

## THE FEET OF JESUS

The feet of Jesus rest in a black panel, perhaps indicating his descent into hell. The figures at the base of the crucifix are no longer clear. Franciscan scholars suggest that they could be the patriarchs or saints of the Umbrian region namely; Damian, Rufinus, Michael, Peter, Paul and John the Baptist. Others have asserted that the figures are those of the disciples at the Last Supper.

The presence of the rooster in this part of the crucifix is a reminder of Peter's betrayal – drawn small to

suggest that the crucifixion consigns all sin to history and even the biggest regrets of our lives are minute events in the whole human story.

**How do the imagery, layout, colour and symbolism of the San Damiano Crucifix challenge your understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ?**

**The tiny rooster suggests that we can all fail in life. Why do you think the artist added this image?**



# Using the San Damiano Crucifix in Formation Programs & Reflection

The San Damiano Crucifix can be used in many ways to engage people in the story of Francis and his call to 'rebuild the Church'.

The crucifix also invites reflection on the Franciscan understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ.

**HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE SAN DAMIANO CRUCIFIX IN FORMATION, DISCUSSION OR REFLECTION WITH STAFF, STUDENTS AND WIDER GROUPS.**

- Give each participant a crucifix and invite them to examine each section of the crucifix using the reflection questions provided in this section. Then organise participants into groups to discuss their observations.
- There are five sections of the crucifix. Make reflection cards of each section of the crucifix. Give each participant a card and ask them to reflect on the image presented. Then put people into groups ensuring that each group has all five sections. Groups could then be invited to work together to present their understanding of the imagery and symbolism to the rest of the participants.
- Challenge participants to write prayers to go with each of the sections of the crucifix.
- Ask groups to design their own crucifix featuring words and images which capture their personal understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Use a Visio Divina where participants take the crucifix and walk with the images as a reflective prayer experience. Instructions on using the Visio Divina prayer form are provided in the appendices.
- As a ritual, stand participants in a circle and invite 5 people to step forward with a candle (or lamp) and present the message of each section of the crucifix.
- Contemplate the words of Clare on seeing the San Damiano Crucifix as a mirror: In this mirror you will find poverty in bright reflection. You will see humility and love beyond words. You will be able to see this clearly with the grace of God and to contemplate it in its fullness ... (Fourth Letter of Clare to Agnes of Prague).

**What do you see in the mirror of the San Damiano Crucifix?**

**How can Francis and Clare help you see the face of Christ more clearly in those whom you live and work?**

**What are you doing to rebuild God's Church today?**