

Stations of the Cross

Opening Prayer

Holy and merciful Father,
grant that we may follow the way of the cross
in faith and love, so that we may share
in Christ's passion and together with him
reach the glory of your kingdom.
We ask you this through your son Jesus Christ.

Amen.



The First Station

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus stands before Pilate. His followers have abandoned him. He has been rejected by his people, insulted, crowned with thorns and unjustly condemned.

Even Pilate, who has sentenced him to death, would like to wash his hands of the matter, and yet he seems fascinated by Jesus. He wonders who he is and how he can remain so peaceful despite the prospect of his approaching death.

We are reminded how easy it is to pass judgement unjustly, without knowledge of the truth or understanding of another person; how easy it is to echo the prejudices of those who shout the loudest or those we want to please. We are reminded of our own feelings when we stand wrongly accused.

We pray that the truth in all things is revealed.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Second Station

JESUS RECEIVES THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

The beam of the Cross is laid on the back of Jesus, already wounded by scourging. Jesus accepts what he knows to be the will of his Father; his life of obedience has led to this and he trusts in the Father's love to the end.

What is our cross?

Our responsibility to others brings a burden we sometimes feel we do not have the strength to carry. And yet, Jesus tells his disciples to take up their cross each day; that is how we follow his path through life.

We pray for help with the burdens that we carry today.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Third Station

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

At the very outset of the journey Jesus falls to the ground. His strength is not enough. Yet here the power of God is made perfect in weakness.

This station reminds us how easily we fall because of our weakness and human limitations. It asks us to think about how tiredness and suffering affects our readiness to follow Christ, how quickly we are discouraged, or become lazy.

How ready are we to ask for help from God, to draw on the strength of the Holy Spirit rather than trust in our own strength? Jesus fell, not from sin but because he shares our physical weakness.

We pray that the Lord will carry us when we fall.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Fourth Station

JESUS IS MET BY HIS BLESSED MOTHER

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

It will have been a painful moment for them both; such is the bond between a mother and her child.

She had followed him from Galilee, watching and trying to understand him with all the hopes that any parent has for a child. Simeon had prophesied, when she brought the new-born Jesus to the Temple, that a sword would pierce her heart. Now she begins to feel the pain. That moment has come.

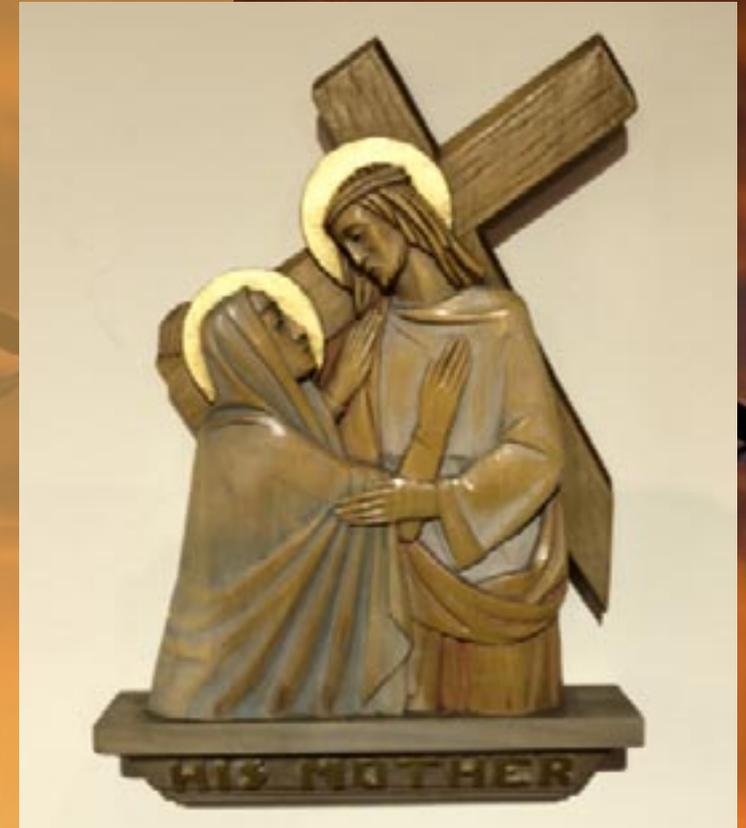
Shining through the anguish of this scene is a mother's constancy, her desire to be with her son, whatever happens. The bond of love uniting mother and son is stronger than all the pain.

