

St Vincent de Paul Stations of the Cross

Holy and merciful Father,
grant that I may follow the way of the cross
in faith and love,
so that I may share in Christ's passion
and together with him
reach the glory of your kingdom.



1st Station

Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When Pilate saw that he was doing no good, but that actually a riot was imminent, he took water, washed his hands in the presence of the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this murder. It is your problem.' And the whole people replied, 'His blood on ourselves and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas; but he whipped Jesus, and handed him over to be crucified.

Matthew 27:24-26

What does it mean to be condemned - and to be condemned unjustly? We see poverty, injustice and unfairness all around us, the scale of the problem is too difficult for us to deal with and, like Pilate, we wash our hands of it. Remove the blinkers from our eyes because wherever there is suffering and injustice we cannot remain outsiders or uninvolved.

St. Vincent de Paul

We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God.

All: I love you Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with whole heart of offending you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again, then do with me what you will.



2nd Station

Jesus takes up his cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Pilate handed him over to them that he should be crucified. And so they accepted Jesus. And carrying his cross for himself, he went out to the place known as Skull Place, which in Aramaic is known as Golgotha, where they crucified him, and with two others, on this side and on that, and Jesus in the middle.

John 19:16-17

Lord Jesus you accepted your cross, help us to accept whatever trials and sufferings we are given. When our problems seem too much for us, when disappointment, weariness and monotony grind us down - then, Lord, show us how to shoulder our burdens and follow steadfastly in your footsteps.

St Vincent de Paul

The first step to be taken by one who wishes to follow Christ is according to our Lord's own words, that of renouncing yourself - that is, your own senses, your own passions, your own will, your own judgement and all the movements of nature, making to God a sacrifice of all these things, and all of their acts, which are surely sacrifices very acceptable to the Lord. And we must never grow weary of this; for if anyone having, so to speak, one foot already in Heaven, should abandon this exercise, when the time should come for them to put the other foot there, he would run much risk of being lost.

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3rd Station

Jesus falls the first time

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He carries our sin, and suffers agony on our behalf, and we reckoned that he was in pain, under attack and affliction.

He was wounded because of our iniquities, and was sick because of our sins, the chastisement of our peace was on him, and by his bruise we were healed.

Isaiah 53:4-5

In that moment it seemed that all that Jesus had achieved in his ministry was wasted. Under the weight of the cross, Jesus is too weak to carry on and falls to the ground. Then, slowly, he rises and carries on. Lord Jesus, help us to accept our weaknesses, teach us not to complain when things get too difficult for us and give us the strength to carry on with the work you have given to us.

St Vincent de Paul

Human nature grows tired of always doing the same thing. Through God's will, we are given the opportunity of practising two great virtues. The first is perseverance, which will bring us to our goal. The other is steadfastness, which overcomes the difficulties on the way.

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4th Station

Jesus meets his mother

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The child's father and mother were in a state of astonishment at the things being said about him; and Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: 'Look! this one is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and as a sign of contradiction (and your own soul will be pierced by a sword) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'

Luke 2:34-35

Mary sees her son kicked and driven like an animal but she can only watch - silent and in deep pain. Yet her trust in God was constant. There are times when we must watch as those we love suffer, help us to be faithful and to know that all things are in your hands.

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

The science of charity reform is not transmitted through books but as much as by climbing stairs in the homes of the poor, kneeling at their bed, suffering from the same cold as they do, and discovering the secret of a grief-stricken heart in the course of a friendly conversation. When we have accomplished this ministry, not for months, but over long years, then we are entitled to propose serious measures.

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5th Station

Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

As they led him away, they took hold of Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming from the field, and put the cross on him to carry it behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26

Simon was forced to carry Jesus' cross. He would have been ashamed to be seen helping a criminal or outcast. Help us not to be ashamed of helping those whom society condemns because we are the hands, the feet and the shoulders of Christ in our world of today. Lord, help us to speak words of kindness and to listen with attentiveness to all those who claim our time.

St Vincent de Paul

Since Christ willed to be born poor, he chose for himself disciples who were poor. He made himself the servant of the poor and shared their poverty. When we visit the poor and needy, we try to be understanding where they are concerned. We sympathise with them, so that we can echo Paul's words: 'I have become all things to all men.'

All: I love you Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with whole heart of offending you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again, then do with me what you will.



