



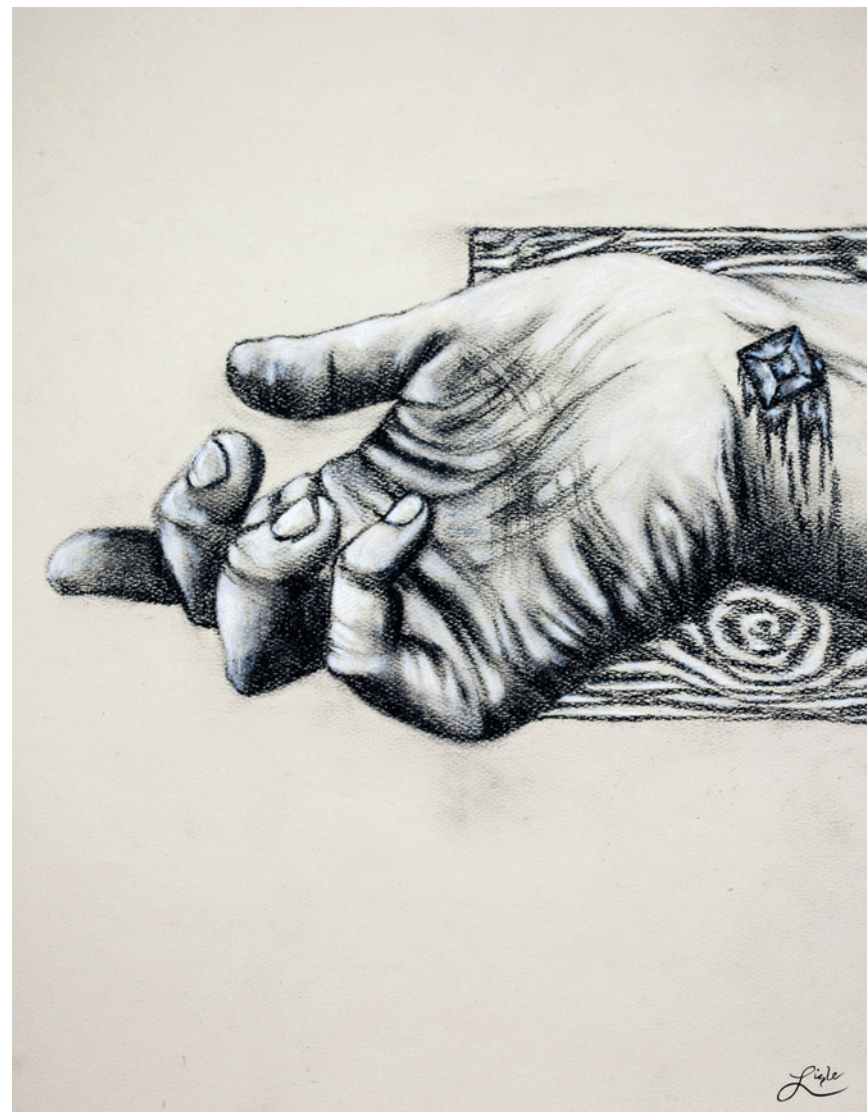
write

Imagine the backstory of the penitent thief. What crime(s) did he commit and why? How did he learn about Jesus? What led him to confession in his final moments? Create a short narrative in the space below.

[illegible]

pray

God of the mockers and the confessors, remember us all when you come into your kingdom. Amen.



The Penitent Thief



FACES OF OUR FAITH

THE PENITENT THIEF ON THE CROSS

read LUKE 23:32-43

from the artist | LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

How did he know?

Before he committed his crime, had he heard? Had he heard of the One who healed and loved and came to turn the world upside down? Or was it during the hike to Calvary hill, the beams of his cross digging deep into his flesh, that he saw the crowds swell for the One before him and he knew, for the first time, the weight of systemic injustice?

Or was it while they nailed them in, the piercing hammer pounding his own body to contort and heave, that he saw his neighbor in perfect silence, hanging as if weightless in the air?

Or was it when he heard, “Forgive them, Father,” the words pouring down like a warm bath?

Or was it when the other mocked him, blood and hate and profane humanity spewing from his mouth, that the contrast made the divine palpable and quite easy to perceive?

How did he know that the One dying alongside him was blameless? How did he know he was the Christ?

Regardless of how, he was convinced of it the way death makes all things clear. So he told the truth—about his own brokenness and the suffering Savior beside him—opening himself to redemption, pointing to the One who might bestow it.



RESPOND

THE PENITENT THIEF ON THE CROSS



look

Take a few moments to gaze upon the artwork. Sit still in quiet meditation as you observe the visual qualities of what you see: color, line, texture, movement, shape, form. Now take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you overlook? Now engage your imagination. If you were to place yourself in this scene, where would you be and how would you interact with what surrounds you?



reflect

- When and how do you imagine the penitent thief knew Jesus was the Christ?
- Why do you think the other criminal joins the crowd in mocking Jesus? What feelings, fears, and needs might be driving his behavior?
- Consider a time when you have taken a risk to tell the truth. What were the outcomes of your confession?