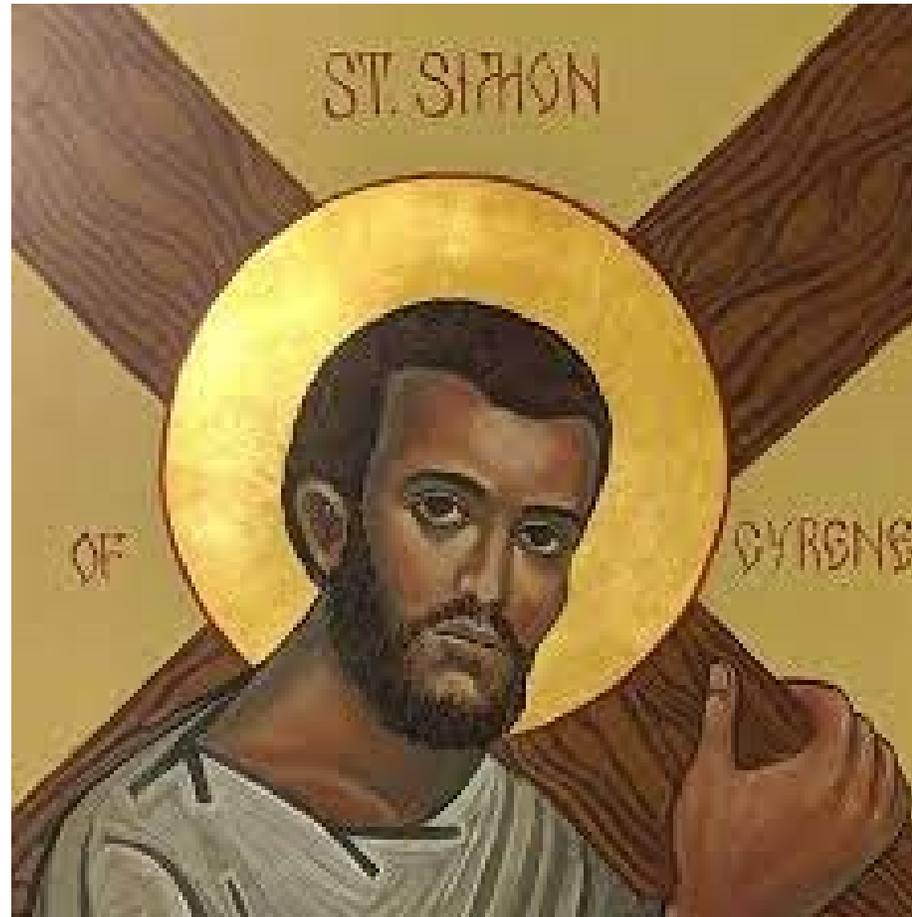


People of the Passion
Simon of Cyrene
Mary & Joseph Retreat Center
March 7, 2024



Prayer of Simon of Cyrene

Lord, you opened the eyes and heart of Simon of Cyrene, and you gave him, by his share in your Cross, the grace of faith. Help us to aid our neighbors in need, even when this interferes with our own plans and desires.

Amen



Simon of Cyrene – Excerpts from the Gospels (NAB Version)

Matthew 27: 31-32

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

Mark 15: 20-21

And when they had mocked him, they dressed him in his own clothes and led him out to crucify him. They pressed into service a passer-by named Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry the cross.

**Simon of Cyrene – Excerpt from Gospel of Luke 23: 26
(First Nations Version)**

Luke 23: 26

The soldiers then marched Creator Sets Free (Jesus) away. A man named Listening Man (Simon), from Land of Power (Cyrene) in Northern Africa was just entering Village of Peace (Jerusalem). The soldiers forced him to walk behind Creator Sets Free (Jesus) and carry the crossbeam for him.

Excerpts from Gospel of John 6: 53-58, 60-63, 66

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.

