

Praying the Stations of the Cross

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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.**

Pope Francis 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

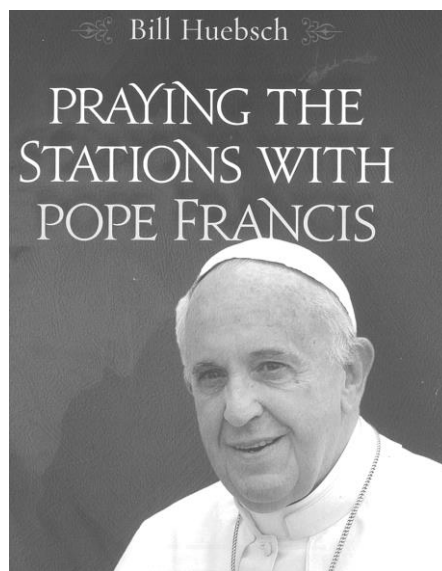
Pope Francis (The Joy of the Gospel No. 285)

"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.”

St John Paul II

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

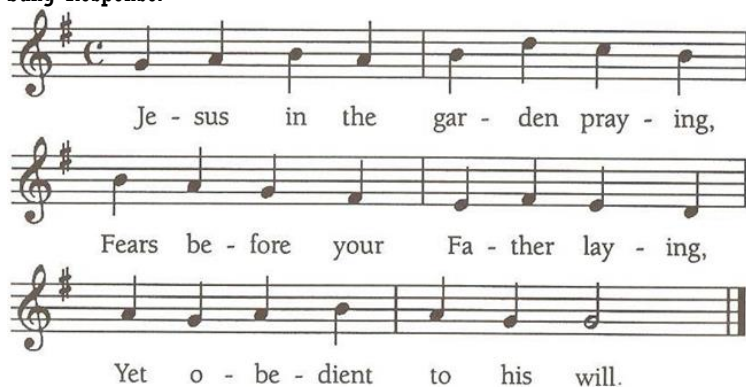
Ostinato Refrain



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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.



POPE FRANCIS

Between each Station:

Ostinato Refrain



At each Station:

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

All: **Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

1st Station: Jesus is condemned to death

Lord, your disciples were afraid to ask what you meant when you said, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men." For them, it was better not to talk about it, it was better not to understand, than to understand the truth that you had proclaimed. We must pray for the grace not to fly from the Cross when it comes. **Amen.**

2nd Station: Jesus takes up his Cross

Lord, through your Cross you bear the suffering and the sin of mankind, including our own. Jesus, you accept all this with open arms, bearing on your shoulders our crosses and saying to us: "Have courage! You do not carry your cross alone! I carry it with you. I have overcome death and I have come to give you hope, to give you life." **Amen.**

3rd Station: Jesus falls for the first time

Ask Jesus, speak to Jesus, and if you make a mistake in your life, if you should fall, if you should do something wrong, don't be afraid. Jesus, look at what I have done, what must I now do? Speak continually with Jesus, in the good times and in the bad, when you do right, and when you do wrong. Do not fear him! **Amen.**

4th Station: Jesus meets his mother

Lord you left your Mother in our midst that she might accompany us. May she take care of us and protect us on our journey, in our hearts, in our faith. May she make us disciples like herself, missionaries like herself. May she teach us to go out onto the streets. May she teach us to step outside ourselves. **Amen.**

5th Station: Simon helps Jesus to carry his Cross

Lord, only in you can we find salvation and redemption. With you, evil, suffering, and death do not have the last word, because you give us hope and life: you have transformed the Cross from an instrument of hate, defeat and death into a sign of love, victory and life. **Amen.**

6th Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

So, looking upon the Man of the Shroud, I make my own prayer which St Francis of Assisi prayed before the Crucifix: Most High, glorious God, enlighten the shadows of my heart, and grant me a right faith, a certain hope and perfect charity, sense and understanding, Lord, so that I may accomplish your holy and true command. **Amen.**

