

DAY 39: GOOD FRIDAY

## *The Women Were Heard*

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Luke 23:27-28

### **Reflect**

His robe was stained with grim red lines. Gashes from the scourging had no time to seal and heal. He was losing control of his legs and feet, crushed by the weight of his burden. He collapsed into a heap of blood, thorns, and exhaustion. Would he die before his sentence could be carried out? Soldiers anticipated the question. They grabbed a bystander visiting from Cyrene. He was ordered to take up what the condemned rabbi could no longer carry: a wooden cross—large enough to support the weight of the rabbi himself.

His death was on the horizon. The hill was in the distance, and on its top were two crosses fully laden. An empty space lay between them, ready to receive another. But he was not there yet. There was still life in his broken body. He was still breathing. His journey went on.

The women of Jerusalem lined the street. Distress filled them with a mix of vulnerability and strength. With tearful desperation, they pushed through the crowds to get close to the street. The women did nothing to conceal the rawness of their emotions. They beat their breasts and wailed as was their regional custom. Their cries travelled above the din, onto the road, and into earshot of the one they came to see.

Their rabbi heard their lament. He turned his attention away from the destination and toward the present moment. The jeering of the bystanders

faded. He beheld the faces of the women, treasuring their faithfulness and acknowledging their protest. His voice was saturated with exhaustion; his words were heavy with authentic concern. He was selfless when he spoke, giving the women permission to worry about themselves and their well-being in the days ahead. Even as he made his final steps in his earthly journey, his attention was on those who would continue to walk—long after his own feet had been nailed into place.

### Ponder

- We don't know why Simon of Cyrene was in Jerusalem. He was pulled out of his journey and redirected along a different path. Does this part of his journey resonate with any of your life experiences? How?
- The women of Jerusalem did not hide their grief. How has your family practised grieving when there has been a death? Were emotions visible or hidden?

### Pray

Most Holy God,  
mysterious and mothering,  
see the rawness of our grief  
through compassionate eyes;  
extend to us travelling mercy  
so we never face suffering alone.  
This we ask in Jesus' name.  
Amen.

### Practise

Take a few moments to centre yourself through prayer. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply but easily. Visualize yourself in this story, paying attention to where you are situated. What do you see? How do you see it? Ask God to reveal details that will be helpful in your own spiritual journey.

*Debbie McMillan*