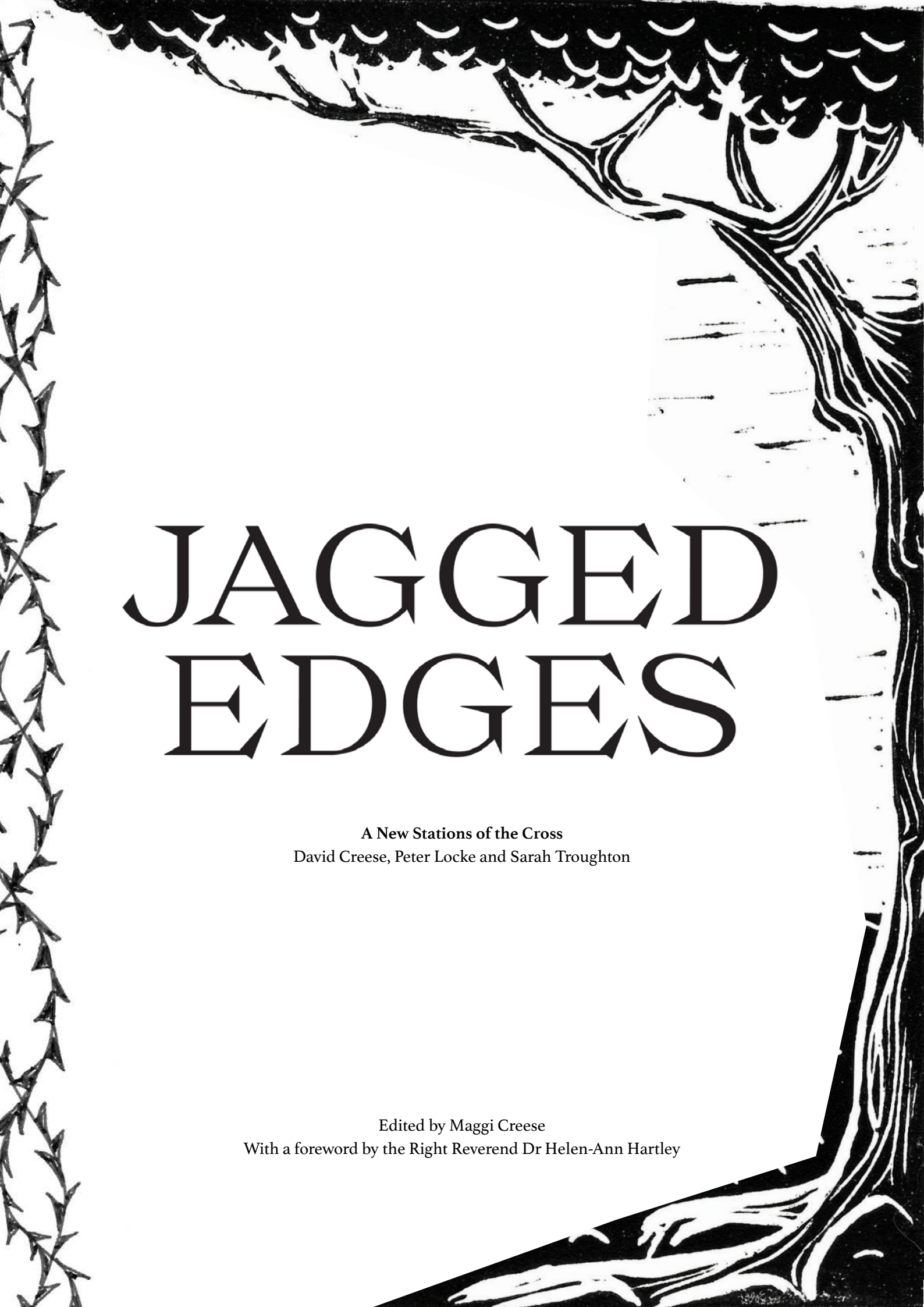

JAGGED EDGES

A New Stations of the Cross

David Creese, Peter Locke and Sarah Troughton

Edited by Maggi Creese

With a foreword by the Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

Jagged Edges
A New Stations of the Cross

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Edited by Maggi Creese

With a foreword by the Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
and additional illustrations by Sarah Troughton

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE Seeking. Sharing. Sending.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL

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Foreword

I am delighted and honoured to be invited to write a brief foreword for this remarkable project. Having come into the Diocese of Newcastle I was aware very quickly of the pioneering work that had been developed with the victims and survivors of church-related abuse. That a leader in the institutional Church of England should be invited to offer some words here is not something I take for granted. So often the institution and its leadership has failed those who have trusted themselves into its worshipping life and community. This is not a matter of history for Christian churches, it is a present-day reality.

I write in the season of Easter, specifically what is known as the 'Octave of Easter': the period of eight days that immediately follows the joy of Easter Day. One of the readings from Scripture that features in this period is the story of the road to Emmaus. As two disciples walk on the road, discussing the events of Jesus's death and resurrection they are joined by a stranger who accompanies them. It is only when they sit down at dinner together and the stranger breaks bread that the disciples recognise that it is in fact Jesus who is with them. I wonder what stories were shared over dinner. Was there laughter, were there tears? Perhaps gladness, or sadness? I'd like to think there was an invitation to keep journeying together, to tell the story afresh and to allow life in all its raw reality to be wrapped in to the cycle of the story of Jesus's death and resurrection.

There is an element of all of this in *Jagged Edges*, not least because this project is rooted in the Gospel Passion narratives of Holy Week and Easter. The fragmented narrative that forms the broad canvas on which David, Peter and Sarah map their own stories in poetry, art and music reflects the fragments of lives that retain the jagged edges of trauma and pain. While this remains unresolved to an extent, I certainly have found that my own experience of listening and pastoral accompaniment has been shaped by the edges that are jagged. Too often we demand resolution and neatness whereas in the Christian story God holds the fracture, enabling the brokenness to be held by the cross of Jesus that forms the heart of the Easter story. It is this holding that searches for (in the words of David, Peter and Sarah) the work of 'repair, reconciliation and recovery'. For me, as a church leader, the most powerful element of *Jagged Edges* is that it is the victims and survivors who lead and offer company on the Emmaus road. I invite you to travel on that road too and be transformed by all that you will encounter there. Bread is broken, the edges are torn, crumbs fall, the body is made whole again as we recognise it is Jesus who is with us. I conclude this short piece with a profound word of thanks to David, Peter and Sarah. It is their names and stories that guide us and for that I say a heartfelt thank you.

+Helen-Ann, Bishop of Newcastle

Acknowledgements

For their generous funding, we thank the Bishop of Newcastle, Newcastle Cathedral and its Cathedral Lantern Project, and the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance. For proposing the idea of undertaking a project connected with the Stations of the Cross we thank Pete Askew. For his encouragement at an early stage of the project we thank Bishop Stephen Wright. For enabling us to disseminate some of this work when it was still in progress, we thank Newcastle Cathedral and the International Centre for Moral Injury at Durham University, and in particular ICMI's Director, Brian Powers, and Administrator, Jane Lidstone. We are grateful to Shieldfield Art Works for opening their gallery space to us in April 2025, allowing the *Jagged Edges* exhibition to reach an audience that included those for whom it may not have been safe to enter a church building, and to the wonderful SAW staff, Lydia Hiorns, Gemma Herries, Benji Spence, Lorna Bryan and Adam Wilkinson, for their practical help and encouragement. We thank Andrew Wilson for introducing us to the SAW team. We are grateful to Pete Askew, Rae Caro and Rhona Knight for reading this booklet in draft and helping us to improve it with their feedback and suggestions. We thank +Helen-Ann Hartley, Bishop of Newcastle, and Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle, for the courage and integrity with which they continue to support all victims and survivors of abuse.

Contents

Foreword iii
The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

List of Contributors viii

Note to the Reader x

General Introduction 1
Maggi Creese

Introductions to the Stations 5
David Creese, Peter Locke and Sarah Troughton

The Stations of the Cross 9
David Creese, Peter Locke and Sarah Troughton

Reflections on the Prints 45
Sarah Troughton

Notes on the Poems 53
David Creese

Suggestions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion 54
David Creese, Maggi Creese, Peter Locke and Sarah Troughton

Where to Find Support 59

Contributors

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Peter Locke is an organist and composer.

Sarah Troughton is an NHS psychiatrist and Associate Dean for Veterans' Health.

The value

of joy is in its

asking, *what now shall I repair*?

Kaveh Akbar, 'The Value of Fear'

To Consider Before Proceeding

You may find the content of this booklet difficult, and it may resonate with you in ways you didn't expect. Please be kind to yourself and engage with this material wisely. If anything feels unsafe, put it aside. If you need to speak with someone about anything that this material raises for you, please seek out someone you trust. You will find contact details for organisations that can help if you need further support on p. 59.

General Introduction

In 2022 Newcastle Diocese launched a set of resources called *If I Told You, What Would You Do?* These resources, created by David Creese and Sarah Troughton, combine the principles of trauma-informed care with Christian theology and the voices of those with lived experience of trauma caused in and by the Church. Their aim is to engage with survivors and to help others in the Church know how to respond well to them and build confidence in their ability to do so.

Around that time, one of our clergy colleagues, Pete Askew, then Bishop's Chaplain, expressed the hope that we would be able to keep this conversation going, and he wondered if we might do something related to the Stations of the Cross.