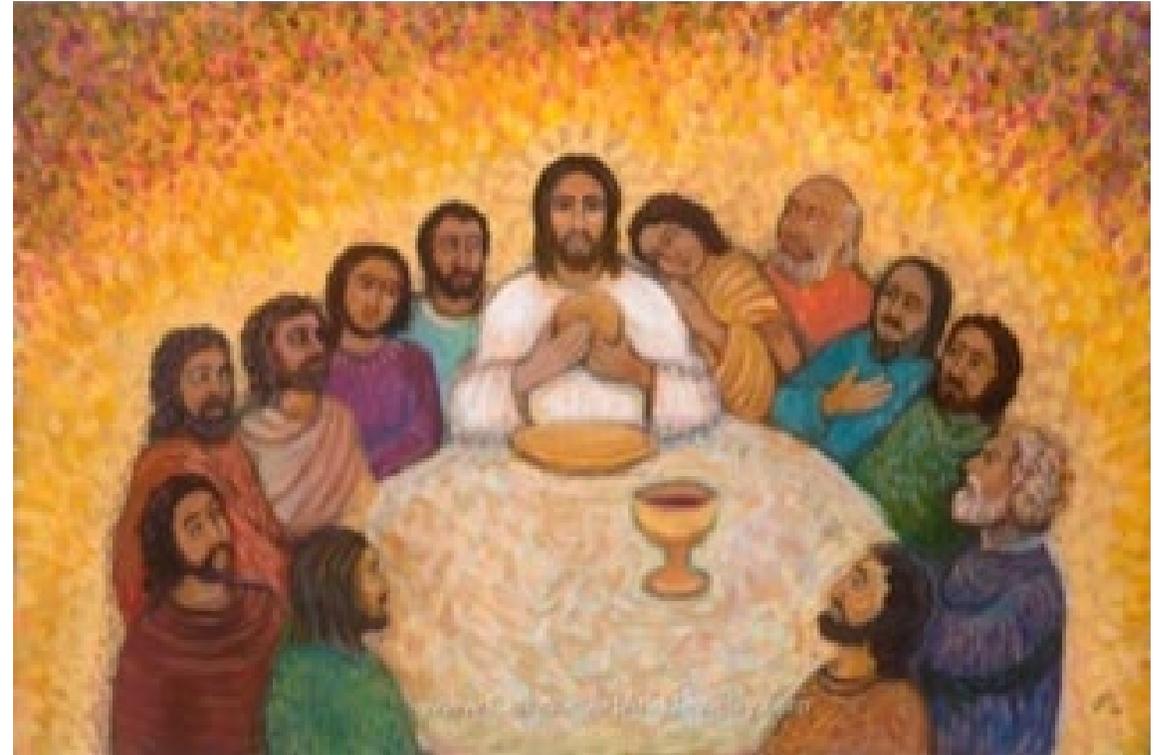
Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you?" What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?" It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.



The Last Supper...The Passion... The Eucharist

- Jesus symbolized the Eucharist in John's Gospel (Chapter 6).
- Jesus introduced the Eucharist at the Last Supper.
- Simon enters the Passion scene, encounters Jesus, experiences the Eucharist.



History and Geography:

Cyrene – a city in Libya (Northern Africa) with a large Jewish community.

Jerusalem had a Cyrenian synagogue.

Jerusalem was a Passover pilgrimage destination – a difficult journey of nearly 1,000 miles.

Palm Sunday – Jesus rides into Jerusalem in glory.

Only Kings and Emperors arrive in such procession.

Passover in five days.

Jesus creates a scene in the Temple.

Simon the Cryenian arrives on his
Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem...



What Happened When Simon Was Involved?

- Under Roman rule – crucifixion was intended to punish the individual offender and instill fear in the people; the cross was a symbol of humiliation.
- Simon's role in the passion/crucifixion of Jesus – a passerby, wrong place at the right time.
- How did it end – or go on – in history? Let's look at Acts of the Apostles.
- Acts 11:19-22, 23, 25-26 – *Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose because of Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but Jews. There were some Cypriots and **Cyrenians** among them, however, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.*
- **Where does this leave us?**
- **What more can we learn?**

Joseph

He hears God's reassuring voice and commits to the journey.



