

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



The Stations of the Cross are a traditional Catholic devotion with the purpose of focused prayer and meditation on Christ's Passion. The Stations are 14 "stops" along the way that Jesus took in the final hours of His life – from being condemned to death under the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate to being laid to rest in a borrowed grave. Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land who wished to walk in the footsteps of Jesus began the tradition.

Today we will experience a Living Stations of the Cross. Although it looks like a play or a performance, it is actually a prayer. When we pray the Stations of the Cross, we are asking God for the grace to understand what Jesus suffered for our sake.

Your group will be acting out Station _____.

- › Look for ways to let everyone in your group be part of the Station. Roles can include the narrator, main characters, or people in the background.
- › Choose a strong reader to be your narrator. Only a few Stations have other speaking parts.
- › The purpose of reenacting these Stations of the Cross is to help us to understand what Jesus endured for our sake and to bring us to love Him more and more. To that end, please be serious and prayerful in your presentation.
- › Please sit with your group members until after your Station has been acted out.
- › Please walk quietly to the prep area when the Station before yours goes on stage.
- › When it is your group's turn, the narrator should announce the Station that your group has been assigned, read the Scripture and reflection, and lead the prayer.
- › After you leave the stage, give your props to the prop master and take a seat in the audience.

THE FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



Scripture

Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and said to them, "You brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him."

But all together they shouted out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us."

(Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder.)

Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus, but they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate addressed them a third time, "What evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him."

With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed. The verdict of Pilate was that their

demand should be granted. So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished. (Luke 23:13-25)

Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. (Matthew 27:29-30)

Reflection

Jesus, you are standing before Pilate to be judged. Almost all the friends that you have lived with, taught, and loved for the past three years have abandoned you. Even Peter, the Rock, has denied that he even knows you. You are innocent of any wrongdoing, and yet you are condemned to die. Jesus, help me to think of you when my friends turn away from me, and when I am falsely accused. Thank you for the grace to live as you lived. I love you, Jesus.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE SECOND STATION

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS



Scripture

And carrying the cross Himself He went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17)

Reflection

Jesus, you willingly take up your Cross and begin to carry it to Calvary because you are obedient to your Father's will. The Cross is heavy, but your love for me is greater than your suffering. It is not easy for you to carry this Cross.

Jesus, sometimes it is not easy for me to do the things that I must do. Help me to remember that you said that I must take up my cross and follow you. Give me the grace to say yes to those things that you would have me do even when they are hard for me.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



Reflection

Your Cross is heavy, Jesus, and you fall to the ground. The weight of the sins of the world is upon you. But you must go on. you pick up your Cross and continue on the way to Calvary. Jesus, your love for all people, even when they have sinned, compels you to go on.

The prophet Isaiah foretold your suffering: Yet it was our pain that He bore, our sufferings He endured. We thought of Him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted (Isaiah 53:4).

Jesus, I have fallen into sin even when I did not want to. It is hard for me to go on sometimes. Give me the grace to be sorry for my sins and to get up again and to continue to live my life for you.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



Reflection

Jesus, it must have made you sad to have your Mother, Mary, see you this way. Surely her heart was breaking as she looked upon your suffering. You would have spared her the pain of seeing people laughing and cursing at you.

As Mary looks upon your sweaty and bloodied body, a sword pierces her heart, and she wants to help you. Jesus, your mother's look of love gives you strength, and you continue along the way.

Jesus, help me to remember all that Mary endured for you so that through her example I, too, can endure the hard times in my life for your sake.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE FIFTH STATION

SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS



Scripture

As they led Him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

Reflection

Jesus, the soldiers notice how tired you are and how hard it is for you to carry your Cross. They want to make sure that you do not die along the way to Calvary, because they want to crucify you. So they make

Simon of Cyrene carry the Cross for you for a while. How blessed is Simon to help you in your suffering, even though it is not what he wants to do. How blessed am I to suffer for you, Jesus, when things are hard for me. Help me to realize that these difficult things can be a grace from you. Help me to unite my suffering with yours.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



Reflection

you continue on your way to Calvary, Jesus, and you are tired, sweaty, and bloody. A woman named Veronica has been following you, and she can no longer bear to see your pain. She puts aside her fear of being beaten by the guards and breaks through the crowd to wipe your face with a cloth. She loves you so much, Jesus, and her love is stronger than her fear. you reward her love by leaving an image of your holy face upon the cloth.