7th Station: Jesus falls a second time

Lord, why did you take the Cross as your throne! Because you take upon yourself the evil, the filth, the sin of the world, including the sin of all of us, and you cleanse it, you cleanse it with your blood, with the mercy and love of God. **Amen.**

8th Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him

Dear friends, let us bring to Christ's Cross our joys, our sufferings and our failures. There we will find a Heart that is open to us and understands us, forgives us, loves us and calls us to bear this love in our lives, to love each person, each brother and sister, with the same love. **Amen.**

9th Station: Jesus falls the third time

Lord, sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps your wounds at arm's length. Yet you want us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. You hope that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people. **Amen.**

10th Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

Lord, you are a scandal. You are a scandal: the scandal of the Cross. A Cross which is humility, meekness; a Cross that speaks to us of God's closeness. **Amen.**

11th Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Lord, with the Cross, you unite yourself to the silence of the victims of violence, those who can no longer cry out, especially the innocent and the defenseless; with the Cross, you are united to families in trouble, and those who mourn the tragic loss of their children. We pray for them.

Amen.

12th Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Lord,

on the Cross, you are united with every person who suffers from hunger in a world which, on the other hand, permits itself the luxury of throwing away tons of food every day;

on the Cross, you are united to the many mothers and fathers who suffer as they see their children become victims of drug-induced euphoria;

on the Cross, you are united with those who are persecuted for their religion, for their beliefs or simply for the colour of their skin;

on the Cross, you are united with so many young people who have lost faith in political institutions, because they see in them only selfishness and corruption;

on the Cross you unite yourself with those young people who have lost faith in the Church, or even in God because of the counter-witness of Christians and ministers of the Gospel.

How our inconsistencies make you suffer! **Amen.**

13th Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross and given to his mother

Mother, look upon us! Your gaze leads us to God, your look is a good gift from the Father, who awaits us at every turn of our journey; it is a gift from Jesus Christ on the Cross, who takes upon himself our suffering, our struggles, our sin. And in order to meet this loving Father, today we say: Mother, look upon us! Let us all say it together: Mother, look upon us! Mother, look upon us! **Amen.**

14th Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

Father, your Cross is the word through which you have responded to evil in the world.

Sometimes it may seem as though you do not react to evil, as if you are silent. And yet, you have spoken, you have replied, and your answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy and forgiveness. It also reveals a judgement, namely that you, in judging us love us. You judge us by loving us. If I embrace our love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by you, but my own self, because you never condemn, you only love and save. **Amen.**

Mary's Way of the Cross - Richard Furey CSsR

1/ JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE

It was early Friday morning when I saw my son. That was the first glimpse I had of him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks. Then Pilate, from his chair of judgement, asked the crowd why they wanted my son executed. All around me they shouted. "Crucify him!" I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I stood and cried silently.

℟ All Sing: *At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,
it is hard for me to imagine the anguish your mother felt at your condemnation. But what about today, when I hold a grudge, not ready to forgive? Am I joining in the cry "Crucify him!?" When I judge others, not trying to listen – am I joining in the cry "Crucify him!?" Doesn't this bring tears of anguish to both you and your mother? Forgive me Jesus.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

2/ JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my son stumbled out, the guards laughed behind him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on his shoulders. Then they shoved him down the road. My pain for him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from him and carry it myself but I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I walked on silently.

℟ All Sing: *Through her heart, His sorrow sharing
all His bitter anguish bearing,
now, at length, the sword has passed.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

I beg you to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to your cross by closing my eyes to the pain and loneliness of my neighbour. Forgive me for any gossiping about others and for trying to find excuses to avoid certain people who wish to talk with me. Help me to be like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

3/ JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

I followed close behind my son as he stumbled towards Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into his shoulders. My heart dropped when I saw him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on his back. For a moment I thought my beloved son was dead. Now my whole body began to tremble then the guards kicked him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped him. I wanted to protect him with my own body. But, I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I walked on and wept silently.

