

# Stations of the Cross

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## Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a way to contemplate and enter into the mystery of Jesus' gift of himself to us. From the earliest of times, Christians shared the story of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. When pilgrims visited Jerusalem they followed in the footsteps of our Lord, from the pronouncement of his death to his crucifixion. So that others might experience this journey, the stations as we know them today were created for use. This is a personal journey, one done in prayer and reflection. It is not a historical one rather an imaginative one that will hopefully lead you to gratitude.

Spend time with each image; read the description, ponder the 'wonder' questions and then close each station with prayer. As you move through the stations – slow down, breathe, and imagine yourself there.

And now your journey begins . . .

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Dear Jesus,  
Now it is Lent and we are getting ready for Easter. Please help us remember that before you were resurrected on Easter morning you had to die on the cross for us. You loved us very much to do that. We thank you, and we love you. We pray in your loving name, Jesus our Savior. Amen.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray.  
Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of these mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## First Station -- Jesus Condemned to Death

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

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a meeting. They bound Jesus and led him away and gave him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. Pilate washed his hands to show he had nothing to do with what was happening. Jesus' hands are tied behind his back.

I wonder was there ever a time when you did not accept responsibility for an action or a decision. I wonder have you ever been blamed for something you did that you thought was right.



Dear Jesus,  
You must have felt so scared when they told you that you were going to die on the cross. Sometimes I feel scared about things I have to do. I feel nervous and worried, and I wish it would all just go away. Help me be brave just as you were, Jesus. Help me tell the truth, and help me do what I know I need to do. I know you always love me and protect me. Please remind me just how close you are when I am scared. Amen.

## Second Station -- Jesus Takes Up His Cross

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

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the hill called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull. Although he was God's Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter: Jesus did not open his mouth and complain. His cross represents the weight of all of our crosses.

I wonder how it felt when they put the cross on Jesus' shoulders.  
I wonder what Jesus' was feeling when he began the journey to Golgotha.



Dear Jesus,  
The cross they gave you to carry was so rough and heavy. It hurt your hands and shoulders right from the start. And it was so big, you had to drag it step-by-step. The road ahead was very long, and at the end you were going to die. Your journey must have seemed impossible. Even so, you reached out and took the cross. Share your strength with me, Jesus, when I have to do a big project or a hard chore. I will remember how you took the cross without complaining or running away. Help me be as strong as you when I have to face my responsibilities. Teach me to do my work with your grace. Amen.

### Third Station -- Jesus Falls the First Time

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

The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. Jesus, God's Son, was born as a human being. He did as God asked him to and died on the cross for us. Therefore, we need to bow down and kneel before the Lord in thanksgiving while he is pulled up and made to continue.

I wonder what it would feel like to fall on dirt and rocks like Jesus did.  
I wonder how Jesus felt when people laughed at him.



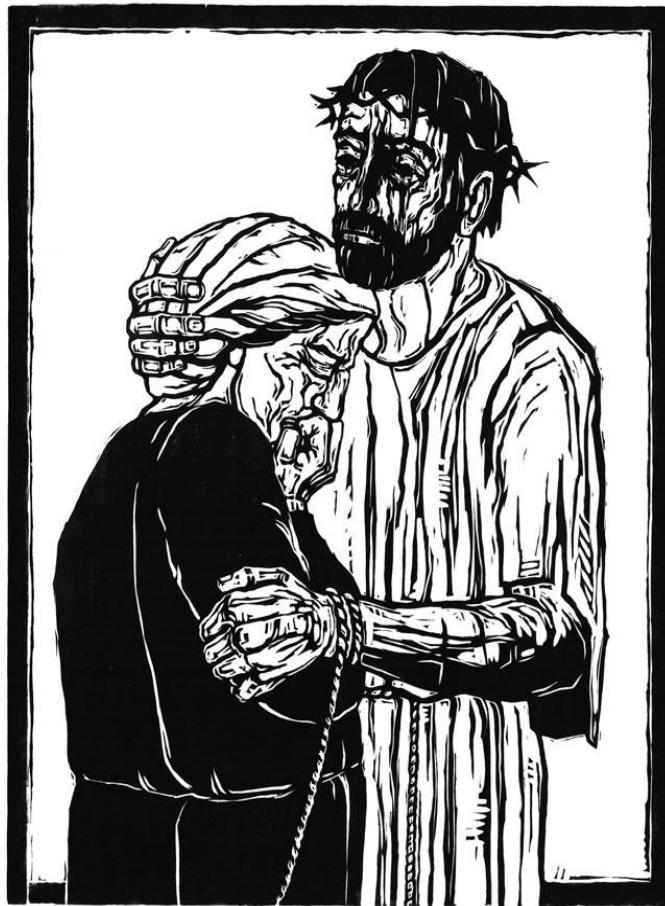
Dear Jesus,  
I bet it really hurt when you fell down with the heavy cross. I know it hurt your feelings, too, when some of the people teased you. It must have been so hard to get up. When I fall, it hurts in lots of ways. I'm glad you're with me, Jesus, when I fall, to help me get back up and dust myself off. You make me feel better in every way, because I know you understand my tiredness and defeats. Please help me accept the weaknesses of others as you accept mine. Amen.

