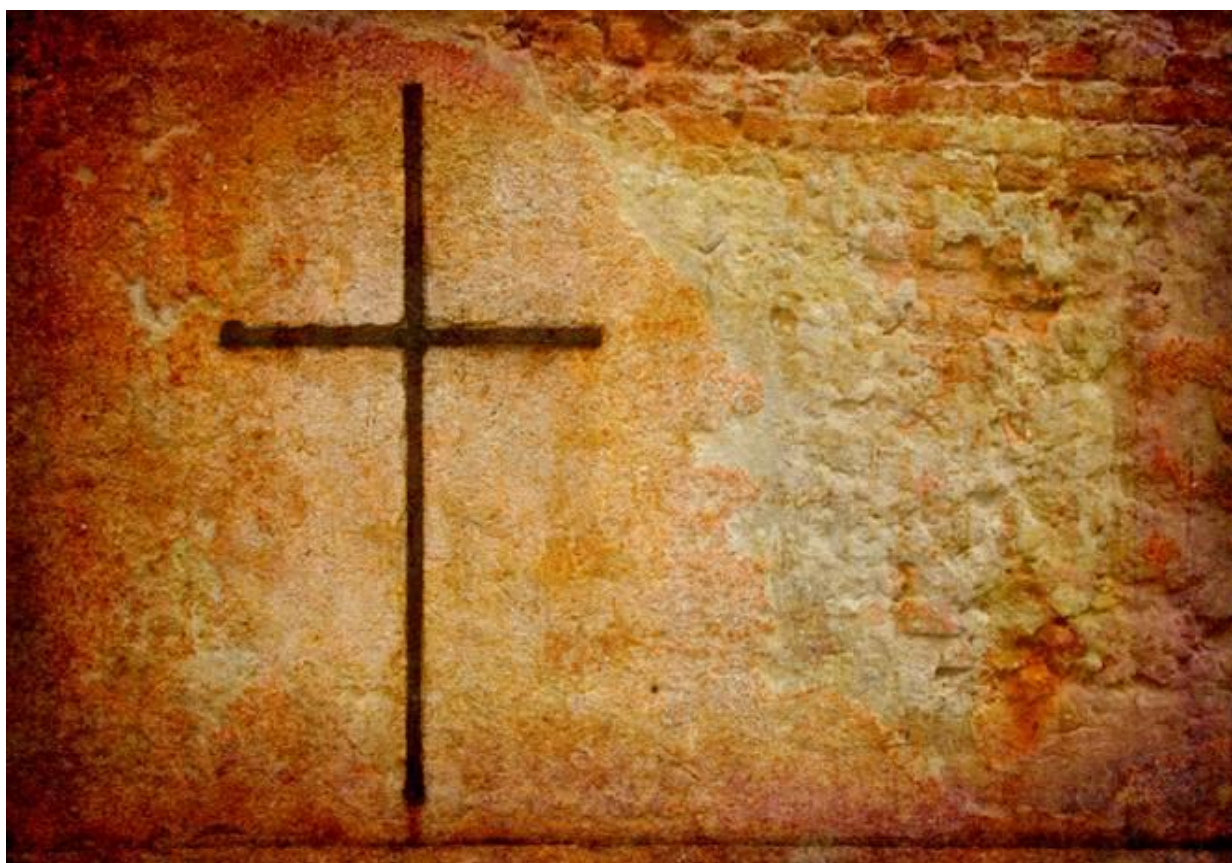


# Stations of the Cross



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

**Good Friday 2020**

## Introduction

Devotions of the Stations of the Cross go back to the time when early pilgrims visited the holy sites in Jerusalem. During these pilgrimages, travellers called to mind the last moments in the life of Jesus by praying at the sites associated with Jesus' suffering and death. Christians who were unable to travel to the Holy Land desired to do the same thing, and so Stations of the Cross were set up in churches.

During the Stations of the Cross we follow Jesus Christ in his passion and see ourselves reflected in him. To face life's dark side in ourselves and in our world, we need images of hope and Jesus offers such hope in his journey to the cross and in his resurrection from the dead. By accompanying him on the Way of the Cross, we touch into the pain, desolation and courage of Jesus and learn to place our trust in God who in Jesus transforms death into new life.

