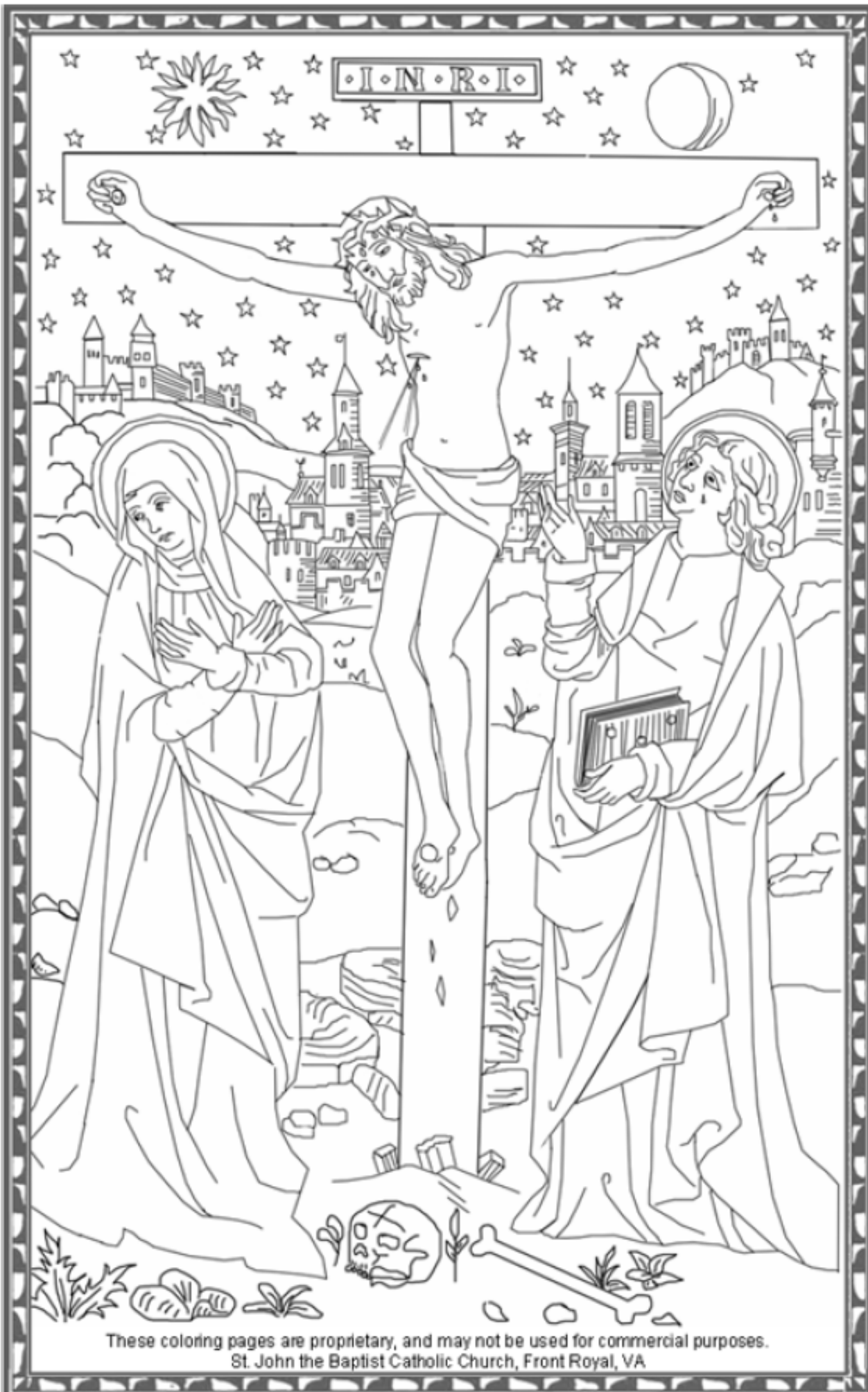


The Stations of the Cross



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St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Front Royal, VA

Station 1—Jesus is Condemned to Death



Dear Jesus,

Help me to be fair and help me not to judge others. Help me also to stand up for what I believe in and do the right thing so I can be loving and caring like you.

