

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

By

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OPENING PRAYER

PRIEST OR LEADER:

God of power and mercy bless us as we gather to reflect on the suffering and death of your beloved Son so that we may learn from his example and follow in His footsteps. We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord.

All: AMEN

First Station

Jesus is condemned to Death

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Even though Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent and has said so, he goes against his better judgement, gives in to the crowd and condemns Jesus to die on the Cross. The Jewish leaders are threatening to report Pilate to Caesar if he releases

Jesus who is claiming to be Son of God and King of the Jews. They go so far even to ask the release of Barabbas who was in prison for murder. So for the sake of political expediency Pilate washes his hands of the situation and sends Jesus to his fate.
(pause)

Lord, it wasn't so much Pilate but my sins which sentenced you to death. You are the innocent lamb led to the slaughter. By your death you atone for my sins and those of the whole world. You open the gates of heaven to all those who turn to you in faith and repentance. Like Peter after his threefold denial, I turn to you and ask forgiveness for all the many times, in little and big ways, that I have let you down.

Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

2nd Station

Jesus receives His cross

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

After having been scourged and crowned with thorns the heavy cross is laid on the shoulders of Jesus. The horrendous journey to Calvary lay ahead, made all the more agonizing by the taunts and jibes of the hostile crowd. During his three year ministry among these same people Jesus healed their sick, forgave their sins, cast out demons, fed them when they were hungry and this is how He is recompensed. (Pause)

O Jesus, I have often acted like members of that crowd. How many times have I disowned you by my failure to return your love and how many times have you forgiven me. You shouldered the heavy cross for me. Give me strength to shoulder the little crosses you send me on my journey through life to help make up for all my ungratefulness. Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

3rd Station

Jesus falls the first time

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee
People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Having been weakened by the scourging and crowning with thorns, Jesus stumbles and falls under the heavy cross. He is not allowed a moment's respite – the soldiers lose no time in hauling him up again and slam the cross back on his aching shoulders. Prior to his passion he had already told his apostles that the Son of Man must suffer grievously. These same apostles are now nowhere to be seen. Jesus suffers physical cruelty in his passion but his mental distress is no less real especially when his closest friends have deserted him. (pause)

Lord Jesus, like the apostles, I too have deserted you at times. Forgive me when I've ignored you in those who suffer or when I looked the other way when someone needed my help. I have caused you to fall through the weight of my indifference and neglect.

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to

Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer
and to die with thee.

4th Station

Jesus meets his afflicted mother

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Among the openly hostile crowd Mary is there to
comfort her Son. She shared the pain meted out to
Him on this sorrowful journey. She is the mother of
sorrows who understands us in our disappointments
and difficulties and, when asked, will help us carry
our crosses in union with her beloved Son. (pause)

O Mary you have a share in your son's passion and
cross which he bore for the salvation of the world.
Your faith is strong and unwavering. Strengthen my
faith especially when it is challenged, help all
mothers and fathers struggling to bring up their
children in the faith in today's world. May they never
lose heart?

Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to

Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

5th Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus with His cross

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus is getting weaker and weaker so the soldiers drag Simon from the crowd and enlist him to help Jesus with His cross. Like Simon we may be reluctant to put ourselves out to help those in difficulty but the Lord has told us that anyone who helps those in need is indeed helping him. By doing this we lighten each other's burdens. (pause)

O Jesus, Simon helped you when called upon. May I be a Good Samaritan to others when I sense they need my help? Help me to have time for those who appear cold and indifferent towards me and go that extra mile with them. Help us lighten each other's burdens.

Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

6th Station

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Veronica, an ordinary woman, is moved by the sufferings of Jesus so she steps courageously from the crowd and wipes the sweat and blood from His face. She is amply rewarded when an imprint of His face appears on the cloth. When we, like Veronica, step out of our comfort zone to show a kindness to someone, may our Christian witness leave its mark.
(pause)

Lord, Veronica converted love into action by stepping out from the mostly hostile crowd to wipe your face. Forgive us for the times that we lacked the courage of Veronica by keeping ourselves to ourselves when more robust action was needed on our part.

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

7th Station

Jesus falls a second time

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee
People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Further weakened by this harrowing journey to Calvary, Jesus falls a second time. On our life journey we have sometimes fallen from grace but that same grace of God is returned to us in the Sacrament of Penance. Like the Prodigal Son, when we rise after a fall, we too will be forgiven and welcomed back into the fold with open arms by our merciful Father. (pause)

Lord, Jesus help us to learn from our failures. You helped so many people in the Gospel and restored the dignity of those who had strayed from the right path and sought your help. People spring to mind like Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, the man crucified with you and even Peter who disowned you. Look with pity on us today and especially those who are in dire need of your mercy.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

8th Station

The women of Jerusalem mourn for our Lord

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The encounter which Jesus had with women in the gospels, such as the Samaritan woman, Mary and Martha, the Canaanite woman, the daughter of Jairus, Mary of Magdala, and many others demonstrates the empathy Jesus had for woman and their concerns. In the midst of the hostile crowd and with many tears and lamentations they offer Jesus some words and gestures of comfort. But Jesus asks them not to weep for him but for themselves and their children. (pause)

Lord, Jesus we pray for women in our world today who have suffered violence as a result of war, displacement and migration. We pray to you for mothers who are doing their best to protect their children from the stressful effects of family disunity and break-up. Like the women of Jerusalem who mourned for You, may women of today reveal your compassion and love to those in distress? May their efforts be rewarded?