This year we cannot physically be together to pray the Stations, however it is possible to pray the Stations in our homes at **10:00 am** together. We can be spiritually connected as we pray and reflect on Jesus' passion and death.

To pray together, it can be helpful to make a sacred space by lighting a candle, placing a crucifix and Bible in a special place to pray. You may wish to softly play some solemn sacred music e.g. [Bach's St Matthews Passion](#) , Samuel Barber's [Agnus Dei](#) or the traditional , [At the Cross Her Station Keeping](#).

Alternatively, if the day is fine, you may wish to walk the Stations outside in your garden...

For families praying the Stations together, the parts/voices are retained in the Stations.

## First Station      Jesus is condemned to death

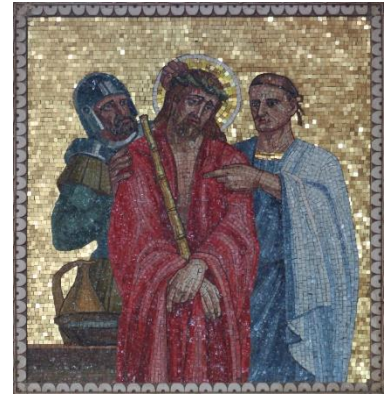
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

### READER

Scripture      **From the gospel of Mark 15:12-13,15**

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, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.



### COMMENTATOR

Jesus had just celebrated Passover with his closest friends. In their shared meal, Jesus had washed their feet and fed them with the bread of life. Their joy turned to bitter disappointment when he was betrayed, arrested, and condemned. How could Judas have led the soldiers to Jesus, and done this to his friend? Somewhere in the crowd that day, Pilate lost his nerve, and condemned Jesus - an innocent man.

We too condemn others when we follow the pathway of selfishness and sin rather than self-giving love.

### BRIEF REFLECTION time

There are many ways of condemning someone. The death of isolation is a slow death, and many are condemned to it by an unjust judge, which can be any one of us. Sentence can be passed because of who someone is, or is not; what they do, or don't do; where they live or where they come from.

### LEADER:

Jesus, like your disciples, we are often weak in faith.

May your grace empower us to be like you in our daily lives.

Move our hearts to engage in works of mercy that can heal the world.

Through Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen

## Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

### READER

Scripture      **From the gospel of Mark 15:20**

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.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under

**COMMENTATOR**                      The soldiers who now mocked and humiliated Jesus treated him as less than human. To them, he was something to be laughed at and treated roughly. The prophet Isaiah had written about the Servant of the Lord, saying he would be despised, a man of sorrows, a lamb being led to the slaughter.

### BRIEF REFLECTION time

The cross comes in many shapes and forms, and is always uninvited and unwelcome. People try to meet it in different ways. Many are burdened by the weight of a cross not of their own making. Can we provide support to those carrying a cross, and compassion for their situation?

### LEADER:

Jesus, give us the courage to be with you in this trial,  
to take up our own cross and follow in your footsteps.  
May we open our hearts to receive your grace,  
the grace that empowers us to love,  
in the face of violence and hatred.  
May that grace be what we need  
to become your hands and voice in today's world.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen

## Third Station: Jesus falls

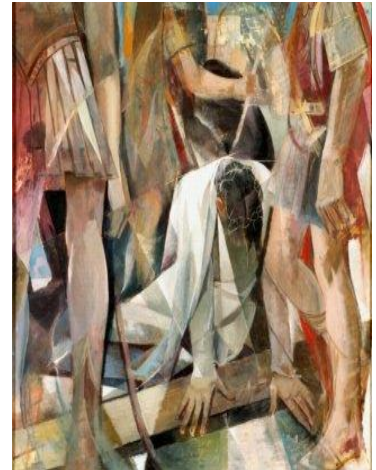
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

### READER

Scripture      **From the prophet Isaiah [53:4-5]**

He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; 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.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown

### COMMENTATOR

Many people in the crowd around Jesus may have turned their back on his suffering. Some may have watched with horror but did not step forward. It's uncomfortable to watch someone on the ground. It's a degrading place to be. Jesus came to pick up the fallen, and yet, here he is, fallen himself.