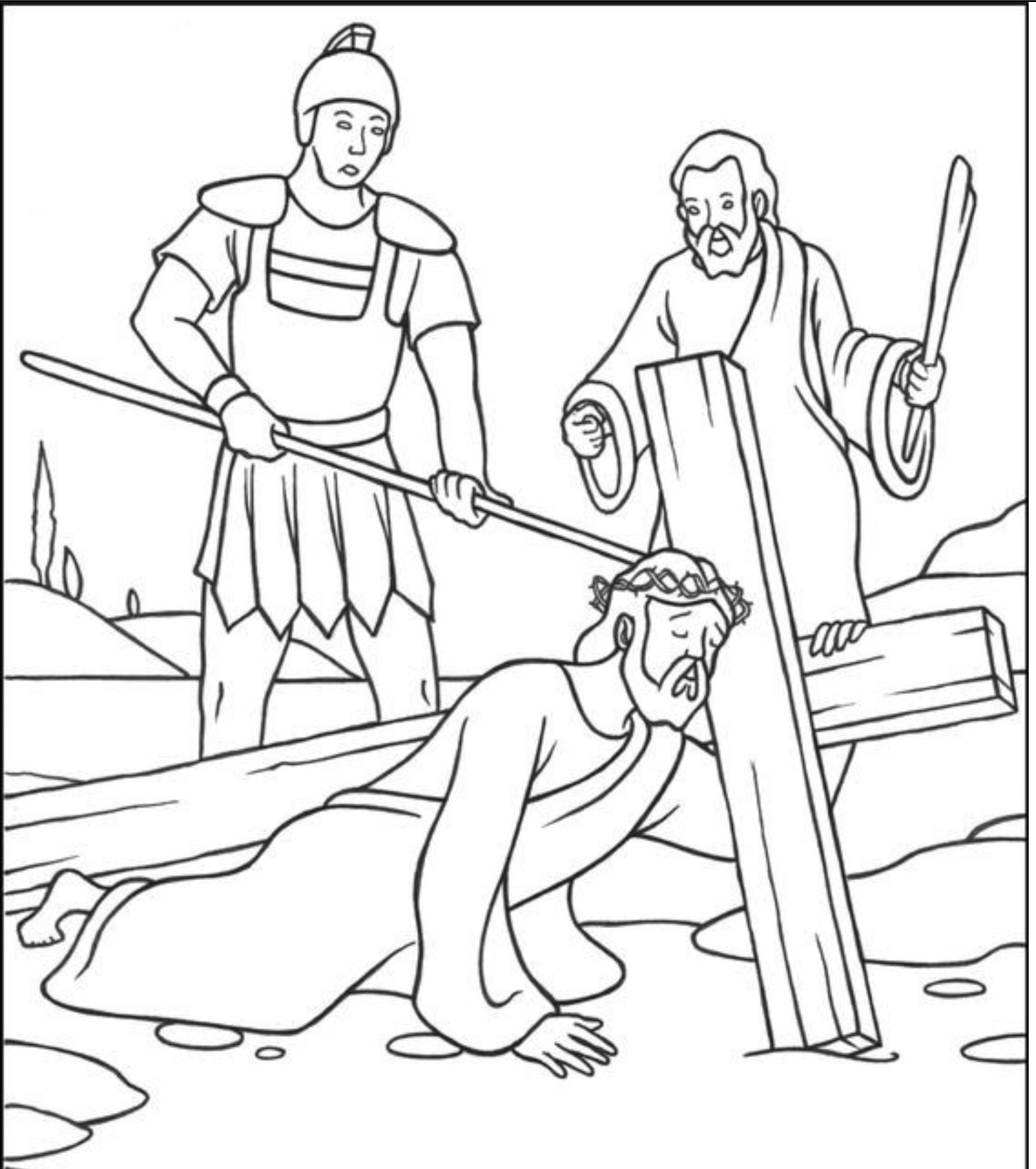
Station 2—Jesus Carries His Cross



Dear Jesus,

When I have problems, I am, in a way, carrying your cross with you. Even though I bear only a piece of your cross, you are there to help carry all of mine.

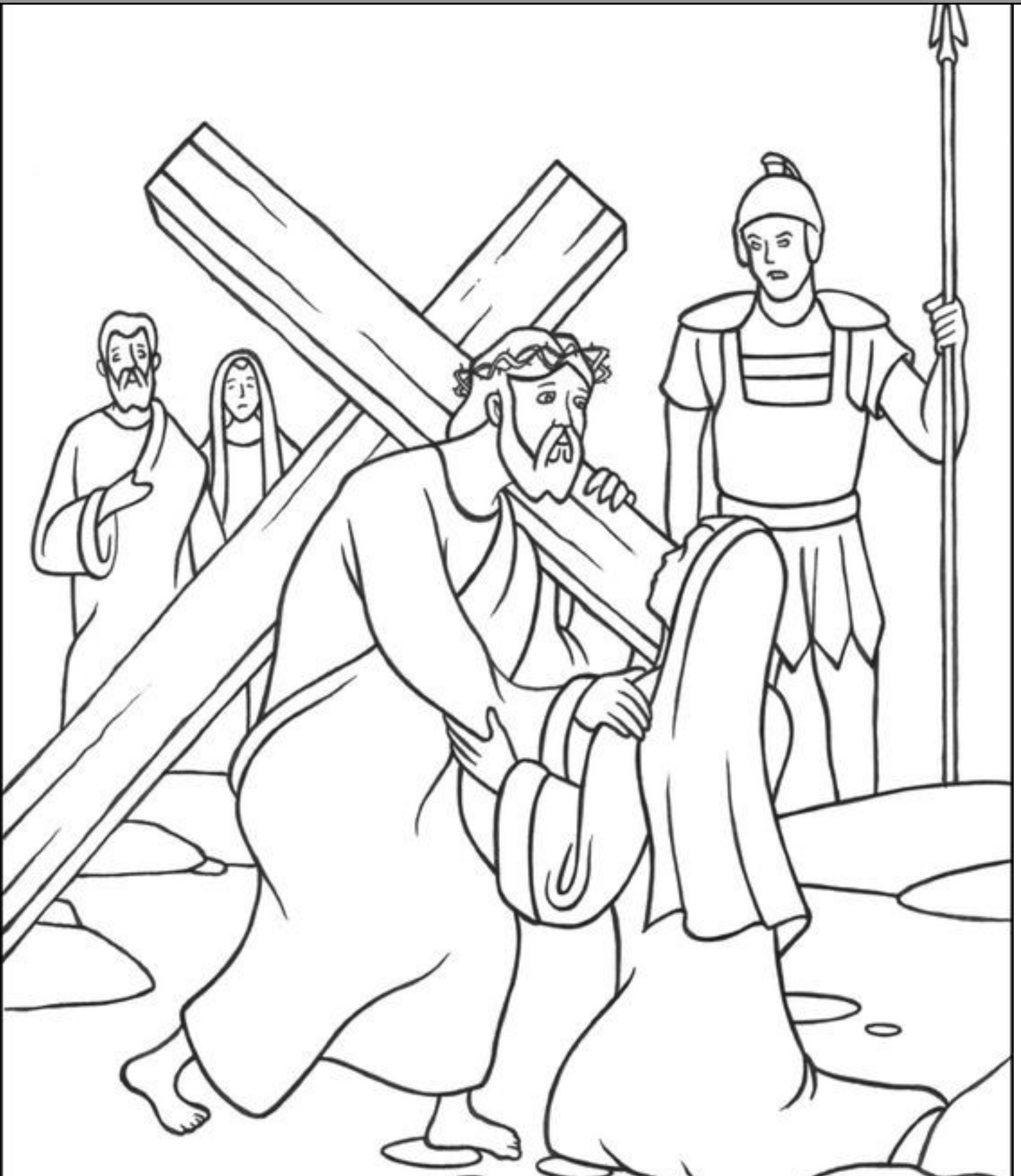
Station 3—Jesus Fall the First Time



Dear Jesus,

I make mistakes. Help me to realize that when I hurt others or do not help when I can I am hurting myself and hurting you.

