



Stations of the Cross

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The text is taken from The Book of Occasional Services and then reworked to be made more accessible to young people.

Artwork from unknown source.

Concerning the Service (from The Book of Occasional Services)

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The number of stations, which at first varied widely, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The remaining six (numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 13) are based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend. If desired, these six stations may be omitted. The form which follows is appropriate either as a public service or as a private devotion, particularly on the Fridays of Lent, but it should not displace the Proper Liturgy of Good Friday. Traditionally, the stations are made before a series of plain wooden crosses placed along the walls of the church or in some other convenient place. With each cross there is sometimes associated a pictorial representation of the event being commemorated.

Leaders read the plain text, and everyone read the bold. Italics are directions

Opening Devotions

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Officiant and People

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.

Way of the Cross

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In you is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Give us your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy as we contemplate your mighty acts, by which you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The procession goes to the First Station.

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered 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. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

God did not spare his own Son:

But delivered him up for us all.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Almighty God, whose most dear Son suffered pain before he was crucified: Help us when we are walking in the way of the cross to find life and peace in the midst of pain and suffering; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you experienced pain and suffering, but were able to see joy and peace?

Second Station: Jesus takes up his Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull. He didn't argue or complain, but did what he knew needed to be done. He did this not for himself, but for everyone else. He served as the "sacrificial lamb," taking the punishment and blame upon himself.

The Lord has laid on him the wickedness, misdeeds and sins of us all:

For the misdeeds of my people was he stricken.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly took upon himself the agony and shame of the cross to help us: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you done something, or taken something on that you didn't want to do in order to help others?

Question: Have you ever felt unworthy of people doing good things for you, or helping you out in some way? This is Jesus' act of helping us, whether we deserve it or not.

Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And being found in human form he humbled himself and was able to die, even the painful death on a cross. By allowing himself to be made low, God has highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is the Lord our God.

Surely he has borne our griefs and sadnesses:

And carried our sorrows.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, and we are not always strong: Help us find the strength and protection that may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you felt weak and unable to do something, and then found the strength to do it? Did you ask others for help? Did you ask God for help?

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his afflicted mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

To what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? How can I help you, mother of Christ? For you watch your son being tortured, and you must feel such pain. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. The Lord will be a light for you forever, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

A sword will pierce your own soul also:

And fill your heart with bitter pain.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, who willed that as part of the pain your Son experienced, his mother would experience tremendous sadness: Mercifully grant that we, having shared with her in his pain, may be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: Have you ever seen anyone in pain and could do nothing to help? How can Mary be an example to us in ways to deal with the pain of others?

Fifth Station: The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and gave him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my burden upon you, and learn from me; for my burden is easy, the weight is light."

Whoever does not bear his or her own cross and come after me:

Cannot be my disciple.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you helped someone that you barely knew, and helped them with something that you didn't even know that you could do?

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 restored the world.

We have seen Jesus without beauty or majesty. He was despised and rejected by so many people; a man of sorrows, and who knows grief; and as one who people wouldn't look at, he was despised, and we didn't respect him at all. His appearance was so distorted, he barely looked human. But this woman looked upon him, and truly saw him. Instead of looking at him like an animal, she reached out to him and wiped his tears. By seeing past the scars, we connect with another person. By helping someone else, we are healed.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts:

Show us your beauty, and we shall be saved.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, who before the pain of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, by seeing his beauty, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you been able to see past something that is outwardly ugly, or distorted or dirty, and truly seen something beautiful?

Seventh Station: Jesus falls a second time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

Surely he has carried our sorrows. All of us have gone astray; we have each turned our own way; and often we truly feel unworthy. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he didn't open his mouth and complain. For the wrongdoings of my people he suffered.

But as for me, I am a small and not worthy, I am barely human:

Scorned by all and despised by the people.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to become human like us, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may understand his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you felt unworthy, but have still be loved and cared for by others?

Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

Many people followed after Jesus, and among them were women who cried and wailed because of his pain. But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Those who sowed with tears:

Will reap with songs of joy.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to turn away and change; that, by your pardoning grace and your forgiveness, the results of all we have done wrong may no longer stay with us and our families; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you truly felt bad about something, changed your ways and asked for forgiveness – and have received it?