This suggestion came when I happened to be educating myself about moral injury, and when I was starting to have conversations with Sarah, a psychiatrist who specialises in treating military veterans, about the need to educate others in the Church about moral injury as well. It was also around the time that I was getting to know Peter Locke, and we invited him to join Sarah and David in thinking about how they might engage creatively with the Stations of the Cross with moral injury in mind.

As defined by the International Centre for Moral Injury at Durham University,

> Moral Injury refers to the experience of sustained and enduring negative moral emotions — guilt, shame, contempt and anger — that results from the betrayal, violation or suppression of deeply held or shared moral values.
>
> It is distinct from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which entails the body and mind's adaptation to situations of extreme fear and stress. Moral Injury involves a profound sense of broken trust in ourselves, our leaders, governments and institutions to act in just and morally 'good' ways.[1]

The violation of deep moral beliefs that causes moral injury may be carried out by oneself or by trusted individuals.[2] It is important to note that moral injury is not a disorder or a mental health problem; rather, as Rita Nakashima Brock describes it, moral injury is a 'morally appropriate response to devastating life conditions'.[3] It is 'a wound in the soul'.[4]

It is also important to note that what is at the root of moral injury is something that all socialised humans experience, namely, moral conflict, and that moral conflict sits on a spectrum.

---

[1] https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/moral-injury/what-is-moral-injury/

[2] J. D. Jinkerson (2016), 'Defining and assessing moral injury: a syndrome perspective', *Traumatology* 22.2: 122–30.

[3] R. N. Brock (2023), 'The use of ritual in moral injury', Robbins Lecture, Durham University, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIWIsz-8KJo

[4] R. N. Brock and G. Lettini (2011), 'How do we repair the souls of those returning from Iraq?' *The Huffington Post* (26 October 2011). Available at: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-war-is-coming-home-so_b_1027499

At the least severe end of this spectrum is something that causes moral discomfort: perhaps witnessing a teacher or parent punish an innocent classmate or sibling, for example. In the middle of the spectrum is something that causes moral distress acute enough that you might lose sleep over it and find that it has an impact on your ability to function well. Many of us can probably recall experiences of moral distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. If moral distress accumulates over time or we experience a betrayal or violation of our deeply held moral code in an 'environment thick with moral responsibility', as Zachary Moon has put it (e.g. military combat, treating COVID-19 patients in an over-crowded hospital, reporting an allegation of abuse in a church), then we may sustain a full-blown moral injury, which involves a crisis of trust and identity and can cause severe anxiety and depression.[5]

Church-related abuse can cause moral injury not only to the victims, who may feel betrayed by their faith group or even by God, but also to others in the Church who, by not passing on a report of abuse or not responding to a disclosure with compassion, may have failed to act in accordance with their own moral values. Both victims and bystanders have also been betrayed by those in positions of authority who have perpetrated abuse or covered it up. And many in the Church who have no direct connection with anyone involved in a case of abuse will nevertheless experience moral discomfort and distress when they hear the stories of victims and survivors.

The Gospel Passion narratives lend themselves to an exploration of moral injury in the context of church-related abuse, and they already represent 'commonly held stories'[6] that provide the contents for communal, performative rituals during Holy Week. Participants may take part in a passion play, re-enacting the events that led up to the crucifixion, or they may 'walk the way of the cross' on Good Friday, using the Stations of the Cross to follow the path from Pilate's house, where Jesus was condemned to death, to Calvary, where he was crucified, and engage actively with Jesus's suffering.

In his book *The Body of Jesus and Sexual Abuse*, Michael Trainor presents the Passion narratives as stories of abuse, including abuse of power by religious authorities.[7] Two priests in the United States, Paul Turner and Ronald Patrick Raab, have published a Stations of the Cross liturgy in which they invite the Church to contemplate the Passion of Jesus through the experience of survivors of clerical abuse.[8]

While these efforts to encourage members of the Church and its leaders to empathise with survivors are very welcome, they are clergy-led and they are examples of the Church speaking to and on behalf of victims and survivors.[9]

[5] Z. Moon, 'Reflections', delivered at the conference *Narratives of Moral Injury in European and International Contexts*, Durham University, 10 April 2024. The moral conflict spectrum was illustrated by Brock in her Robbins Lecture (see n. 3 above).

[6] S. Jones (2019), *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a ruptured world*, Second Edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press).

[7] M. Trainor (2014), *The Body of Jesus and Sexual Abuse: How the Gospel Passion narratives inform a pastoral response* (Sydney: Morning Star).

[8] P. Turner and R. P. Raab (2020), *The Stations of the Cross* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press).

[9] It was only after the artistic components of *Jagged Edges* had been finalised that we became aware of Pádraig Ó Tuama's set of poems which serve as a reflection on the 14 Stations of the Cross traditionally used in the Roman Catholic tradition. P. Ó Tuama (2021), 'This is ~~My~~ A Body', in J. R. Reaves, D. Tombs and R. Figueroa (eds.), *When Did We See You Naked? Jesus as a Victim of Sexual Abuse* (London: SCM Press), 131–46.

What happens when survivors of church-related abuse use the Stations of the Cross as a means to speak both to their fellow survivors and to those who let them down in the communities where they were harmed? This was the question that emerged when we brought together David, Peter and Sarah, all of whom have lived experience of abuse in a church context.

Our answer is contained in this booklet. *Jagged Edges* combines a theoretical and practical understanding of moral injury with Christian theology and the voices of those with lived experience of the moral injury that can be sustained alongside the trauma of abuse. Peter, Sarah and David have each approached the Passion narratives from their own perspective and through a different artistic medium, to co-create their own Stations of the Cross. These Stations draw meaningful connections between the shared narrative of Jesus's Passion and the lived experience of individuals harmed in Christian churches.

We offer these Stations as a framework that might be used to develop Lent courses and Bible studies, or rituals and liturgies of lament, healing and reconciliation. The entire set of Stations could be approached in the way the traditional Stations are followed in Good Friday liturgies: that is to say, in the order in which the episodes occur in scripture. But there are, we think, many ways in which one might engage with this material. One might approach only one or two Stations that resonate and feel safe and accessible, for example, and they could be taken in an order different from the one in which they appear in the story. It seems to us that some of the Stations can be paired with each other, to be explored through the ways in which the scenes speak to and into each other. In a separate section on p. 54 you will find a set of suggestions for individuals and groups to reflect on the Stations in ways we hope will be fruitful. We hope that this booklet will serve as a helpful resource in churches to promote and facilitate conversations about church-related abuse and the moral injury it causes.

Some might question the wisdom of promoting such difficult conversations in the Church; some might wonder, 'what good would that do?' One answer is that because moral injuries are sustained in the context of relationships and involve a profound sense of broken trust, healing from these injuries in the Church likewise involves repairing relationships in the Church. In other words, this is not just about the victims and survivors of abuse; it is about all of us. As Jesus said to his disciples, 'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12.32 [NRSV]). The Church already has the resources necessary for moral repair, and that is why we are proposing to frame these conversations through engagement with a shared narrative that is familiar and meaningful, and that lends itself to ritual as well as to personal and communal reflection. This effort is worth undertaking, despite the challenge of the conversations it facilitates, because such conversations, if held in an environment of moral safety, can promote healing.

The title *Jagged Edges* reflects the unique elements of survivors' individual experiences of moral injury, which, like the Passion narratives, overlap but do not fit neatly together; it reflects the dissonant combination of God's love and the harm done in and by God's Church in those experiences; and it reflects the fact that survivors often engage with the Church from the periphery, because that is where they feel safe. You will see all of these jagged edges in the pages that follow. Sarah, David and Peter have each brought their unique experiences and talents to the story of Jesus's Passion, and when you put their work together the result is a complex and nuanced response to the Gospels. There are places where Sarah and David have responded to the same scene from the story without knowing ahead of time that they would meet up in those moments, and there are places where each artist has been directly inspired by something offered by one of the others. Sarah's *Peter on the Beach* emerged from hearing David tell that part of the story in conversation; Peter's *Intersections* is a response to Sarah's *Peter's Denial*; and David's *They Asked Pilate to Have their Legs Broken* came to him after a conversation with Sarah and Peter about Holy Saturday, when he already had what he thought was a complete set of poems. But each set of pieces also stands on its own and each responds to parts of the story the others leave out.

It has been a great pleasure to see this project, which began with a conversation on a Saturday morning in Sarah's parish church, come together into such a powerful and moving whole. What I find most remarkable about Peter, Sarah and David's work is that it is full of compassion for the Church that harmed them, and that it is the expression of an open, loving invitation to the rest of the Church to meet them on the beach with Peter and Jesus. It is my hope and prayer that the Church, or at least the parts of it that are ready, will accept this invitation.

Maggi Creese

Introductions to the Stations

The Poems

As a university student many years ago, I was invited to join a team of volunteers on a large project that was producing a new edition of one of the four accounts of the life of Jesus commonly referred to as 'Gospels'. I was not studying theology, and I knew very little about the history of the text. I had been asked to participate because as a classicist I knew the language of the New Testament (an early form of Greek), and because the task was relatively simple: to read photographed pages of a Gospel-book copied by hand in the seventh century alongside a modern printed edition, and note any differences between the two. Hundreds of other early copies of the same Gospel were being read and compared by other volunteers.

