

# THE MERCIFUL JOURNEY:

Feminine Perspectives on the Way of the Cross

Into His Marvelous Light Study Series  
“enlighten the mind, encourage the spirit, transform the heart”

  
Magis Women 

The Magis Center was founded by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., as a response to the “inaccurate secular myths” that are corroding faith and morals as well as undermining faith in God and Jesus Christ. The goal of Magis is to restore, reconstruct, and revitalize belief in God, the transcendent dignity of every human person, the significance of virtue, the higher levels of happiness, love, and freedom and the real presence of Jesus Christ. Magis is committed to finding and returning lost sheep to the Good Shepherd while creating disciples of those who “hear the Word”.

Magis (pronounced Mah-Jis) in Latin means “more”. In some contexts it can mean “the even more”- the furthest frontier. The goal of Magis Women is to offer resources that will lead women to their more - for the greater glory of God.

**The Merciful Journey: Feminine Perspectives on The Way of the Cross** is a Special Edition study guide developed by Magis Women based on materials written by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D.

As part of the Magis Women **Into His Marvelous Light** (1 Peter 2:9) Study Series, this study is based on a thematic and uniquely feminine approach to each station of the cross. Utilizing the lens of the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as “the greatest story ever told”, the student will engage in intentional journaling, prayer, and art experiences designed to help apply the Word of God to life’s everyday situations. This study will draw women into the transformative, healing love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through the inspiring words of sister storytellers sharing personal real-life experiences of pain, suffering and revelation. Through this powerful encounter your own struggles could be transformed and may you, who were once in darkness, be called into His marvelous light.

Magis Women **Into His Marvelous Light** Study Series  
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## THE HEALING POWER OF STORY

It's been said that the "good news", the gospel message, the telling of the life and times of Our Lord Jesus Christ is "the greatest story ever told." Indeed it is! And inside this momentous story of the New Testament lies the ultimate story of a terrible and wonderful journey, *The Merciful Journey*, the journey of the way of the cross. It is through the steps (or better known as the "stations") along this arduous road that the trail of tears, heartache, and pain is transformed into salvation, hope and redemption. This is the story of the great and glorious mystery of the Passion of Our Lord.

Within the pages of this study you will find additional stories. Deep, personal, and real-life stories of women just like you, brave Magis Women, who said yes when asked to share their own personal stories as they reflected upon the themes of each step of *The Merciful Journey*. These stories are reflections of your own stories.

Hold the hearts of your sister storytellers gently in your own as you engage in *The Merciful Journey*. May the transformative, healing love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ at work in the lives of these women transform your own struggles, and may you, who were once in darkness, be called into His marvelous light.



*Together we are strong, together we are Magis.*

# CONTENTS

<b>Erev: The Night Before</b>		6
<b>The Journey Begins</b>		8
<b>Important Features of this Guide</b>		10
<b>Abba Time Practice Session</b>		12
<b>Lesson One</b>	Judgment The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Die	14
<b>Lesson Two</b>	Acceptance The Second Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross	22
<b>Lesson Three</b>	Failure The Third, Seventh & Ninth Stations: Jesus Falls, Repeatedly	30
<b>Lesson Four</b>	Mother of Mercy The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother	38
<b>Lesson Five</b>	Spiritual Friendship The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross	46
<b>Lesson Six</b>	“Vera Icon”: True Image The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes The Face of Jesus	54
<b>Lesson Seven</b>	Expectations The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem	62
<b>Lesson Eight</b>	Shame The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments	70
<b>Lesson Nine</b>	Suffering The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross	78
<b>Lesson Ten</b>	Death The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross	86
<b>Lesson Eleven</b>	Deep Calls to Deep The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross	94
<b>Lesson Twelve</b>	Waiting in Hope The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb	102
<b>Lesson Thirteen</b>	Victory! Jesus Rises from the Dead	110

# EREV: THE NIGHT BEFORE

## IMAGINE:

Recall the night before Jesus died on the Cross. Just after the Last Supper, He took his apostles to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Imagine now that you are one of His apostles and put yourself into this story. You've spent the evening with Him, you've partaken in the seder meal commemorating the exodus of the Jews from Egypt; the Lord has washed your feet; He's given you a teaching about His Body and His Blood which you do not quite understand. Then Judas rushed out in a frightful way that caused you great confusion, and now Jesus is telling you to sit down, stay put, and pray. You are definitely uncomfortable, perhaps even afraid. Immerse yourself in this scene and enter into the story below:

“Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.’ ” (*Matthew 26:36-38*)

*Can you relate to a time when your soul felt “sorrowful even to death”? Write about this time.*

“He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.’ ” (*Matthew 26:39*)

*Has there been a time in your life when you had to do something you truly did not want to do? Explain what that was and how you felt.*

“When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, ‘So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ ” (*Matthew 26:40-41*)

*Is there an area of your life now where “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”? Journal about your struggle with this.*

“Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, ‘My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!’ Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open.”  
(Matthew 26:42-43)

*Have you ever tried to “keep watch” with Jesus, either in prayer, adoration, or by studying His Word? Write about these efforts.*

“He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, ‘Are you sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.’ ” (Matthew 26:44-46)

*Are you willing to enter more deeply into the practice of “keeping watch” with Jesus as you journey through this study? Might there be a possibility that, for the duration of this study, you could “watch and pray” one hour per week in an Adoration Chapel? If not, In what way(s) might you put “keeping watch” into practice?*



**LISTEN:**

Need to Breathe - Garden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiMvTICt4kI>

## THE MOST IMPORTANT PRAYER OF ALL:

In Fr. Robert Spitzer’s book *Five Pillars of the Spiritual Life*, he tells us that “Without a doubt, the most important prayer of all is ‘Thy will be done.’ Jesus teaches us this prayer in the Our Father (Mt 6:9-15) and uses it Himself at the agony in the garden (Mt 26:39-44). Since that time, it has become the centerpiece of Christian spiritual life. It can be used in times of fear, temptation, anger, trial; indeed,...If you cannot remember any other prayer, default to this one.”

Fr. Spitzer then goes on to ask “Why?” and explains the following answer: “Because the will of God is optimally loving, optimally good, optimally just, and optimally salvific; and when the will of God is working through you, you become an instrument of His optimally loving, good, just, and salvific will in the world; you become the agent of a legacy that will last into eternity, an agent for the kingdom of God manifest on earth and perpetuated for eternity. There could be no more worthy purpose for living than this.”

*How do you feel about “the will of God working through you”? How might that change your outlook or help you make a deeper commitment in regard to The Merciful Journey? Does anything else come to mind as you prepare to enter into this study?*

# THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Using a Catholic resource, locate a list of the fourteen Stations of the Cross and write them here.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

## **A NOTE FROM THE CATECHISM:**

“The prayer of the Church venerates and honors the Heart of Jesus just as it invokes his most holy name. It adores the incarnate Word and his Heart which, out of love for men, he allowed to be pierced by our sins. Christian prayer loves to follow the way of the cross in the Savior’s steps. The stations from the Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb trace the way of Jesus, who by his holy Cross has redeemed the world.” CCC 2669

*Is the practice of praying the way of the cross (the stations of the cross) a new concept for you, or do you have past experience with this devotion? Share your thoughts or feelings about this.*

# 6 THE SIXTH STATION:

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS ( AND IS LEFT WITH HIS IMAGE ON HER VEIL)

“Love is patient, love is kind. \_\_\_\_\_

It is not jealous, is not pompous, \_\_\_\_\_

it is not inflated, it is not rude, \_\_\_\_\_

it does not seek its own interests, \_\_\_\_\_

it is not quick-tempered, \_\_\_\_\_

it does not brood over injury, \_\_\_\_\_

it does not rejoice over wrongdoing \_\_\_\_\_

but rejoices with the truth. \_\_\_\_\_

It bears all things, believes all things, \_\_\_\_\_

hopes all things, endures all things. \_\_\_\_\_

Love never fails.” \_\_\_\_\_

*(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)*

*Read the scripture above, then rewrite it in the area provided, inserting the word “Jesus” in the places where the word “love” is written or implied.*

*Journal about this experience. Did it give you any new insight or revelation?*

I ADORE YOU OH CHRIST, AND I PRAISE YOU! BECAUSE BY  
YOUR HOLY CROSS, YOU HAVE REDEEMED THE WORLD.

## IMAGINE:

Veronica watches as he is cursed, beaten, falls, and gets up again. She seizes the moment, as the Roman soldier turns away, distracted by an unruly citizen. She steps in to offer her veil...

