

Stations of the Cross



INTRODUCTION

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Let us pray

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

A hymn or chant may be sung between every station

FIRST STATION Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Mark 15.1—5,11—15

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. But the chief

priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, ‘Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

MEDITATION

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed.

It was a good question.

Jesus had annoyed the religious leaders, of that there was no doubt.

He had been critical of social and religious structures.

He had healed the villagers; he had told stories to the crowds;

he was probably a threat to public law and order;

but was that enough to condemn him, to end his life?

But he would not defend himself — the storyteller was silent now and the crowd was noisy, and Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

PRAYER

For those on trial this week and for those appointed to judge them:

God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us.

SECOND STATION Jesus takes up his cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Mark 15.16—20

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a

crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

MEDITATION

Soldiers
taking the chance for a bit of fun.
They had a heavy day ahead.
Soon they would have to put on their public face—
disciplined, controlled, efficient.
But for now a bit of a lark with the lads
with no risk of recrimination.
Dead men tell no stories,
and Jesus was going to his death.

PRAYER

For those appointed to keep public order,
and for those tempted to abuse their power:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

THIRD STATION Jesus falls for the first time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Isaiah 53.1

Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

MEDITATION

Jesus was exhausted.

He was in pain.
He was going to his death.
The cross was heavy and he fell.
He was flesh and blood like us,
he was struggling.

PRAYER

For those who are tired or in pain:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

FOURTH STATION Jesus meets his mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Luke 2.22,25,34,35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

MEDITATION

She was going to be there at his end—
she who had been there with God at his beginning.
She was his mother.
She had fed him and cradled him
and watched over his growing.
Whatever he had said and done,
he was still her son and she would not desert him now.

Whatever pain of his she could embrace she would.
And in the meeting of their eyes
there was love,
suffering and shining.

PRAYER

For parents whose children are in pain or in trouble:
God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

FIFTH STATION Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Mark 15.21

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country,
to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander
and Rufus.

MEDITATION

Simon from Cyrene,
father of Alexander and Rufus,
what a tale you had to tell your children!
You helped Jesus,
you gave him your strength on the streets of Jerusalem.
Willing or unwilling,
you, Simon, have become part of his story,
and he part of yours,
for you helped him
when he needed you.
What would we give to be Simon?

PRAYER

For a willingness to serve you, in friends and in strangers,
God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

SIXTH STATION Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Matthew 25.35–36,40

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

MEDITATION

Wiping faces, dirty faces; faces full of sweat and tears,
faces covered in chocolate and in jam.

Wiping faces is something we try to do gently and lovingly,
something that soothes and cleanses,
something that brings healing.

Wiping faces is something we do for those who are young, or old,
or in pain, or in trouble, wanting them to know that they are
cherished and loved. And when we wipe the faces of God’s little
ones, we are wiping the face of God.

PRAYER

For those whose faces we wipe
and for those who wipe away our tears:
God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

SEVENTH STATION Jesus falls for the second time
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Isaiah 53.7

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

MEDITATION

I am finding it hard to watch you, Jesus, to see you struggling, to see you on the ground. Into your silence I want to shout: 'Why do they keep on hurting you? What have you done wrong?'

PRAYER

For those who today will struggle and fall:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

EIGHTH STATION Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Luke 23.27,28

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children'.

MEDITATION

Weep for the mothers and children of Jerusalem,
for Israeli and Palestinian,
for Jew and Muslim and Christian,
for the strangers in their midst.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Pray that her people may live together in justice.
Pray that all people may live together in peace.

PRAYER

For those who live in places of conflict and danger;
for peacemakers and peacekeepers in every land:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

NINTH STATION Jesus falls for the third time

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Isaiah 53.4—5

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases, yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

MEDITATION

I am not sure if I can watch this much longer.
In his pain I see my pain,
in his falling I feel myself falling,
in his cross—in his cross
I am included.

He carried it for me—
for me, and my enemies, and my friends.

PRAYER

For those whom I love,
for those whom I struggle to love,
for those who find me difficult:
God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

TENTH STATION Jesus is stripped of his clothes

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Mark 15.22–24

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

MEDITATION

Stripped now—
of clothing,
of disciples, of friends.
Alone, naked and vulnerable,
with nothing to protect you from the pain to come.

PRAYER

For those deserted by friends,
for those who are alone and vulnerable:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

ELEVENTH STATION Jesus is nailed to the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Luke 23. 35,49

And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

MEDITATION

We look on from a distance:

a distance of time and space and culture,

And for us it hurts to watch Jesus dying,
even at a distance.

It hurts to know that we are being rescued.

It hurts to know how much we are valued and loved.

PRAYER

For the depth of your love for us, we thank you.

God in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

TWELFTH STATION Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

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

BIBLE READING Luke 23.44—46

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

MEDITATION

In your hands he placed himself:
all that he was,
all that he had ever been,
all his beauty,
all his obedience,
all his loving.
In God's hands he placed himself.
He was returning to his father,
he was going home.

PRAYER

For all who have died today,
for all who love them and will miss them:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

THIRTEENTH STATION Jesus is taken down from the cross
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Mark 15.42—46

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for

the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth.

MEDITATION

Jesus is dead and lies in the arms of his mother.
Death is hard and final
and yet, whatever happens on this earth,
children never die to their mothers.
In the memory of those who loved them, loved ones remain.
And for us, and for all God's people,
our hope is safe in God.
From swaddling bands to grave clothes,
all the days of our living and dying,
we are cradled and wrapped in love.

PRAYER

For our families and friends who have died,
for ourselves as we carry their stories:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.
Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Mark 15.46—47

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn

out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body was laid.

MEDITATION

The door is shut now,
and the world sighs and waits.
And we wait in night's darkness,
longing for the morning,
longing for the light.

PRAYER

For all who are waiting.
For all who are longing for light:
God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

FIFTEENTH STATION The Resurrection

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

BIBLE READING Mark 16.1—7

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been

raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.

MEDITATION

We go on our way
and Jesus goes ahead of us.
We do not need to be afraid
for Jesus is risen.
God is love—
and love is more powerful
than fear or death or evil,
and we are greatly loved.
And we are grateful.
Thanks be to God for redeeming the world in love.

Amen.

CONCLUSION

Let us pray.

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Christ was manifested in the body,
vindicated in the spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
glorified in high heaven.

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.
Amen.

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