

Stations of the Cross

with St John Paul II

By Fr J.M. Champlin
With Prayers from CEC adapted

Ostinato Refrain



1. The AGONY of JESUS in the GARDEN of OLIVES

Reading: Mark 14:32-36

Sung Response:



Meditation:

Jesus felt sorrow and dread over what lay ahead of him. He prayed for the burden to be lifted and the cross to be removed, but only if the Father willed it so. When Christ saw clearly that he must drink of the bitter cup, then our Lord totally accepted his future. "Not my will, but thine be done." His example teaches us how to pray at all times, especially in the midst of our own crosses and cups of suffering.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, as you faced the days of suffering and sorrow in your Passion and death, you gave us the perfect example of constancy in doing your Father's will. May we always follow your lead with the same faithfulness amidst the troubles of our daily living. We ask this in the name of God the Father with whom you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

2. The BETRAYAL and ARREST of JESUS

Reading: Mark 14:43-46

Sung Response: Sold for gain by your disciple,
Hand-ed ov-er to your peo-ple
King held cap-tive by his own.

Meditation:

Rejection always hurts. It tears at our self-esteem and leaves us doubting our own worth. Even the turning down of a simple invitation can wound us. Betrayal, especially by a friend, hurts even more. Jesus had prayed all night before selecting his twelve apostles, including Judas. Judas had also been his companion for three years, hearing the Lord's words and observing his miraculous deeds. Now he betrays his saviour with a kiss, and for but a few dollars. Remembering Jesus's hurt and pain in the garden can help us deal with those times when we feel rejected and betrayed.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, you suffered the hurt and pain of betrayal by a friend. You let your self be taken as a criminal though you had done no wrong. May we be given hope to face the rejections in our lives. We ask for this hope in the name of our Saviour who suffered betrayal silently before his passion. Amen.

3. The SANHEDRIN CONDEMNS JESUS

Reading: Mark 14:55, 60-63

Sung Response: Judge of all, you stand con-vict-ed,
Of the sin that we've com-mit-ed.
All for love you bear our guilt.

Meditation:

Envy and jealousy are like cancerous diseases within us. They spread throughout the whole being, leading to uncharitable conversations, false accusations, and other destructive actions. We see all this played out among the religious leaders of Jesus' time as they condemn Jesus without basis. Our Lord offers a model for us: he did not defend himself, but remained silent before the false accusations. Jesus did, however, assert himself, speaking the truth regardless of the cost.

Let us pray: Lord our Saviour, your mission in this world was to bear witness to your Father and to pass on His message of salvation. May we always abide by the truth of the belief within us and speak it openly to bear testimony of you. This we ask, for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

4. PETER DENIES JESUS

Reading: Mark 14:66-72

Sung Response: E-ven Pe-ter now de-nies you,
Claim-ing e-ven not to know you,
Just as you had pro-phe-sied.

Meditation:

All of us are like Peter to an extent, willing but weak. We make resolutions but don't keep them. We try to start a new life, but slip back again into a way of darkness. Yet weak as Peter was – not only at Jesus' trial but at other times as well – he truly loved Jesus. In fact, it was his love that repeatedly set him up for failure. All of Christ's other followers ran away after his arrest. Peter, however, followed along into the courtyard, only there to see his weakness take over. Almost immediately, he wept because of what he had done. A few short days afterward, Jesus would take this weak but loving follower and make him head of the Church, supplying him with divine strength to overcome his human weakness.

Let us pray: Lord ever faithful to us, you make strong all those who love you. You challenge us to stand by you as witnesses to the way of your Cross. May we repent of our failings and overcome our human weakness. This we ask, for you are the Lord our strength. Amen.

5. PILATE CONDEMNS JESUS to the CROSS

Reading: Mark 15:1, 6-15

Sung Response: To the rul-ing pow'rs de-liv-ered
By the crowd your verd-ict ren-dered,
Shunned by those you came to save.

Meditation:

Pilate seemed anxious to release Jesus, almost looking for a way to do so. But the crowd would not allow that. Pilate capitulated, fearing for his future and lacking the courage to do what is right, we have, on occasion, acted similarly.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, for our sake you underwent the indignity and mockery of your trial before Pilate as the powers of this world sought to destroy you. May we always stand up for the truth in which we believe, despite any passing hardships that are demanded of us. We ask for this courage in your name. Amen.