Let us pray that Mary will guide us in faith and love.

Act of Contrition

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

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when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Fifth Station
**SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS
CARRY HIS CROSS**

v. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

The Gospels tell us that, as Jesus staggered under the burden of the cross, the soldiers forced a visitor to Jerusalem to help. We do not know why he was in the crowd that day or what his feelings were towards Jesus. Perhaps it was easy for the soldiers to pick on him, a foreigner, dragging him in, to share the mockery of the crowd.

This scene makes us think of our resistance when circumstances force us to act when we prefer a quiet life and are unwilling to become involved, especially when it means unpopularity or scorn.

Let us pray for the courage to do what we see is right and good.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Sixth Station

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Veronica is drawn into the story of the Passion like Simon, but in her case voluntarily. Behind the blood and sweat, and the popular abuse, she saw a human being, whose suffering moved her to pity. A simple gesture, in itself of little consequence, to wipe the face of Jesus. The important thing here is the simplicity of the human gesture, the open heart which prompted it.

We pray that, like Veronica, we will be able to see the face of Jesus in other people, especially those in need, and to see them not as a problem but as our brothers and sisters in need of our kindness and help.

Act of Contrition

I love you Jesus, my love, above all things; I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, then do with me what you will.

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Seventh Station **JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

After three scenes where the suffering of Jesus is met in different ways by Mary, Simon and Veronica, we are back in the crowd watching him fall a second time. This time, there is no one to help, no sympathy. What is our response to Jesus? We are reminded of the loneliness that pain causes someone who is suffering.

We are reminded of how slow we are to respond, how easily we overlook other people's isolation, caught up with our own needs, we stand back in the crowd.

Let us pray that we will recognise the suffering of others and to be attentive to their needs.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Eighth Station **THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

In the crowd, there are those who feel sorry about what was happening. They even have the courage to speak out, if not in protest, at least with regret. The reply Jesus gives them is a warning, 'Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children.' It is no good feeling sorrow for what Jesus undergoes, unless we are ready to respond.

A change of heart in us will let us see the Passion in its proper perspective.

Let us pray that we recognise our failure to love as Christ has commanded us to do and ask for his forgiveness.

Act of Contrition

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All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Ninth Station

JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

As we reach the top of Golgotha, where Jesus is crucified, he collapses for a third and last time. In terms of his human strength, Jesus has reached rock bottom; the rest of the way he is driven on simply by the determination of others to finish him off. Helpless as he is, Jesus is still the obedient Son of his heavenly Father, who, 'for the prize of our salvation that was set before him' did not refuse his cross, but held fast to hope.

It is our Lord's tenacity to the end which can encourage us to be faithful when we find our weakness letting us down, and we fall again into habits of sin.

Let us pray that the figure of Jesus on the ground of Golgotha will lead us away from the temptation of sin.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Tenth Station

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

The public humiliation of a criminal continues. Just as Jesus had stripped himself of his glory as God in order to save us, so now his own clothes are stripped off and his dignity, as a human being, is taken from him.

As we think of this scene we can learn what Jesus meant when he said 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

We pray that we may put aside our own needs and concerns, for those of others.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Eleventh Station

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Cruelty and barbarism are not just features of the Roman world; the modern world has found many ways of dehumanising people thoughtlessly, in the name of greed or selfishness.

Jesus identified himself with the most vilified outcasts of society and has opened up a new way for us to find our true humanity.