When the page is undamaged and the writing is clear, the work is straightforward, but it requires close observation and patient attention to minute detail. It is a kind of reading that cannot be hurried.

The first pages I was given contained a passage from the Gospel of John recounting the civil trial of Jesus before the Roman provincial governor, Pontius Pilate, and his torture by Roman soldiers under Pilate's orders (John 18-19). I was by no means unfamiliar with the story, but to read it like this — slowly and carefully in the original language, paying close attention to every stroke of an ancient pen — was an entirely different experience. The words hurt. They had not hurt this much in English, in the churches of my childhood.

The churches of my childhood had taught me this story, nevertheless: of what it is to be betrayed by people you trusted, to be harmed in body and mind by those whose actions are at variance with their words, and to be excluded by your own religious community and its leaders for speaking the truth. It was not by reading and preaching the Gospels that those churches taught me this story. Actions always teach us more than words.

Still, words can make meaningful connections: between times and places, between past and present, between one person and another. Sometimes these connections are too painful to bear, and we turn our attention elsewhere. I was not ready, as a student, to trace the pain to its source. Over twenty years later, the invitation to co-create this Stations of the Cross with two other survivors of church-related abuse has provided an opportunity to revisit more safely the difficult connections the biblical story raises for me, and for the three of us. In these words, images and music, we speak not only for ourselves, but to and for those who have either lived through similar things, or have felt betrayed, outraged or forsaken by a Church whose leaders have exercised power without love and failed to protect the vulnerable.

The connection between our experiences of abuse in the Church and the sufferings of Jesus may not seem as obvious to some as they do to us. Evoking such a connection, let alone exploring it creatively as we have done, may even seem inappropriate. But as Serene Jones puts it in her book *Trauma and Grace* (2009), 'the mirrored cross reflects our own stories of suffering back'. In the initial stages of the work we found Michael Trainor's readings of the Gospel Passion narratives in *The Body of Jesus and Sexual Abuse* (2014) a particularly rich source of ideas and inspiration. For many survivors of church-related abuse, the visceral connection between this story and our own is as painfully clear as it was to the apostle Paul: 'For I bear on my body the marks of Jesus' (Galatians 6.17).

By exploring this connection together in this way, we are attempting a kind of reparative work that begins simultaneously from the jagged edges of the Church and from inside its wounded heart. One of the problems we have had to face throughout the creative process is how to do reparative work at all in a Church so deeply morally injured by its own failings. Quite early on we realised that it would be essential to set aside the traditional Stations of the Cross, and allow ourselves to be guided by the ways the story spoke to each of us through our own individual experiences not only of harm, but of the painful pairing Jones calls 'trauma and grace'. This led us to conclude that our Stations of the Cross must extend beyond Jesus's death to include his resurrection and the incipient repair of his broken relationship with Peter on the beach. By framing our Stations so as to look forward to that moment, and to look backward from it, we have confronted the challenge of addressing a morally injured Church by envisioning repair through the lens of trauma, and trauma through the lens of repair.

In approaching the Passion narratives for this project, I began where I had left off: with the Greek text of the Gospels. The uncomfortable intimacy of working at such close quarters with these accounts of Jesus's suffering, death and resurrection is what gave rise to the form of the resulting poems. Each begins with a phrase from one of the Gospels, quoted in English and in Greek. The lines that follow draw on this phrase, or on a single word which may have more than one meaning, or on another word or phrase it evokes from another text. Where relevant, such words are noted at the foot of the page. I have drawn widely from passages elsewhere in the Bible that intersect with the themes of each Station. References to these passages are provided on p. 53.

David Creese

The Music

Aside from the daily round of practice for liturgies and concerts, I have been devoting much of my time to composition and arranging and to the creation of these soundscapes. At the initial stage of composition, I use traditional methods: piano, pencil and manuscript. Notation programmes enable my work to be formatted in a virtual instrumental medium (e.g. a String Quartet or a Jazz/Rock Combo). Once the composition is in the digital domain, it can be further arranged and scored. I then use synthesisers to enhance the traditional instrumental texture and to create ambience.

Suffering. Shame. Solitude. Silence. These all find a voice. Through the process of disclosure and peer support we, who have been morally harmed, can articulate that voice. We are listened to. We are not treated with contempt or disdain. As measured against the stature of our Lord, flawed and frail we are. As human beings, we can nevertheless stand up and be counted. As Christians we learn that above all else, the only power worth having is the power to become children of God (John 1:12).

Disclosure and the subsequent process of engagement with peer support is not a soft option. For the individual survivor, navigating the complex topology of his or her inner space, that which, at various times, in various locations and in various ways has been violated or crossed, requires strength and courage. Healing begins in the place of pain.

My experience with peer support has encouraged me to look deeper into events that form the substance of my story. Things happened to me that should not have happened. I blamed myself. I felt ashamed.

The experience of working on this project with Sarah and David has helped me to rebuild self-confidence and trust in others. I have a long way to go, but I am using my musical skills and knowledge to help others, and I hope that this will continue.

The Collect for purity reminds us that, from Almighty God, no secrets are hid. We are all accountable. We are all entitled to trust, and to be trusted. We are all entitled to have our voices heard. We need confidence to speak and to be listened to in confidence, and with confidentiality. We need neither gossip, nor slander.

I hope that the Church will continue to work to be a Christian presence in every community, including the community of the hurt, injured and wounded.

Peter Locke

The Prints

The process of lino printing is symbolic: a perfect sheet of lino is cut into or damaged — relating to the experience of trauma. Then it is covered in ink — relating to the shame, guilt and self-condemnation experienced after the abuse. Next, a sheet of paper is laid onto it, hiding it from view — relating to our stories being denied, avoided or dismissed. However, after a process involving significant pressure and effort, an image is revealed with its own story. And it is beautiful and powerful, even with its imperfections — this represents our story as it is before you now.

The details of the faces are intentionally absent in the images. This is to leave space for you to consider the emotions of the individuals involved in each scene and to put yourself in their place, in order to reflect on their experiences.

When recalling a traumatic event, no two versions are the same. This is because the laying down and retrieval of memories can be impaired during a trauma. Individuals who experience extreme stress or threat can become detached from their emotions, thoughts and surroundings. This helps them cope at the time by distancing themselves from the overwhelming emotional intensity of their experience. In such experiences, recall of individual details of an event can be enhanced, whereas the ability to connect and sequence events or remember contextual details can be impaired. This leads to a fragmented or disorganised memory of events, which may include memory gaps or distortions. The usual narrative structure of such memories breaks down. Replacing a coherent, linear recollection, the memory might be recounted as disjointed images, emotions, or sensations. This fracturing can make it difficult for the traumatised to process and make sense of what has happened to them.

The four Gospel accounts of the traumatic events leading up to and including the crucifixion of Jesus seem to reflect the fragmentation that occurs in traumatic memory. The events recounted in the Passion narratives were transmitted by people who cared deeply about Jesus and who were affected directly not only by what was happening to him but also by a direct threat to their own security and by their own moral injuries. The accounts of the events vary as they get closer to the most distressing parts of the trauma, where the stories are even more fragmented or dissonant, don't flow in the same way and focus on different aspects of what was happening, with some details altogether absent in some of the accounts. The edges of these stories are jagged.

In our work, Peter, David and I are recalling our own individual traumatic and morally injurious experiences in the Church, with all their commonalities and differences. Our pieces don't map on to each other directly, and this is intentional. The edges are jagged.

Sarah Troughton

The Stations of the Cross

Below you will find Sarah's linocut prints and David's poems. We have, as far as possible, recreated the sequence in which these appeared in an exhibition at Shieldfield Art Works in April 2025. One disadvantage of the booklet format is that we have not been able to pair prints with poems visually, as was possible on the gallery walls.

Please visit our webpage to access recordings of Peter's music, as well as audio recordings of David's poems: https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/jagged-edges/

Sleeping (in the Garden)

I

AND THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HIM

καὶ οὐκ ᾔδεισαν τί ἀποκριθῶσιν αὐτῷ
(Mark 14.40)

they say nothing they
stare at the floor like there's

bread and wine waiting for them down there a
meal for silent lips and I say again can't you

wait with me five minutes just
five even two OK

just half a minute just
long enough to meet my eye

and see in me the face
Judas keeps kissing again

and again the cheek
no soap can cleanse

but their eyes are on the
floor so clean you could lick Christ's
blood from it while my words
hang above their gaze like motes
stained red in the eye of the
glass that says THE AGONY

IN THE GARDEN καὶ
    they do not know τί

ἀποκριθῶσιν and οὐκ
    ᾔδεισαν what to say

and they have no idea
    τί ἀποκριθῶσιν and

οὐκ ᾔδεισαν how on earth
    to respond

And They Did Not Know What to Say to Him (David Creese)

Alone (Peter Locke)

Anguish and Solace

Embraced by Betrayal

II

AND EVERYONE DESERTED HIM AND FLED

καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἔφυγον πάντες
(Mark 14.50)

they see I'm done for and they run
save their skins, leave me to fend
forfeit flee forsake freak out anything but
feign friendliness like nothing's happening when
everything is tilting into the mouth of an
appetite without a body to give it
limits

so I run, too
when it's too late I run with abandon
holding one question in my hand while
biting the other between my teeth

the second I spit on the flagstones while
they are flogging you:
    Why
    was I
    chosen
    to endure
    this?

the first I keep hidden in the hollow of my fist:
    Where were you?