### BRIEF REFLECTION time

This can be a station for all of us who have been caught off guard and lost our footing. Who among us has not fallen under the weight of the cross we are given to carry? Some days the burden feels too much.

### LEADER:

Jesus, let us turn our hearts to you now  
and likewise look with love upon ourselves and those around us.  
Give us the strength to get up from our sinfulness and the burdens of life and move onward,  
knowing you walk with us in all things.  
Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** Amen

## Fourth Station: Jesus meets his Mother

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **From the gospel of Luke [2:34-35, 51]**

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" ... His mother treasured all these things in her heart.



**COMMENTATOR:**

There's no mention of any dialogue between Mary and Jesus – meeting in this hostile and curious crowd. Mary's faithfulness to Jesus is the model for our own lives. It's one thing to accompany people whose lives are going smoothly and who never face an obstacle. But when times get tough, staying with them as Mary did with Jesus is more difficult to do.

**BRIEF REFLECTION time**

This station speaks to all that is good in the bond between parent and child. It calls us to be there/here for each other in moments of uncertainty and crisis. It calls us to pray for families that have been broken by lack of communication and relationship.

**LEADER:**

Mary, our Mother, help us draw closer to your Son.  
May we stand with each other in times of pain, suffering and violence,  
just as you stood with Jesus.  
May we always be one with our brothers and sisters.  
Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN

## **Fifth Station: Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross**

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **From the gospel of Luke**      **[23:26]**

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.



*This Photo by Unknown*

**COMMENTATOR:**

It seems likely that this man who carried Jesus' cross was surprised to be chosen from the crowd. He would have been an unwilling volunteer, dragged from his vantage point on the side of the road, and placed centre stage. We can only imagine the difference it made to Jesus when some of the weight was, quite literally, taken from his shoulder.

**BRIEF REFLECTION time**

It's easy to look right past Christ in other people, especially when they are suffering and burdened by the crosses of life. May we be motivated by love and mercy to step forward willingly to reach out to our brothers and sisters.

**LEADER:**

Lord Jesus, let us not be blind to the pain  
with which some people live.  
Give us hearts full of love and compassion  
to pick up and carry the crosses of others.  
Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN

## Sixth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **From the gospel of 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."



This Photo by Unknown Author is

**COMMENTATOR:**

The women in this station understood what was going on and wanted to show their support. They draw close to the suffering Christ, and he turns his gaze in their direction. These women were there, and they cared. They responded to cruelty and wrongdoing through their concern and their tears.

### **BRIEF REFLECTION time**

These women showed courage in letting their sympathy for Jesus be seen. Following Jesus means forgiving enemies, sharing concerns, looking after the sick and treating sinners with mercy and forgiveness. As followers of Jesus we cannot turn away from the effects of violence and injustice.

**LEADER:**

Fill our hearts, O God, with mercy and compassion.  
Give us the insight to see where the world needs healing,  
and then give us the courage to reach out to those in need.  
Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN



## Seventh Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

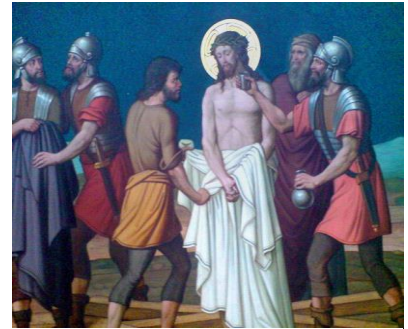
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **from Ps 22 [v. 18]      and Matthew [27:35]**

They divide my clothes among themselves, and for my  
clothing they cast lots.



**COMMENTATOR:**

The stripping of Jesus emphasises his vulnerability. He stands before those who would mock and deride him, with nothing left. Nakedness was a terrible disgrace for a Jew, and it was also considered a shameful act to take a person's clothing.

**BRIEF REFLECTION time**

This violation of Jesus' human dignity is similar to the way many people are treated in our world – as less than human. They lack food, comfort, and care.

Each of the least among us bears the face of Christ. Whatever we do to any of them, we do to Christ himself.

