

The Stations of the Cross



*Please rise as the leader enters, and,
after the Sign of the Cross,
join in the Opening Prayer, below.*

Opening Prayer

ASSEMBLY: (+) Lord Jesus Christ, we come in faith to remember your suffering and your dying. Allow us to walk at your side in prayer during this, your final journey. Help us to see beyond the image of each station to the reality of the suffering you experienced on that Good Friday. Help us to see both our own pain and the pain of others as a sharing in your bitter suffering. Give us constancy in our own trials and deep compassion for the sufferings of others. Above all, help us never to forget how deep your love is for each of us.

HYMN: At the cross her station keeping, Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.

You are welcome to join the leader in processing around the Church to each Station.

The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

LEADER: Pilate said to the people, "Behold, the man!" When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" ...Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. (*John 19:6, 15*) (*Please genuflect as you are able:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Pilate has heard all the evidence; the Man is obviously innocent. And so Pilate condemns Jesus to death. Is there anything that stings and outrages like rank injustice? When we are on the receiving end, we all cry out bitterly against injustice. What we rarely notice is that we too can be unjust. When we find ourselves denying people any courtesy we demand from others, we are unjust. More often than we think, we can cry in our hearts, "Crucify him." (*Please pause in silent prayer for a few moments, kneeling as you are able*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, let us walk at your side during this, your Passion. Give insight to our minds and touch our hearts, so that we understand the price you paid to convince us of your love. Teach us to be aware of others' pain, as we gaze on yours. Speak to us, Lord, and stir up our listless spirits to respond to you. Amen. (*All please stand & sing*)

HYMN: Through her heart, his sorrow sharing, All His bitter anguish bearing, Now at length the sword has passed.

The Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross

LEADER: And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him. (*Mark 15:20*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Each of us who bear the name of Christ is called to bear courageously whatever cross a loving Providence has allowed upon our shoulders. But even as we are bearing our own cross, we must not shut our eyes to the suffering of others. It's easy to close our eyes, isn't it? If we just don't look at suffering people, we can pretend that things aren't as bad as some say. And then we can forget the whole thing. (*All please pause to pray and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord, Jesus Christ, as we see you take up your cross and lead the way for us, we ask two graces: that we be patient and uncomplaining in carrying our own cross, whatever it may be; and that we learn to feel deeply with all who suffer, no matter who they are, or what they are, or where they are. Amen. (*Please stand & sing:*)

HYMN: Oh, how sad and sore distressed Was that Mother highly blessed Of the sole-begotten One!

The Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

LEADER: Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. (*Philippians 2:6-8*) (*Genuflecting as you are able:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: The savage scourging has taken its toll, and the heavy cross is dead weight. Jesus stumbles and pitches forward on his face, the cross pinning him to the stones of the street. Here Christ is weak. We are weak, too. Understandably, we ask both God and others to be patient with us in our weakness, to bear with us as we stumble and fall in our struggle to be true Christians. Should we not extend the same patience and pity as we witness the grievous failings of others? Suppose that our own lives had been different; where and what would we be now? We can look at these less fortunate and say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord, Jesus Christ, it is hard to look on you in your moment of weakness as the cross presses you to earth Remember the bitter taste of your own weakness and strengthen me when my weakness tempts me to feel that I cannot go on. Above all, help me to be patient with the weaknesses of others. May I see you in their pain. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: Christ above in torment hangs; She beneath beholds the pangs Of her dying glorious Son.

The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

LEADER: Simeon said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, and you yourself a sword will pierce, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (*Luke 2:34-35*) *Genuflecting:*

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Laboring under the burden of the Cross, Jesus lifts his heavy head and looks into the eyes of his mother. Did he think then of all the women who would suffer because of the deeds of wicked men? Women suffer when men deceive them. Women suffer when men objectify and degrade them. Women suffer when they are told that they are truly free only when they are childless. If we truly love the Mother of Christ, we will not add to the lust and conflict and violence of our day, but work to stop it. (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: Is there one who would not weep To behold Christ's mother deep In her sorrow, overwhelmed?