ἔφυγον, *third person:* they fled
ἔφυγον, *first person:* I fled

And Everyone Deserted Him and Fled (David Creese)

Intersections (Peter Locke)

Peter's Denial

III

AND SOME BEGAN TO SPIT ON HIM AND TO COVER HIS FACE

καὶ ἤρξαντό τινες ἐμπτύειν αὐτῷ καὶ περικαλύπτειν αὐτοῦ τὸ πρόσωπον
(Mark 14.65)

when I stand before the gleaming rail
polished beyond smudge of fingerprint
the words for the things spill out
and fill the scented air between that cup
and these lips

unclean lips

and blasphemy they cry blasphemy
    and on the altar no coals no tongs no seraphs no holyholyholy

blasphemy they cry blasphemy
    heart calloused ears dull

blasphemy they cry blasphemy
    stumps of terebinth and oak

blasphemy they cry blasphemy
and they tear the alb the stole the mitre, bend
the crozier, rip off their broad phylacteries
    and underneath, foreheads
    leprous as Uzziah's

blasphemy they cry blasphemy
and snatching the purple cloth from the
shrouded crucifix
they cover my face before the altar of the LORD
they strip you naked to hide the shame of me

lest I prophesy again

    who hit me?

    who hit me?

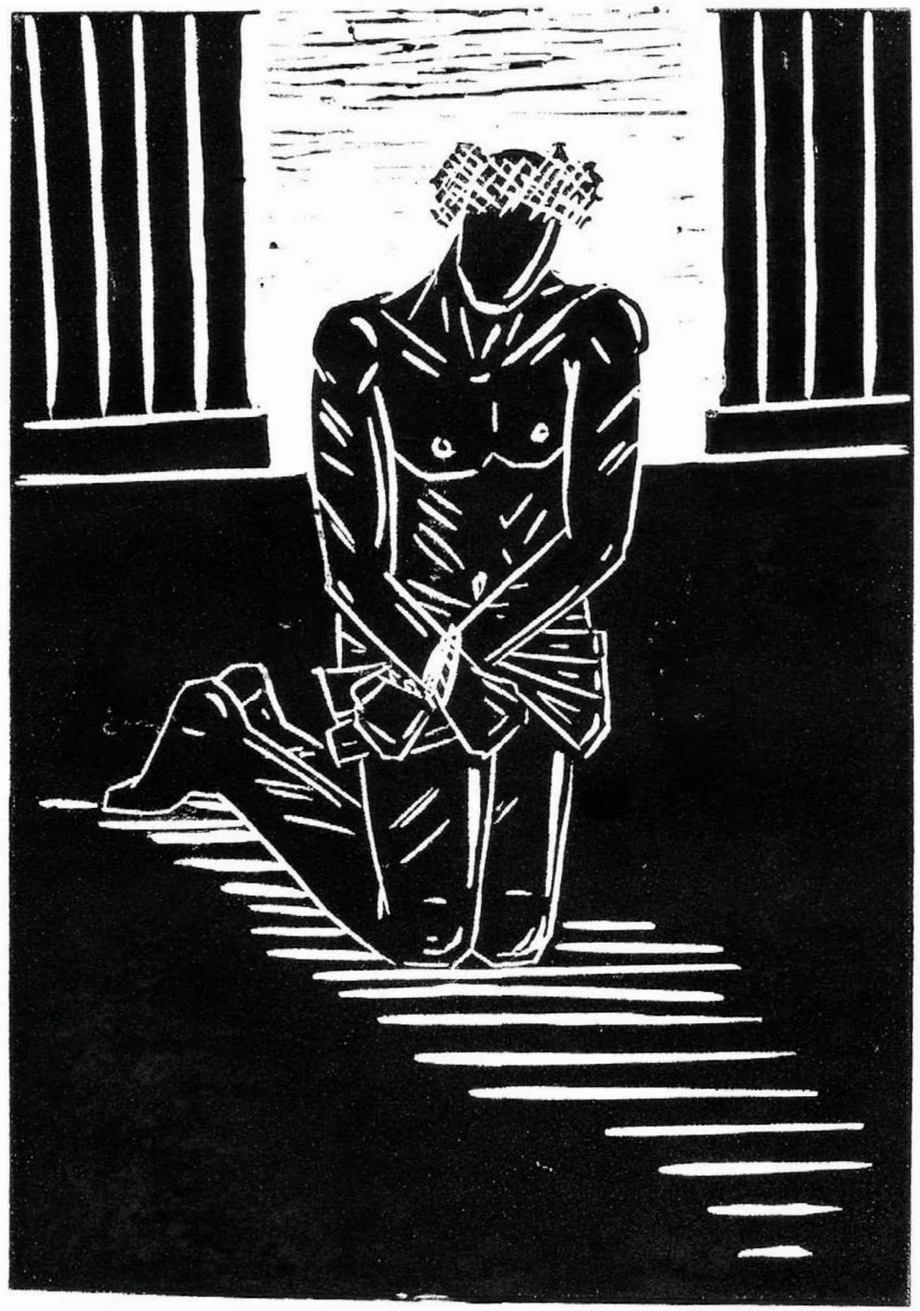
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land

περικαλύπτειν: to cover up

And Some Began to Spit on Him and to Cover his Face (David Creese)

Crossing the Bridge (Peter Locke)

Beaten



IV

AND A REED IN HIS RIGHT HAND

καὶ κάλαμον ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ
(Matthew 27.29)

what is it?
a reed a flute a staff a pen a yardstick an arrow a fishing rod
you hold it because they place it in your palm
    the oldest reflex

what is it?
it is agency it is dignity it is voice it is honour it is truth it is
music it is proportion it is the force of attraction

they genuflect, and it is none of that

it is a whippystick to smack the thorns in deeper
it is the splintered reed that wounds the hand that leans on it
it is their saliva on your sternum, because the cloak doesn't cover you
it is the party hat that pierces the scalp
it is the new clothes that expose you before all their eyes

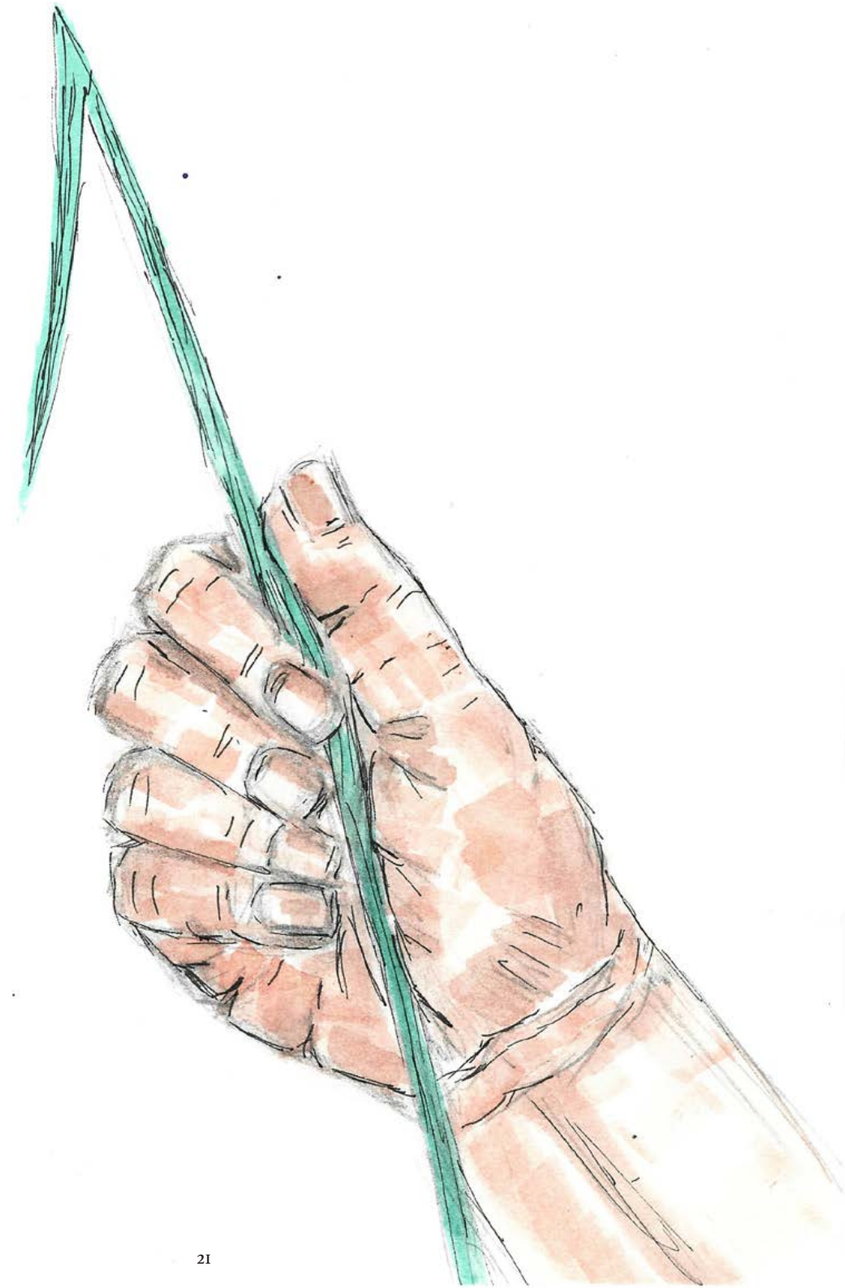
it is none of the things they tell you it is

it is #YouToo #YouToo #YouToo

and between the blows that echo across the church hall
I message you back:
    A bruised reed he will not break
    A bruised reed he will not break
    A bruised reed he will not break

κάλαμος: reed; *also* staff, flute, shaft of an arrow, measuring-rod, pen, fishing rod

And a Reed in His Right Hand (David Creese)



‘Crucify Him!’