6. JESUS is SCOURGED and CROWNED with THORNS

Reading: John 19:1-3

Sung Response: Pain on head and back you car-ry,
May we just but brief-ly tar-ry,
Pon-d'ring now what love will do.

Meditation:

Pilate had Jesus scourged – a truly cruel punishment. He was probably stripped to the waist and made bend over a short pillar. Then he was lashed several dozen times with a whip, the first few of these strokes cutting open the skin of his back. After the scourging, a wooden band, or crown, of long, sharp thorns was pressed into his scalp. The pain had to be excruciating. When our head hurts or we suffer some other bodily pain, it would do well for us to follow the advice in the Letter to the Hebrews: "Let us ... [keep] our eyes fixed on Jesus ... for the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the Cross ..." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Let us pray: In your suffering by the whipping and crowning of thorns, Lord Jesus, you offered this pain to your heavenly Father to make up for the many sins of men and women. May we turn to you in sorrow when we offend, and seek that forgiving grace won by you on our behalf. We ask this, for you are true King for ever and ever. Amen.

7. JESUS is Mocked by the SOLDIERS and GIVEN HIS CROSS

Reading: Mark 15:16, 18a, 19-20

Sung Response: Now the cross as Je-sus bore it,
Has be-come for us who share it,
Sym-bol of our Vic-to-ry.

Meditation:

Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He deserves our praise and reverence. Yet the soldiers placed on him a dirty cloak instead of a royal garment. They handed him a thin reed instead of the golden staff used by kings. Through all his humiliation, Jesus remained silent. How different with us. Though not as pure or as important as Christ, we nevertheless become angry and defensive when someone attacks or criticizes us in any way.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ on your shoulders and in your heart you carried the grossness of our infidelity, may we be ever thankful to you for this journey which was to give us true life. We ask this, for you reign for ever and ever. Amen.

8. SIMON the CYRENIAN HELPS Jesus CARRY HIS CROSS

Reading: Mark 15: 21

Sung Response: Si-mon bears with hes-i-ta-tion
Glo-rious sign of our sal-va-tion,
That which we should bear with joy.

Meditation:

Those in charge of Jesus' crucifixion compelled Simon of Cyrene to help carry the Lord's cross. He did not volunteer or willingly accept the task, but that is no surprise. Simon was only passing by and presumably knew little about Christ. We, on the other hand, do know Jesus. And we have heard his words about the necessity of taking up our own crosses each day and walking in his footsteps. What is our response? Must we be pressed to carry our crosses, be they big or small, or do we accept them willingly?

Let us pray: O Lord, you called Simon of Cyrene to the moment of his greatest glory in allowing him to share the weight of your cross on the way to Calvary. Grant us the privilege of sharing in your suffering by giving to us the strength to raise up those overburdened by the cares of this life. This we pray, through your help. Amen.

9. JESUS MEETS the WOMEN of JERUSALEM

Reading: Luke 23:27-28

Sung Response: Like the wo-men at your pas-sion,
Lov-ing hearts with-in us fash-ion,
That we might share oth-ers' pain.

Meditation:

Compassion means, literally, to suffer with someone. Empathy means to feel with them. These women displayed both qualities as they accompanied Jesus, so bruised and disfigured, on this sorrowful journey through the streets of Jerusalem. We imitate their example when we listen with love to another's troubles, hold another's hand by a hospital bed, or embrace another who is grieving.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for your constant love for us and your ever-present thought for our good. May we respond to this by loving you more deeply and by reaching out to those whom we meet each day who are in sorrow. We ask this, counting on your love. Amen.

10. JESUS is CRUCIFIED

Reading: Mark 15:22-24

Sung Response: Arms spread wide our pain em-brac-ing,
Stain of blood our sin e-ras-ing
Though nailed fast, your hands still heal.

Meditation:

First they drove nails through his hands and feet. Then they raised him on the cross, where he hung for three hours – an example of patience for all to study. Pope John XXIII had a crucifix on his bedroom wall. He prayed in front of it before retiring, upon arising, and whenever cares awakened him during the night. "A cross," he said, "is the primary symbol of God's love for us."

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, those feet which walked to the aid of many and those hands which brought blessing and healing were nailed to the cross in the offering of your life. May we always direct ourselves in ministering to others according to your example, for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

**11. JESUS PROMISES PARADISE
to the PENITENT CRIMINAL**

Reading: Luke 23:33. 39-43

Sung Response: E-ven in the midst of suf-f'ring,
Je-sus' words of com-fort of-f'ring:
"This day you shall dwell with me."

