**Priory’s Reflection of Stations of the Cross**

March 28, 2017

Opening Song – Tina Paulson and Music Ministry

* “Be Not Afraid” #683

Opening Prayer – Tim Molak

Stations of the Cross Overview –Fr. Martin and Molly Buccola

Stations of the Cross – Ryan Calbert and Theology Students

Reflection Song – Sammie Sargent

* Piano

Closing Prayer – Fr. Martin

Community Announcements – Micah Morris

**Opening Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father,

Be with us this morning as we journey in the footsteps of Jesus, his suffering and death. Send us your Spirit to enter our hearts so that we may listen with compassion and respond to the plight of others who carry burdens, crosses, despair, and loss of dignity. Awaken our hearts that we may accept your challenge to create the world anew.

Amen

**The 1st Station: Jesus Is Condemned to Death**

**Ryan:** After Jesus was arrested; he was taken before the Sanhedrin, where the chief priests testified against him. Finally, the high priest asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to what these men testify against you? Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” Jesus said, “I am...” Then they sentenced him to death.

**Tatiana:** When Jesus was condemned to death, he was faulted for being different, an outsider, who his prosecutors didn’t bother to understand. The Jewish authorities turned him over to the Romans in power, because they felt threatened by his power and influence. This hatred and intolerance has not disappeared in the time since Jesus died, even though the world has progressed towards equality. In today’s America, we face the same bigotry towards minority groups, namely African Americans. We live in a country built on the blood, sweat, and suffering of slaves, and despite immense strides towards social justice through the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, we have new systems of oppression in place. Through the criminal justice system and police brutality, black people in this country are subjected to racial profiling, that is often fatal. As seen with victims like Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, there are stereotypes in place that African Americans are dangerous, tied to gangs and crime, and are to be feared instead of loved. This institutional racism and racial profiling has led to the deaths of far too many innocent people, who society didn’t bother to understand, much like Jesus. We didn’t see them, in their whole humanity. We didn’t see their hopes, dreams, aspirations, and fears. We didn’t see their relationships with their family and friends or their impacts on their communities. We only saw their skin color, and thus they were condemned to a tragically early death. Recognizing the fatal flaws in our systems is the first step towards change, so that we can begin to value every person equally and carry out the very messages of love, acceptance, and respect that Jesus preached.

**Art Holder:** Claire

**The 2nd Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross**

**Ryan:** Jesus was brought to Pilate, whom had Jesus scourged. They wrapped him in a purple cloak and placed a crown of thorns on his head. Pilate brought Jesus back out to the crowd, who screamed, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” In the end, Pilate handed him over to be crucified. Jesus was led away, and carrying the cross by himself, went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, Golgotha.

**Sergio:** At the second station, Jesus is forced to pick up his cross and carry it. Every person has their own difficulties, or metaphorical crosses to carry, but those with mental illnesses often feel as though the burdens they carry are invisible to others. This sense of invisibility only adds to their struggle – often, people with depression or anxiety wind up feeling that being bowed under this weight is simply their natural way of being. The stigma that those with more uncommon mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia or personality disorders, face can become a burden as well. It is important to remember that people may be facing struggles that can't be seen or easily recognized. Just as each of us has our crosses to bear, we must respect that others are carrying crosses of their own as well.

**Art Holder:** Matt George

**The 3rd Station: Jesus Falls the First Time**

**Ryan:** Carrying the heavy wooden cross alone, Jesus stumbled and fell under its massive weight. Already bruised and wounded from the earlier scourging, the pain he experienced must have been unbearable. Yet he got to his feet again and continued his journey towards his death.

**Adian:** JESUS GOES DOWN UNDER THE CROSS’S WEIGHT, BUT THEN HE RISES TO LIFT UP OTHERS. HE REACHES OUT TO IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES – PEOPLES WHO HAVE SUFFERED REJECTION, WHO THEMSELVES HAVE FALLEN AND NEED HIS HANDS AND OURS TO GIVE THEM HOPE & STRENGTH & WELCOME. WE MUSTN’T CLOSE OUR HEARTS, OUR HANDS, OUR DOORS AND OUR BORDERS TO THEM.

**Art Holder:** C.T.

**The 4th Station: Jesus Meets His Mother**

**Ryan:** While slowly trudging up the path to Golgotha, Jesus met his mother, Mary. Mary’s heart was filled with grief as she watched her only child suffering as he did, being lead out to be crucified; yet there was little she could do for him. She could only be near him in his last hours.

