

THE STATIONS OF THE STORM

An Immersive Passionist Journey



Stations of the Storm:
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Cover Art: Mary Southard, CSJ, Fear Not

Introduction

"Do not be surprised by the fiery ordeal that comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice, in so far as you share Christ's sufferings..."

— 1 Peter 4:12-13

In our Passionist tradition, we are called to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus, not merely as an event that happened once in history, but as a living mystery unfolding in the aching hearts and turbulent lives of people today. St. Paul of the Cross, our founder, taught us that "the Passion of Jesus is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love."

The Passion of Jesus is a mirror held up to our own lives, revealing that Christ still walks with us through every storm. In these seven stations, we meet Jesus not only in His suffering, but in our own: in dread, betrayal, abandonment, injustice, burdens, powerlessness, and surrender. And in walking with Him through them, we discover that no storm is stronger than God's love, and no night too dark for grace to reach.

Let this be your pocket companion through life's fiercest weather—a reminder that you are never alone in the storm.

Station I: The Storm of Dread — Gethsemane

Scripture: *Luke 22:41-44*

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Ritual: small bottle of olive oil

Have you ever been afraid of tomorrow?

Some storms begin in silence—in the pit of your stomach at 3 a.m., when prayers return like unanswered echoes. Jesus faced this dreadfully, trembling and pleading, yet choosing to stay and trust: “God, I trust that you are in this.”

When fear grips your heart and tomorrow feels unbearable, Jesus kneels beside you in the garden of dread. He sanctifies your anxiety not by removing it, but by remaining with you in it.

Questions to Ponder:

- Is there a storm you have come through where you can now notice the presence of God even in the midst of it?
- What storm are you quietly anticipating right now—the one you're afraid to name aloud?
- When have you felt dread so heavy that even prayer felt like a whisper into silence?
- How do you usually respond to fear—do you fight, flee, freeze... or try to numb it away?
- What storm are you begging to avoid? Can you let Jesus sit with you in it tonight?

Station II: The Storm of Betrayal — The Kiss of Judas

Scripture: *Luke 22:47-48*

“Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Ritual: cracker packet - crumbs

There are wounds only love can leave.

Betrayal comes from those we trusted most—wearing familiar faces, speaking in voices we once believed. Yet even as Jesus was kissed into captivity, he looked at Judas with sorrow, not rage, and called him "friend"—showing us love that remains open even when wounded.

Heart Reflections:

- When have you felt most deeply betrayed by someone you trusted?
- What broken promises or shattered relationships are you still carrying in your heart?
- How has betrayal changed the way you trust others?
- Who in your life might need your forgiveness for wounds they have caused?
- What would it mean for you to call someone who hurt you "friend" as Jesus did with Judas?

Station III: The Storm of Abandonment — The Disciples Flee

Scripture: *Matthew 26:56*

“Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.”

Ritual: small smooth stone

Have you ever suffered alone?

There’s a particular cruelty to suffering witnessed by no one—the empty chair, the unanswered text, the silence when you needed voices most. Jesus faced this abandonment too, yet discovered that even when everyone else flees, God stays—silent perhaps, hidden in the darkness, but present.

Questions for Solitude:

- When have you felt most deeply abandoned by those you counted on?
- What burdens are you carrying that feel too heavy to bear alone?
- Where do you sense God's presence when human companions fail you?
- Who in your life might be experiencing their own storm of abandonment right now?
- What would it mean to believe that even in your deepest solitude, you are not forsaken?

Station IV: The Storm of Injustice — Pilate's Verdict

Scripture: *John 18:33–38*

"I find no basis for an accusation against him."

Ritual: (group movement) muddy water

Have you ever tasted the bitter storm of unfairness?

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent yet condemned him anyway—truth sacrificed for convenience, systems meant to protect becoming instruments of harm. Jesus absorbed this injustice without bitterness, showing us how to fight wrongs without becoming wrong ourselves, trusting that God's justice will ultimately prevail.

Jesus stood silent before corrupt power. He absorbed injustice without becoming unjust. You can seek justice without letting it poison your heart.

Questions for Courage:

- When have you experienced injustice personally—been falsely accused, unfairly treated, or denied what you deserved?
- Where do you see systemic injustice in your community, workplace, or world that breaks your heart?
- When have you "washed your hands" like Pilate—knowing what was right but choosing the easier path?
- Where are you being invited to speak up or step in—because silence would make you complicit?