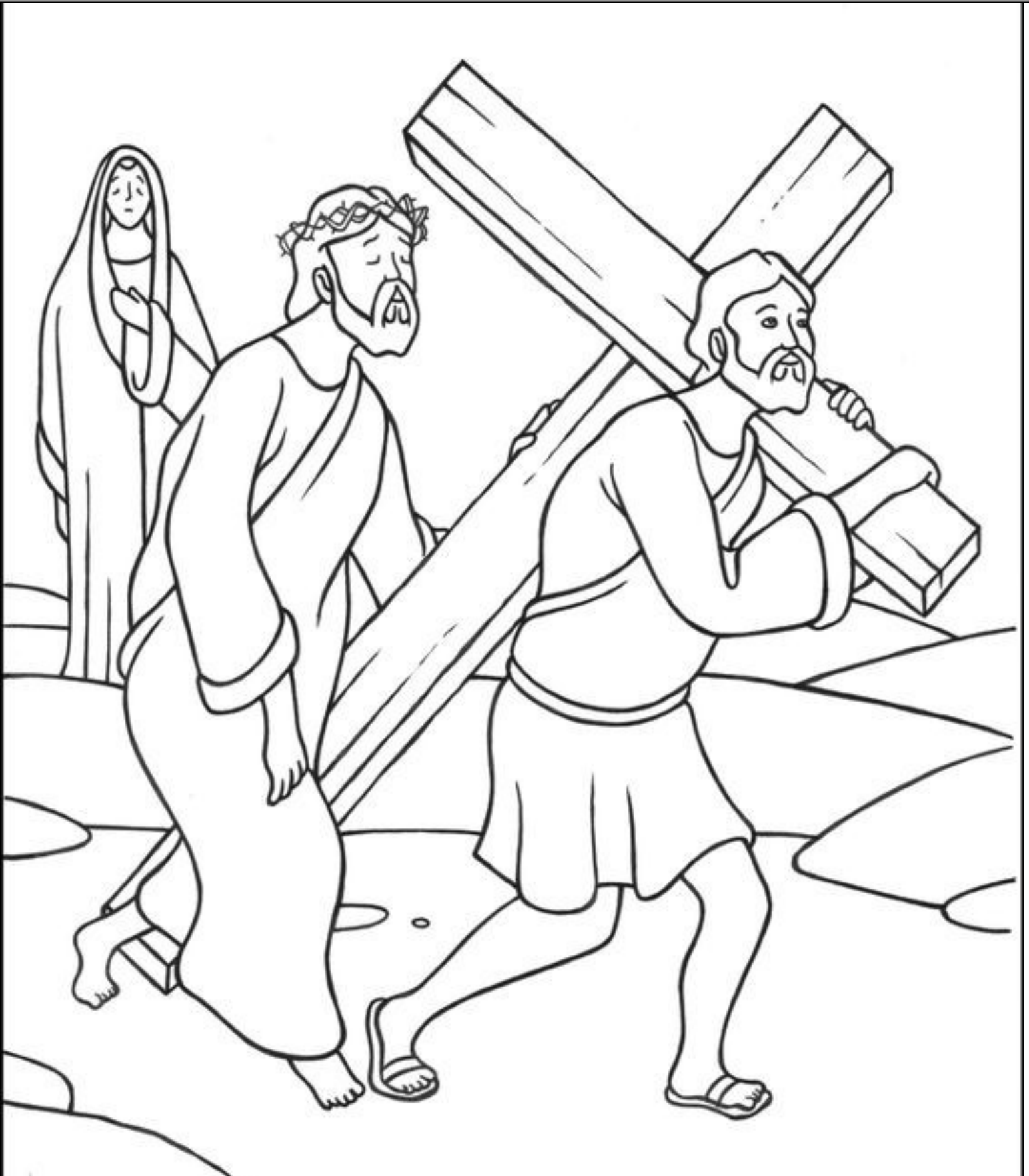
Station 4—Jesus Meets His Mother



Dear Jesus,

Help me to love your Mother, Mary, whom you loved so much. Teach me to always show how much I love my parents, grandparents, and guardians.

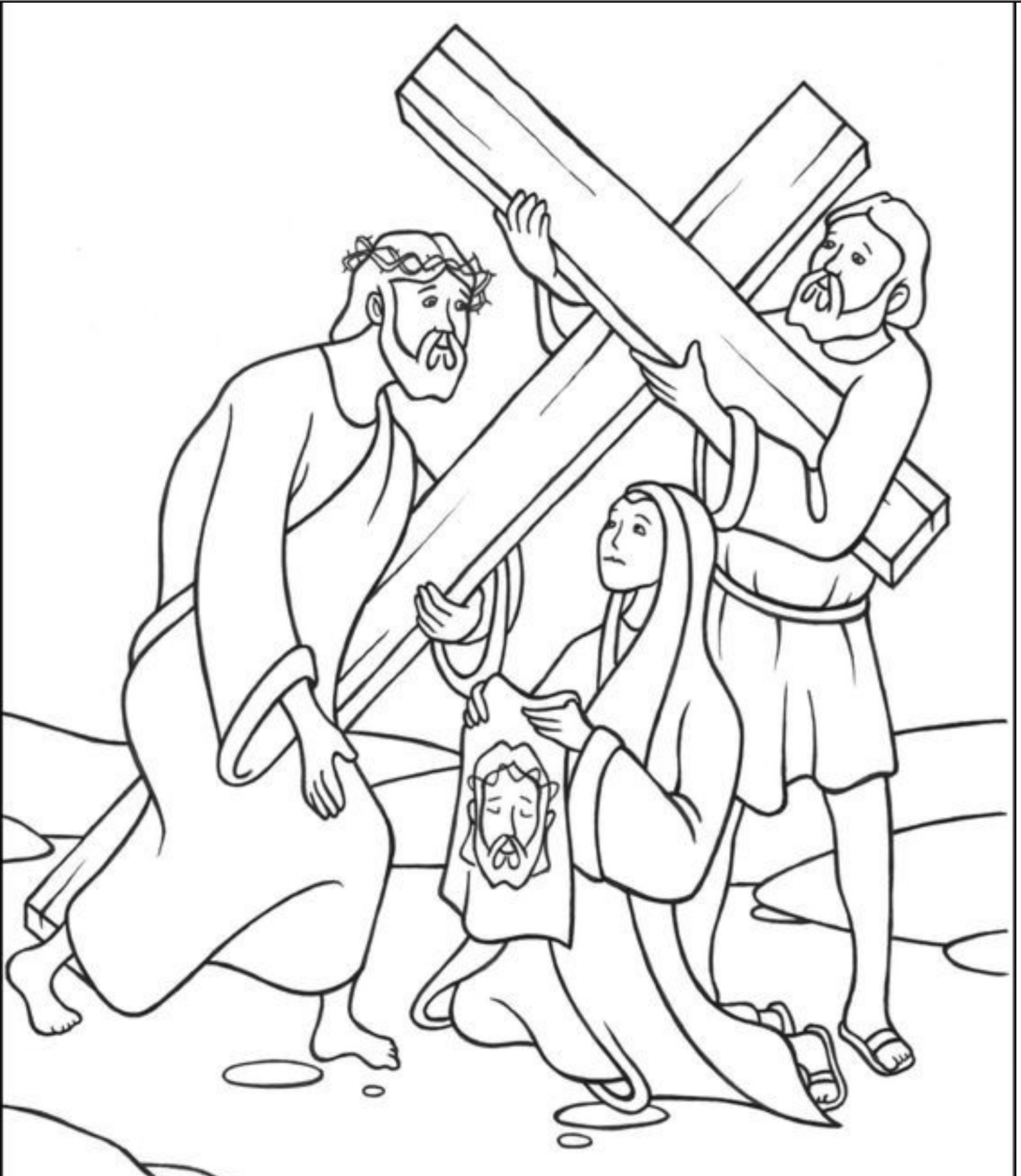
Station 5—Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross



Dear Jesus,

Let me always be ready and willing to help others. I can then be like Simon and help you to carry your cross.