Joseph and Mary

Their journey to
Bethlehem.



Joseph, Mary, and Jesus

Their journey to Egypt.



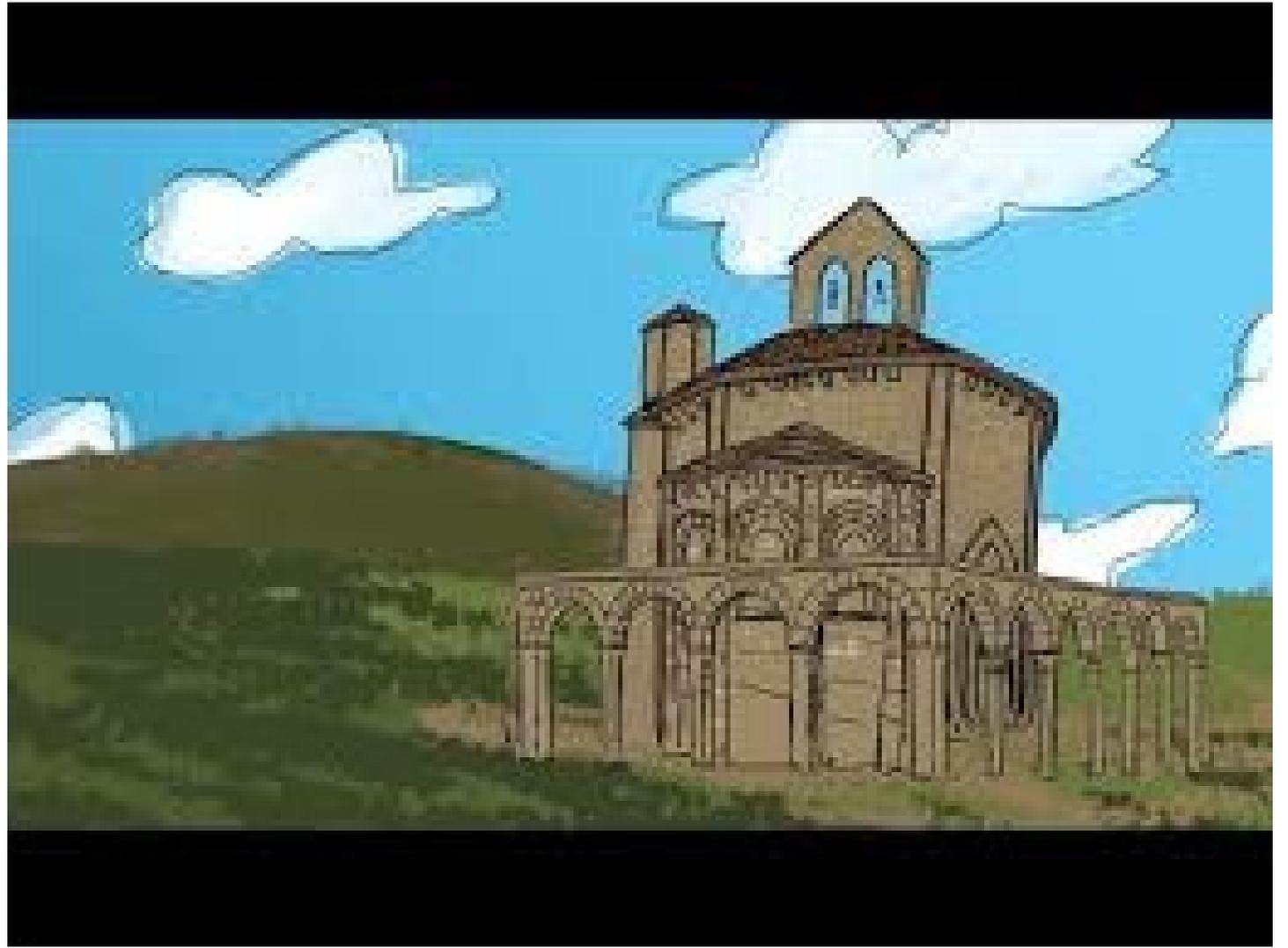
The Magi

- They journeyed together.
- How did their individual journeys change?