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

9th Station

Jesus falls a third time

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee
People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The suffering Jesus endured and the times He fell on the road to Calvary redeems mankind from the effect of the great Fall of the human race when Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden. Jesus described himself as the wheat grain which falls into the ground and dies in order to reap the harvest of Eternal life for us. In the Mass He feeds us with the Bread from Heaven which is His very self. In receiving Him worthily at Holy Communion he helps us to counter the ill effects of our fallen nature and keep us on the path which leads to Life Eternal. (pause)

Lord, Jesus, we thank you for the times you have lifted us up through your loving forgiveness when we had fallen from grace. You overcame the Power of Satan who wants us to stay on the ground and not avail of your mercy. Despite the falls along the way to Cavalry, you picked yourself up and kept going to the bitter end in obedience to your father's will. May the Father's will be done in and through

us despite our falls along the road of life.

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy.

Our Father....Hail Mary....Glory be

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee

10th Station

Jesus is stripped of His garments.

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

When he reached the place of execution, Jesus is faced with the added indignity of being stripped of his clothes. By going through this ordeal he stands for all those whose personal dignity has been stripped away by abuse, neglect or grinding poverty. (pause). Through His death and Resurrection he restores our dignity as children of a loving Father.

Lord, Jesus you endured the added shame of being stripped of your clothes. Through your sacred passion you take away the guilt and shame of our sins and restore our dignity as children of the Father. Lord, Jesus we pray for all those in our

world whose dignity has been dishonoured. We remember especially children who have endured abuse, youngsters who are trafficked, older people in institutions who are sometimes not given the care which is their right. Through the care and concern of the Christian community may they be re-assured of God's abiding love for them?

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

11th Station

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Having reached the summit of Calvary, Jesus's feet and hands are now fastened to the Cross. The pain inflicted by the nails followed by the hoisting of the Cross into position must have been excruciating. Jesus said: "when I am lifted up on the cross, I shall draw all people to myself". He died for the world's salvation as a result of which no one is outside the pale of His mercy. When taunted by his detractors to come down from the cross Jesus was resolute

because this was His greatest act of love for the human race. Jesus said: "Greater love than this no man has than to lay down his life for his friends".
(pause)

Lord, Jesus we know we are your friends because you gave your life for us. The people taunted you by saying "He saved others, himself he cannot save". Life to you wasn't about saving yourself but us. You ask us to follow in your footsteps – to die to ourselves for the sake of others. You said: "the one who saves his life loses it but the one who loses his life for your sake will save it". Help us to take your words to heart. Keep us on the straight but narrow road which leads to Our Father's house.

Have mercy on us Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

12th Station

Jesus dies on the Cross

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus was crucified at noon and three hours later he expires. His dying words were 'into thy hands I commend my spirit'. Before he dies, he forgives his executioners and offers paradise to the man crucified with Him. Lastly he bequeaths to us his own dear mother to be our mother when he says: "Woman, behold your son, son, behold your mother". (pause)

Lord Jesus you offered your life in atonement on the altar of the cross for the sins of humanity. In return the floodgates of divine mercy are opened to those who long for your forgiveness. The gates of heaven are thrown open to those who follow the way of the Cross by living lives of selfless love. Lord, as we journey further into Lent in anticipation of Easter, may the sufferings which we endure in this life for love of you and in expiation for our sins prepare us for our resurrection to glory.

Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

13th Station

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus is removed from the Cross and placed in the arms of his afflicted mother. She who caressed him as a baby, now in a loving embrace holds his lifeless body in her arms. Mary was the one *par excellence* who heard the Word of God, took it to heart and kept it to the end. As Simeon prophesised 'a sword of sorrow did indeed pierce her heart'. But she also took to heart her beloved Son's words that he would rise again on the third day. (pause)

Mary, you are intimately united with your Son in his sacred passion. We ask you to intercede with your Son for all those who are going through a passion of their own. Help us to carry our crosses in union with Him whose 'yoke is easy and burden light'. Every time we come to Mass, we are present at Calvary. Lord, forgive us for the times when we've side-stepped the Cross and went our own way. Mary, mother of Our Redeemer, pray for us.

Have mercy on us O Lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

14th Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Priest: We adore thee of Christ and we praise thee

People: Because by thy holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

A member of the council arrived, an upright and virtuous man named Joseph who had not consented to what other members of the council had planned and carried out, had the body of Jesus taken down and placed in a tomb in which no one had yet been laid. Along with Mary and John, and the other women, Joseph is also part of that faithful few standing beneath the Cross. All those who stand by Jesus and live by the truth will indeed inherit the Kingdom of God, that same kingdom won for us by virtue of his death and glorious resurrection. (pause)

Lord Jesus, to the non-believer you died a defeated man but to those with faith, the tomb does not signal the end. For three days the King sleeps to be awakened on Easter morning. "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer and so enter into His glory". Jesus says to Martha; "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever who believes in me even though he dies he shall live and whoever

believes in me shall never die".

Have mercy on us O lord, have mercy.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be..

O Jesus who for love of me didst bear thy cross to Calvary, in thy sweet mercy grant to me to suffer and to die with thee.

FINAL PRAYER

PRIEST or LEADER:

Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever. **ALL:**
AMEN