The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

LEADER: They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (*Mark 15:21*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: The practiced eye of the Roman centurion regarded the Prisoner with cold realism. At this rate, the condemned would die before Calvary could be reached, and he would be faced with the absurdity of crucifying a dead body. Someone must help with the cross. The soldier looked at the crowd; he pointed, and Simon of Cyrene unwillingly came forward and shouldered the cross. It was a mean and unreasonable job. Simon's arms and shoulders grew sore; there were bloodstains on his clothes and the crowd mocked him. Simon hated the whole business. ...Only long afterward would he be grateful. (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, please make us believe that it is never too late to help you carry your Cross. In the person of all who suffer, you shoulder the Cross once again. Show me how I can help, and make me willing to help, even when, like Simon, I would rather be left alone. Amen.

HYMN: (*Please stand & sing*) Can the human heart refrain From partaking in her pain, In the Mother's pain untold?

The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

LEADER: And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward. (*Matthew 10:42*) (*Genuflecting as you are able:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Now that Simon was helping to bear the Cross, there wasn't much else anyone could do for Christ on his harsh trip to Calvary. Yet a woman named Veronica thought of something. Braving rebuke by the soldiers and mockery by the mob, she stepped in front of the stumbling Christ and with her veil gently wiped the blood and sweat from his face. True, her act of love was little, but imagine how that little deed of compassion comforted the heart of Christ. We keep waiting for the big things we can do for our neighbors. What they need, and would appreciate are the small kindnesses we can give them right now. (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus Christ, make us believe the truth of the saying, "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Make us instruments of your peace. In the needy and unnoticed of this world, may we see your face, and open our hearts to them. Amen.

HYMN: (*Stand & sing*) Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled She beheld her tender child,
All with bloody scourges rent.

The Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time

LEADER: He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye, no beauty to draw us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, knowing pain, like one from whom you turn your face, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

(*Isaiah 53:2-3*) (*Genuflecting as you are able:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Even without the full weight of the Cross, Jesus is wilting. He has lost so much blood; he has had nothing to eat or drink. Everything goes black before his eyes. His knees buckle and down he goes. You wonder if this time he can drag himself to his feet, but somehow he does. You wonder also if this second fall suggests that life can become so unbearable for people that they simply no longer care whether they live or die. Such people can be dangerous, but all that makes them so is their torment. Given a chance and an understanding friend, their lives might be transformed. (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus Christ, help us to live up to the responsibilities which your goodness to us puts upon us. Make us see you in the people who enter our lives. We ask you to give us faith and charity so that we may give our neighbor hope. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: For the sins of his own nation, Saw him hang in desolation, Till his spirit forth he sent.

The Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

LEADER: 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, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ (Luke 23:27-29) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Jesus is thinking of the total destruction of Jerusalem that will occur some forty years later—as well as the destructive elements in our own culture. Even in the midst of all his woe, his Sacred Heart still loves, in holy sympathy, the innocent victims of human wickedness. When we can do no more for the afflicted than sympathize, let us at least do that, with sincerity. (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, we thank you that our Father has created the human heart capable of pity, sympathy, and compassion. Make us understand that if ever we grow callous or indifferent to the suffering of another human being—of the poor, of the immigrant, of the unborn—our heart will not be your Heart. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: O thou Mother! fount of love! Touch my spirit from above; Make my heart with thine accord.

The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

LEADER: 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*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Yet another fall in this terrible journey. Surely, as the exhausted and ravaged Christ lay there in the street, he could have thought: “I can go no farther. I have reached the limit of human endurance. I can try no more.” Yet he would not give up. He hauled up his trembling body and staggered on to his appointed end. Look at him now—learn from him—from him take courage. Our ultimate temptation is that black discouragement, that refusal of new effort, which is actually despair. We can, and must, and will go on—in the strength of Christ. (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, you know our burdens, our disappointments, our weariness. Help us to never lose heart. Your Passion tells us that suffering can be borne; adversity can be overcome. We believe you; but we need the strength that only you can give. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: Make me feel as thou hast felt; Make my soul to glow and melt With the love of Christ our Lord.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