Ecotone

Santa Maria de Eunate



On your Journey...

*Abres tus ojos y todos tus sentidos, no solo como turista o peregrino ...
Abre el corazón como un hombre o mujer que busca.*



On your Journey...

*Open your eyes and all
your senses, not only as a
tourist or a pilgrim ...*

*Open your heart as a man
or woman who is seeking.*



Paul's Journeys and Letters...

Excerpt from
Romans 16:13

Greet **Rufus**, chosen
in the Lord, **and his
mother and mine...**



Discipleship

Mark 8:34



Uncertainty...

...Faith...

Not clarity...

...Trust....

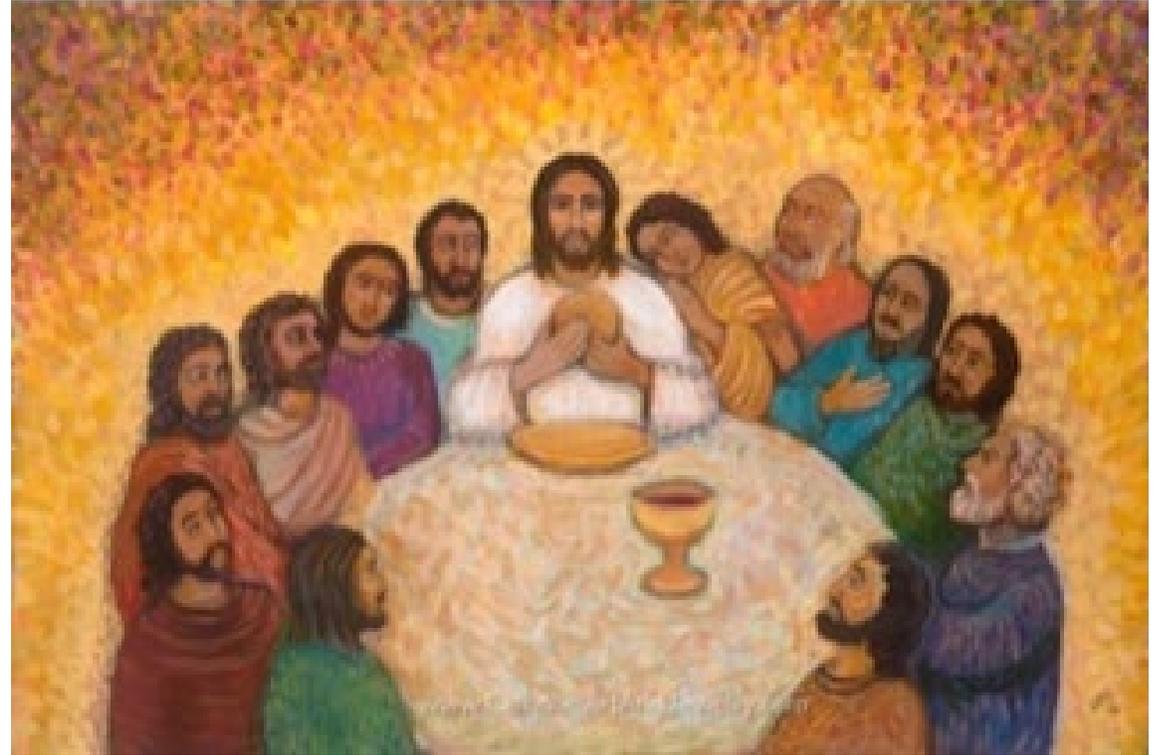
(Mother Teresa and John Kavanaugh; excerpt
from *Sin of Certainty*, by Peter Enns)



Our faith journey today...