**Francesca:** A cry of maddening fear and desperation rippled painfully through her body and out the bullet hole his backward steps had ripped through her chest. It was dangerously selfish to want to preserve the young boy she saw laughing in her son’s unarmed eyes as he opened himself to her one last time before she lost his brown skin to the black sea. If she truly loved him, as she did more than life itself, she would have to let him go. He had let her go. But to her, it had never been a choice. The bible tells us Jesus’ mother was there with him as he weakly carried the cross beam that would be the device of his own death. However, the story does not describe the internal turmoil of emotions Mary must have been experiencing at helplessly watching the extreme suffering of her child. We are therefore called to empathize with Mary and fill in this gap in the story ourselves by remembering someone often not fully seen. It is the same empathy we must practice today to make sure the marginalized mother watching her frightened child sail far away to uncertain fate across a border is not forgotten and that we treat that child here in the US with the love of a mother he has lost.

**Art Holder:** Betty

**The 5th Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross**

**Ryan:** The massive cross that Jesus was forced to carry soon wore him out. Simon of Cyrene, a field hand passing by, was enlisted to help Jesus. With his aid, Jesus was able to continue on his path towards Golgotha.

**Andy:** When Simon of Cyrene was forced into carrying the cross of Jesus he entered into solidarity with him. Today we can still see acts of solidarity with events like the protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline. When it became apparent that there were serious environmental concerns regarding the pipeline as well as the fact that it would run through a Native American burial ground, members of the Meskwaki and Sioux tribes formed a coalition to stop the construction of the pipeline. This opposition drew international attention after videos surfaced showing acts of police brutality against those opposed to the pipeline, including the use of attack dogs. On November 15, 2016 protests in solidarity with the Sioux and Meskwaki occurred across the nation in cities like San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Denver. The national show of solidarity for opposition against the pipeline shows that people are still socially conscious and willing to fight for what is right.

**Art Holder:** Greer

**The 6th Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

**Ryan:** While traveling along the path to Golgotha, Jesus met Veronica. Seeing how hot and tired Jesus was, she reached out to wipe his face with her veil. As soon as she took the cloth away from his face, she noticed that an image of him remained on her veil.

**John Max:** Caring for someone who is sick, bereaved or burdened is an example of unconditional love in action. Veronica knew it was not popular for anyone to help a condemned man. Yet, regardless of her reputation, she did what was right. She took care of Jesus the best way she could. Know that standing up for the oppressed of society is not always popular, but it is humane. It is just. Once, my friend and I gave a homeless person some money. The man was suffering from a lack of food, water, and shelter. In the end, he was able to use those funds to make his life a little bit better. Sure, it seemed like a small gesture but it allowed for him to have a moment of joy, peace, and hope for a better tomorrow. So, how can we, as a Priory community, stand up for the burdened? Let’s follow Veronica’s example. Be selfless, be available, and be present for those struggling.

**Art Holder:** Ben and Samantha

**The 7th Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time**

**Ryan:** Exhausted from the long journey towards Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, each step Jesus took caused him great pain. He faltered again and fell to the ground.

**Mark Theis:** VICTIMS, REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS, THE SHUNNED, THE REJECTED, AND THE OPPRESSED –JESUS REACHES UP & OUT TO ALL THESE FALLEN PEOPLES AND ASKS US TO HELP HIM HELP THEM. NOT WITH WALLS TO BLOCK THEM OUT, BUT WITH WAYS FORWARD – WAYS TO WELCOME PEOPLES INTO NEW HEARTS AND HOMES.

**Art Holder:** Sammie

**The 8th Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

**Ryan:** Along the way, large groups of people followed Jesus. Many women mourned and wept for him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.”

**Katy:** An open letter to a heart unsatisfied.

Bloom, my love for the time for darkness is over.

Grow, my strength as warmer days are on the horizon.

Educate, my mind as I learn what it means to be a woman.

Bloom, as the door you shut yourself behind opens once more.

Grow, my heart as you surround yourself with a passion rediscovered

Educate, my eyes to see the beauty in days that are to come.

Bloom, my rose.

Grow, my heart.

Educate, my spirit.

Allow me to awaken myself from a slumber so deep

So relentless

So demanding

So draining

Allow me to become a woman of grace, of love, of wisdom, of God.

**Art Holder:** Cecilia

**The 9th Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time**

**Ryan:** For a third time, the weight of the cross overcame Jesus. He fell to the ground in tremendous pain, but somehow managed to get to his feet.

**Jacie:** WITH HIS LAST BIT OF STRENGTH JESUS RISES FROM THE GROUND ONE MORE TIME. JESUS ASKS US TO JOIN HIM IN THIS REACHING OUT TO RAISE UP FALLEN OTHERS – IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES, VICTIMS. THEIR SUFFERINGS, THEIR PAINS, THEIR LANDLESSNESS AND HOMELESSNESS WEIGH THEM DOWN. WE CAN HELP IN MANY WAYS TO UPLIFT THEM. THEY ARE FAMILY TO US ALL.