*Put yourself in this sixth station of The Merciful Journey. Imagine all the details of this event, and witness the encounter between Jesus and Veronica. Is she young, middle-aged, or older? Does she know Him? Is she afraid to defy the soldiers as she takes off her own veil to wipe His face? And you? Where are you in this story? Are you a bystander, one of His followers, a partaker in the cruelty toward him, or perhaps even Veronica herself? Where do your thoughts and feelings take you as you consider the many facets of this story? Express yourself in word or color below.*

## FR. SPITZER EXPLAINS:

“The Lord desires a heart of forgiveness, compassion, and mercy, a heart that is not indifferent to the needs of others, but can offer a smile, a kind word, and sometimes much more; a heart that tries, within its physical, mental, and spiritual limits, to respond as best it can; a heart that, at the very least, can pray for whatever it cannot heal or rectify; a heart that cares as Jesus does.”

*Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., Five Pillars of the Spiritual Life, page 58.*

*Share about a time that you emulated this quote in your own life. Is there anything holding you back from consistently living out this message.*

“I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.”

*St. Teresa of Calcutta*

*Based on the quote above, what would your love letter say to the world?*

## THE HEALING POWER OF STORY - REFLECTIONS OF A MAGIS WOMAN:

I have touched the face of our suffering Lord, and received the gift of His presence remaining with me.

I sat in the intersection at a red light watching the unbelievable: My teenage son being instructed to kneel on the sidewalk as his hands were cuffed behind him. It felt so unreal, like a movie moving in slow motion. As I fought back tears, I prayed for God to give me the strength to be the mother my son needed in that moment. After pulling over to park, I approached him with a mixture of fear, sorrow, pain, disappointment and disbelief, but also with an overwhelming sense of love and compassion. His car was totaled but thankfully no one was hurt. Following his DUI, I realized I would be driving him to school each morning, which conflicted with the time I attended daily mass. I asked the Lord how I could drive my son every day at that hour without harboring resentment towards him for taking me away from my Eucharistic devotion. I had come to cherish being able to receive Christ daily and knew I would miss that gift deeply. In prayer He said to me, "I am present in your son, as I am present in the Mass. When you welcome your son into your car each morning, you will receive Me and I will remain with you. Receive him with the same awe and reverence that you receive Me in the Bread."

The practice of embracing the presence of our suffering Lord in the face of my son has filled me with love and compassion and remains now, over seven years later as a priceless treasure in my life.

*Express your reaction to this story in word or color.*



**LISTEN:**

Tom Booth - Here I Am

<https://youtu.be/ZjI4R8mPk5U>

### **WISDOM OF THE CHURCH:**

“Necessary emphasis should be placed on the “genius of women”, not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day women fulfill their deepest vocation. Perhaps more than men, women acknowledge the person, because they see persons with their hearts. They see them independently of various ideological or political systems. They see others in their greatness and limitations; they try to go out to them and help them. In this way the basic plan of the Creator takes flesh in the history of humanity and there is constantly revealed, in the variety of vocations, that beauty-not merely physical, but above all spiritual-which God bestowed from the very beginning on all, and in a particular way on women.”

*St. John Paul II, Letter to Women*

“Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love.” *St. Thérèse de Lisieux*

*Reflecting on the above quotes, in what ways do you give yourself to others in love?*

### **A SIMPLE ACT:**

Do you own or have access to a scarf, pashmina, or some type of prayer shawl? If so, consider utilizing this in quiet worship before the Lord. You could imagine yourself as Veronica or any woman during Jesus’ time, when covering your head would have been something you did on a daily basis. What would it have been like to uncover your head in order to wipe the face of Jesus? Place your hand on your heart, close your eyes, and imagine you are doing that for Him now. If this idea seems too far-fetched for you, then incorporate this scarf, prayer shawl, (or any material you have on hand) into your home altar or as a table centerpiece this week and say a little prayer as you do so.

*Journal about any thoughts or feelings you have after you complete this exercise.*

### **A WORD OF HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY:**

*Read Matthew 25:37-40 and rewrite verse 40 below. Respond.*



## WELCOME TO ABBA TIME

### **ENTER:**

*Get comfortable in your prayer space. Take a deep breath and come before the Father with your request: “Abba, Father, please reveal your Mercy to me in a new or deeper way as I spend time in the silence with you.”*

### **EXPAND:**

*Write any thoughts and/or questions that were stirred up in you as you worked through this lesson. How did this lesson give you hope, encouragement, or healing? Consider writing your reflections as a letter to the Lord.*

### **EXPERIENCE:**

*Read and reflect on one or two of the scriptures that were featured in this lesson, and then, for an amount of time that you determine, enter into the silence with the Lord.*

### **EXPRESS:**

*On the following page, put word, images, or color to paper. Creatively respond to your experience of quiet time with the Lord.*