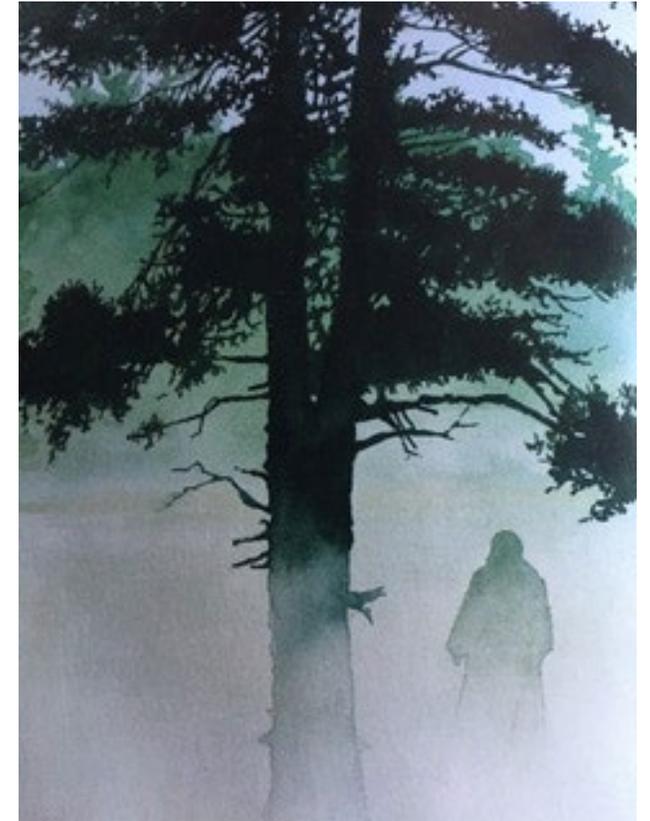
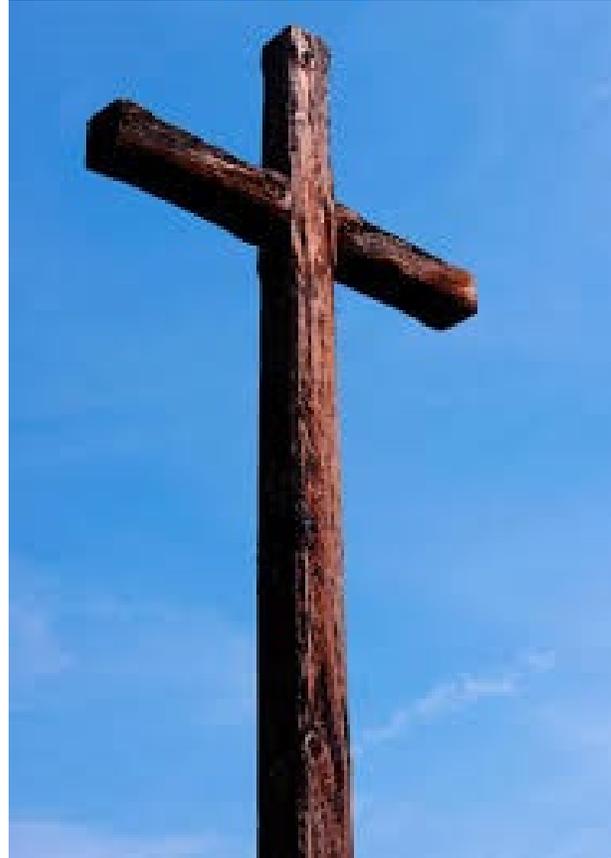
Rooted in Christ and the Eucharist...

**...the Word Made Flesh --
Christ's Body and Blood.**



Jesus...

...conquered the
Roman cross and
death, and changed
it to the Tree of Life.



