

## The Village of Graffham follows the Way of the Cross

### 1 Jesus is condemned to death

Proclaiming a kingdom of justice and mercy for the poor, sick and weak, the evening before Jesus had stooped to wash his friends' feet, to show self-giving loving service is the path to greatness in his kingdom. Now Jesus stands before Pilate to be condemned.

***We pray for mercy, knowing how far we are from being the people God would have us be.***

### 2 Jesus takes up his cross

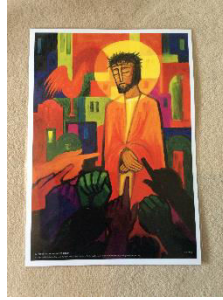
Feeling the weight of rough wood, Jesus faces an arduous journey through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. ***We pray for strength to carry our own cross in a time of uncertainty.***

### 3 Jesus falls the first time

Jesus had been interrogated by Jewish leaders, publicly humiliated, whipped, crowned with thorns and condemned. With his body already weakened Jesus falls to the ground. ***Help us honour the sacrifice of those caring for others. Protect and strengthen all who continue your healing work today.***

### 4 Jesus meets his mother

Hearing the mysterious call to be the mother of Jesus, Mary had asked 'How can this be?', repeated again now watching her son on the way to Golgotha. Her heart of love is pierced by a sword, as Simeon in the temple foretold. ***We pray for those who have lost their lives, and all stunned by the deadly impact of an unlooked-for virus, 'How can this be?'***



### 5 Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross

Now the wounded figure at the roadside, Jesus is grateful for a stranger's help in time of need, Simon from North Africa. ***May community spirit brought out by the challenge of difficult times continue to thrive and hearten when danger, though not the need for kindness, has passed.***

### 6 Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

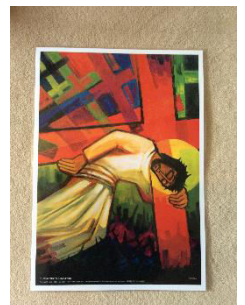
A woman steps from the crowd to wipe away the blood running down Jesus' face, with a cloth. Some say in doing so, the imprint of his face is discovered there. ***May we be ready to respond to others' need even in the smallest ways, knowing your power to turn the little we offer into a powerful force for good.***

### 7 Jesus falls the second time

The journey seems long and the cross heavier. Exhausted, Jesus falls to the ground again. ***We pray for those who are isolated and lonely. Comfort them with assurance of your unfailing support, through thick and thin.***

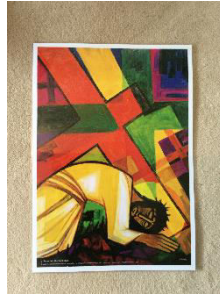
### 8 Women of Jerusalem

Despite pain and exhaustion, Jesus' face radiates great power through weakness, affecting those who watch. Tears stream from the local women as he passes them. ***We pray for families losing loved ones in such heart-breaking ways.***



### 9 Jesus falls the third time

Each step now an effort, Jesus falls to the stony road leading out of the city, a third and final time. ***We pray for people who are anxious for their futures. May the lessons we learn in demanding times teach us to build back society with consideration, so no-one need lose hope in our times.***



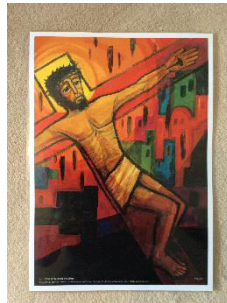
### 10 Jesus is stripped

The soldiers cast lots to decide who receives Jesus' clothes, appropriating what is not theirs, taking for personal gain. ***We pray for everyone to see the needs of others as important as our own wants and desires. When we are the selfish ones, expose us to ourselves.***



### 11 Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus reaches Golgotha and sharp nails are driven through his hands and feet. Jesus submits, to express God's solidarity, vulnerability and suffering with humankind. 'The Word made flesh', the new-born baby in the manger is now battered, bruised and blessing on the cross. ***We are thankful you share all we are going through, even in dark times.***



### 12 Jesus dies on the cross

Three of the Gospels tell us there was darkness over all the land. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus calls out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he has said this, he breathes his last. ***Help us to share the pain of others as you do and let no-one rest until all are free and safe.***



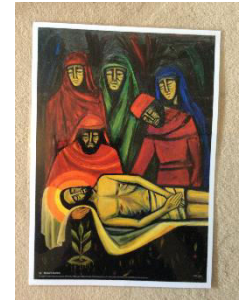
### 13 Jesus is taken down from the cross

The body of Jesus is gently and lovingly taken down from the cross. It is placed in a shroud and carefully taken to the tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea. ***Uphold all who take responsibility for the bodies of those who have died, sharing your love with those in grief.***



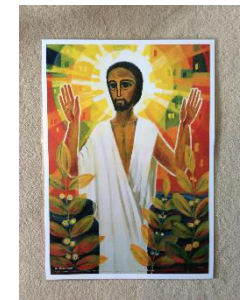
### 14 Jesus is buried

The body of Jesus is placed in a sealed tomb. The grief-stricken, bewildered followers walk away and isolate, praying, reflecting. Soon their experience would give them a clear vision of the Gospel to be proclaimed. Now though, they wait in uncertainty. ***We pray for a vision of the kingdom where kindness is contagious and forgiveness overcomes all sin***



### 15 Jesus is risen!

Bathed in light on Easter morning, the cross is a symbol of darkness defeated, love triumphant, pain relieved and death overcome. Mary Magdalene comes out quietly as dawn breaks and encounters the risen Christ, who commissions her to spread the Good News. There's an explosion of new life. The church comes into being. Self-isolation is over. The life-changing Gospel is proclaimed with courage, confidence and conviction. And that is our task as well. ***We pray for the hope and promise of life beyond crisis, when the chastening of this difficult time gives way to freedom in a kinder society, with your kingdom proclaimed anew.***



**Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**