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*A Higher Education*

# The Stations of the Cross

A GIFT FROM THE  
BALKUM FAMILY



The fourteen oil paintings depicting the “Stations of the Cross” were donated to Houston Baptist University by David D. and Kimberly M. Balkum. Completed by an anonymous Dutch artist in the late nineteenth century, the paintings depict different moments in the Passion of Christ, leading up to the Crucifixion. In Roman Catholic devotion, the stations were developed in the late middle ages as a mimetic practice, wherein individuals can move from station to station, meditating upon Christ’s sufferings and sacrifice as they walk through the different stations.

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“ Take up your cross, therefore, and follow Jesus, and you shall enter eternal life. He Himself opened the way before you in carrying His cross, and upon it He died for you... If you die with Him, you shall also live with Him. ”

– Thomas Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

## THE TRADITION OF THE STATIONS

Contemplatively walking the Stations of the Cross was a practice developed in the Middle Ages to allow people who could not take a pilgrimage to Jerusalem the chance to ‘walk’ the Via Crucis (or Via Dolorosa), the believed route of Christ’s Passion. The Stations emphasized the suffering and humanity of Christ. By the seventeenth century, the practice of walking fourteen Stations was codified by Franciscan communities in Spain, and from there, the tradition of the Stations spread across most of Catholic communities in western Europe and the Americas. Although the Stations of the Cross is a traditional Roman Catholic practice, meditation and prayerful contemplation of Christ’s sufferings also played a crucial role within early Protestantism. Martin Luther wrote, “The real and true work of Christ’s passion is to make man conformable to Christ, so that man’s conscience is tormented by his sins in like measure as Christ was pitifully tormented in body and soul by our sins. This does not call for many words but for profound reflection.”

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References: Carmen Acevedo Butcher, “Walking the Walk (of the Stations of the Cross).” The Center for Christian Ethics, 2013. Martin Luther, “A Meditation on Christ’s Passion,” trans. Martin H. Bertram; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1992); Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013).



## THE BALKUM FAMILY

The "Stations of the Cross" is a generous donation to Houston Baptist University by Kim and David Balkum, alumni of HBU and parents of alumni Laurianne and Lesleigh Balkum Jones and son-in-law Josh Jones. The Balkums appreciate the many professors who taught them how to integrate a Christian ethic in their lives. As HBU's founding verse, John 14:6, focuses our faith on Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life, the Balkums hope these paintings will continue to focus our heart, souls, and minds on our Savior and His sacrifice.

“ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him ... so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. . . and that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ”

– Philippians 2:8-11



## THE STATIONS

- 1 Jesus is Condemned to Death**  
Pontius Pilate washes his hands after allowing the Jewish crowds to condemn Christ [Matthew 27:24]
- 2 Jesus Takes Up His Cross**  
After beating Him, mocking Him, and placing a crown of thorns upon Him, the soldiers give Jesus the cross to carry to the place of crucifixion [Matthew 27:27-31].
- 3 Jesus Falls under the Cross the First Time**  
According to Roman Catholic tradition, Jesus was weakened by the tortures he suffered, so much so that he fell under the weight of the cross, which he was forced to carry.\*
- 4 Jesus Meets his Mother**  
While there is no specific reference to this in scripture, Mary is at the crucifixion, and Jesus gives her into the care of the apostle John [John 19:26-27].\*
- 5 Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross**  
Because Jesus was weakened by His beatings, the Roman soldiers conscripted Simon, from Cyrene in North Africa, to carry His cross [Mark 15:21].
- 6 Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**  
The account of Veronica wiping Jesus' face with her veil is a medieval tradition, which claims that His image remained on the veil after this encounter. Veronica has been associated with the woman who suffered from the issue of blood [Luke 8:43-48].\*
- 7 Jesus Falls the Second Time.\***

\*scenes based on church tradition

## THE STATIONS

# 8

### Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

As Jesus moves towards the place of crucifixion, women mourn His upcoming execution. Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, but for themselves and their children, warning them of the destruction that would come on Jerusalem in 70 A.D. [Luke 23:27-31].

# 9

### Jesus Falls the Third Time\*

# 10

### Jesus is Stripped of his Garments

Jesus' clothes were removed before He was nailed to the cross. Soldiers gambled for His clothes [Mark 15:23-24; Psalm 22:16].

# 11

### Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Jesus' hands were nailed to the vertical cross-beam and his feet to the vertical post supporting the crossbeam. The scars of these wounds from the cross remain even after Jesus' resurrection [Luke 23: 33-43; Mark 15:23-32].

# 12

### Jesus Dies on the Cross

Jesus's last words were "It is finished!", as He had completed the work for man's redemption. Jesus then "gave up His Spirit," no one took Jesus' life from Him. A centurion at the cross who testified to Jesus' death said, "Truly this was the son of God." [Mark 15:33-39; John 19: 28-37; Matthew 27:50-54; Philippians 2:5-8].

# 13

### Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Scripture does not describe this moment, though Mary and other women who were followers of Jesus watched the scene from a distance [Matthew 27: 55; Psalm 22:14-15]. \*

\*scenes based on church tradition

## THE STATIONS

# 14

### Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Pontius Pilate granted Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, the body of Jesus to bury in Joseph's new tomb. Three days later, Jesus rose from the grave [Luke 23:50-24:50].



# CAMPUS MAP

- Stations 1-2: Hinton, 1st floor
- Stations 3-5: Hinton, 3rd floor
- Stations 6-8: Atwood I
- Stations 9-14: University Academic Center