℟ All Sing: *O, how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother highly blessed
of the sole Begotten One.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

how often have I seen you fall, and unlike Mary, have left you there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and laughed at them? How often do I find myself getting angry when someone does things differently than I do? Mary offered you her support through your entire passion. Help me to do the same for you by the support I give to others. Lord, have mercy on me.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

4/ JESUS MEETS HIS GRIEVING MOTHER

I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my son. I called to him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, his full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then his eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As he stumbled on, I knew he was right, I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I followed and prayed silently.

℞ All Sing: *Christ above in torment hangs
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying, glorious Son.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,
forgive me the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me the times I brooded over little inconveniences or became discouraged and did not heed your call to courage! Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times but sometimes fruitlessly.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

5/ SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my son as he tried to carry his heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be his last. I felt his every pain in my heart and I wanted the whole thing to end. Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my son's load. He asked the guards why this had to be.

I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I followed silently.

℞ All Sing: *Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

I have many times refused to help you. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned your word. Don't let me remain like Simon, but help me to be like your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

6/ VERONICA WIPE THE FACE OF JESUS

As I continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil and began to wipe my son's sweating, bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back. Her face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to him?"

I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I walked on in faith, silently

℞ All Sing: *Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

this woman gave you the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to you by giving to others - but I pass them by. My Saviour, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to you.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

7/ JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Again, my son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that he might die. I started to move toward him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my son fall, get up again, and continue on, was bitter anguish to me.

I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I walked on silently

℞ All Sing: *Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled
She beheld her tender Child,
all with bloody scourges rent*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

of all people Mary was your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for you. I have many times turned away from you by my sins and have caused others to turn away from you. I beg you to have mercy on me.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

8/ JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw him stop. Some women were there crying for him and pitying him. He told them not to shed tears for him. They had the opportunity to accept him as the messiah; like many others, they rejected him instead. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears that would bring their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and his walk to death.

I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I followed praying silently

℞ All Sing: *For the sins of His own nation
saw Him hang in desolation
till His spirit forth He sent.*

℣ All: My Saviour,

many times have I acted like these women, always seeing the faults of others and pitying them. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked your pardon. Lord, you have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me ...*

9/ JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had he fallen on the rocky ground again, but now he was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at him and abused him, almost dragging him the last few steps. My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to him next.

I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I climbed the hill silently.

℞ All Sing: *O sweet Mother! Fount of love,
touch my spirit from above
make my heart with yours accord.*

℣ All: My loving Jesus,

I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people but when it became inconvenient or painful to me I left them, making excuses for myself. Help me, Lord, to be like your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me ...*

10/ JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENT

With my son finally relieved of the weight of the cross. I thought he would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip his clothes off his blood-clotted skin. The sight of my son in such pain was unbearable.

But I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I stood by and cried silently.

℟ All Sing: *Make me feel as You have felt
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ, my Lord.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

in my own way I too have stripped you. I have taken away the good name of another by foolish talk, and have stripped people of human dignity by my prejudice. Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended you through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see you in all people.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

11/ JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

As they threw Jesus on the cross, he willingly allowed himself to be nailed. As they punctured his hands and his feet I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There he was, my son, whom I love so much, being scorned as he struggled for the last few moments of earthly life.

I gasped with him but I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I stood by and prayed silently.

℟ All Sing: *Holy Mother, pierce me through;
in my heart each wound renew
of my Saviour crucified.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

what pain you endured for me. And what pain your mother went through, seeing her only son die for love of me! Yet, both you and she are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me, Lord to turn away from my sinfulness.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

12/ JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes! I, who had brought this saviour into the world and watched him grow, stood helplessly beneath his cross as he lowered his head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever.

I saw him give up his life; I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I stood by and mourned silently.

℟ All Sing: *Let me share with you His pain
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

have mercy on me for what my sins have done to you and to others. I thank you for your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down your life for your friends. Let me always be your friend. Teach me to live my life for others, and not fail you again.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

13/ JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped, I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our saviour, my son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my son, but it had also brought life to all of us.

I cradled my son's lifeless body; I knew this had to be.

℣ All: So I prayed silently.

