

9TH SCRIPTURAL STATION - THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

by Fr Robbie Low

(Lk 23 v 26-32.)

We the poor. We the distressed. We the background music to a hundred million deaths. We the women of Jerusalem. We the women of the world beyond the walls. We gather here to weep and keen and howl the cruel loss of one more mother's son.

We are the life givers. We are the secret bearers of another soul. We are the hidden wellspring of human creation, the cradlers of all who come to be, the open arms of love to each scrap of humanity, each little life struggling to be born.

And so we come, drawn like moths to a flame, unable to resist the pain, unable to turn back from the burning light of man's dismissal of his very self, unable to dismiss the relentless vision of the defaced image of the God who lurks in Man.

We are not discreet. Death has its own passion. We gather as the chorus of distress. We watch at the last as the true mother braves the swords' points to embrace her beaten, battered, dying, only child.

We ask for absolution. This is not our doing. This is not our way.

We know not if this be truly the Christ. We know, and this alone, that Man was not born for this. We know that between the gentle arms of motherhood, the beautiful warm trusting child who snuggled at our breast, and this obscenity of death, this refinement of Satan's anger, there is a disconnection in the soul of Man. What makes Man such a brutal and inhuman beast?

Speak, Christ. Speak to us, Jesus. Speak, who raised the girl child from the dead

And so He turned to listen to our agony and spoke – naught for our comfort.

The broken King denounced this Kingdom.

The Prophet spoke of this City's destruction.

The High Priest of Man decreed the Temple's doom.

Our children and grandchildren to be heirs of ruin and disaster, the longest exile in the history of Man.

Thirty years have passed since that fell day along the Way of Sorrows.

Another new revolt is playing out against the might of merciless empire.

Born in the shadow of His dying, the men who now stand vainly on our walls must risk all to save what may.

Was this His meaning when He stopped to warn,

'Weep not for me but for yourselves. Weep for your children's children.'

Did He, beneath that torture crown and blood blind eyes, foresee these great siege engines of Titus invest our city walls? Did He somehow know the cost of ruin, the shattering of every sign of hope? How did He come to understand that God, who had so long promised His sacred Presence in this place, would abandon us and leave us facing rampage, rape and ruin, the streets awash with blood, the future burning before our tortured eyes?

How could He know the last stand at Masada? The desert redoubt where the last of our noble freedom fighters fell.

And so we stood and watched and wailed and wept for Him, not dreaming of the ambush of the future that would engulf us all.

Another day. Another dead child. Another mother's arms emptied of all joy.

We the women of Jerusalem will weep down all the centuries of tears in many

strange and different places of the unknown world. Weep for fallen Man.

Weep for man who does this to his brother.

Weep for the endless procession of broken hearted mothers.

Weep for the little boy we have lost.

Weep for the man who can no longer see us home.

Weep for this ruin where once we lived and laughed and loved and looked forward. This place of hope and all our futures where nothing now remains but ash and smoke and silence – broken only by the jackals' call and the night owl's predatory swoop.

We, the women of Jerusalem, howl and beseech:

If you are indeed the dead man walking, Son of David, rightful heir of this broken city of peace, pray for us and for our children.

And.....

Sweet mother of sorrows, in solidarity with your sisters throughout time, sufferer whose heart was pierced on that dread day so long ago, pray for us now, who wept with you, and at the hour of our death. Amen.