THEY PUT THE CROSS ON HIM TO CARRY BEHIND JESUS

ἐπέθηκαν αὐτῷ τὸν σταυρὸν φέρειν ὄπισθεν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
(Luke 23.26)

it is like this: they wear you down
until you cannot carry it
so you fall you float
away fast like a twig on the bearded face
of a beck in spate
and before you are back, another bears it
for no strength is great enough
    not even yours

but it is not strength we crave
when the wood is green and yet they still plant
wickedness, reap
evil, and gorge themselves on the fruit
of deception

it is not strength we crave
but company

and we bless the ones who weep for us
we bless them in their
    emptiness

we bless as we watch the thorns and thistles
grow up and cover the altars

we bless to keep from saying to the steeples,
    Fall on us
and to the bells,
    Cover us

we bless even as we say again,
    Not one stone upon another

φέρειν: to bear, carry, endure

They Put the Cross on Him to Carry Behind Jesus (David Creese)

Proteus (Peter Locke)

CASTING LOTS FOR THEM

βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ᾽ αὐτά
(Mark 15.24)

three herons in a field with no horizon — *o vos omnes*
I stop to look — *qui transitis per viam*
fret furls the fenceposts — *attendite et videte*
two fly off; the third — *si est dolor*
just gazes — *sicut dolor meus*

and I hold my breath while they roll
a pair of sheep-bone dice for your
dew-jewelled plumage, regal
on a rise in the shorn field
king of the harvest

they pluck you bare for all to taunt — *sicut dolor meus*
feathers cover the path like straw on a stable floor — *si est dolor*
where those who win the toss whittle them to — *attendite et videte*
quills and write fine words without meaning — *qui transitis per viam*
for thus they inherit their portion — *o vos omnes*

κλῆρος: a lot (cast or drawn)
κληρονομία: inheritance

Casting Lots for Them (David Creese)

Crooked (Peter Locke)

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING

πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἴδασιν τί ποιοῦσιν
(Luke 23.34)

Father, how can you forgive them they know
exactly
what they are doing they have done it
before they will do it again and each
time they will say it was a mistake a
one-off a special case a misunderstanding a
terrible blunder a little thing blown completely
out of proportion

Father, how can you forgive them they do it
to wound they do it to crush they do it to
teach me my place they do it to protect
themselves their friends their jobs their
reputations their grasp of a universe where
all is light

Father, how can you forgive them they
say they never did it they say I was
difficult they say I asked for it they say
I had it coming to me they say do I
realise the seriousness of the allegations
I am making they say do I really want to
ruin an illustrious career they say I will
only harm myself they say they are the
victims they say I am
crucifying them

they say who do you think you are?

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make straight the way of the LORD

I am a reed shaken by the wind

Father, how can you forgive them they are trapped
in themselves they do not know how to
repent

ἄφες: forgive, let go, set free

Father, Forgive Them, for They Do Not Know What They Are Doing (David Creese)

Tetrardus (Peter Locke)

Recognition

VIII

JESUS CRIED OUT IN A LOUD VOICE

ἐβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ
(Mark 15.34)

they think he is calling for Elijah
because when Elijah was hungry you sent him ravens
now he says, I thirst
and your silence says, εἰς κόρακας

and to the ravens he goes
roaring hoarse with the voice we lost, shaking
the firmament of the black heavens with
the question we dared not say aloud
    answering it for ourselves:
        because we were not worth saving

and he dies with his thirst unquenched
his question floating on the darkness like an ark
until we make a window
and send out a raven
to fly back and forth
while the waters dry from the face of the earth

we rest our chins on the windowsills, watching
them row their way above the waves
and we remember his words: κατανοήσατε τοὺς κόρακας
    Notice the ravens
before the doves, before the olive leaves
    Notice the ravens

εἰς κόρακας: to the ravens (with you), i.e. go hang

Jesus Cried Out in a Loud Voice (David Creese)

THEY ASKED PILATE TO HAVE THEIR LEGS BROKEN

ἠρώτησαν τὸν Πειλᾶτον ἵνα κατεαγῶσιν τὰ σκέλη
(John 19.31)

they've all gone in
and while they eat the golden calf I stand outside
stoning Caiaphas

Annas got away he's hacking the website
adding scare-quotes to the cartouche like locusts
flanking the glyph of the lamb while the Jordan
runs red with blood, squirms with the tadpoles
of plagues averted, cut short with a few
smart blows to the legs

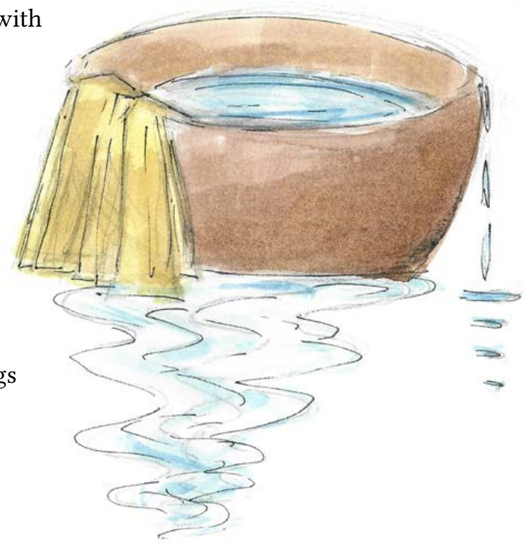
they brought the spear, the clouds
unfolded, and after the blood, water
caught in a cup cleaned on the outside
dregs of a life lived in the shadow
of Egypt

they bring it to Pilate and he washes
his hands in it
carefully, one gold ring at a time

then hush a moment and listen as he raises the dead
branch broken just now from the tree of the knowledge of good
and evil by a noose lighter than an evening kiss
its leaves dry as paper, whispering
quod scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi
scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi
scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi scripsiscripsi
till he plunges it in, lifts it dripping
high over his shoulder to sprinkle the people with
truth

and they did not cease
the sword did not sleep
and they built
Jerusalem

little wonder their impatience now:
this is taking too long please break their legs
there's a party on please break their legs
we can't wait forever please break their legs
this is a bit of an eyesore please break their legs
when will this be over please break their legs
and take them down



κατεαγῶσιν: that they be broken

They Asked Pilate to Have their Legs Broken (David Creese)

Altered State of Time and Place (Peter Locke)

Void

X

COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY

δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο
(Matthew 28.6)

they say nothing they
fall to the ground

shaken at the frequency of
light, rocked on the wavelengths of a glory

that turns emptiness into capacity
a hollow to hold and not to fill

that teaches us to carry in our palm
the place they wanted us to lie

that says too late
    he got there first

that says come see
    τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο

that says δεῦτε ἴδετε
    the place ὅπου ἔκειτο

that says δεῦτε ἴδετε
    τὸν τόπον where he lay

Come, See the Place Where He Lay (David Creese)

Peter on the Beach

Epilogue

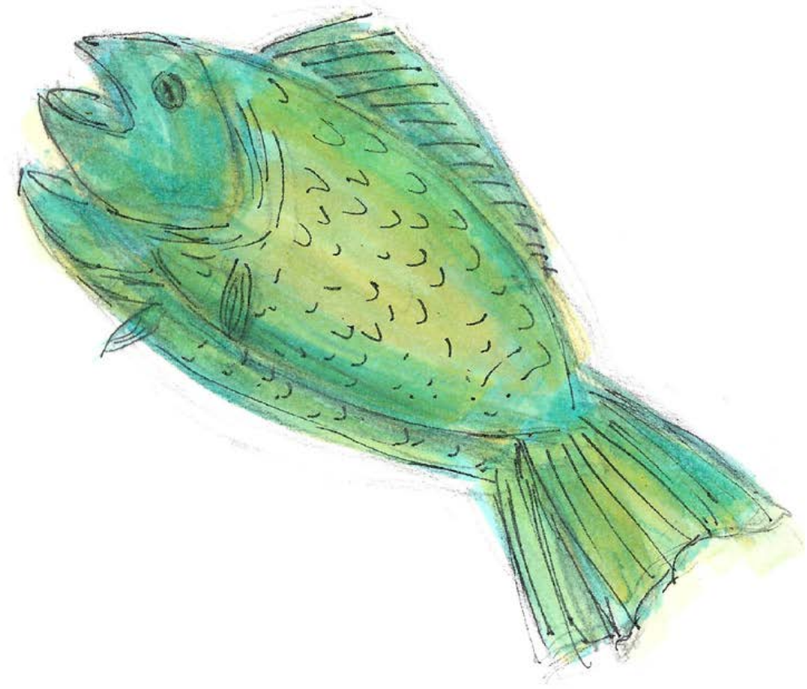
DO YOU LOVE ME?

