

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke.
(Luke 9:22-24)



The Son of Man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected, and to be raised up on the third day. If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, will save it.

Lord Jesus, help us to be open to your closeness and presence as we begin this journey to Calvary with you. Help us to find in your Passion and Death the strength we need to take up our crosses and follow you.

First Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to Death



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

If the elders and scribes had been able to see their situation clearly, they would have realized that it was because of their jealousy – because they felt personally threatened by Jesus – that they condemned an innocent man to die. If Pilate had had the strength and integrity do what was right, he would have freed Jesus. Jesus calls us to do the right thing. He knows what is in our hearts. The truth is there, among our other desires. He asks us to search within ourselves, in our hearts and consciences, for the right decision. Then when we identify the truth, he asks us to act justly.

Lord Jesus, often I judge others and fail to be understanding or loving. Help me to see the people in my life through your eyes, not the eyes of a Pontius Pilate.

*Judge of all He stands convicted,
Of the sin that we've committed.
All for love He bears our guilt.*

Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

We all carry a cross of some sort. Some are heavy, like the grief over the death of a loved one. Some are easily seen. Some are hidden within our hearts. We take the weight of all these kinds of crosses on our shoulders, and we carry them toward Calvary. Jesus walks beside us on our way. Having carried the heaviest cross of all - the weight of our sins - he journeys with us to Calvary. Knowing exactly what we hold in our hearts, he lightens our burden. He is there alongside us - lifting the weight from our shoulders.

Lord Jesus, you embraced your cross to redeem the world. Help me to embrace the crosses in my life - the hardships, struggles, disappointments, pain. Only recognizing my own weakness, can I discover your strength.

*Now the cross as Jesus bore it,
Has become for us who share it,
Symbol of our victory.*

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

It is tempting to give up on things in our lives – to quit right there and then. We want to say, “Forget it! Enough!” and be done with it forever. But Jesus calls us to get up from the floor and try again. As we fell when we learned to walk, so must we fall at times throughout our lives to get to the places where we want to be. Jesus is our support along the way. As we lie on the ground discouraged and disillusioned with ourselves, he is our helping hand, encouraging us to walk once more toward our goal.

Lord Jesus, you know how often I fall trying to follow you. Yet you are always there to lift me up. Help me to always trust in your loving care for me.

*For the sins of His own nation,
Jesus walked in desolation,
'Til He fell upon His knees.*

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION :

The responsibility of looking after and caring for another is difficult. If we have experienced being a caregiver in any way, we have probably also experienced the pain of seeing someone we care for suffer – and we suffer with that person. Think about Mary and the pain she must have experienced at seeing how much her son was suffering.

Lord Jesus, your mother Mary's grief was surpassed by her love for you. So often you come to me in others and their love gives me new life. Help me to see how often you love me through the people in my life.

*Can the human heart refrain,
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold.*

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

From time to time, all of us are given jobs that we don't enjoy or didn't volunteer for. We can't successfully avoid all of the bothersome tasks with which we are confronted. Jesus calls us to go beyond the call of duty, and to offer care and compassion to others, even when doing so may inconvenience us.

Lord Jesus, sometimes I am indifferent to the needs of others in my life. I even neglect those whom I love. Help me to see that loving others is the surest way to find you in my life.

*Simon bears with hesitation,
Glorious sign of our salvation,
That which we should bear with joy.*

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

When a person goes against the crowd, there is a chance that the crowd will shift its attention. Veronica took that risk. The crowd could have started throwing things at her, even demanding that she be punished. But she overcame those fears to wipe the sweat and blood from Jesus' face. Jesus asks us to show the same integrity, courage, and compassion that Veronica did.

Lord Jesus, at times I am afraid to reach out to others. I do nothing when I should act, I say nothing when I should speak out. Give me a deeper and more courageous faith. Help me to trust that you are with me.

*With the cloth she wipes His face,
Tears of pain she can't erase,
From the face of love on earth.*

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

It is often much more difficult to pick ourselves up from a second fall than from a first. Our excuses for quitting are stronger. We have more reasons why we should give up. When Jesus fell the second time, his pain intensified, yet he stood up with courage, pulled the cross back onto his shoulders, and went along his way. Jesus calls us to rise from each fall and to walk with him. He doesn't promise an easy trip. In fact, he warns us of the difficulties of traveling the narrow and less common road. But he promises to accompany us on this road if we choose to walk it.

Lord Jesus, failure and disappointment sometimes lead me to despair. I hide behind my pride and self-pity, withdrawing from you and others. Give me the hope I need and help me never to be afraid to begin again.

*Jesus falls upon the ground,
Struggles forth without a sound,
To continue on His way.*

Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks to the Women



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

The women who wept for Jesus along the road to Calvary could do only that: weep and feel his pain. Unable to carry his cross for him, they offered him their hearts. As Jesus passed the women, he was touched by their sorrow. Their tears most likely brought brief relief to his suffering, or at least a small consolation in his pain.

Lord Jesus, your great compassion for others overwhelms me. I feel petty and selfish when I think of you and the way you love. Help me to pour out my love, that you might fill me with your love.