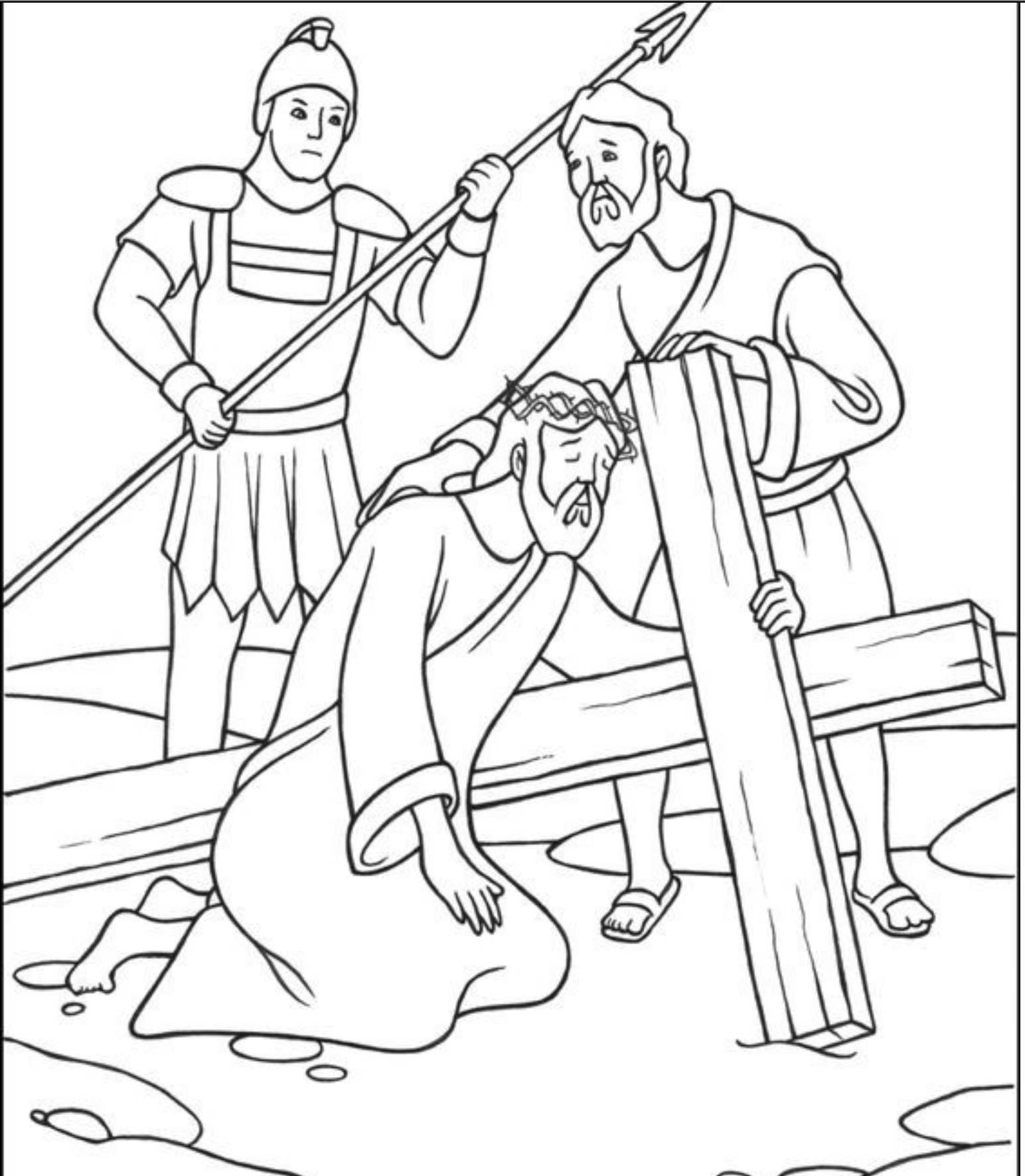
Station 6—Veronica Wipes The Face of Jesus



Dear Jesus,

Teach me to be brave and stand up for what is right. Help me to realize that whatever I do for others, I do for you.