Jesus, help me to see your face in everyone who needs assistance. Help me know that I, too, through my loving action to others, can leave your holy image upon this world. Give me the grace not to be afraid of what others may say about me, but to let my love for you shine forth as Veronica's did.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



Reflection

Jesus, you are God and man. Once again the weight of the Cross and the sins of the whole world are heavy upon your shoulders. you fall a second time. Yet your love for me and your desire to complete your Father's plan gives you the strength to rise and to continue on your way.

We read again from the prophet Isaiah, who foretold how you would redeem us through your suffering and death:

But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed (Isaiah 53:5).

Jesus, may my love for you and my desire to do your will be strong enough to enable me to rise from my failures and continue along the path you have chosen for me.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE EIGHTH STATION

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



Scripture

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented Him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:27-28)

Reflection

Jesus, as you continue along your way, you meet some women with their children. They are weeping for you. Even though you are

suffering so terribly, you stop to offer them comfort. your words are not for yourself, but for them. Jesus, I want to be more like you. Help me, even when I am experiencing hard times, to think of others first. Help me always to pray for the needs of all.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME



Reflection

O dear Jesus, the sins of the world are heavy upon your shoulders, and you fall a third time. Can you get up under all this pain and carry your Cross again? But your love is once again greater than your pain. It gives you the strength to rise again and to complete the journey that you have begun.

Jesus, I am sorry that my sins added weight to your Cross. I, too, want to begin again with your forgiveness. Forgive me my sins and grant me the grace to complete my journey to you.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES



Scripture

And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots (Matthew 27:35).

Reflection

Jesus, the soldiers stripped you of the only property you had on earth: your clothes. They left only the Crown of thorns on your head. your love for us is beyond our greatest imagination Jesus. Nothing would stop you

from fulfilling the plan that would open the gates of Heaven for all people. Jesus, even when I am humiliated or shamed before others, help me to respond with your love.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



Note: This Station will be followed by a period of silent reflection while Jesus hangs on the Cross. The person who plays Jesus should have the physical strength to hold his arms up during this time.

Scripture

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on His right, the other on His left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They divided His garments by casting lots.

The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at Him and said, "He saved others, let Him save Himself if He is the chosen one, the Messiah of God."

Even the soldiers jeered at Him. As they approached to offer Him wine they called out, "If You are King of the Jews, save Yourself."

Above Him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews." (Luke 23:33-38)

Reflection

Jesus, they stretched out your body on that wooden Cross that you have carried all the way to Calvary. Through your hands and your feet they drove huge nails so that you could not escape your Death. Your blood gushes forth as the gift that brings redemption for me and for all who would believe in you. But those nails were not what held you to that Cross, dear Jesus. It was your love that kept you there. Thank you, sweet Jesus, for a love so powerful and profound you would have died for me even if I were the only person on earth. [Pause for a moment of silent reflection.]

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE TWELFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



Scripture

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, He is calling Elijah."

One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to Him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take Him down."

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

[Narrator says, "Let us kneel." All kneel quietly for a few seconds. Then the narrator says, "Let us stand." All stand.]

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.

When the centurion who stood facing Him saw how He breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:33-39)

Reflection

Jesus, by your willing death on the Cross, you have paid the price for all of the sins of the world; you have paid the price for my sins. Thank you for the gift of redemption. Help me not to lose that gift or to treat it lightly. I desire to live with you forever in Heaven at the end of my life. Thank you for so great a love!

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



Scripture

Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph (Mark 15:43-45).

Reflection

Jesus, they took your body down from the Cross and placed you in your Mother's arms.

Indeed a sword had pierced her heart, as the prophet Simeon had foretold. Yet, despite her pain, she stayed by your side, dear Jesus. Please help me always to be faithful to you, as your mother, Mary, was. Jesus, give me the grace to be strong.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



Scripture

Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus watched where he was laid (Mark 15:46-47).

Reflection

It is over, Jesus, and yet even in your death you did not receive what was due to you, the King of Kings. They buried you in a borrowed grave and went away sad and confused. They did not yet believe what you had promised them.

The price for sin had been paid in full – why were they so forlorn? Jesus, often I do not understand your ways, and I, too, am sad and forlorn. If only they could have believed your promise of Resurrection – what joy and peace they would have experienced! If only I could believe that your plans for me are good – what joy and peace I could experience each day of my life! Jesus, help me to put my faith and trust in you. I love you, Jesus.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

CLOSING PRAYER



Jesus, thank you for loving me so very much that you would endure all of this suffering in order that I might have life in you. Fill my heart with your grace that I might live as you lived. Help me always to reflect on your Passion and death in order to find the strength to do all that you ask of me. I love you, Jesus. you are my Redeemer and my Savior.

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

All Respond: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Amen.