**Art Holder:** Lauren

**The 10th Station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments**

**Ryan:** When Jesus reached Golgotha, the soldiers took his clothing and divided it four ways—one for each soldier. But they did not want to tear his seamless garment, which was woven in one piece from neck to hem. Instead they cast lots for it.

**Caleb:** In today’s competitive free market, it has become so easy to fall prey to materialism. By the very nature of the industrial economy, exploitation and class struggle is woven into our history. Relationships are reduced to their material value and the respectable positions may lose their honor and reverence in being reduced to simply paid labor. Jesus asks us, those with freedom and without, the oppressed and the oppressors, to seek his grace rather than material satisfaction. Acts 4:32-37 states: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.” We are compelled to act in charity and community rather than greed and selfishness. We are warned from the sins of soldiers drawing lots over the clothes of Christ.

**Art Holder:** Cameron

**The 11th Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross**

**Ryan:** After reaching Golgotha, the heavy burden of the cross was finally removed, but Jesus’ suffering was far from over. As the nails were driven through his hands and feet, the pain he felt was excruciating.

**Romi:** In this dark hour, Jesus endures through physical and mental agony resulting from the evils of the world. He suffered for the unrighteous. He endured to show love for His enemies, so that they may be transformed by it. He was beaten, spat on, and rejected. Yet, He still loved them in the midst of their wrongdoing. What do you do when it hurts? Jesus says to love and pray for those who do you harm, for “they know not what they do.” To love means to stand up for what is right. We must resist violence by sacrificing the darkness within us to make room for God’s marvelous light. Priory, let’s allow for our light to shine radiantly for all to see.

**Art Holder:** Julianna and Jess

**The 12th Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

**Ryan:** At noon, darkness fell over the countryside and lasted until mid-afternoon. Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Then he uttered a loud cry and gave up his spirit.

**Allie:** Jesus said, “It is Finished!” – **Pause** – He finally did it. He sacrificed his life to give light to those without, to take away the sins of the world. He gave a message and died for us all – **Brief Pause** - for me and for you. In the midst of his brokenness, He fulfilled God’s will for His life by showing the world how to love unconditionally. This demonstration is a model for us all not to just live for ourselves, but to live to serve others especially, as Jesus would say, for the oppressed, the sinner, the unrighteous, the lame, **- Pause -** the forgotten. This is why he died. His death speaks to us, helping us all know we have the same ability to love entirely. It is within us from birth and exists when we put the needs of someone else before our own. We, at the Priory can share this love with each other. It’s not hard. It starts with a smile, a simple hello, and then an act of kindness that shows we care. Jesus “finished” his life with the definition of love, now it is up to us to “begin” showing it.

**Art Holder:** Liam and Nikhilas

**The 13th Station: Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross**

**Ryan:** The Soldiers came to break the legs of the other men. When they saw that Jesus was already dead they decided not to break his legs. Instead, a soldier thrust a lance into Jesus’ side and blood and water flowed out. Then Joseph of Arimathea came to remove Jesus’ body.

**Thomas K:** Jesus’ spirit and strength had gone, like “water spilled upon the ground.” His mother, Mary, & His disciples mourned for Him. Yet, in the end, they understood why He died. He did it for love. He did it to spare us, to shelter us from God’s judgment. He brought us abundant grace. We remember and honor his sacrificial dedication to the world and others who have done the same. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King. Jr. spent much of his life protesting and standing up for civil rights. Every year, in January, we celebrate Dr. King and what he did for our country. Just as He sacrificed many things to support civil rights, Jesus sacrificed his life to support peace and inclusivity. Let us always remember that we have the power to promote a socially just world. Let’s do it together with love and respect.

**Art Holder:** Isabella T. & Oliver

**The 14th Station: Jesus Is Laid in a Tomb**

**Ryan:** Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in a clean shroud, and placed it in the tomb. Then he rolled a huge stone in front of the new tomb and went away.

**Lena:** After Jesus was crucified, the community of people who worshipped him and relied on him for guidance entered into a state of mourning. When a figure so crucial to one's sense of identity passes away, individuals tend to feel lost and unable to comprehend and accept their emotions. Everyday, people around the world freeze when receiving news of unexpected death and enter into this same navigable period of sadness. Gun violence is one of the most prominent issues in our country today; according to the department of Justice 87 percent of all the successful homicides in 2011 were by gun violence. Losing those we love makes us feel powerless as if we are in situations beyond our control. This feeling is something that has been experienced by people of all backgrounds. As we know, Jesus does rise from the dead, teaching us all that maintaining hope - even in the darkest of times - is crucial, for everything is possible and our futures have light, even if this light may be represented in ways other than someone rising from the dead.

**Art Holder:** Daniel