℟ All Sing: *Let me mingle tears with thee
mourning Him who mourned for me,
all the days that I may live.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,

your passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over you. I have done my part in your crucifixion and now, my saviour, I beg your forgiveness with all my heart. Help me to live a life worthy of you and your mother.

℟ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

14/ JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

We brought Jesus' body to a tomb and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before I left, I thought, I knew this had to be ... it had to be for you!

℣ All: So I waited in faith silently.

℞ All Sing: *By the cross with you to stay
there with you to weep and pray
is all I ask of you to give.*

℣ All: Lord Jesus,
this had to be because you love me, and for no other reason. All you ask is that I live a good life. You never said such a life would be easy. I am willing; help me to leave sin behind and live for you alone, in my brothers and sisters.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*

15/ JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

I could only be most grateful for the sacrifice of my son for us. Yet, what emptiness I felt trying to live without him whom I loved so! But, only two days later that emptiness was filled beyond belief - he had risen! Our saviour had opened the doors to a new life. That is the way it had to be – because his undying love for you would not stop at anything less. I knew this had come to be.

℣ All: So I rejoice forever, but not in silence.

℞ All Sing: *Virgin of all virgins blest!
Listen to my fond request;
let me share thy grief divine.*

℣ All: My Saviour,
thank you! Thank you for such endless love that helps me to rise out of my own sinfulness. I will try again to live a better life. Help me to always remember that unquenchable love you have for me. Mary, mother of our risen Saviour, teach me to be like you, and in my love for others, love your son Jesus in return.

℞ All Sing: *Jesus remember me*



World Youth Day

✝ Station 1

▣ The Last Supper

REFLECTION:

Bread, our food, is a sign of life and survival; wine our drink, is a sign of joy and celebration. At this last meal before his death, Jesus Christ offers himself to his friends through the signs of bread and wine. He has given himself so often before in friendship, teaching, and leadership; this time however, he gives them everything: his very body and blood under the appearance of bread and wine. As bread is broken, His Sacred Body will be broken on the cross. As wine is poured out, His Precious Blood will be poured out of his side. It is a terrifying prediction, but not without hope. In this last meal, Jesus is replacing the old Passover with his own journey to the Father, old sacrifices of animals with his own self-giving. Amidst the gloom he gives thanks and promises his friends that he will drink again with them one day. However dark the journey of the next 24 hours will be, Jesus leaves them a promise of reunion and joy on the other side of death.

PRAYER:

Lord, many people lack the food and drink that bring true joy. They do not know, or have forgotten, how you wish to meet them in the Eucharist and share with them your humanity and divinity. Help us to appreciate the great gift of your Body and your Blood, the key to your Passion and ours. Draw us into your real presence at Mass. Help us to understand that communion with you also means union with all those to whom you give yourself. Make us generous and insightful as we try to walk in your footsteps.

✝ Station 2

▣ The Agony of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane

REFLECTION:

Jesus, about to undergo a rigged trial, torture and judicial murder, fears what awaits him, as any of us would. He doesn't hide how much he desires the support of his friends and the end of the ordeal, but his

whole life has been a witness of faith in the Father he loves and of love for the Father's other children. He must leave the last word to the Father. However frail his friends, however frail our human nature, he must also maintain hope in the Father. May all who are anxious or lonely be helped by his example and receive his power to triumph over fear.

PRAYER:

Lord, you know by experience what it is to suffer terrible stress and attack. You see in us, and in our world, many kinds of anxiety, depression, loneliness and fear. You know how tempted we can be to run away, evade our responsibilities through drink or drugs, the Internet or other distractions. Help us, in your Holy Spirit, to be clear-eyed and courageous. Keep our faith strong when we are under attack. Help us always to pray with you: "Father, your kingdom come, your will be done – your will, not mine."

