



Station X: CRUCIFIXION

Jesus is Crucified

Scripture ~ Luke 23:33-34

³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

Reflection for Adults

The image of the cross has become so commonplace that we tend to forget how truly revolutionary it is. In 1949 the communist regime in Poland began work on Nowa Huta, a new town just north of Kraków. In an effort to crush the Christian spirit of the Polish people, and to reinforce the atheism of the communist party, the government decreed that there would be no church building in Nowa Huta. It was the first Polish city to be intentionally designed without a church. But the people's faith could not be so easily destroyed. They erected a large cross in the middle of the field where they wanted their church to be built. Each time they would put the cross up, the communists would bulldoze it down.

In 1959, the young archbishop of Kraków, Karol Wojtyła, celebrated Christmas Eve Midnight Mass under the cross in the field. Hundreds of people came, standing in a freezing Polish winter night, to defy the government and worship the God who had come to set them free. After each Christmas Eve celebration, the government would again tear the cross down...and the people would again rebuild it. Finally, in 1967, the communists issued a permit for a church to be built. One year before he was elected Bishop of Rome, Archbishop Wojtyła dedicated the new church in Nowa Huta.

Look at the picture. On each crossbeam of the cross it appears that ladders are descending and ascending. What makes the crucifixion so revolutionary is the truth that God, in the person of Jesus, descended to humanity, took on all the sufferings of the pain of others, the world, and died for the salvation of all people so that we might ascend to the heights for which we were created.

Going Deeper

- Could you imagine a time when you might use the image of the cross as a sign of protest against oppression?

Reflection for Children

Jesus came to teach us about God's love. Jesus wanted us to listen to him and follow his way. Some people did not like what Jesus was teaching them, and so they decided to crucify him on the cross. But even on the cross, Jesus continued to teach us about God's love. Because Jesus was crucified, we can now share eternal life with God.

Discussion with Children

- What do you think about when you see the cross?