

# Praying the Stations with Pope Francis

## Opening Prayer

Loving Jesus, you took up your cross with complete love for us.

You walked the way to your death in order to give us the freedom of new life.

We willingly take up our own crosses today and follow you on your journey, walking with you on this pathway of love.

Only you can lead us away from selfish darkness to the light of self-giving love.

Stir up within us the desire to forgive our enemies, to love our friends more deeply, and to take upon our shoulders the needs of the poor and vulnerable whom you love so much.

Dear Mary Mother of God, be our example of courage now as we face this way of the cross.

Pray for us as we journey here that our lives might be filled with grace.

Give us clean hearts, Holy Spirit, and kindle within us the fire of your love.

Let us be thankful for the merciful love of Christ, which led him to embrace the cross.

And lead us now to the loving arms of God our Father with whom we hope to love forever and ever. **Amen.**

Note: The words of Pope Francis are paraphrased unless within quotation marks.

## The First Station

### Jesus is Condemned to Death

Pope Francis (Daily Homily 23/6/2014)

People who judge others are wrong, mistaken, and defeated because they assume God's place; but God is the one and only judge. God often "takes time" when rendering judgement and does not operate according to human ways or conceptions. Jesus spoke of picking a splinter in a neighbour's eye while failing to tend to the plank in our own. "He who does this is so obsessed with the person he wants to judge ... that the splinter will not let him sleep! He who judges becomes defeated, ends badly, because the same measure will be used to judge him. Jesus, before the Father, never accuses; it is the opposite, he defends!"

## The Second Station

### Jesus takes up his Cross

Pope Francis (Way of the Cross 18/4/2014)

The cross is a reminder of how much evil people are capable of and how much love Jesus has for sinful humanity. One's cross may be heavy because she is abandoned; another's heavy because he has lost a loved one; and for others it is heavy because they have taken on the pain of evil. Jesus shows "that evil will not have the last word"; love, mercy, and forgiveness will be victorious,

"From the cross we see the monstrosity of {human}kind when it lets itself be guided by evil. But we also see the immensity of the mercy of God, who doesn't treat us according to our sins, but according to his mercy." Pray that you may find strength in the trials of your cross, and live in the hope of God's resurrection and love.

### The Third Station Jesus falls for the first time

Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel No.3)

“How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another ‘seventy times seven,’ has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With tenderness that never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew.”

### The Fourth Station Jesus meets his Mother

Pope Francis (Homily 23/10/2013)

“Mary said yes to God: a yes that threw her simple life in Nazareth into turmoil, and not only once. Any number of times she had to utter a heartfelt yes at moments of joy and sorrow, culminating in the yes she spoke at the foot of the Cross. Here today there are many mothers present; think of the full extent of Mary’s faithfulness to God: seeing he only Son hanging on the Cross. The faithful woman, still standing, utterly heartbroken, yet faithful and strong. And I ask myself: am I a Christian by fits and starts, or am I a Christian full-time?”

### The Fifth Station Jesus is helped by Simon

Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel, nos. 7b-8)

I never tire of repeating those words of Pope Benedict that take us to the heart of the Gospel: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with {the person of Jesus Christ}, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves.

### The Sixth Station Jesus’ face is washed by Veronica

Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel, nos. 54b)

“To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for a selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping at other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.”

### The Seventh Station Jesus falls for the second time

Pope Francis (St Peter’s Square 23/6/2014)

“I repeat the firm condemnation of every form of torture and invite Christians to commit themselves to work together for its abolition and to support victims and their families. To torture persons is ... a very grave sin.”

## The Eighth Station

### Jesus meets the Women

Pope Francis (At the Vatican 7/12/2013)

"I would like to underline how the woman has a particular sensitivity for the 'things of God,' above all in helping us to understand the mercy, tenderness, and love that God has for us. And it pleases me to think that the Church is not {masculine} it is {feminine}. The Church is a woman! And that's beautiful ... We have to think deeply about this."

## The Ninth Station

### Jesus falls for the third time

Pope Francis (Public Audience, Rome 18/6/2014)

Even though we Christians wander away from God, "God never tires. God has patience, so much patience, and continues to form and to educate his people just like a father does with his own sons and daughters ... God walks with us. When we recognize that we are sinners, God fills us with his mercy and love, and he forgives us. He always forgives us. This is what makes us grow as the people of God, the Church."

## The Tenth Station

### Jesus is stripped of his garments

Pope Francis (General Audience 16/4/2014)

Jesus, who opted to pass through this life, calls us to follow him on his way of the cross. There are moments in all our lives when we find ourselves in great difficulty, when we sink into the thickest darkness. That is the moment of our humiliation and total stripping, the hour where we experience that we are fragile and that we are sinners. It is then that we have to admit our failure and open ourselves with confidence in God, as Jesus did. Dear brothers and sisters, it will do us good to take the cross in hand and kiss it with passion, saying "Thank you, Jesus. Thank you Lord. Amen."

## The Eleventh Station

### Jesus is nailed to the cross

Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel Nos. 210-213 & 216)

"It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, and indigenous peoples, of the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment, and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights. Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us."

## The Twelfth Station

### Jesus dies on the cross

Pope Francis (Weekly General Audience 27/11/2013)

"If we live united to Jesus, faithful to him, we will be able to confront with hope and serenity even the passage of death. If my life has been a path with the Lord, of trust in his immense mercy, I will be prepared to accept the last moments of my earthly existence as the definitive trustful abandonment in his receiving hands, in awaiting to contemplate him face to face."

### The Thirteenth Station

Jesus is taken down from the cross

Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel No. 285)

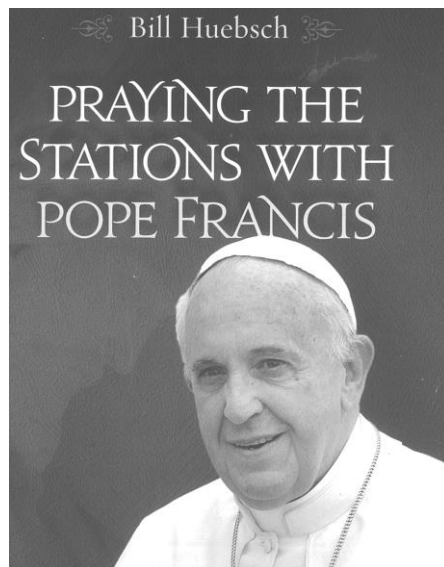
“At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and {we} read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel. The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood. Mary, who brought him into the world with great faith, also accompanies ‘the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.’”

### The Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Pope Francis (At Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem 25/5/2014)

“It is an extraordinary grace to be gathered here in prayer. The empty tomb, that new garden grave where Joseph of Arimathea had reverently placed Jesus’ body, is the place from which the proclamation of the resurrection begins: **‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said.’** Let us receive the special grace of this moment. We pause in reverent silence before this empty tomb in order to rediscover the grandeur of our Christian vocation: we are men and women of resurrection, and not of death. From this place we learn how to live our lives, the trials of our Churches and of the whole world, in the light of Easter morning. Every injury, every one of our pains and sorrows, has been borne on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd who offered himself in sacrifice and thereby opened the way to eternal life. His open wounds are like the cleft through which the torrent of his mercy is poured out upon the world. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the basis of our hope.”



**St Joseph, Protector of the Church, pray for us.**

Last Words from St Patrick:

(Divine Office p50\*)

“I praise and proclaim your name in all places, not only when things go well but also in times of stress. Whether I receive good or ill, I return thanks equally to God, who taught me always to trust him unreservedly.”