Meditation:

One criminal said "no" to Christ, the other "yes." To his penitent companion on Calvary, Jesus promised immediate forgiveness and entrance into heaven. When we doubt God's willingness to forgive us, when we keep punishing ourselves for past mistakes, when we dread the thought of standing before the pure Christ with our not-so-pure lives, we might recall this scene on the cross and draw hope from it.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, you came to call us all to conversion that we would repent and live with a new life. Grant that we may heed your call, turn away from sin and enjoy that life which you won for us by your suffering on the cross. We ask for this life through your merits, for you live for ever and ever. Amen.

**12. JESUS SPEAKS to HIS MOTHER
and to HIS DISCIPLE**

Reading: John 19:25-27

Sung Response: Je-sus gives us to our moth-er,
In his blood, now sis-ters, broth-ers,
God makes us his fam-il-y.

Meditation:

With these words, Jesus gives his mother to us, making her our mother as well. Mary becomes the Mother of the Church. We can rely on her for help

and look to her as a model. Here, she stands at the foot of the cross, offering her son to us and for the whole world. She reminds us that if we unite our sufferings, both large and small, with her son on the cross and with her at the foot of the cross, we will share in Christ's work of bringing grace and blessings to others.

Let us pray: Jesus, son of Mary, out of love for us you gave us Mary, your mother, to watch over us during our lifetime and to be a model of devotion and fidelity to you. May we always imitate her, love her as you did, and rejoice in her presence in your kingdom where you reign for ever and ever. Amen.

13. JESUS DIES on the CROSS

Reading: Mark 15:33-37

Sung Response: Word of Life, of death de-fi-ant,
Bowed his head – the world is si-lent;
Through his death came life a-new.

Meditation:

Jesus as a faithful Jew, would have prayed the psalms regularly. It is no surprise, then, that these words from Psalm 22 are on his lips during the agony of his last moments. While this cry might seem to be a sign of despair or hopelessness, it reveals, rather, the depth of his anguish and the intensity of his pain. Shortly afterward, he surrenders totally to his Father's will – "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit." We might wish to follow Christ's example, letting these words be the last on our lips as we wait each night for sleep to come, sleep which is a symbol of our own eventual death.

Let us pray: Christ, our Saviour, as you gave your life for our redemption on the cross, you were lifted up to draw all people to the source of life. May we ever be conscious of your love for us, and draw closer to you, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.

14. The BURIAL of JESUS

Reading: Mark 15:42-46

Sung Response: Hid-den from the sight of heav-en,
Earth's dark womb re-ceives our vic-tim,
Now our hope seems all but gone.

Meditation:

Starting on Good Friday, the Church enters into a brief period of silent grief, a time of mourning that looks with hope to the joy of the resurrection that

will be proclaimed and celebrated at the Easter Vigil. We grieve in much the same way when someone we love dies. There are tears and sorrow, of course, but rays of hope and belief in a later reunion bring us comfort, understanding and strength.

Let us pray: Lord, Jesus Christ, after the agony of your death, the stillness of the tomb was the prelude to your final victory. May we live always in your friendship so that we may face our own death conscious of your redeeming power. We ask this in your name. Amen.

15. JESUS RISES from the DEAD

Reading: Mark 16:1-6

Sung Response: Life and love are now vic-to-rious!
Pas-chal Lamb, who was slain for us,
Come and reign as Lord of all!

Meditation:

After cross comes the crown. After three days of mourning and waiting, the Church celebrates Jesus' Resurrection. He is victorious. The Light of the World has conquered darkness. The Way, the Truth, and the Life has overcome death. We hear Jesus' words, "Peace be with you." We feel joy in our hearts. We sing again that acclamation of praise, "Alleluia."

His triumph is ours as well. On Easter Sunday, and in the many other Easters of our lives, we rise above our failures, our burdens, and our struggles. We, too, emerge victorious. Throughout our own Good Fridays, the risen Lord is by our side, pledging that we, too, will rise again, both here on earth and hereafter, in the life yet to come.

Let us pray: Christ our Saviour, you rose from the tomb to prove that you had won for us our redemption, and opened to us the way to eternal happiness. May we live with the grace of new life, so that when our earthly existence is over we may all come to the joy of your Kingdom, where you reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