✝ Station 3

▣ Jesus before the Sanhedrin

REFLECTION:

Jesus is not an ordinary person, but he is willing to go the ordinary way. He is in 'the hands of sinful men' and imperfect institutions – as we all are, from time to time, in a world so damaged by original sin. But on the verge of humiliation and then destruction, he claims that the outcome will still be a triumph for his Father, the source of creativity, of fidelity, and of justice. Jesus draws us beyond our present, partly unjust, state, to a better place. God's kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.

PRAYER:

Lord, each of us can add to the fairness of the world, or make it less fair, whether in our homes, among our friends, in schools or universities, at work, or in society at large. Open our eyes so that we can see how things really are with us. Give us the courage to be fair, even when it's hard. And strengthen in us the conviction that you will never desert this imperfect world, which you both love and save.

✝ Station 4

▣ Jesus before Pilate

REFLECTION:

Jesus' life in public and his readiness for suffering and death, stand in contrast to a life of greed, self-preoccupation and abuse of power. In the end, these are not the truth of things – they are a lie, a fantasy, even though millions of people join in their illusion. Pilate is blind to the deepest truth of life: we are most like God, the giver, when we ourselves give, and so share in divine life. To know this truth would have required a change of heart for Pilate – as it does for us.

PRAYER:

Lord, it is from you and from your friends that we must learn the deepest truth of life. Give us the good sense and the determination not to be swayed simply by fashion and popularity when it comes to decisions. Let us not be, as Pilate was, at the mercy of a mob. May we not be dominated by peer pressure or 'going with the flow'. Let us not mistake consensus for wisdom. And may we not let relativism or cynicism dominate our thoughts and actions or allow others to pay the price for our evasiveness.

✝ Station 5

▣ Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

REFLECTION:

'A cohort' of soldiers – hundreds of them – mobbed and mocked Jesus, like so many Jews and other ethnic minorities have been before and since his death. Scourging and crowning with thorns were forms of torture. To torture someone is to treat them as less than human, less even than an animal. This still happens in many places today. The tortured Jesus stands with and for anyone, without exception, guilty or innocent, to whom this is done. And he offers them life beyond their present suffering.

PRAYER:

Lord of the mistreated, show us how to help those who suffer. Heighten our distaste for every form of cruelty, small or great. Let us never take lightly the way in which life itself is insulted whenever anyone is killed or tortured. Make us resolute in the pursuit of just

peace, whether at home or abroad. Let us see how alien cruelty is to you, to your loving Father and to the Spirit. Give us courage even in the face of contempt.

✝ Station 6 ☐ Jesus takes up His Cross

REFLECTION:

Jesus, carrying the cross from which he will be hanged, is driven out of the city he has loved and on whose behalf he has worked and prayed. He is an outcast, and he will remain like that until he dies. He has been burdened, earlier, with cares and responsibilities: now comes the final, lethal burden. He had said that following him meant taking up a personal cross – love’s burden. Here he is, living it out, not in metaphor but in brute reality. Sooner or later, most of us will encounter a ‘place of the skull’ – a place of seeming barrenness, in which love’s tasks will have to be carried through.

PRAYER:

Lord, you carried with you not only the literal cross, but your care for all the world. Help us to be grateful for your love of us, then and now. Broaden and deepen our compassion for the men and women who ‘labour and are burdened’ in so many ways. Make us creative in seeing how we might help, and generous in carrying it out. Keep us from being discouraged when our efforts seem to fail. And help us to bear our own cross, when that time comes, in following you.

✝ Station 7 ☐ Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry His Cross

REFLECTION:

Simon had no say. Simon, like our Lord, was a victim. He was forced to play a part in the dirty work of crucifixion carried on behalf of the occupying Romans. He may, later, have wanted to put the episode right out of his mind. But willing or not, he was being drawn into ‘the work of salvation’. He was part of Jesus’ final offering of himself to the Father, his saving gift to us. Many opportunities for helping our fellow men and women go ‘against the grain’. They come at times and in ways which we would not have chosen, but which

cannot wait. May the prospect and power of Christ's resurrection be our comfort and our hope.