Ninth Station: Jesus falls a third time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

I am the man who has been hurt because of someone else's anger; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has covered me with bitterness and suffering; he has made me live without hope. Though I call and cry for help, he doesn't allow anyone to hear me.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter:

And like a sheep that knew no one would hear his cries.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you somehow made this humiliation become the way to real life: Give us the glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you been in pain or sadness, and thought that no one cared, or even knew? How did you come out of it and realize that others were there?

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, which tasted bitter; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by lottery.

They gave me gall to eat:

And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you been put down by others – teased or bullied? How did you deal with it, and remember that you are loved?

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them.

They pierce my hands and my feet:

They stare and gloat over me.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: When have you felt the love of Jesus? Have you ever told a friend about it?

Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And when Jesus had received the vinegar, 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 handed over his spirit.

Christ for us became obedient unto death:

Even death on a cross.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, who to help us gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Help us to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and forever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: Before Jesus died, he made sure that people were there for each other. When you have problems, who can you go to, who will truly help you and be there for you?

Thirteenth Station: The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

All you who pass by, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are sore with crying; I'm so confused; my heart hurts because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi (which means Pleasant), call me Mara (which means Bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

Her tears run down her cheeks:

And she has none to comfort her.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Help us your servants to follow your way in faith, that we may be able fall asleep peacefully in you and when we wake, to be like you; for your tender mercies' sake. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have restored the world.

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

You will not abandon me to the grave:

Nor let your holy One see corruption.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.**

Question: At baptism, you are said to have died and reborn in Christ. What things in your life do you want to "die", or get rid of, so that you can start new and live the best life you can?

Concluding Prayers before the Altar

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

Save us, and help us, we humbly ask you, O Lord.

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

We thank you, gracious God, that you have delivered us from the life of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. **Amen.**

How to use this booklet.

This can be used alone, with a few friends, or with a large group. You can use one station each day, use a few each day, or do the entire thing at once. Basically, there is no wrong way, so don't worry! The following are things to think about in preparation.

Make space for God

When entering into this journey, take your time. Start by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal something new. Go through each Station prayerfully and intentionally. Leave space and silence between each Station for God to speak, illuminate, reveal and unveil.

Use your eyes

God gave us our vision to help us enter into God's vision. Whether you are praying the Stations in the church or at home, use visual images of each Station to help focus and direct your prayer.

Imagination station

Just as God gave you eyesight, God also gave you an imagination. Use it! With each Station, place yourself in the moment. What does the cross look like? What do the crowded streets feel like? What does nails piercing the hands and feet of Jesus sound like? What does the incense used to prepare Jesus for burial smell like? Enter in and allow the Holy Spirit (and your imagination) to lead the prayer.

Some ideas

Have tactile representations at some of the stations; a piece of wood and nail, incense for the burial, a textured woven cloth to wipe the tears.

Have people act or stand in a "picture" of what each station looked like (the youth group could do this for the parish. If you have 3 or so rooms, as the people go from one to another, the groups can change poses and the group can experience the stations in a different way).

Have the group take time to journal or draw a picture about each station, asking specific questions that they can think about, or simply giving time.

Ask one person to give a reflection at each station. Some of the young people will be help, and all reflections should be read by an adult before-hand to make sure that nothing inappropriate or too heavy is spoken about.

Please note

As with all experiential opportunities, things may come up for the young people, past hurts or bad experiences. Please remember that we adults are not their counselors; we do not enter into "therapy" with anyone nor do we give advice.

We refer to the professionals, we make sure that the young person has access to the help he or she needs. All youth ministers need a list with telephone numbers of qualified and licensed mental health counselors that can be used for referring. Please also remember that confidentiality in a group means "what is said in here stays in here, it's private". If a young person ever reveals abuse by others or even self-abuse, [this must be reported], both to the church authorities and to the appropriate legal authorities. Ask your rector or diocesan office if you need further assistance with this.

If you are a young person reading this – please know that you can also help your friends and/or yourself – by making sure that they or you get help. Speak with a trusted adult – and keep speaking until everyone gets the help that is needed. You cannot fix things, but you can make sure that others know so that things can get fixed!