*Like the women at His passion,
Loving hearts within us fashion,
That we might share others' pain.*

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

If anyone had an excuse to quit, it was our Lord. Having already been scourged, mocked, and crowned with thorns, he carried an unbearable weight on his shoulders ... falling three times. Yet our Lord was determined to die according to the Word of God.

Lord Jesus, your failing strength makes me see how helpless I am. Without you, I can do nothing. Help me to rely on your strength, to see how much I need you.

*Pain in head and back He bore,
Near to death, He fell once more,
Yet obedient to God's will.*

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

Think about the last time you felt vulnerable or rejected or people made fun of you. Jesus is with us in those lonely and sometimes humiliating moments. He suffered so much for us through humiliation and scorn.

Lord Jesus, seeing you so cruelly humiliated makes me realize how I cling to my accomplishments, my possessions, my way. Help me to let go of those things in my life that prevent me from growing closer to you and others.

*Garments stripped, He stands alone,
Soldiers mock, no mercy shown,
To the Son of God that day.*

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Crucified



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

At times we feel innocent and resent the punishment that is thrown our way when we are being persecuted; other times we know that we have to pay the consequences of our behavior. In both situations, the pain is equally unbearable. We wait for the nailing to cease; we pray for an end to our persecution.

Lord Jesus, I can never doubt your great love for me when I see you crucified. Help me to see your cross as the great sign of your love for me.

*Arms spread wide our pain embracing,
Stain of blood our sin erasing,
Though nailed fast, His hands still heal.*

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

It seems as though death is the final word – that there is nothing beyond it to give us hope. When we lose loved ones, it feels as though we have lost them forever, and we have no chance of ever relating to them, ever communicating with them again. Jesus tells us and shows us otherwise. Death is not the last word. There is resurrection. The whole point of Jesus' death on the cross is to show us that death is conquered by love.

Lord Jesus, your broken and lifeless body calls me to deeper faith. You chose death, even death on a cross. Help me to see my crosses as ways of loving you.

*Word of Life, of death defiant,
Bowed His head – the world is silent;
Through His death came life anew.*

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

Just as the wise men in the nativity story bring unique offerings to the newly born Messiah, Joseph of Arimathea and other followers of Jesus contribute special gifts to the burial of Jesus' body. After a humiliating death, Jesus is finally given the respect that is due him. Our Lord is given a proper burial, in keeping with the Jewish burial custom.

Lord Jesus, seeing your body taken from the cross reminds me how fearful I am of letting go of my own life. I am frightened when I think of being unimportant, useless, helpless. Help me to place my life in your hands.

*Earth's sky black in midst of day,
In His Mother's arms He lay,
Now at length His suffering passed.*

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb



*We adore you, Lord Jesus,
and we praise you.
Because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

MEDITATION:

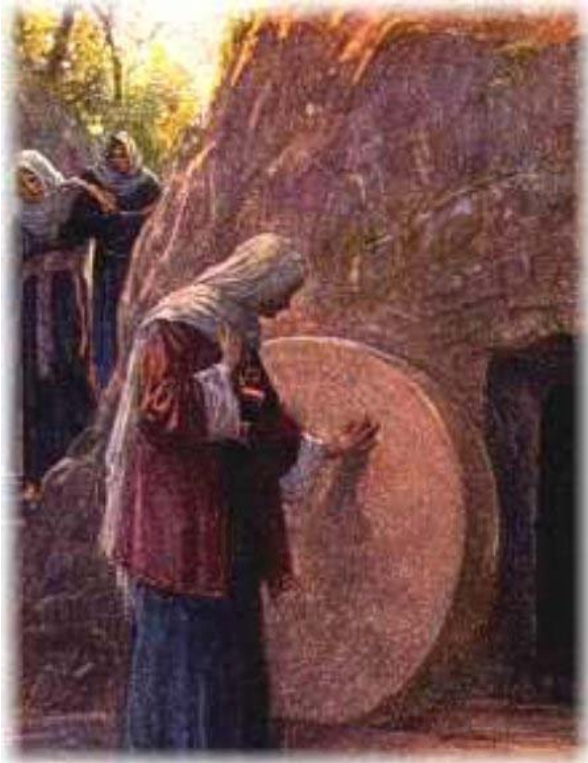
Think about a time when you had to wait patiently for an answer, outcome or result. Recall the anxiety and restlessness that were part of the waiting. With Jesus' resurrection on Easter comes an end to the waiting.

Lord Jesus, when I see the great stone sealing your tomb, I feel alone and abandoned. Even though you sometimes seem distant or absent in my life, help me always to believe in your closeness and loving presence.

*Hidden from the sight of heaven,
Earth's dark womb receives our victim,
Now we wait for Him to rise.*

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke.
(Luke 24:1-8)**



On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. But, on entering, they discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, “Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful people and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?”

And they remembered his words.

Lord Jesus, help us to walk with you each day, even to Calvary. The sorrows and joys, the pains and healings, the failures and triumphs of our lives are truly small deaths and resurrections that lead us to closeness with you. Give us faith and trust to walk with you always.

Amen.