PRAYER:

Lord, you tell us that whatever we do for those in need, we do for you. You also tell us that you will not always be obvious in those in need; the sick or the starving, the gaoled or the depressed, the refugees and strangers, may not seem to match our image of you and this too, has come to be true of many of the indigenous peoples of our world. But they are truly your sisters and brothers. Help us not to ignore them, but to walk with them and lighten their burdens.

✝ Station 8 ☐ Jesus speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

REFLECTION:

The women have compassion for Jesus, and he has compassion for them. Jesus enters in to the circuit of genuine love in the human family. It would have been natural for someone in Jesus' situation to be preoccupied with their own suffering. For Jesus, however, what is natural and normal is to seek our good, to share the Holy Spirit's healing power, to bring us salvation. Like Jesus, we face the challenge to reach out with compassion from our own distress into the distress of others.

PRAYER:

Lord, we all have problems – sometimes deep ones – and we need to face up to them. May we never dismiss offers of help, through pride or shame or imagined self-sufficiency. May we find in our needs a reminder of how our brothers and sisters suffer. All are frail, however secure they may seem to be. All have a claim on the care of the Christ, who called himself the healer of bodies and souls. All may expect that followers of Christ will act in the spirit of Christ. May we not disappoint them.

✝ Station 9 ☐ Jesus is stripped of his garments and nailed to the Cross

REFLECTION:

Clothing shelters us from the elements, maintains privacy, and expresses personality. To be stripped, as Jesus was, is to be denied

these things. The stripping also says, 'You are beyond help now': it jeers at the notion of a merciful God. Sometimes we can be tempted to doubt the existence of God or to think that he has abandoned us: the angry atheism that would strip us of hope and consolation is itself a violence. The crucifixion was also designed to degrade and torture. Yet in its cruelty, it was more an indictment of those who used it than of those who suffered it.

PRAYER:

Lord, too many people suffer violence in everyday life. Our brothers and sisters are victims of physical and emotional abuse, dispossession and exile, starvation and neglect, terrorism and warfare. In our society, violence against the unborn, sexual abuse of the vulnerable, and neglect of the young, the old and the Indigenous are all too common. You were on the receiving end of violence, and it cost you your life. You knew how deeply violent behavior is at odds with the peaceful purposes of your Father. Teach us to be outraged both at the inhumanity of unjust violence, and at its insult to the God of peace. Make us channels of your peace.

✝ Station 10

▣ Jesus Promises Paradise to the Good Thief

REFLECTION:

In his public life, Jesus was often found in the company of outcasts – with lepers and prostitutes, with outsiders and sinners, or with tax-collectors and soldiers of the occupying forces. It was to be so to the end. He died as a convicted criminal among criminals, all of them outcasts. In the end, though, the verdict that counts most is not society's, but God's. The worst of citizens, like the best, can be met by God. The healing of the heart can begin through the words of a friend, through God's Word, or through the gift of absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To be aided in these ways is the beginning of paradise.

PRAYER:

Lord, it is easy for us to regard some people as outsiders, as enemies, as expendable, but when we do this we are also regarding you as expendable. Remind us, when we need it, how to forgive and how to see

the image of God in the face of even the most degraded or different of people. May we regularly receive your abundant mercy in the sacraments. Remind us of the hope of paradise for all which Jesus brought in his life, his death, and his resurrection.

✝ Station 11 ☒ Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

REFLECTION:

At the foot of the cross, Mary and the disciple John stand for all of us. Jesus had given them much and had asked much of them. Now he consigns each of them to the other's care. Mary is his family; John is his friend. Now they must begin to nurture their own small community, in his name. In the darkness of the afternoon, there is the dawning of the Church. This is the last will of Jesus. The charge of mutual care given by the dying God-man echoes on, even goes on echoing up to own day.

PRAYER:

Lord, when we are open to real relationships we risk being hurt, as happened with Jesus, Mary, and John. May we not stay sealed off from one another for fear of being hurt. You, the wounded Lord, the displayer of scars, commit us to one another's care. Grant that we may especially know the loving embrace of your Blessed Mother. May we be blessed by the company and lasting care of all your holy ones.