ἀγαπᾷς με;
(John 21.16)

at daybreak you come up empty
    still at sea
so I show you a hundred and fifty-three
ways to say it but they swim behind your
back and you don't see them you're
leaning over the other side of the
nave trying to make out the spot where
you nearly sank
that time when you thought
too hard about sinking

later, when the bones lie on the sand
we watch the coals sink, and
I ask you again

and now as the sun catches your
hair almost dry I know your
answer is almost yes and I say
you know you will be
me one day?



Do You Love Me? (David Creese)

Ideas and Dreams (Peter Locke)

Reflections on the Prints

Sleeping (in the Garden) (p. 10)

Jesus fears what is to come but those around him are sleeping. They are exhausted by recent events. Everything appears beautiful and peaceful in the garden. They should be vigilant but don't see the signs; they should be supporting and protecting him but they don't see the need. He is isolated. In dread and pain, he calls out to God.

Many of us were let down in the past by those in the Church who were sleeping and did not act as they should have done; they may have felt overwhelmed by events and let their guard down. Some of us may have let ourselves down through inaction, or may have tried to act but were let down by others who were asleep to our concerns. These failures to live up to what we all value can cause us all lasting harm and may have a lasting impact on our ability to support and protect each other now.

Anguish and Solace (p. 12)

No one around Jesus notices the anguish that he is experiencing. He is alone but speaks openly and honestly to God, expressing the pain that he cannot bear. God sends an angel at this very moment to sit alongside him, support, console and strengthen him.

When we are feeling overwhelmed, we can speak honestly to God. Like Jesus, we are not meant to bear our pain alone. Our angels might not be as obvious as the one in the image. They may be people who notice our suffering, who show us empathy, who help us when we are most in need, who support us when we feel we can't go on or who help us find appropriate support.

We too can be angels for others in their time of anguish, if we notice and respond to the signs. If we notice but fail to respond, we may bear the impact of the feelings of guilt and shame that stem from failing to have done the right thing, or compound the harm done to those already hurting by letting them down when they need us most.

Embraced by Betrayal (p. 13)

Jesus has already been let down by those closest to him, but in this act, he is actively betrayed. An act of love is used against him.

Abusers in the Church, like Judas, are trusted individuals and may offer acts of kindness, tenderness, love or comfort to draw their victims to them.

This is the greatest of betrayals — by those who hold positions of trust and are meant to demonstrate God's love.

This may also apply to others. Consider Church leaders who say things like, 'We are sorry for and ashamed of what has happened; lessons will be learned and now we will do the right thing', but don't make meaningful changes because, like Judas, they prioritise their own interests. This betrayal can cause a deep moral injury which adds to the psychological, social, and spiritual injuries of those already harmed in the Church.

An act of this kind can harm the betrayer as well as the betrayed. Judas was overwhelmed by the moral consequences of his betrayal, and his intense feelings of guilt and shame led to suicide. The emotional consequences for those in the Church who betray the abused can be deep, diverse and enduring. Attempts to absolve themselves of their responsibility for this can lead to further poor choices and actions and cause more damage to the already broken trust in the relationships between members of the Church.

Peter's Denial (p. 16)

In this image we see Peter soon after he has disowned Jesus. The darkness on the right-hand side of the image is where this betrayal has taken place, and on the left-hand side we see the impact of this act.

Peter had been prepared to fight for Jesus earlier, but now the others have fled and he is isolated. He alone has stayed close to Jesus and sought comfort by the fire. The cost of this was to be challenged. But feeling weak and fearful, he denied Jesus.

He tried to do the right thing but failed. He is racked with guilt, shame, and self-condemnation. He may be wondering what makes his actions different from those of Judas.

We would like to think that we would do the right thing under pressure, but would we?

Like Peter, other members of the Church may feel that they should have done more than they did to prevent or stop abuse. Just like Peter, these are not bad people with bad morals or beliefs. In fact, they are probably trying to do the right thing, but when challenged they don't stand up.

But why?

Like Peter, they are dealing with their own experience of what has happened. On reflection, they may have felt that their own limited actions, inaction or unintentional facilitation of the abuse made them complicit in the abuse itself. Like Peter, they may feel the shame of not having done more to prevent it.

The shame and guilt that comes with this moral injury can perpetuate the poor responses from individuals and the Church itself, and this needs to be acknowledged in order to move towards healing.

Beaten (p. 18)

Jesus has been exposed, humiliated, mocked, and abused under the orders of those in authority. He kneels before them silent and alone, apparently beaten and powerless both literally and metaphorically.

In this he shares in the experience of those abused in the Church. The abusers count on their victims feeling weak, isolated and ashamed, so that we are paralysed and can't speak up.

However, it is not just the abusers that inflict the wounds which silence victims and survivors. It is also those in Church systems who ignore, minimise or dismiss the plight of the abused. Whether or not we have actively participated in this, we may feel complicit in the harm caused by these wounds, and if we are to heal our relationships with each other, it may be necessary to address the disgust and shame we feel as a result.

'Crucify Him!' (p. 22)

Jesus stands here in the pain of his wounds and of humiliation, mocked and exposed in front of a hostile crowd. For the most part, Jesus is silent throughout this ordeal.

Those bearing the experience of church-related abuse often remain silent, because although they are innocent, they bear the burden of shame and humiliation.

They have also often been silenced by the Church — a very deep betrayal — which can even feel like having been betrayed by God himself.

Jesus stands accused of blasphemy: victims of church-related abuse are often told by their abusers that they are the ones acting against God. This is the message they also get from others around them in the Church, in less overt ways that may be unintentional: through disbelief or the misuse of scripture. They are falsely accused of violating their values and faith, and they carry this burden.

Jesus, though surrounded by people, is alone in this scene – his disciples have fled, and we can't identify those in the crowd who may be there to support him among those who are hostile. When we have been harmed by poor responses to abuse in the Church, we feel cut off from that which should be our refuge and strength: our community, our faith, our God.

Turning to Pilate, we see that he is someone who is forced into a situation where there is no easy resolution, and this is often where moral injury in leadership occurs. He acknowledges that he can find no case for Jesus to answer, but at the same time he prioritises his own interests over the truth. Rather than face up to the responsibility to manage a sensitive case, Pilate tries to hand it over to Herod; in turn Herod likewise ducks responsibility and hands the case back to Pilate; and Pilate ultimately absolves himself of responsibility. No one in a position of authority is prepared to testify to the truth.

Sometimes, in responding to allegations of abuse, those in the Church with responsibility to take difficult actions and decisions have tried to avoid these responsibilities, and innocent victims have paid the price for their cowardice.

We know that when church-related abuse is uncovered, this can rock the authority of Church leaders: they may feel guilty that they failed to prevent the abuse; they may feel shocked that those entrusted with power have let them down; they may fear that an acknowledgment of the abuse could undermine their authority or result in suspicion being directed at them; they may perceive the situation as a threat to themselves and others in positions of power. They may react with denial or by failing to conduct a proper investigation or by alienating the victim. These poor responses are most often not born out of malice but out of their own moral injury or fears.

Pilate symbolically washes his hands of responsibility. Church leaders may attempt to wash their hands of responsibility for abuse that happens in their churches, but they hold authority and are responsible for the Church's response. It is only when they acknowledge this that they can address their own injury and then respond to those directly affected in a meaningful way.

As for the crowd, some just can't believe that their leaders could be wrong.

Some want to believe that they were right to put their faith in the authorities, or are invested in the status quo.

For some, it is too painful to acknowledge that those they trusted did the wrong thing.

All of the above may be inclined to believe the misinformation spread by another group: those who don't want Jesus to be found innocent because they are invested in Jesus being wrong. In the context of church-related abuse, this may be the abuser or others invested in keeping the abuse hidden. They may discredit the abused so as to manipulate opinion. These people often have the loudest voices, perhaps because of the power, authority or respect that their voices command.

There are those who want to act but don't speak up, don't know what they can do, or stay silent out of a fear of the consequences if they go against the majority.

There may also be some who do stand up for what they believe but cannot be heard.

Being a bystander doesn't mean that you bear no responsibility for what has happened or won't feel complicit. It is only when we accept that as members of the Church, we share in the responsibility for how the Church responds to abuse, that we can heal from our own moral injury of being part of a community that has hurt others.

Bearing the Weight (p. 24)

Carrying the cross to the place of execution was designed to be part of the humiliation and pain of Jesus's crucifixion.

Simon, who had no obvious connection to Jesus, happened to be there in the crowd and was compelled to share Jesus's load. He may have felt reluctant to help, but he did it all the same. Simon didn't take the whole burden on himself, but stepped up when called upon to come alongside Jesus and bear some of the weight.

The time may come when you are unexpectedly called upon to share the burden of someone's trauma or to help find someone else who can help.

Lamenting (p. 26)

Who were the women of Jerusalem who were weeping for Jesus? Was their mourning a mere ritual, or something deeper from the heart? Had they heard him preach? Had they been present when he was enthusiastically welcomed into the city a week earlier?

As individuals in that society, they were insignificant and powerless, but together in a demonstration of collective grief and lament they could not be ignored.