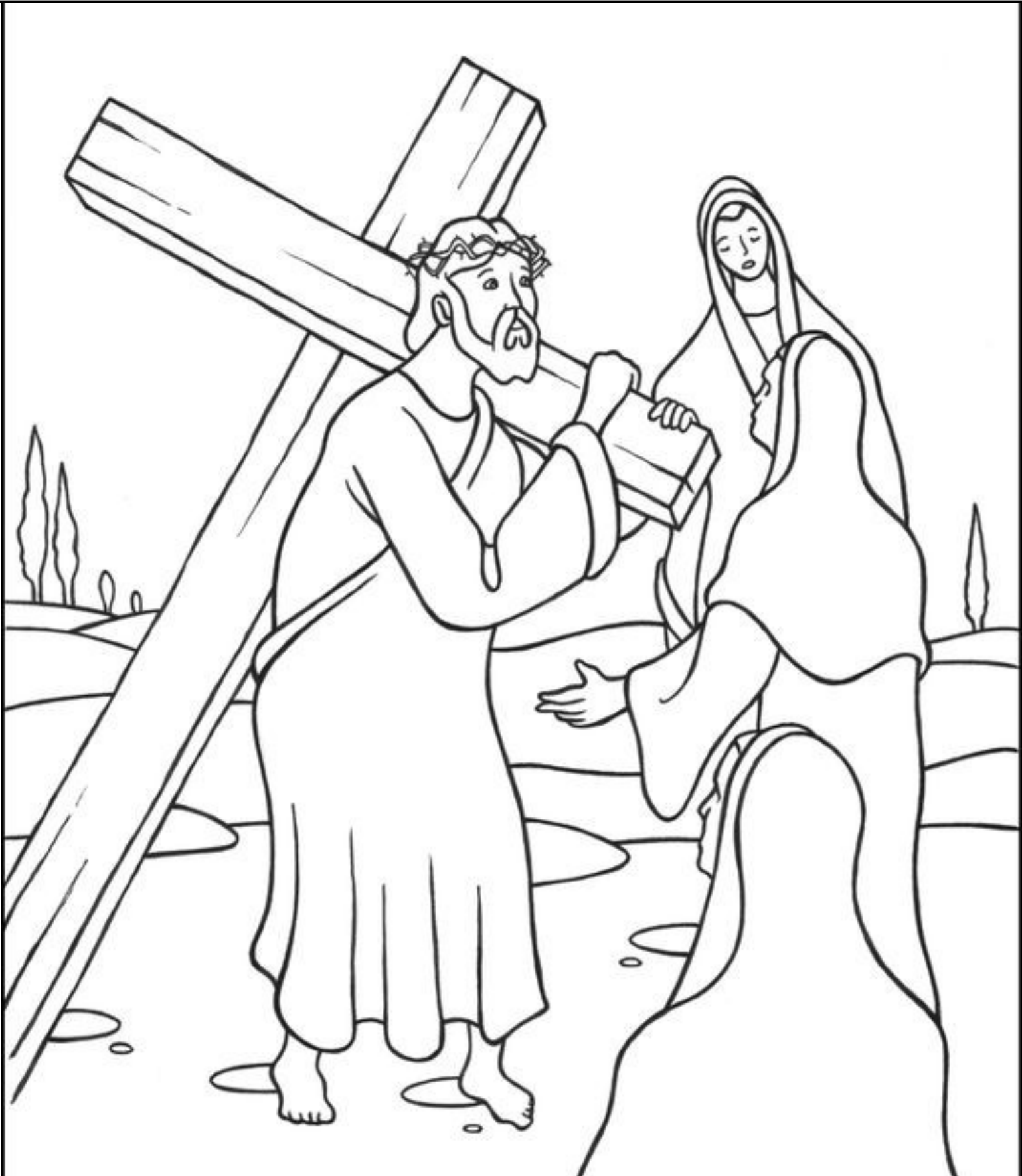
Station 7—Jesus Falls the Second Time



Dear Jesus,

Give me your strength to withstand the suffering that comes from peer pressure as a result of trying to do the right things. Help me to remember that I am never alone, for you are always with me.

Station 8—Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem



Dear Jesus,
You love me no matter what I do. May your suffering make me strong and help me share your love with everyone I meet.

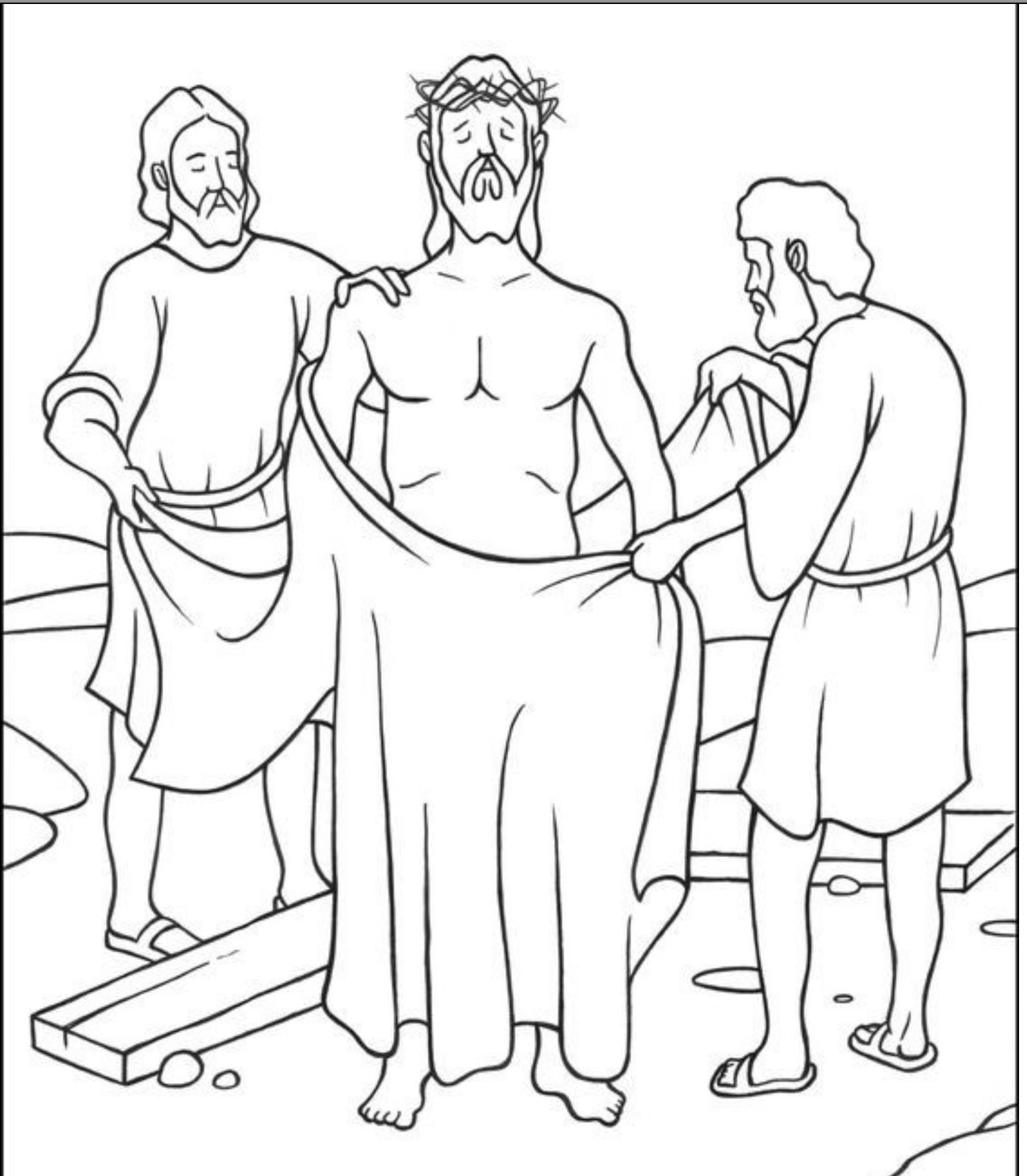
Station 9—Jesus Falls a Third Time



Dear Jesus,

When I am really down, help me remember that you got up again and again. Rather than find blame, help me move on.