#### Fourth Station -- Jesus Sees His Mother, Mary

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

Standing nearby were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Face to face, Jesus and his mother meet. Jesus is covered in blood, sweat and spit, bent under the weight of his cross. And Mary, experiencing every mother's worst nightmare, offers her love and strength by her presence.

I wonder how we can show our parents and family we love them.  
I wonder who else loves us besides our family.  
I wonder how I can show Jesus my love.



Dear Jesus,  
Your mother was always there for you. She stood by the road while you carried the cross, even though it broke her heart to see you hurting. It must have made you feel so much better to see her. Mary knew you needed her love. Thank you for the people who love me, Jesus. They make me feel safe and happy when things go wrong. I will do my best to show them how much I love them, too. Please bless them with your grace and protection. Amen.

## Fifth Station -- Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

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

Even Jesus experiences our struggle to receive help. As they led Jesus away, they meet a man from Cyrene, Simon, who was coming in from the farm, and laid on his back the cross to carry it behind Jesus. There was a huge crowd lining the streets and no one offered to help Jesus.

I wonder why we are afraid to help someone who is in pain or need.  
I wonder what stops us.  
I wonder why it is so hard to ask for help.



Dear Jesus,  
I wonder what Simon must have thought when the soldiers grabbed him from the crowd and made him help you. He didn't know you, and he saw everyone teasing and hurting you. I wonder if he felt scared. I wonder whether he felt bad for you. I wonder whether he felt glad he could help you. Simon's hands and shoulders made things easier for you for a little while. Thank you, Jesus, for the people in my life who make things easier for me when I am having a hard time. Thank you for the times when you have been by my side. Please give me strong shoulders and a strong heart, so I can make things easier for people who need help. Amen.

### **Sixth Station - A woman wipes the face of Jesus.**

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

As Jesus stumbled, a woman took her veil and gently wiped the spit and blood from his face. Jesus had been whipped and beaten. He suffered the injustice, abuse and indignity so many others have suffered. A loving woman wipes his face, and on her veil, she discovers the image of his face - his gift to her.

I wonder what does the face of Jesus hold for me.  
I wonder if I have ever ignored someone who is in need  
I wonder what injustice I might need to stand up for.



Dear Jesus, open my eyes to those suffering around me. Help me be kind to others. Help me to bring healing to the wounded in our world. Give me the strength to be by your side as I learn to give myself to others. Amen.



### Seventh Station - Jesus falls a second time

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

Jesus, wracked by pain, bowed under the weight of the cross, worn out by the abandonment of all his friends, stumbles and falls to the ground again. A jolt of agony shoots through his body. Jesus once surrounded with love and acclaim now is rejected and scorned. Somehow he gets up and continues on his way.

I wonder if you ever felt overburdened by the crosses you carry.  
I wonder if you ever felt like giving up, but chose not to.



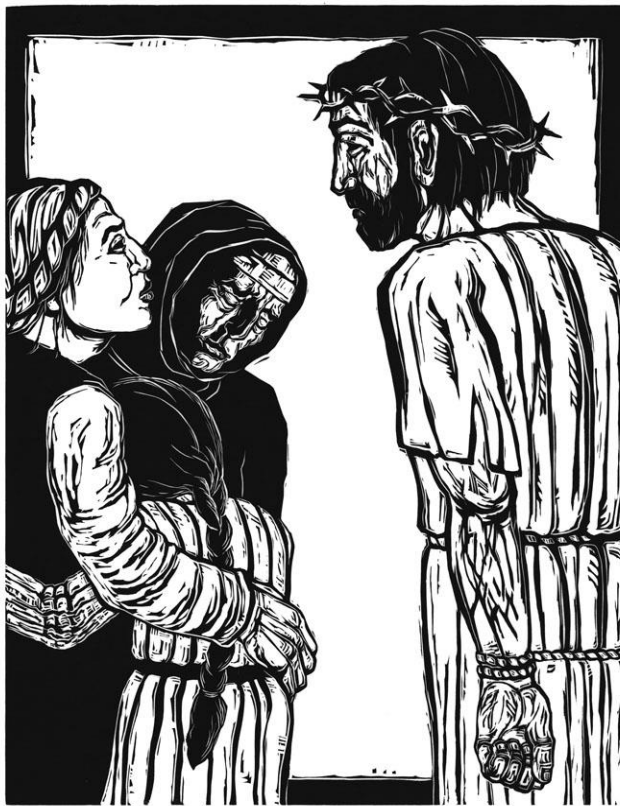
Jesus, somehow you found the strength and courage to get up and continue your journey. Be with me when I fall and help me to find the strength to keep going even when hope is dim. Amen.

## **Eighth Station - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

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

As Jesus walked, some people laughed, some people stood in silence, some jeered, some wondered who he was. One group of women, seeing how Jesus suffered and beaten down, wept. Jesus feels their grief and breaks his silence for the first time and says, "Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children."

I wonder what things that happen in the world make you sad, make you cry.  
I wonder what we can do about these things.