Questions for Courage (Cont.):

- How can you be an instrument of justice without becoming bitter or vengeful?
- What would it mean to trust that God's justice will ultimately prevail, even when earthly systems fail?
- Who is paying the price for "keeping the peace" in your family, workplace, or community?
- What would courageous action look like for you this week— small, concrete, and real?

Station V: The Storm of Burdens — The Cross is Laid Upon Him

Scripture: *Matthew 27:31–32*

"They led Him away to crucify Him. As they were going out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they forced to carry His cross."

Ritual: rope

What burden are you carrying that no one else sees?

Some burdens we choose, others are flung upon us—aging parents, struggling children, chronic illness, depression that shadows every step. Even Jesus, carrying the world's pain, stumbled and needed Simon's help, reminding us that strength isn't measured by how long we carry something alone, but by our willingness to let others in.

Even Jesus did not carry His cross alone. You were never meant to carry yours by yourself.

Questions to Carry:

- What burden in your life feels heaviest right now, threatening to crush your spirit?
- Which of your burdens did you choose, and which were imposed upon you?
- Who or what helps you carry them?
- Have you let anyone step in—or have you told yourself you have to manage it alone?
- What burdens are you carrying in secret that you're afraid to share with others?
- Where do you sense God's presence in your heaviest moments, even when relief doesn't come?

Station VI: The Storm of Powerlessness — Jesus is Stripped and Mocked

Scripture: *Matthew 27:35-36, 42*

"When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots... 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself!'"

Ritual: torn piece of cloth

Have you ever reached the end of yourself?

Sometimes the very gifts that define us become instruments of torment—the healer who cannot heal their own disease, the counselor whose marriage crumbles. Jesus, who had calmed storms, could not calm his own suffering, yet used his remaining breath to forgive and comfort, showing us that when we can no longer do, we can still be love.

Sometimes the strongest thing you can do is stop trying to fix everything. God meets you in the unraveling, not after it.

Questions for Vulnerability:

- When have you felt most powerless despite having skills or abilities that usually help you?
- How do you respond when others see you in your most vulnerable, unguarded state?
- When have you been mocked or criticized for being unable to help yourself despite helping others?
- Where do you find meaning and purpose when you can no longer do what once defined you?
- Can you trust that God is with you—not despite your weakness, but right in the center of it?

Station VII: The Storm of Surrender — Jesus Breathes His Last

Scripture: *Luke 23:44–46*

"It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon... Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."

Ritual: (collective movement) rough stone

What are you being asked to let go of that feels like death to release?

This is the storm that ends all storms, when fighting ceases and the only choice left is letting go. Jesus' surrender was not defeat but ultimate trust, the deepest act of faith possible, whispering "Into your hands" when understanding fails and hope seems lost.

Surrender is not giving up. It is the sacred act of placing everything into hands greater than yours.

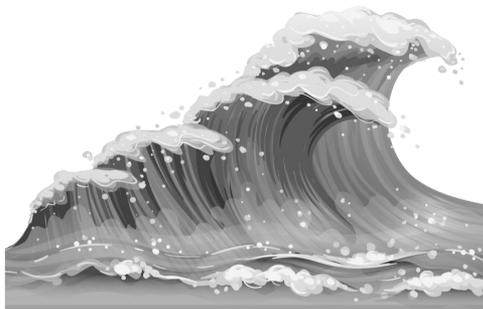
Questions for Surrender:

- What in your life feels like it's dying or needs to die for new growth to happen?
- What are you still trying to control that you're being invited to place "into God's hands"?
- What deaths in your life—of dreams, relationships, identities—still cause you grief?
- Where do you sense God's hidden work happening in the silence after loss?
- What would it mean for you to breathe your own prayer of surrender: "Into your hands I commit..."?

After the Storm

We have walked through seven storms together, and in each one found not just suffering, but the trace of God, a God who doesn't hover above our tempests but enters them. Christ meets us not after the storm, but within it. Let the memory of Christ in the storm become the presence of Christ in your storm. You are not alone in the boat.

The storms we have named are not signs of God's absence. They are the very places where Christ meets us. These stations remind us: we are not alone, and the storm is never the end.



Closing Prayer

God of storm and stillness, thank You for walking with us through winds and silence. Give us courage to surrender what we cannot fix, grace to carry what is ours, and faith to wait for resurrection, even in the dark.

Teach us to see Your presence in every pain, to trust when we must release, to love even when wounded. Anchor us in the cross, and carry us through the storm.

Let us be Simons to one another, and let our lives whisper: "Peace. Be still." Amen.



St. Paul of the Cross

Passionist Retreat Center

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