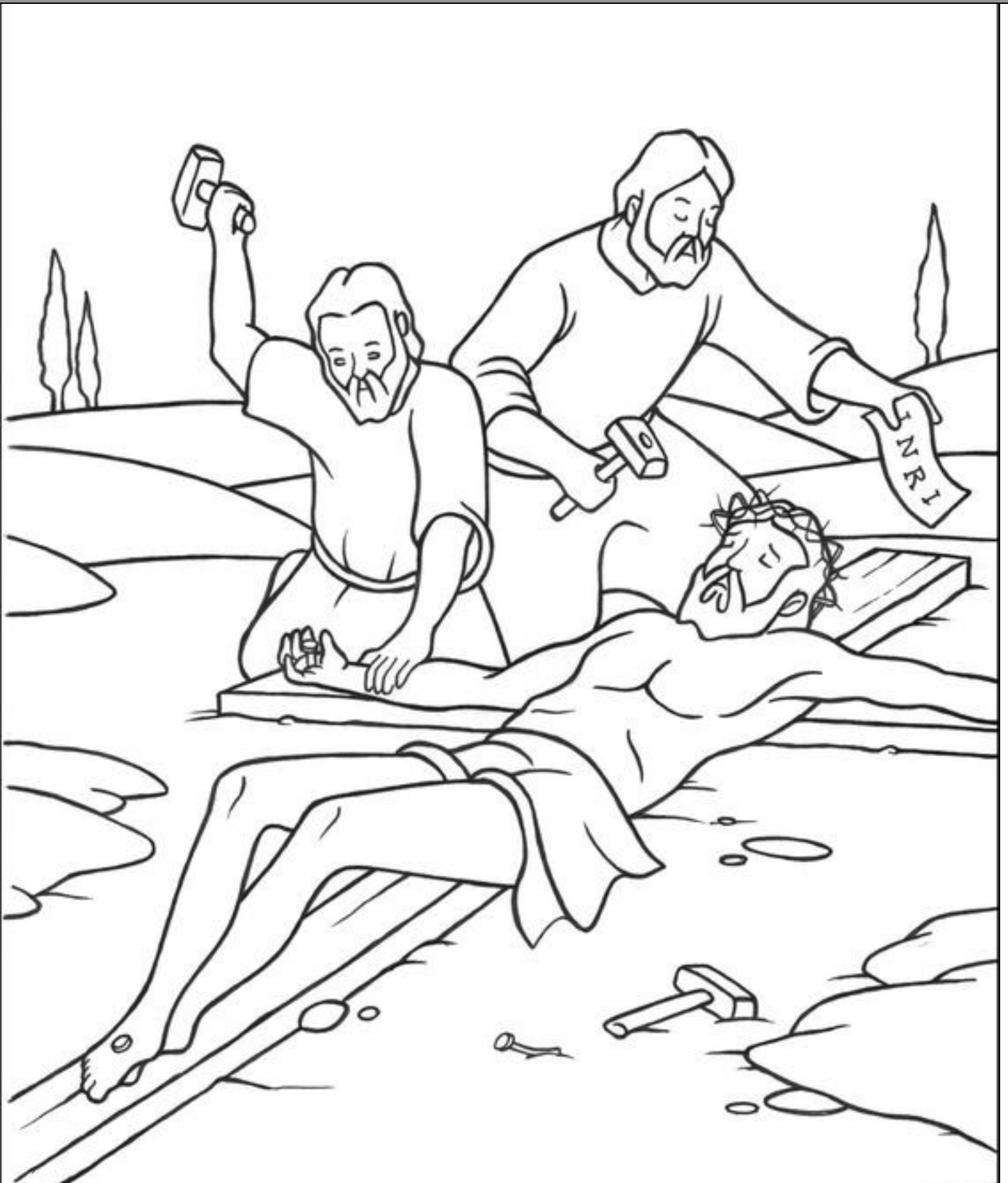
Station 10—Jesus Clothes are Taken Away



Dear Jesus,

Everything I have is a gift from you. Everything I do, I try to do in your name. Please help me remember that without you in my life, I have nothing.

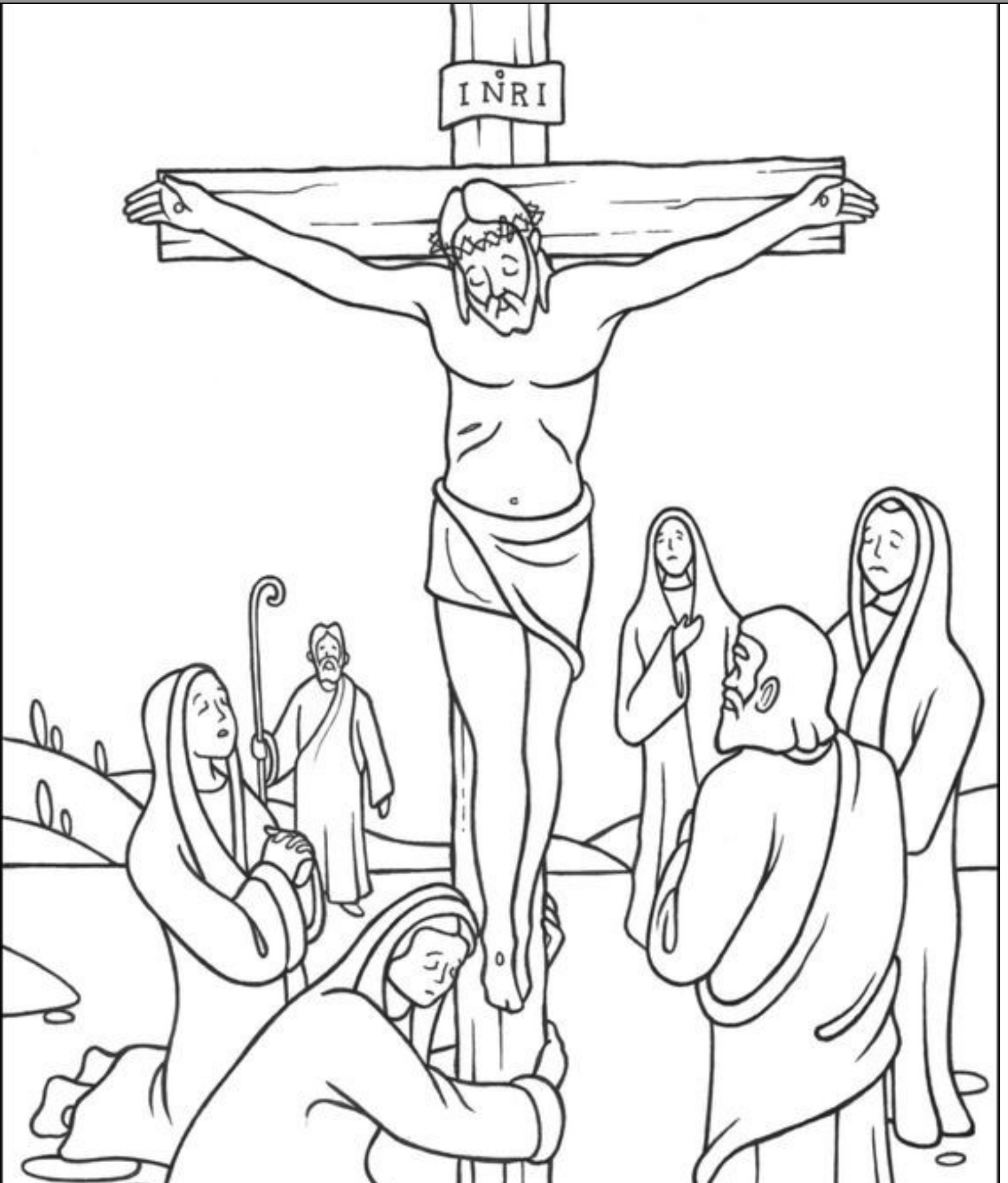
Station 11—Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