Ashley's Story

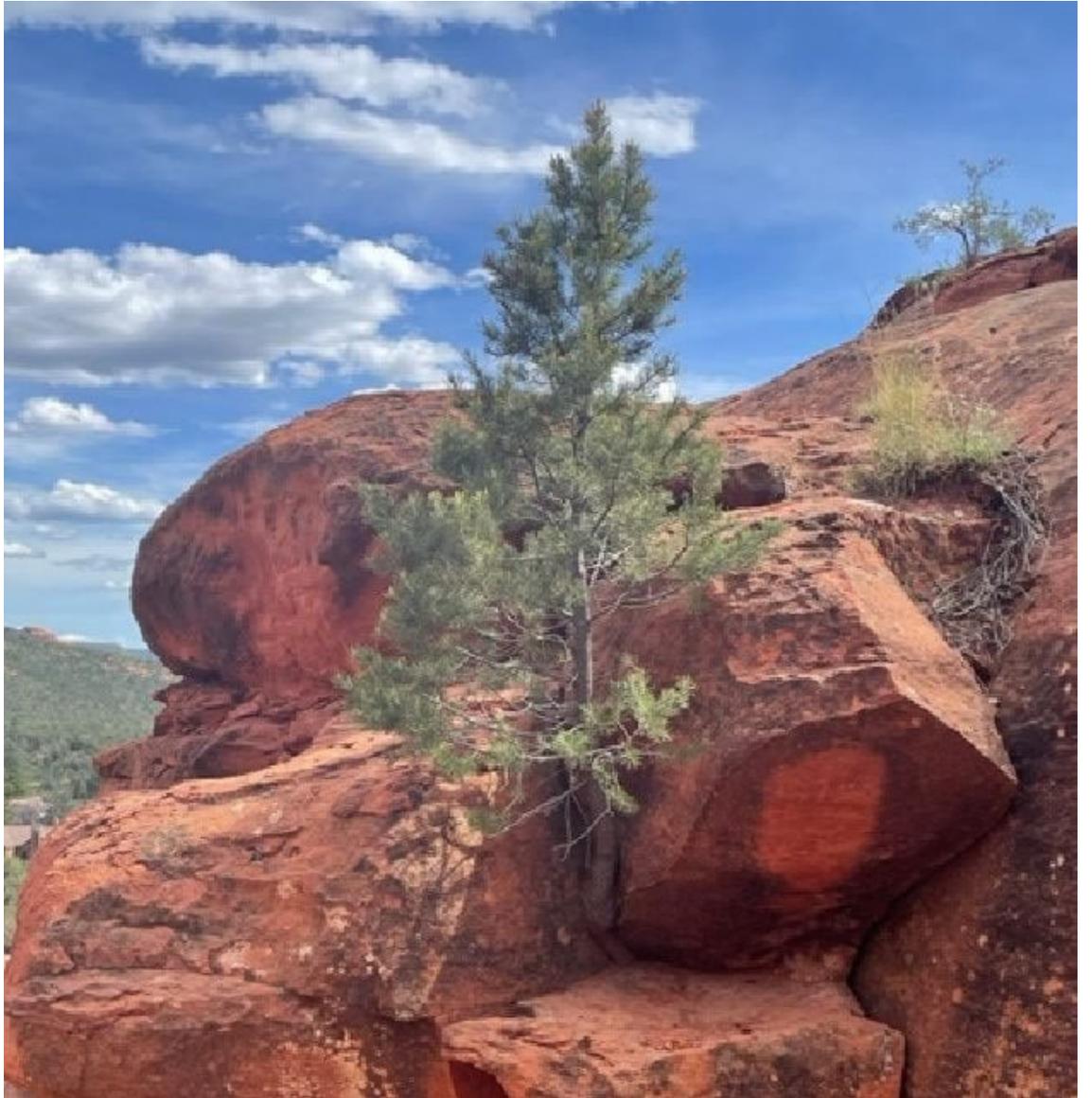
Give us this day our
daily bread...



Simon's lesson for us today...