To comfort the dying was an act of mercy in their tradition. Their presence gave comfort to the condemned and their families, but the spectacle of their lament also highlighted the injustice of what was happening.

They were stronger together, as we can be when we support each other and collectively express our distress at the pain of those hurt or harmed in the Church, and when we make our expression one of solidarity and protest that challenges those in authority.

When Jesus spoke to them, he said that they should lament for themselves, as the future would not be easy in the shadow of the abuses that were unfolding. We need to consider the impact of abuse on those supporting the victims. This includes their sense of helplessness and the feeling that they too have been betrayed by the Church and its leaders. It is important to acknowledge and validate the feelings of victims' and survivors' supporters, their friends and families, as well as others in the community who want to stand with them.

'Forgive Them' (p. 28)

In this moment, Jesus doesn't make a declaration of personal forgiveness towards those who have harmed him. He can't. Instead, he calls out to God to forgive them.

Who are those he calls out to be forgiven? Those who have directly harmed him; those who have facilitated the harm through poor leadership; passive bystanders who could have stood up for him; those who have simply carried out orders or who have increased his suffering by mocking him.

Victims of abuse in the Church are often encouraged, or told, or even pressured to forgive those who have harmed them. This pressure to forgive can increase the sense of guilt felt by the survivor, and the shame that they are made to feel by those calling for them to forgive, when they are overwhelmed by the paralysing impact of what has happened, can isolate survivors from their faith. It may also contribute to the survivor's feeling of being betrayed, betrayed by those who should care for them and perhaps even betrayed by God.

But victims and survivors don't need to take personal responsibility for the forgiveness of those who have harmed them. They can call upon God to do that; if they find that too difficult to navigate, then we can call upon God on their behalf.

Recognition (p. 30)

In this moment, there is recognition in the shared experience of suffering, and one of the thieves reaches out to Jesus.

Jesus displays compassion and provides a deep reassurance. It is often those who have endured abuse themselves who are able to help others with similar experiences. Through a shared understanding, they can offer support in ways that others don't or can't.

But the thief recognises that Jesus is different from himself — Jesus's suffering has a deeply spiritual element, and he is suffering not because of what he has done, but because of the actions and sins of others. Survivors of abuse in the Church suffer for a sin that is not theirs, and the traumatic experience and its consequences have a deeply-rooted spiritual element.

Why Have You Forsaken Me? (p. 32)

Jesus feels overwhelmed with a sense of abandonment. Utterly and unbearably alone, he cries out in extreme distress.

Those abused in the Church are holding shame which is not theirs to hold. Even though they have done nothing wrong themselves, they are made to feel responsible for what has happened, and so in turn they may feel disgusted with themselves and engage in self-condemnation. The impact of this is potentially devastating: it cuts them off from their sense of who they are, their community, the Church, their faith and their God. They feel forsaken by God due to the behaviour of those supposedly acting in His name.

It may be difficult for us to hear, but it is important to create a safe space in which victims and survivors can ask God the question Jesus asked and to validate their feelings. If it was acceptable for Jesus to feel abandoned by God and to ask him why, then it must be acceptable for those harmed in and by God's Church to do the same.

Foot of the Cross (p. 34)

The few remaining present at the foot of the cross were some of those most dear to Jesus. They witnessed close up the sights, smells and emotions, the unimaginable horrors of his humiliation, abuse and murder; and they became witnesses to the wider impact of these atrocities. Remaining present was an act of perilous defiance. In this space of danger, Jesus ensures that they turn to each other for support.

We need those in our communities who have witnessed the impact of abuse in the Church to speak up and not to shy away when it becomes difficult. Belief and validation are important in the recovery of the abused. Just as we should not sanitise the story of Jesus's crucifixion, neither should we minimise or shun the responsibility of addressing the harsh realities, difficult emotions and moral responsibilities created by abuse in the Church.

But we should also support each other in this.

Beyond Wounded Yet Valued (p. 37)

The body is taken down before more harm and humiliation can come to it, despite the threat to those carrying out these acts. The wounds are carefully dressed, and the body tenderly anointed. Rather than being discarded, the body is respected and honoured.

Those who have been traumatised in the Church are perceived by some as a threat to the Church even in their state of woundedness. By others, they are seen as broken and of no value, to be put to one side, discarded.

We know that Jesus's life is not over, but many who have experienced abuse are treated as if their lives are. They are not valued as they should be, and this could exacerbate their feelings of guilt, shame and worthlessness.

We can lift up that which is beyond wounded. We all have a role to play in the aftermath of abuse even when this might come at some cost to ourselves. We need to show that this person matters right now, that they are of value, just as they are, wounds and all.

Void (p. 39)

At this point there seems to be no hope; the outcome of the story is not yet known. Jesus is lying dead in the void, that is, the tomb. The abuse has ended but the devastating consequences of abuse remain.

For those who have experienced the impact of the abuse, there may be no apparent help or way out. There is nothing; just emptiness, and the abused lies disconnected, discarded, rendered void.

The silence of the abused is deafening.

This is where many of those abused in the Church still are right now. It may be tempting for others to skip over or rush through this part of the story, just as it may be tempting to move quickly from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, but then we fail to acknowledge the devastation of the experience of rejection, hopelessness and disconnection. A willingness to enter into the experience of Holy Saturday, and to be alongside victims and survivors in that experience, is a valuable gift we can give to those harmed by abuse in the Church.

Rise Up! (p. 41)

Jesus now appears to his disciples after the resurrection with the visible wounds of crucifixion, still bearing the marks of his profoundly traumatic experience.

The resurrection of Jesus is a defiant act of rebellion against fear, loss and isolation. Sin that was not his no longer holds power. Jesus offers hope that suffering is not the end of the story, even in the face of immense physical, psychological and spiritual trauma.

Those who bear the scars should be seen and heard. The scars bear witness to what has happened, but are a sign and reminder of healing too. Those who have been hurt or harmed in and by the Church should not be dismissed, rejected or concealed in embarrassment, but valued, and their stories honoured.

The shame that has burdened the abused in the Church but is not theirs holds no power in the face of the resurrection. Even when you have been through such experiences, you remain of great worth and your story can be one of hope.

When we rise up together, defiant in the face of abuse, the abusers and their facilitators lose their power, and we are freed.

Peter on the Beach (p. 42)

Feeling unworthy and ashamed, Peter has to face Jesus in a deeply personal and symbolic dialogue. Symbolism and ritual can play a significant role in healing from moral injury. In this scene, Jesus navigates the meaning of what has happened, symbolically questioning Peter three times. In asking, 'Do you love me?', Jesus directly addresses the shame that Peter is feeling and invites him to engage in the work of repairing the relationship between them.

He doesn't just reinstate Peter: he gives him a greater meaning and purpose, and honours him. At the same time, Jesus foretells the eventual suffering and death in store for him (John 21.18-19). The path towards greater meaning and purpose is not necessarily easy, and it may involve sacrifice.

What lesson might this episode contain for Church leaders and church communities in the context of church-related abuse?

Perhaps it is that the most important thing is a willingness to accept the invitation to begin the work of repairing the broken trust in relationships in the Church, and recognising that this represents a path towards healing and reconciliation, rather than a one-off event after which all is well.

In other words, it is not a matter of finding the right way to say 'sorry' so that we can all 'move on'. It is about discerning what it would mean to do as Jesus instructs Peter when he says, 'Feed my sheep' (John 21.17 [NRSV]).

Sarah Troughton

Notes on the Poems

I	Mark 14.37, Luke 6.41–2.
II	John 19.1.
III	Isaiah 6, Mark 14.63–4, Matthew 23.5, 2 Chronicles 26.19–21, Matthew 26.67–8
IV	2 Kings 18.21 (Isaiah 36.6); Matthew 27.28, 12.20 (Isaiah 42.3).
V	Hosea 10.7–13; Luke 23.27–31, 21.6.
VI	Lamentations 1.12, Mark 15.26, Luke 10.2–4, Mark 12.7–8.
VII	John 1.22–3, Matthew 11.7.
VIII	Mark 15.33–7 (Psalm 22.1), 1 Kings 17.6, John 19.28, Genesis 8.6–8, Luke 12.24.
IX	John 18.28; Exodus 32.4; John 18.13–14, 18.24, 19.21; Exodus 10.14, 12.3, 7.20, 8.5–6; John 19.32–4; William Blake, *And Did Those Feet* (from the preface to *Milton*); Matthew 23.25, 2.14–15, 27.24 (Deuteronomy 21.6–9); Genesis 2.17; Matthew 27.5; Luke 22.48; John 19.22; Exodus 24.8; John 18.38.
X	Matthew 28.4.
Epilogue	Matthew 14.30.

David Creese

Suggestions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion

The set of suggestions you find here are offered as an invitation to engage in guided reflection on the artwork, poetry and music presented in this booklet. This could be done individually or in a group. There is no need to complete all of the activities below; please engage with whatever you find interesting and worthwhile and whatever feels safe and accessible for you. Be creative! Use the ingredients you find here in ways and combinations that work for you or your group, or in combination with ingredients of your own. If what you find here doesn't work well for you or your group, we hope that you will develop other ways to engage with the material.