LEADER: They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones. They stare at me and gloat; they divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots. (*Psalm 22:17b-19*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Christ was stripped of his garments; everything is taken from him—not only his clothing, but the last vestiges of human dignity. Men and women can be destroyed in many ways. You can break and shatter and kill their bodies, even the most defenseless, in the womb. But you can also degrade them, rob them of all decent pride and self-respect, so that what is wrecked is not the body, but the spirit; what is poisoned is not the bloodstream but the heart. The Christian owes it to Christ, his Master, to reflect seriously on a world in which people are stripped of their dignity because they do not possess the basic means to lead a decent life. (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus Christ, you know we cannot right all the wrongs of a selfish, sinful world, but help us to be ready and willing to do whatever we can. Do not let us, by word or act, demean or degrade another human being. We cannot claim to love you and yet ignore the dignity of the other men and women created in your image. Amen. (*Stand & sing*)

HYMN: Holy Mother! pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

LEADER: 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.” (*Luke 23:33-34a*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: The cross is an altar, and the Sacrifice that will redeem all mankind is about to be completed. The terrible spikes drive through the hands and feet of Christ; he is raised on the cross. Hatred continues to pursue him. Passers-by blaspheme against him, tossing their heads: “Come down from that cross if you are the Son of God.” To all of this fury and bitterness, Christ has but one answer: “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” (*Pause and kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Crucified Christ, we live in a world with so much conflict, hatred, and injury to the innocent, even our unborn. You experienced this hatred, but you did not add to it. Help us to have larger hearts, deeper patience, and the courage to follow your example. Amen. (*Stand:*)

HYMN: Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me
in torments died.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

LEADER: It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last. (**Luke 23:44-46**) (*Genuflecting as you are able:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: For three hours Christ hangs between heaven and earth in indescribable torment. He forgives; provides for his mother; and prays. At last he cries out "I thirst" and then "It is finished." He bows his head and dies. Remember, this death is not merely apparent, but real. It is the death that each one of us will most certainly experience. What matters is not the mere fact of death, or when, or where. What matters is that I make a good end; that I die as a true friend and faithful follower of Jesus Christ. (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, as we kneel at the foot of your Cross, there are three things we wish to say. First, thank you. Thank you for laying down your life in order that we may possess eternal life. Second, we are sorry. We are sorry for the guilty part that we have played in your Passion and death. Third, please, Lord Jesus, may your death always be remembered. Let it bring salvation to us, to all whom we love, to all the world. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: Let me mingle tears with thee, Mourning him who mourned for me, All the days that I may live.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

LEADER: 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**) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: "So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out." (**John 19:32-34**) So the last drops of Christ's blood are poured out in love and redemption. His sorrowful friends take down his body from the cross, and once more, the Son of Mary returns to his Mother's arms. (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus, we must never forget your Passion; we must never forget the Sorrows of your beloved Mother. Make us understand how closely your Mother was associated with you in the work of redemption, and so realize anew that, in our hearts, you and your Mother are never separated. Mother of Sorrows, pray for us. Amen. (*Please stand & sing*)

HYMN: By the cross with thee to stay, There with thee to weep and pray, This I ask of thee to give.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

LEADER: They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by. (*John 19:40-42*) (*Genuflecting:*)

LEADER: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. **ALL:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

LEADER: At the very moment of his burial, Jesus' words are fulfilled: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (*John 12:24*). Jesus is the grain of wheat that dies. From that lifeless grain of wheat comes forth the great multiplication of bread that can satisfy superabundantly the hunger of all humanity and provide its deepest nourishment. Through his Cross and Resurrection, the eternal Word of God became flesh and bread for us: the mystery of the Eucharist already shines forth in the burial of Jesus. (*Pause & kneel*) Let us pray:

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus Christ, in your burial you have taken on the death of the grain of wheat. You have now become abundant fruit for every age and for all eternity. May we always share worthily in the Bread of Life, in which you offer us your very self, until that day when we all may partake in the kingdom of our Father. Amen. (*Stand & sing*)

HYMN: Let me, to my latest breath,
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of
thine.

Concluding Prayer

ASSEMBLY: Lord Jesus Christ, we have walked with you in memory on your final fateful journey of suffering and death. From this day forward, may each crucifix we see or touch bring that love to mind, not as an echo of the past, but as something real and present to us. Because of our confidence in your love, help us really hear your words: "If you would be my disciple, take up your cross and follow me." Above all, Lord, we ask you to touch our hearts and expand our vision. Grant that we might love you always, and then do with us as you will. Help us to go forth as people of hope to proclaim the Gospel with our life, for Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. Amen. (+)

Thank you for coming & praying with us.