✝ Station 12 ☒ Jesus dies on the Cross

REFLECTION:

Watered vinegar is the Roman soldiers' normal drink on duty. The thirsty, dying Jesus needs compassion from those who are near him. To accept the drink is also a way of accepting them. When he says, 'It is accomplished', this means more than, 'I've had enough'; it means that his lifelong work of solidarity with needy humanity has been achieved through his saving service. He has remained faithful to the Father who commissioned him and to the men and women who needed him. When he 'gives up his spirit', this is both a surrender to death and a triumph over death. Now is the hour when he pours out the Spirit and we receive power to be his witnesses.

PRAYER:

Lord, you gave your life so that we might live more deeply, both now and after death. We believe that, like you, each of us has a personal calling from the Father, and that each of us is sustained by your Holy Spirit. Help us to discover our vocation and embrace it whole-heartedly. Make many of us priests and religious, spouses and parents, and committed single people, all dedicated to your kingdom. Let us know, in sickness and in health, that we have things to offer to the world, so loved by God. May we be your witnesses, as you directed us to be. May we, too, at the end, be able to say, 'It is accomplished.'

✝ Station 13

☒ The Body of Jesus is brought down from the

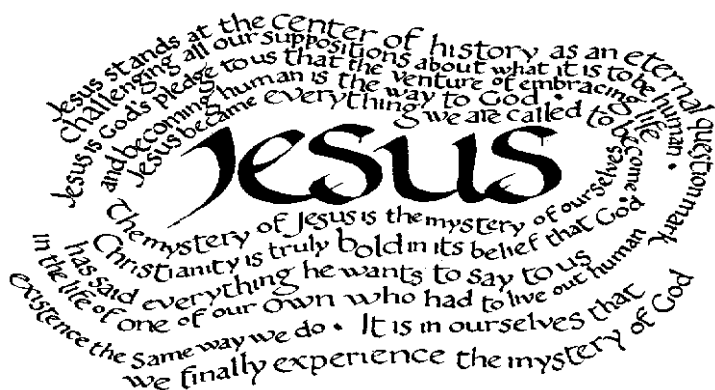
Cross

REFLECTION:

At the end, Jesus can do nothing at all for himself. He was persecuted as a baby, and persecution has left him only in death. But, as is said in the scriptures he cherished, 'love is stronger than death'. Christ's love goes on, continuing to inspire acts of goodness. Joseph of Arimathaea acts out his love for the One who has died for us all. Here Joseph stands for all of us who are called to continue to love, even in the face of difficulty.

PYAYER:

Lord of life and Lord over death, when they took you down from the cross your friends had to consign you in hope to the care of your Father. When we face our own deaths and the death of those we love, the same challenge remains. May your promise, 'I am the resurrection and the life', hearten all women and all men. We are all pilgrims on this earth and heaven is our true homeland. May we be blessed in the conviction that you are the Way.





O Cross of Christ

Prayers of Pope Francis after Stations of the Cross 2016

1.0 O Cross of Christ,

You are the symbol of divine love and of human injustice, icon of the supreme sacrifice for love and of boundless selfishness even unto madness, instrument of death and the way of resurrection, sign of obedience and emblem of betrayal, the gallows of persecution and the banner of victory.

All: Save us, O Cross of Christ.

2.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you raised up in our sisters and brothers killed, burned alive, throats slit and decapitated by barbarous blades amid cowardly silence.

All: Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.

2.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the faces of children, of women and people, worn out and fearful, who flee from war and violence and often only find death and many Pilates who wash their hands.

All: Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.

2.3 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in those filled with knowledge and not with the spirit, scholars of death and not of life, threatening with punishment and death, and who condemn the just.

All: Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.

3.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in unfaithful ministers who, instead of stripping themselves of their own vain ambitions, divest even the innocent of their dignity.

All: Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.

3.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the hardened hearts of those who easily judge others, with hearts ready to condemn even to the point of stoning, without ever recognizing their own sins and faults.

All: Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.