Please look after yourself and each other. If a question or suggestion doesn't feel safe, put it aside. Speak with someone you trust if you need to talk about anything that the contents of this booklet or your reflections raise for you. On the last page you will find contact details for organisations that can help if you need further support.

What we would like to invite you to do in reflecting on Sarah's prints, David's poems and Peter's music is to engage in a kind of translation. In the process of any translation, something is gained, or potentially revealed, just as something is lost. Because the translator will inevitably bring something of themselves to the process, what is revealed may be something about the one engaging in that process, as well as something about the original being translated. It also allows the translator to bring an idea or ideas from elsewhere to the original, and see what emerges.

Here is Peter's description of his 'translation' of Sarah's *Peter's Denial* in his *Intersections*:

> The idea for this miniature was inspired both by Sarah's image and by the idea of dissonance.
>
> Dissonance in music is the agent of expression. It is essential to the harmonic cycle: questioning, uncertain, foreboding, anticipating, unsettling.
>
> I've often struggled with uncertainty — where I'm from, where I'm going, or even, as a matter of fact, who I am. These doubts colour my thinking in a range of situations. At the mercy of forces which I'm unable to grasp, often I can only ask: what have I done to you?
>
> *Intersections* attempts to evoke both the tenuous grasp of individual self-identity and the conflict of perception.
>
> Could I not have walked another way?

The questions below prompt you to respond to images with words, to words with images and to sounds with movement. Perhaps these small acts of creative 'translation' might bring insights that could spark positive change, individually or collectively.

You will find additional resources, including recordings of Peter's music and audio recordings of David's poems, on our webpage:

https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/jagged-edges/

Personal Reflection

The activities for personal reflection might serve as a preparation for group discussion, and some of the questions posed to the individual here could be incorporated into group discussion as well.

On the Prints

Sleeping (in the Garden) (p. 10): What might you do to become more receptive and responsive?

Anguish and Solace (p. 12): Can you think of a time when someone has been an angel for you or when you have been able to be that for someone else?

Embraced by Betrayal (p. 13): Have you ever been betrayed by someone you trusted?

Peter's Denial (p. 16): Have you ever let yourself down by failing to speak up about something that wasn't right?

Beaten (p. 18): Do you feel complicit in the harm done to victims and survivors of abuse through poor responses in the Church? What might you do to address this?

'Crucify Him!' (p. 22): Are you able to identify with anyone in this scene?

Bearing the Weight (p. 24): Simon didn't take the entire burden on himself but stepped up to help. What might you do to prepare yourself to do the same if you find yourself in a similar position?

Lamenting (p. 26): What can you do to bear witness to the suffering of victims and survivors of abuse?

'Forgive Them' (p. 28): Have you ever been put under pressure to forgive someone who did you harm without the person having expressed any remorse?

Recognition (p. 30): What experiences in your life might enable you to offer support to a survivor of abuse through a shared understanding of the experience of suffering?

Why Have You Forsaken Me? (p. 32): Have you ever felt abandoned by God? What did or could have helped at that time?

Foot of the Cross (p. 34): Are you called to be defiant in the face of abuse and its consequences?

Beyond Wounded Yet Valued (p. 37): What can you do to honour those who have suffered abuse in the Church?

Void (p. 39): Think about how those who loved Jesus felt on Holy Saturday. Are you able to pause and sit with the pain and uncertainty of that space between Good Friday and Easter Sunday? What might you bring from your own life into that space?

Rise Up! (p. 41): What would it mean for you to rise up in the context of church-related abuse?

Peter on the Beach (p. 42): Reflect on your answer to the question under Peter's Denial above in light of Jesus's question to Peter, 'Do you love me?' What might you do in response to Jesus's reply, 'Tend my sheep?'

On the Poems

1. What image comes to you on reading or listening to each poem? Draw the image or hold it in your mind's eye as you consider the following questions:
    - Am I somewhere in the image?
    - If I were in the image, where might I be called to be and what might I be called to do or say?
    - Where is God in the image?
    - What might I do to or in the image to create more space for God and God's love?

2. Does an alternative image, opposite to the text, come to mind when you read or listen to any of the poems? E.g. for VII (p. 29), What might true repentance look like? Draw the image or hold it in your mind's eye, and consider the following question:
    - Does changing the image of the poem into its opposite change my answers to the questions above?

On the Music

Notice what happens in your body when you listen to each piece of music: what you feel and where you feel it.

Does your body want to move? If you feel comfortable doing so, allow it to move with the music in whatever way it wants.

- What feelings did you notice as you listened to the music? Are they still with you, after having moved to the music?
- How does your body feel now? Does it feel different?
- Has anything emerged from this exercise that is calling for your attention or that you need to talk about with someone else or that you might want to act on?

Group Discussion

On the Prints

Sleeping (in the Garden) (p. 10): What might we do to make our community one that is more receptive and responsive?

Anguish and Solace (p. 12): Compare this scene with what is happening in Bearing the Weight.

Embraced by Betrayal (p. 13): How should our community respond when our leaders betray our trust?

Peter's Denial (p. 16): Look back to the earlier part of Peter's story in Sleeping (in the Garden), Anguish and Solace and Embraced by Betrayal. How might Peter's failure to stay awake and to keep Jesus company, and how might his being a witness to the soldiers taking Jesus, have contributed to Peter's choice to deny Jesus, and to the emotional consequences of that choice?

Beaten (p. 18): What can we do to encourage each other to talk about the difficult emotions that might arise in us when we hear stories of abuse and of poor responses in the Church?

'Crucify Him!' (p. 22): How can we as a community encourage each other to be active rather than passive bystanders when things go wrong? How can we encourage and support our leaders in responding well to abuse in the Church?

Bearing the Weight (p. 24): How might we work together to step up and help collectively when called upon to respond well?

Lamenting (p. 26): What can we do as a community to bear witness to the suffering of victims and survivors of abuse?

'Forgive Them' (p. 28): Reflect on Jesus's words 'forgive them' as a response to the words of the crowd in 'Crucify Him!'

Recognition (p. 30): Reflect on the contrast between the hope of paradise and the extreme agony of the place of skulls.

Why Have You Forsaken Me? (p. 32): Consider the potential consequence of feeling forsaken (by God, by the Church and by others) for the individual and their faith. What can we do as a community to help victims and survivors feel less isolated?

Foot of the Cross (p. 34): Are we as a community called to be defiant in the face of abuse and its consequences? What might this look like?

Beyond Wounded Yet Valued (p. 37): What can we as a community do to honour those who have suffered abuse in the Church?

Void (p. 39): How can we create space in the life of our community to be alongside victims and survivors of church-related abuse in the void?

Rise Up! (p. 41): What would it mean for us as a community to rise up in the context of church-related abuse?

Peter on the Beach (p. 42): Consider how this image provides a representation of what incipient repair looks like in relation to what is happening in Peter's Denial.

On the Poems

Choose a poem to listen to together, either asking someone to read it aloud or playing the audio recording. Then work together to create an image of the poem. You could make a note of ideas from the group first, and then get everyone to draw the image. Or choose someone to draw the image as members of the group share their ideas.

- If each member of the group drew the image, are the different versions of the image the same? What differences do you notice? Spend some time exploring the reasons for these differences.
- Choose one image to look at together or look at the one drawn in response to the ideas of the group. Are there things in the image that reflect God's love? Are there people or things in the image in need of God's love?
- Spend some time considering the image as a reflection of the Church. What might we be called to change in the image? What would it look like then?

On the Music

Choose a piece of music to listen to together, and as you listen notice what you feel in your body and where you feel it.

- If the group feel comfortable doing so, play the piece again and invite everyone to move to the music in whatever ways their bodies want to move.
- Spend some time exploring the feelings and movements that the music elicited. Notice the similarities and differences in the group's experience of listening to the music with their bodily reactions in mind.
- You could spend some time thinking together about which print or poem the piece of music resonates with and why. Which prints, poems and soundscapes would you pair together and why?
- Is there anything that emerges from this exercise that is calling for the group's attention or that the group might want to act on?

A Final Question

How might engaging with Jesus's suffering through the work of survivors inform our faith, individually or collectively?

Where to Find Support

Samaritans: 116 123
Free, open 24/7 every day of the year

Survivors Trust: https://thesurvivorstrust.org/
Safe, non-judgemental support to survivors of rape or sexual abuse and violence.

Safe Spaces: 0300 303 1056
https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/

Free & independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church or as a result of their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

Chaplaincy to Survivors
https://newcastle.anglican.org/chaplaincy-to-survivors/

Offers pastoral support and advocacy to survivors of abuse in a church/faith context and their family and friends, and advice and support to clergy and others in the Diocese of Newcastle in responding well to victims and survivors of abuse.

What happens when survivors of church-related abuse use the Stations of the Cross as a means to speak both to their fellow survivors and to those who let them down in the communities where they were harmed?

In *Jagged Edges* three survivors have approached the Gospel Passion narratives, each through a different medium — linocut prints, music, poetry — to co-create their own Stations of the Cross.

These new Stations draw meaningful connections between the shared narrative of Jesus's suffering and the lived experience of individuals harmed in Christian churches. They invite us to look at Jesus's trauma and to see his story in a particular light: as a story of abuse and as a story of God's love for and solidarity with those who have been abused. They are also an invitation from survivors to the rest of the Church and beyond to engage in the work of repair, reconciliation and recovery.