

Art at Sacred Heart: Easter Season 2023

The Stations of the Cross The 15th Station: The Resurrection by Janet McKenzie

On the evening of Good Friday, 1991, Pope John Paul II inaugurated the Scriptural Stations of the Cross in the Roman Coliseum. These new Stations were based strictly on incidents corroborated by the Gospel narratives of the Passion; the Traditional Stations, as their name implies, also include events which have long been believed to have occurred, but which are not referenced in any of the Gospels. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Scriptural Stations is that there are fifteen of them, rather than the fourteen to which we are accustomed. The 15th Station is the Resurrection.

Janet McKenzie is an internationally known Catholic artist based in Vermont. Her body of work focuses almost exclusively on the ignored, the marginalized and the spiritually alienated. Although Ms. McKenzie is white herself, her artwork consists almost entirely of people of indeterminate ethnicity. In addition, the dignity and spirituality of women occupy a very special place in her artist's heart.

Ms. McKenzie has created a series of prints representing the fourteen Traditional Stations of the Cross, but she has nonetheless included the 15th Station from the Scriptural Stations. Her rendering of the 15th Station is on display in the sanctuary of Sacred Heart during this Easter Season.

Her Risen Christ is of a mixed ethnicity typical of her subjects, and this stands rather in contrast to the Caucasian depictions of Jesus with which we are most familiar. Her representation of Christ actually brings us closer to what the historical Jesus might have really looked like.

Unlike many renderings of the Resurrection, there is here not the slightest hint of triumphalism. There is no spectacle for us to watch. Rather, her depiction is profoundly relational; there is simply a clear-eyed Jesus looking directly at each of us, and extending his wounded hands to show us what he endured on Good Friday... and he awaits our response.

For anyone interested in learning more about Ms. McKenzie's Stations, noted author Sr. Joan Chittister OSB wrote a book-length commentary in collaboration with Ms. McKenzie in 2013, entitled "The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life." It is available from Orbis Books.