

First Station **Denise**

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

We've always been struck by the assassinations of people who stand up for what, in the eyes of God, is just, good, and holy: President Abraham Lincoln, condemned for daring to abolish slavery in this country; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., condemned for daring to dream of a colorblind world; St. Oscar Romero, condemned for daring to stand up for the poor and downtrodden. And before all of them, Jesus Christ, savior of us all, condemned for daring to include all whom this world would write off as unworthy.

Yet, even as religious and political authorities were condemning him to a shameful death to end his life on earth, God was stretching out his arms to welcome his Son, the Savior of us all, back to himself in the kingdom of heaven.

Reflection Questions: Who are those in your community who may be unjustly condemned, in large or small ways? How is Jesus inviting you to respond?

Leader: We pray...

All: Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps.

Sing: Adoramus te Christe...

Darkness to Light

DENISE reads. DEE lights candles.

Holy One, only You know fully the darkness in which we dwell on this Good Friday evening. While we are blessed with much, we also carry trials and troubles of our own, and deep worries about the well-being of others. We have come here tonight to receive from You, sacred light for our Holy Week journey of hope. Source of all Light, may we experience Your presence tonight, in the dance of candlelight, in the beauty of music, in the sincerity of our prayers, and in the grace of this community. Come Holy One, shine among us. Amen.

Praying the Beatitudes with Light (a responsive reading and candle-lighting ritual based upon Matthew 5:3-11)

Leader: May God bless the poor in spirit. (Light one candle.)

All: Ours is the kingdom of heaven.

Leader: God bless all who mourn. (Light one candle.)

All: We will be comforted.

Leader: May God bless the meek. (Light one candle.)

All: We will inherit the earth.

Leader: May God bless those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Light one candle.)

All: We will be filled.

Leader: May God bless the merciful. (Light one candle.)

All: We will receive mercy.

Leader: May God bless the pure in heart. (Light one candle.)

All: We will see God.

Leader: May God bless the peacemakers. (Light one candle.)

All: We are called children of God.

Leader: May God bless those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Light one candle.)

All: Ours is the kingdom of heaven.

Leader: May God bless us when people revile us and persecute us and utter all kinds of evil against us falsely on account of Jesus Christ. (Light one candle.)

All: Let us rejoice and be glad, for our reward is great in heaven, for in the same way, the prophets before us were persecuted.

Leader: May God bless us as we call upon the Light of Christ. (Light one candle.)

All: Illuminate our Good Friday shadows, O Holy Light. Amen.