



The Final Act of Creation

A Poetic Way of the Cross

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Foreword

I wrote these Stations of the Cross in observance of Lent 2011. They are an attempt to sanctify my art, the paradoxical vanity and envy manifest in the human creative process, and all the mistakes that can flow from an insatiable and immediate desire for paradise. In my fiction and poetry, I try to engage humanity's longing for the mystery of its creation and fascination with its own creative power, the communion of all humanity, and the meaning of suffering. I wanted to reflect on the Passion as the expression and fulfillment of these desires. I look to the Passion as God's authorship of life, as an act that proves both the love of God's creation and the beauty of the humanity he creates, which God further beautifies and sanctifies in the suffering of our exile.

My reflection on the Passion of Christ as the final act of creation treats the Passion as a sacrifice foreknown and accepted in God's plan of creation and therefore part of the creative act itself. The Passion is abiding Love and Hope. We are as we are because Christ is before—before the choice of exile—sanctifying death before it ever closed our eyes.

In our loss of created paradise, we understand that we retained God's image but changed the nature of creation, introducing suffering, the fruit of disobedience. Christ accepts our suffering and participates in it, using it as the means for redemption.

Thus Jesus sanctifies even the fruit of disobedience so that all things are subjugated to God and bent to God's will, and there is no place in existence that is separate from God's love. He goes fully into our exile, even into death. Christ re-creates suffering and gives it meaning so that we may participate in both our suffering and our creating in Christ's image, becoming co-redeemers, as discussed in the apostolic

letter “On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering” by Blessed John Paul II. By sharing in transformed suffering, we share in Christ’s triumph and are near the Father, adorned in his creating, spilling life.

Christ transforms not only suffering but also humanity, continuing his creative act for us and our world. He takes on our flesh in the exile, and by going through death into the Resurrection, he sanctifies the flesh, gives us a new covenant, and reopens paradise. Christ makes good on humanity’s destiny from the beginning, finishing his creative work of uniting us with his promise and in his love. And God achieves all without ever robbing us of our humanity: He leaves us the free will that allows us to choose, that allows us to love, that retains our image of the Divine.

Because God is all time, humanity always exists in the fullness and perfection of his creating. But chronologically, here in the flesh, we understand ourselves to be waiting in the last times. Christ now has given humanity all it needs to come before the judgment of the Father.

These Stations are a combination of the traditional Stations remembered on the streets of Jerusalem and a version of the Stations given to us by Blessed John Paul II, which draw also on parts of the Passion remembered in Scripture. I have taken the liberty of arranging and combining these versions in a way I hope will lend to the themes I describe in this foreword.

Throughout these Stations, readers will recognize the interrelation of all three Persons of the Trinity rather than Christ alone. Each divine Person cooperates in the Passion, because the Passion is part of the long arc of creation and redemption as a whole. Readers will also recognize references from the Old and New Testaments throughout the Stations, reflecting on Christ as the fulfillment of promise and revelation from the beginning.

Furthermore, these Stations emphasize the Eucharist as an ever-present unity with God and Christ's timeless sacrifice, through which the Passion shines as an enduring and current reality of love in all times and seasons. In Christ's

image, we live in communion with all creation and with Christ's reunifying mission, as Jesus shares with us his creative power.

It is my hope that these Stations will bring readers a new perspective on the compelling beauty of suffering and not simply its pain. I hope readers will recall not only Christ's suffering but also Christ's unity with our suffering, giving a deeper scope to the existence and redemptive meaning of the suffering that remains in creation.

David Michael Belczyk
September 2011

We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you
because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.



The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives

The agony comes
like vindication comes,
a vindicator
waiting on the agony
as generations wait for the Messiah,
chosen in him
before the foundation of the world.

The Redeemer lives in this torment,
a promise proved through sinners.

Before me it stands written,
I will not be quiet until I have paid in full
your crimes and the crimes of your fathers,
I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth.

Humanity inherits mortality,
I inherit humanity
to return to the destiny of the Father.
I Am the new inheritance.

I the first fruit
return to creation's garden,
by my wounds to heal the wound of exile.
I weep.
Forever I have known this moment,
when I will have the final and full truth
of Eden's defiance.

My heart is like wax near a fire.
My throat is dry.
My tongue cleaves to my palate.
You are to lay me in the dust of death.

I pray, Father,
let this cup pass.
Do not submit me to human weakness.
But the Father's will be done,
because he knows already
this blood tastes of redemption.

All language from all lips
comes to the Word
in the entreating reign of this eternal plea
for salvation.

So the Father's Word comes
even to the brink of destruction.
Courage exhales life in the devouring void.
From the breath comes paradise,
and exile from paradise to life,
and foreknowledge of a necessary Redeemer
who follows into the exile.

Now in the Garden
of Gethsemane begins
the exile from life to death,
for the restoration of paradise,
where even the creative sigh of
the Father labors.

And sweat like eucharistic blood.