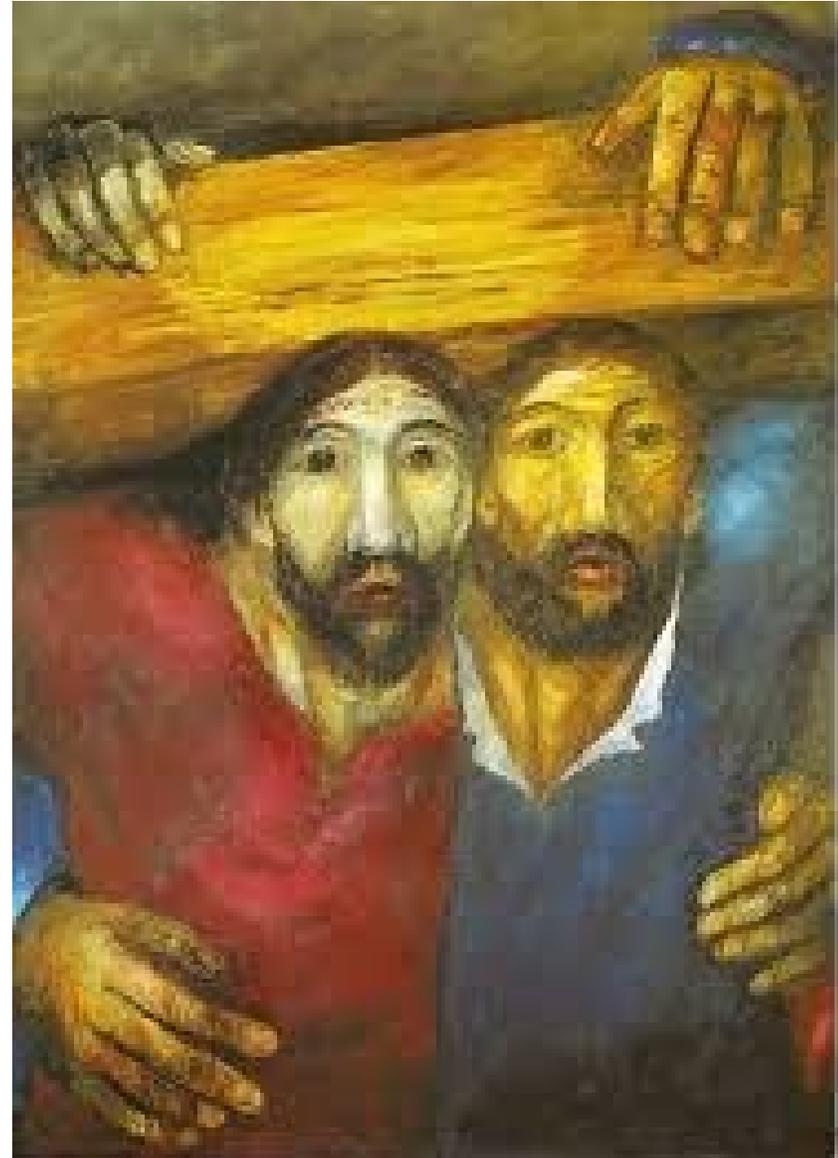
Courage has nothing to do with our determination to be great. It has to do with what we decide in that moment when we are called upon to do more.

(Rita Dove, US Poet Laureate of 1990's)



***This time is not about sin and giving stuff up. It's about giving into the tenderness of God who has only one message, and that is to look at you with breathless delight and say, "You're here."
(Rev. Greg Boyle, S.J.)***

- How does the scene with Simon and Jesus end – how do they part?
- ***You're here...Simon...my Beloved....***
- ***We're here...***



A Parting Blessing (Jan Richardson)

If you would enter into the wilderness, do not, begin without a blessing.

Do not leave without hearing who you are.

Beloved – named by the one who has traveled this path before you.

Do not go without letting it echo in your ears, and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart, do not despair.

That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst,

From the scorching of sun, or the fall of the night.

But I can tell you that on this path there will be help.

I can tell you that on this way there will be rest.

I can tell you that you will know the strange graces that come to our aid only on a road such as this,

that fly to meet us bearing comfort and strength,

that come alongside us for no other cause than to lean themselves toward our ear and with their curious insistence whisper our name.

Beloved. Beloved. Beloved.