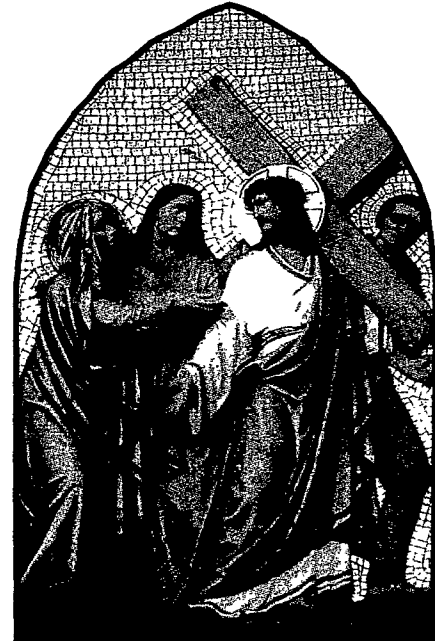
**JESUS IS
CONDEMNED TO DEATH**



**JESUS
ACCEPTS THE CROSS**



**JESUS FALLS
FOR THE FIRST TIME**



**JESUS MEETS
HIS SORROWING MOTHER**



**SIM
CARRIE**

Stations recall Jesus' journey to cross

Jennifer Ficaglia/Catholic Courier

Stations of the Cross provide an opportunity to prayerfully reflect on the journey Jesus made from Gethsemane to his crucifixion, a journey that ultimately resulted in our salvation, according to Joan Workmaster, director of the diocesan Office of Liturgy.

Sometimes called Way of the Cross, this popular Lenten devotion has very, very ancient roots, said Workmaster, who is also associate director of diocesan Parish Support Ministries. It was prayed by early Christian communities, especially in the fourth century, when the Roman Empire began to recognize Christianity. Oftentimes, people would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to retrace Jesus' steps from his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane to being forced to carry the cross to the crucifixion site at Golgotha.

"That soon became a very popular idea, but impossible for most people to go to Jerusalem," Workmaster noted.

Those who could not visit Jerusalem would use the community's churches and other buildings as "stations" that represented each stage of what happened to Jesus between his trial and his entombment. Groups would travel from station to station, remembering and praying at each one, Workmaster said. The devotion gained even more popularity because it was prayed in the vernacular rather than in Latin, and people could understand what was going on.

"It became a prayer of the people rather than some official prayer of



**JESUS FALLS
A THIRD TIME**



**JESUS IS
STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES**



**JESUS IS NAILED
TO THE CROSS**

the church," she said.

Eventually, individual churches erected plaques or other pictorial depictions of all the stations. Stations are usually hung separately, one by one, seven on each side of the church.

The Way of the Cross traditionally consists of 14 iconic stations that depict the events of Jesus' journey to crucifixion. A 15th station, which is not depicted by an icon, is meant to remember Jesus' resurrection, Workmaster said. The 14 traditional stations are:

- Jesus is condemned to death
- Jesus accepts the cross
- Jesus falls for the first time
- Jesus meets his sorrowing

mother

- Simon of Cyrene carries the cross for Jesus
- Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
- Jesus falls a second time
- Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
- Jesus falls a third time
- Jesus is stripped of his clothes
- Jesus is nailed to the cross
- Jesus dies on the cross
- The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross
- The body of Jesus is laid in the tomb

When praying Stations of the Cross in church, either the entire assembly or just a small group of

people move from station to station, Workmaster said. The devotion begins with an opening prayer, usually at the foot of the altar. The song "Stabat Mater," or its tune set to different lyrics, is played. During the first part of the song, people move to the first station, where some sort of reverent gesture, such as genuflection, is made and a responsorial phrase is recited. The name of the station is announced, a reference to Scripture is read, and people kneel and say a prayer. This is done at all 14 stations, and when the procession returns to the altar, the 15th station is prayed there, she said.

There are a variety of ways to pray the Stations of the Cross,