## The Stations of the Cross

5th Sunday of Lent • Year A Divine Office: Week I • 2 April 2017

## **Stripped and Nailed**

have a passing reference to the fact that they gospels were all too familiar with the gruesome

shared out his clothing. St John develops the incident to show how it fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 23: they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamlessly woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, 'Instead oftearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it'. In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: 'They shared out my clothing among them, they cast lots for my clothes'.

This is exactly what the soldiers did. (John ridicule of those hostile to our way of life. An 19:23-24).

of being stripped naked by the soldiers, a suffering at once physical and psychological. It 12:32). brings home to us something of the meaning of the early Christian hymn quoted by St Paul when writing to the Philippians: he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross but it is also a way of peace and gentleness, a (Philippians 2:8).

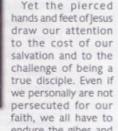
This Station faces us with our tendency to hide behind our outward appearance, to fear humiliation and to run from any confrontation. It is also a reminder of how often people are humiliated, stripped of their dignity and exposed to the hostile gaze of their tormentors.

When we hear about Christians being

T IS remarkable how restrained the Gospels crucified or beheaded by Isis we experience a are about the tenth station: Jesus is Stripped sense of horror and we are lost for words to of his Garments. Matthew, Mark and Luke describe such barbarity. The first readers of the

> details of the process of crucifixion. The Gospel writers were more concerned with the religious meaning of the crucifixion than with the physical details; after all they were writing in the light of the Resurrection.

Yet the pierced endure the gibes and



authentic follower of Jesus is invited along the Our attention is caught by the awful humiliation way of the cross, And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself (John

> There is no by-passing these Stations: the way of faith is a way of the cross, a way which can involve humiliation and pain, a way of fragility; way of holiness and a way to glory.

I love you lesus my love all things. I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.



Sumner in St Mary's Cathedral, Cape Town