6th Station

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

We declared before him, like a child, like a root in thirsty land; he has no form or glory, and we saw him, and he had no form nor beauty. But his form was without honour, inferior [in form] when compared with all [other] people, he was a man under attack, and knowing all about the bearing of suffering, for his face was turned away; he was dishonoured and he was not respected.

Isaiah 53:2-3

It is an ancient tradition of the Church that, when Veronica wiped the bloody face of Jesus, there was an image of Christ left on the cloth. We too see that same face of Jesus in every act of kindness, every offer of support and every act of mercy that is done in His name. So whenever eyes fill up with tears of suffering, of desperation, loneliness or injustice then we have the opportunity to wipe away the tears of Christ.

St Vincent de Paul

If you consider the poor in the light of faith, then you will observe that they are taking the place of the Son of God who chose to be poor. In his passion he almost lost the appearance of a man and was considered a fool by the Gentiles and a stumbling block to the Jews, he showed them that his mission was to preach to the poor. We also ought to have this same spirit and imitate Christ's actions. That is, we must take care of the poor; console them, help them, support their cause.

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7th Station

Jesus falls a second time

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

But they rejoiced against me; and they gathered - they gathered, those scourges,
against me;
and I did not know it.

They were scattered, but were not pierced to the heart.

They tempted me, they looked down their noses at me;
they gnashed their teeth at me.

Psalm 35:15-16

Jesus, who was sinless and innocent, had to struggle to his feet and continue his journey to the cross. There are times for us when all seems to fail and we don't feel that we can carry on. Give us the strength to accept our responsibilities and to persevere in doing your will.

St Vincent de Paul

Extend your mercy towards others, so that there can be no one whom you met without helping. For what hope is there for us if God should withdraw his mercy towards us.

All: I love you Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with whole heart of offending you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again, then do with me what you will.



8th Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A great crowd of the populace was following him, and also [a crowd] of women, who were mourning him and weeping for him. Jesus turned to the women and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, don't be weeping over me. No – weep for yourselves and for your children.'

Luke 23:27-28

In the midst of terrible suffering and pain, Jesus offers words of comfort to the weeping women of Jerusalem. His words tell the women not to weep because of what is happening to him, but to look deeply at the paradox of what is happening and fear for the consequences for the Hebrew nation. We today are the children of those women and the call for repentance and accountability is made to each one of us.

Blessed Frederick Ozanam

The question which is agitating the world today is a social one. It is a struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much. It is a violent clash of opulence and poverty which is shaking the ground under our feet. Our duty as Christians is to throw ourselves between these two camps in order to accomplish by love what justice alone cannot do.

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9th Station

Jesus falls the third time

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Let your thinking be what was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not think it plunder to hang on to (the being equal to God). Instead, he emptied himself, taking a slave's form, coming to be in the likeness of human beings. And being found in appearance like a human being, he humbled himself! He became obedient even to the point of death (death on a cross!)

Philippians 2:6-8

Though totally innocent, Jesus was treated as a common criminal and completely drained of strength, he collapses on the road. This indignity is matched only by our frequently falling away from him. Jesus chose the path of obedience and self-denial. We fall from him by our half-hearted following of the Gospel, by our half-kept promises and by putting our own comfort before our Christian duty. However, no matter how many times we fall, no matter how grave our sins each time we rise to start again we know that we will encounter the mercy and support of God.

St Vincent de Paul

Perfection consists in one thing only, which is doing the will of God. For according to Our Lord's words, it suffices for perfection to deny self, to take up his cross and to follow Him. Now who denies himself and takes up his cross and follows Christ better than he who seeks not to do his own will, but always that of God?

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10th Station

Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

And they take him to the place Golgotha, which when it is translated is 'Place of the Skull'. And they tried to give him wine flavoured with myrrh – but he didn't take it. And they crucify him. And they 'divide his garments, casting a lot over them [to see] who would get something'.

Mark 15:22-24

Jesus is stripped of clothing, of disciples and of friends; alone, naked and vulnerable and with nothing to protect him from the agony to come. We work for possessions, position, and security, but try to hide our sins and weaknesses. Help us Lord, to let go of our prejudice and pretensions and be stripped of all that comes between us and doing your will.

St Vincent de Paul

The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility. For, as he does not know at all how to employ it, neither does he know how to defend himself from it.