Dear Jesus,

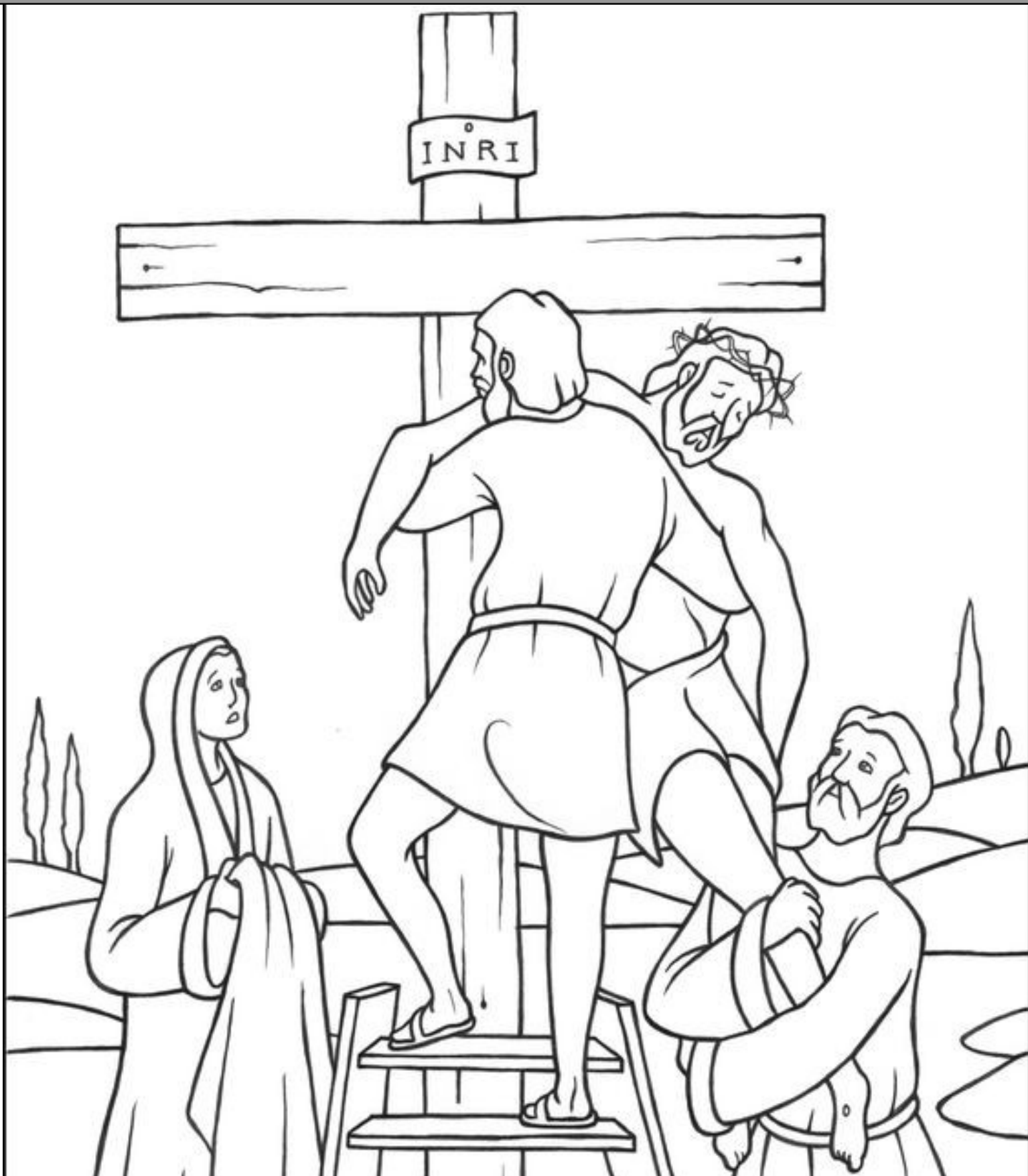
Help me forgive people who hurt me. Just as you forgave those who nailed you to the cross.

Station 12—Jesus Dies on the Cross



Dear Jesus,
You died so that I can live. Thank you, Jesus, thank you.