Jesus, open my heart to the suffering of all the people in our world. Help me to recognize their pain and find ways to support them. I give you thanks for offering your compassionate and merciful love to the women while in your own time of pain and struggle. Amen.

### Ninth Station - Jesus falls for a third time

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

The last fall is devastating. Broken and exhausted. Lying on the ground. In agony, Jesus must decide - does he get up or quit. His executioners look at him as a broken man, pathetic and paying the price he deserves. They urge him to get up so he can get up the hill to his crucifixion.

I wonder why Jesus would get up.  
I wonder why would he use his last bit of energy just to give himself to the pain of the cross.  
I wonder if you have ever fallen and didn't want to get up.



Dear Jesus,  
I realize how deeply and completely you love me. Even when I sin, even when I fall, over and over again, you love me. Through your falling and rising, I am made whole. Your brokenness has made me whole. You can transform my failings into gifts of life. I treasure this gift. Amen.

## Tenth Station -- Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes

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

Jesus finally reaches the top of the hill. When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of a skull. Jesus is brutally stripped of his clothes as his garments cling to the open wounds on his back. He suffers the indignity and humiliation of standing naked before the jeering crowds.

I wonder what it felt like to Jesus to have people hurt and embarrass him.  
I wonder have you ever been hurt or embarrassed or humiliated.



Dear Jesus,  
The soldiers were trying to do everything they could to humiliate and embarrass you. I'm sorry for the times I have done the same thing to someone else. When I hurt them, I hurt you, too. Please forgive me for the times I was mean. And please forgive those people who have made me feel embarrassed. May I be ever grateful for all you endured on my behalf. Amen

## Eleventh Station -- Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

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

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, they hammered huge nails through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away. In the midst of his agony he prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I wonder how it felt to be nailed to the cross.  
I wonder if you can understand how Jesus surrendered himself and bore the pain for all of us.  
I wonder if you are sad and yet grateful for what Jesus did.



Dear Jesus,  
I can't imagine how much pain you suffered when they nailed your hands and feet to the cross. Even worse, people around you were teasing you. They said you should save yourself if you were really the Son of God. And yet, you forgave them. Help me to see pain and suffering with the eyes of empathy. Help me to be for them signs of your love. Amen.

## Twelfth Station -- Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

Jesus didn't die immediately when they nailed him to the cross. He suffered for three long, agonizing hours first. When Jesus received vinegar to drink, he said, "It is finished!" And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And he bowed his head, and died.

I wonder what the vinegar tasted like.  
I wonder if the disciples were confused and doubted who Jesus really was.  
I wonder why a God who loved his Son would let him die this way.



Dear Jesus,  
When the ground started to shake and the sun stopped shining, the curtain in the temple tore in two, and many people were afraid. When you died on the cross, some realized what a terrible mistake they had made. No wonder they ran away. I have made mistakes, too. I need to tell people I am sorry. I need to tell you I am sorry. Thank you, Jesus, for all the times you have forgiven me for my mistakes. Amen

### Thirteenth Station -- Jesus Is Removed from the Cross

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

Jesus is dead. His body hangs on the cross, limp and lifeless, until a few of Jesus' followers are brave enough to ask for his body so they could bury it. They carefully remove the body from the cross and lay it in the arms of his waiting mother. Tears run down Mary's cheeks as she holds the son given to her so many years before.

I wonder what it was like to take care of Jesus.  
I wonder how Jesus' mother felt.  
I wonder what it was like to care for someone who died.



Dear Jesus,  
I know I cannot change many things just as Jesus' mother could not change the events of this horrible day. Let me be as courageous as Mary, who did not withdraw but instead accepted the body of her son holding fast to him. May I have the strength to hold fast to you. Amen.

## Fourteenth Station -- Jesus Is Buried

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

Mary and Jesus' friends prepare his body for burial. They lay it in a tomb cut from solid rock. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. They have forgotten – or perhaps failed to believe – the promise Jesus made to them. As they roll the rock across the doorway, sealing the tomb, they know that their lives will never be the same again.

I wonder if there was ever a time when it was difficult for you to believe in Jesus' promises.

The promise of everlasting life?

The promise that God will always love and forgive you?



Dear Jesus,  
Mary, your mother, stood at the foot of the cross -- we stand before you with broken hearts and tearful eyes. Help us remember that you know our pain, and see your power already at work in our lives. May I, like those who prepared your body, show my devotion to you through courage, respect, and tenderness. Grant me the graces I need to take up my cross to be a servant of your mission. Amen.



## Conclusion of Stations of the Cross

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

Spirit of the living God, be with me when times are hard and in times of waiting. Hold me tight and help me to know that I can count on you and never grow apart from your embrace. In my waiting for Easter, come close so that I may be reassured that nothing, can separate me from your love. Amen.

I wonder what comes next.

*Adapted from:*

*"Reflections on the Stations of the Cross, Lent 2012" by Advocates for Catholic Schools*

*Stations of the Cross by Creighton Collaborative Ministry*

*"By Your Side: Stations by the Cross for Teens" by Steve Givens*

*The Way of the Cross in The Book of Occasional Services.*

*The woodcut images were provided by Margaret Adams Parker*