He stretches out his arms to embrace the world in his love, regardless of the excruciating pain and the loss of his lifeblood. He does not condemn the world but touches our hearts so that we might know the love of God and be saved.

We pray, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Twelfth Station **JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus hung for three hours in the heat of the day, enduring the agony of pain and thirst, as he struggled for breath against the downward pull of his body on the cross.

At the same time, according to the Gospel story, he forgave his murderers, entrusted his mother Mary and John, the beloved disciple, to each other's care, and he promised heaven to the repentant thief.

Now he knows that he has finished his life's work, and can surrender everything to his Father, putting himself into his hands. 'Greater love has no one than this,' he had said, 'than to lay down his life for his friends.'

Let us give thanks for the love of Jesus Christ.

Act of Contrition

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

All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Thirteenth Station

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

After the death of Jesus, his mother and the women disciples together with St John, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, take down the body from the cross and bury it in a tomb nearby.

Finally in the quiet of the evening, the crowds departed, and they are able to mourn the one they have lost, in whom, during his life, they had seen and hoped for so much.

It is the Roman centurion who was on duty at the end of that day who says, 'Truly this was a Son of God.'

Jesus has died for us so that we might live. It is with faith in the mystery of the death and resurrection that we prepare for new life.

Let us pray for all who have died in Christ.

Act of Contrition

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when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Fourteenth Station **JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB**

V. We adore you, O Christ,
and we praise you:

R. Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

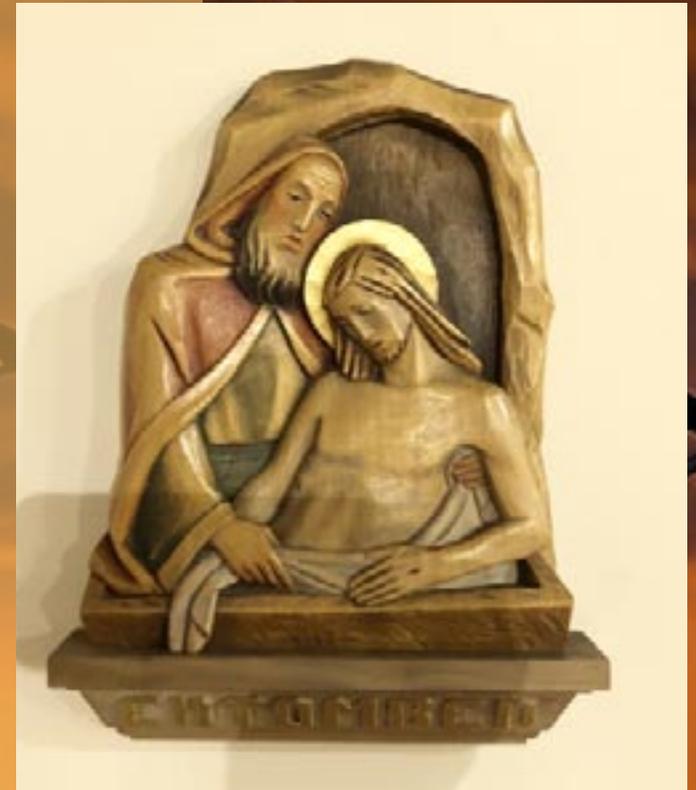
The tomb is sealed so that Jesus may make even the grave a milestone on our road to glory with him. This is where the Way of the Cross ends. Yet the end of the life of Jesus is only the beginning of the story of his life in our hearts .

Let us pray that one day we may be raised to glory with him in the place that he has prepared for us.

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All sing: Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom. *(Repeat)*



Final Prayer

Look down, O Lord,
with mercy upon this your family
for our ways are not your ways;
help us to know your way.

Fill us with your Spirit
that we may truly become your people,
the body of Christ.

Heal our divisions
and give us the courage to live and work for unity and peace.

We make our prayer
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