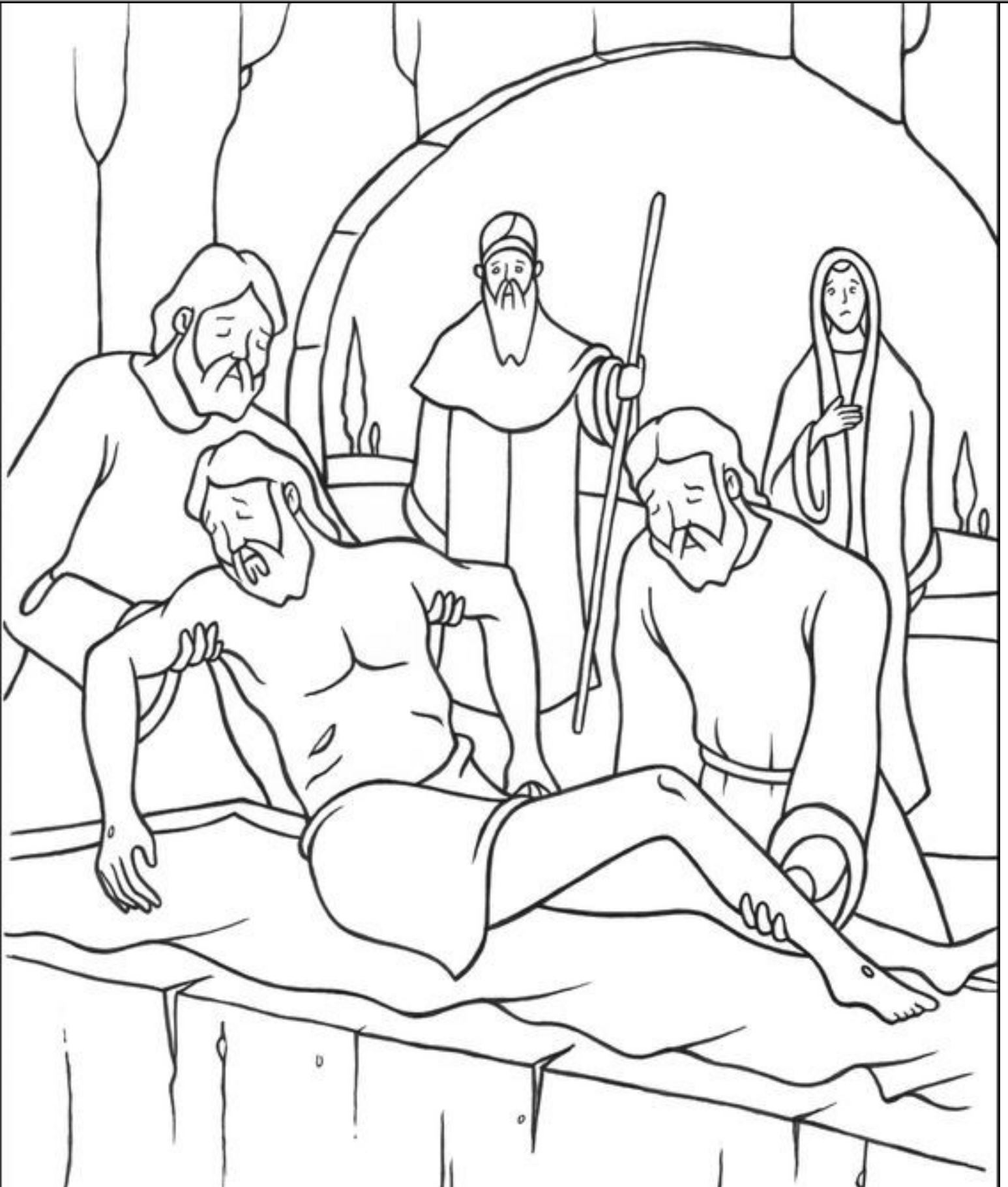
Station 13—Jesus' Body is taken down from the Cross



Dear Jesus,

In looking at your body I find hope. Help me to embrace and accept my crosses. Help me keep my arms open and never let them close. This is my way of sharing your love and peace with everyone.

Station 14—Jesus is Laid in the Tomb



Dear Jesus,

Help me remember how you lived so that I may be like you and make this world a better place.

Why Pray the Stations of the Cross?



8 Reasons from Pope Francis

The Stations of the Cross are an ancient tradition in the Catholic Church going back to the fourth century when Christians went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Like many of our Catholic traditions, the Stations of the Cross can be rich, deep, and meaningful, but at the same time we can lose sight of their significance and how to relate them to our everyday lives.

1. They Allow Us to Place Our Trust in Him

“The Cross of Christ contains all the love of God; there we find his immeasurable mercy. This is a love in which we can place all our trust, in which we can believe.... **let us entrust ourselves to Jesus, let us give ourselves over to him, because he never disappoints anyone!** Only in Christ crucified and risen can we find salvation and redemption.”

2. They Put Us into the Story

“**And you, who do you want to be?** Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?”

3. They Remind Us That Jesus Suffers with Us

“The Cross of Christ bears the suffering and the sin of mankind, including our own. Jesus accepts all this with open arms, bearing on his shoulders our crosses and saying to us: **‘Have courage! You do not carry your cross alone! I carry it with you. I have overcome death and I have come to give you hope, to give you life’** (cf. Jn 3:16).”

4. They Compel Us to Action

“But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, **teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer**, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action.”

5. They Help Us Make a Decision for or Against Christ

“[The Cross] reveals a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. **If I embrace his love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but my own self**, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves.”

6. They Reveal God's Response to Evil in the World

“The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world. Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. **And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ:** a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness.”

7. They Give Us the Certainty of God's Love for Us

“What has the Cross given to those who have gazed upon it and to those who have touched it? What has the Cross left in each one of us? **You see, it gives us a treasure that no one else can give: the certainty of the faithful love which God has for us.**”

8. They Guide Us from the Cross to the Resurrection

“O, Our Jesus, guide us from the Cross to the resurrection and teach us that evil shall not have the last word, but love, mercy and forgiveness. O Christ, help us to exclaim again: ‘Yesterday I was crucified with Christ; today I am glorified with Him. **Yesterday I died with Him, today I live with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today I am raised with Him**’.”



The History of the Stations of the Cross

The Way of the Cross has its origins with the Blessed Mother. It is said that she, who pondered all the mysteries of Christ in her heart, retraced the steps of her Son's Passion and the significant events that happened along the way, keeping in her memory, and for the memory of the Church, the sacred path on which the Son of God trod to accomplish our redemption.

Later in her life, when she was no longer living near Jerusalem, it is said that Mary continued this devotional practice by creating a similar outdoor path near her home with stone markers, along which she would walk, pray, and meditate on those things that happened to her Son on his Sorrowful Way.

For centuries, pilgrims to the Holy Land have walked the steps of Our Lord's Passion in Jerusalem, with "stops" along the way to pray and venerate near the places where a significant event is believed to have occurred (such as the place where Jesus met his Mother, where Jesus fell, and where Veronica handed Jesus her veil, etc.).

This devotional walk, known as the Stations of the Cross, became one of the most popular and useful ways for the devout to meditate on Christ's Passion. The Franciscans, a religious order with special custody of the sacred places in the Holy Land since the Middle Ages, brought this tradition to their churches in Europe in much the same way that the Blessed Virgin erected an imitation of the Sorrowful Way near her home.

Pilgrims who could not travel to Jerusalem could experience in a virtual way the Stations of the Cross by following a signposted path around the inside and/or outside of the church. Here the faithful would walk and pray and meditate on the sufferings of Jesus as if they were walking the real places in Jerusalem. Special indulgences were granted to those who made this virtual pilgrimage.

From the 18th century, by Papal decree, all Catholic churches were permitted to erect the Stations of the Cross in the sanctuary, with the number of Stations fixed to fourteen. A specific way of praying the Stations also developed, two of the most popular being the method of St. Francis of Assisi and the method of St. Alphonsus Liguori.