**LEADER:**

Lord, we return to you now with all our hearts.  
Help us see you as the focus of our lives,  
and transform our hearts until we rest in you.  
Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN

## **Eighth Station: Jesus dies on the cross**

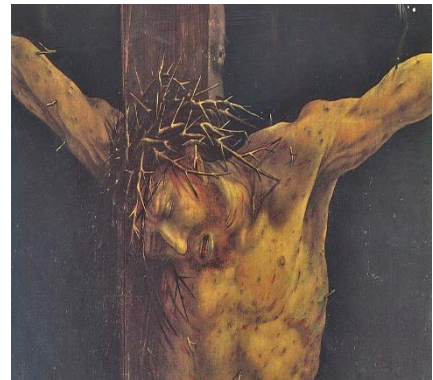
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **From the gospel of 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 out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.



*This Photo by Unknown Author is*

**COMMENTATOR:**

Jesus' death is very public. The details have been retold for more than two thousand years. They include a prayer of forgiveness for those involved in the execution, conversation with a repentant thief, entrusting his mother to the beloved disciple, and a cry of pain.

**BRIEF REFLECTION time**

This final prayer of Jesus becomes our prayer as we commit anew to being his disciples. We place ourselves in the tender and loving hands of God. As disciples we want to make a place of forgiveness and mercy.

**LEADER:**

Lord, by your death you teach us to embrace death  
and so to live a full life.

May we be in solidarity with those who suffer,  
be compassionate towards our enemies,  
and show generosity to the poor.

Through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN

## Ninth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

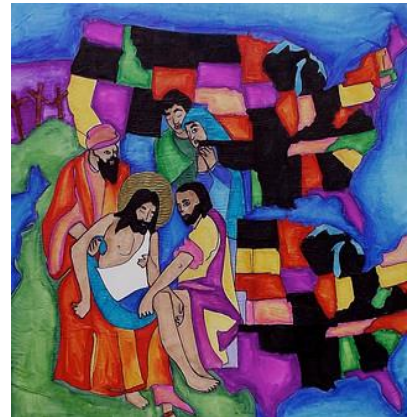
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

**READER:**

Scripture      **From the gospel of Matthew**      **[27:54-55]**

Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw what happened, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

**COMMENTATOR:**

It was not the normal practice for the Romans to hand over a corpse for an honourable burial. The women watched from a distance and took careful note of where the body was laid. They were waiting to care for the body of Jesus. According to custom, the body would be anointed and laid in a tomb. But for now they simply wait.

**BRIEF REFLECTION time**

For us today the body of Christ takes the form of those in any kind of need. What care will we be able to provide?

**LEADER:**

We ask Mary to pray for us with the same tenderness and love as when she held Jesus taken down from the cross.

Lead us to know Jesus even better,  
and be open to the healing redemptive love offered to us.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** AMEN

## Tenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

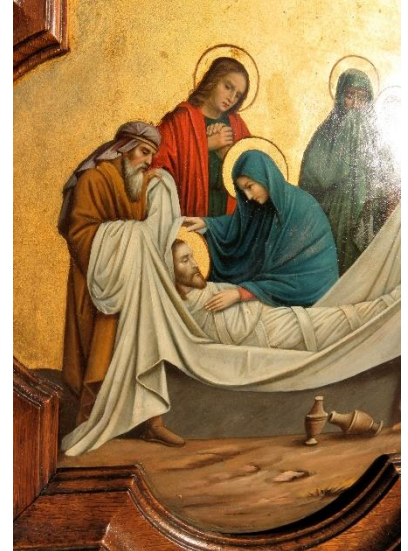
**LEADER:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

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

Reader:

Scripture      **From the gospel of Matthew**      **[27:57-61]**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him, so Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author

### **COMMENTATOR:**

The body of Jesus was placed on a ledge in the burial cave, cut from the soft limestone rock. To protect the body a large stone would have been placed at the entrance of the tomb. Those who love Jesus mourn their loss.

### **BRIEF REFLECTION time**

This can seem like the end of the story. But we know it is only the beginning. For the moment, here, let us pause with Jesus in the tomb. Think of the many years of his ministry, the people he touched, the healing and teaching that happened, the mercy and forgiveness shown to many.

### **LEADER:**

Thank you, God of mercy, for this journey of faith as we followed the way of the cross.  
May these moments so move our hearts  
that we become agents of your compassion and mercy,  
and spirit-filled witnesses to your everlasting love.  
We pray through Christ our Lord

**ALL:** AMEN