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11th Station

Jesus is nailed to the cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Two other criminals were led out with him to be executed. And when they came to the place that was known as 'Skull', there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right, and one on the left. Jesus said, 'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' When they divided his garments, they threw lots.

Luke 23:32-34

The soldiers stretch the arms of Jesus and hold his hands and wrist against the wood and with one blow smash the hammer against the nail and through the flesh. Then they seize the other arm and repeat the process. Next, raising his knees so that his feet are flat against the wood they hammer in more nails. Jesus could have chosen to come down from the cross. Instead he chose to die with two criminals, not to react to those who taunted him and to ask his Father to forgive all those who had been involved in this crucifixion. We look at you, Jesus, and ask, 'Are we worth this much?'

St Vincent de Paul

The Church teaches us that mercy belongs to God. Let us implore him to bestow on us the spirit of mercy and compassion, so that we are filled with it and may never lose it. Only consider how much we ourselves are in need of mercy.

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12th Station

Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Now it was about the sixth hour, and a darkness came on all the earth until the ninth hour. because there was an eclipse of the sun. The veil of the Temple was torn in the middle, and Jesus cried in a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' As he said this, he expired.

Luke 23:44-46

Nailed to a tree, racked by pain and anguish, Jesus empties his humanity and gives himself up to death. He has endured faithfully to the end. Lord, help us to see, in this act of obedience, the mystery of our redemption.

St Vincent de Paul

Let us give ourselves to God completely, renounce ourselves, our personal satisfactions, our ease, and our vanity. We should recognize that our greatest enemy is ourselves. Yet let us do all the good we can and do it with all possible care. It is not enough to help the neighbour, to fast, to make mental prayer, to work on the missions. All that is good, but not enough! We must do all this in the same spirit as did our Saviour and in the way he did, humbly and purely, so that the name of God be glorified and his holy will accomplished.

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13th Station

Jesus is taken down from the cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

There came Joseph, the one from Arimathea. He was a reputable councillor; and he was also waiting for the kingdom of God. He was daring enough to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he was already dead. And he summoned the centurion and asked if he was long dead. And when he had confirmation from the centurion, he gifted the corpse to Joseph. And he brought a linen cloth and took him down and wrapped him in the linen cloth and placed him in a tomb which was hewn out of rock.

Mark 15:42-46

Once more, Mary cradles in her arms the lifeless body of the son she bore. The son she had cradled in her arms on that first night in a stable in Bethlehem. We too must part from those we love and have loved us and grief will come to each one of us. But in that grief, our hope is safe in God's loving hands - from our cradle until our grave we are wrapped in love.

St Vincent de Paul

We have never so much cause for consolation, as when we find ourselves oppressed by sufferings and trials; for these make us like Christ our Lord.

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14th Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He rolled a stone on to the door of the tomb. And Mary the Magdalene and Mary [the mother] of Joses were watching where he lay.

Mark 15:46-47

In the cold, eerie silence of the closed tomb, it seems that death has been victorious. But death will lose its sting when Jesus emerges triumphant on the third day. This plan, formed long ago has been fulfilled. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus give hope and guidance to our difficulties and struggles. Christ has set us free - free to be his hands, his feet and his body here on earth.

St Vincent de Paul

Free your minds from all that troubles you; God will take care of things. Trust in him, I beg you, and you will have the fulfilment of what your heart desires.

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15th Station

Jesus is raised from the dead



We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; and when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And as they were puzzling about this, look! Two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. They became fearful, and bowed their faces to the ground; [the two men] said to the women, ‘Why are you looking for the Living One among the corpses? He is not here – no, he has been raised! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that “the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.” ’

Luke 24:1-7

Death could not hold Jesus who is Lord of Life. No sin, no sickness, no power nor physical death has any hold over us, now that Jesus has risen from the dead. Through the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ we know that we will inherit eternal life.

Blessed Frederick Ozanam

You have felt the emptiness of material pleasures, you have felt the hunger for truth crying out within you; you have gone for light and comfort to the barren philosophy of modern apostles. You have not found food for your souls there. The religion of your forefathers appears before you today with full hands; do not turn away, for it is generous.

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Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

*Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
For all the benefits you have won for me.
For all the pains and insults you have born for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
May I know you more clearly,
Love you more dearly
And follow you more nearly:
Now and forever.*