3.3 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in expressions of fundamentalism and in terrorist acts committed by followers of some religions which profane the name of God and which use the holy name to justify unprecedented violence.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

4.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in those who wish to remove you from public places and exclude you from public life, in the name of pagan laicism.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

4.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the powerful and in arms dealers who feed the cauldron of war with the innocent blood of our brothers and sisters, and give their children blood-soaked bread to eat.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

4.3 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in traitors who, for thirty pieces of silver, would consign anyone to death.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

5.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in thieves and corrupt officials who, instead of safeguarding the common good and morals, sell themselves in the despicable marketplace of immorality.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

5.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the foolish who build warehouses to store up treasures that perish, leaving Lazarus to die of hunger at their doorsteps.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

5.3 O Cross of Christ,

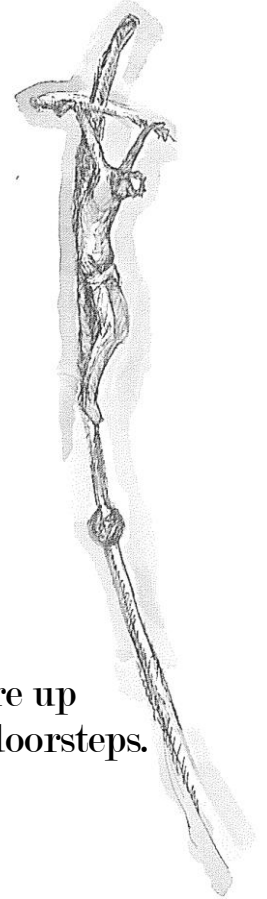
Today too we see you in the destroyers of our “common home”, who by their selfishness ruin the future of coming generations.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

6.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the elderly who have been abandoned by their families, in the disabled and in children starving and cast off by egotistical and hypocritical society.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**



6.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas which have become insatiable cemeteries, reflections of our indifferent and anesthetized conscience.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

7.1 O Cross of Christ,

Image of love without end and way of the Resurrection, today too we see you in noble and upright persons who do good without seeking praise or admiration from others.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

7.2 O Cross of Christ,

We too see you in ministers who are faithful and humble, who illuminate the darkness of our lives like candles that burn freely in order to brighten the lives of the least among us.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

7.3 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the faces of consecrated women and men – good Samaritans – who have left everything to bind up, in evangelical silence, the wounds of poverty and injustice.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

8.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the merciful who have found in mercy the greatest expression of justice and faith.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

8.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in simple men and woman who live their faith joyfully day in and day out, in filial observance of your commandments.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

8.3 O Cross of Christ,

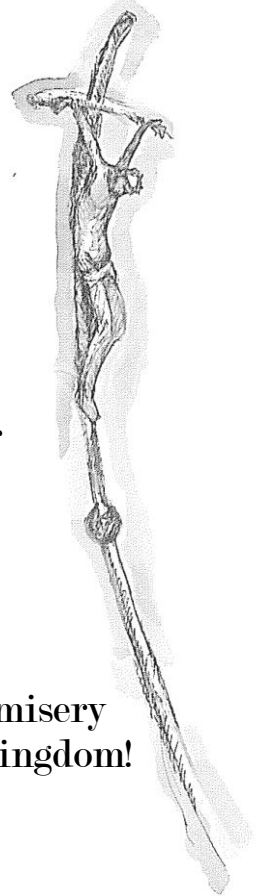
Today too we see you in the contrite, who in the depths of the misery of their sins, are able to cry out: Lord, remember me in your kingdom!

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

9.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in the blessed and the saints who know how to cross the dark night of faith without ever losing trust in you and without claiming to understand your mysterious silence.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**



9.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in families that live their vocation of married life in fidelity and fruitfulness.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

9.3 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in volunteers who generously assist those in need and the downtrodden.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

10.1 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in those persecuted for their faith who, amid their suffering, continue to offer an authentic witness to Jesus and the Gospel.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

10.2 O Cross of Christ,

Today too we see you in those who dream, those with the heart of a child, who work to make the world a better place, ever more humble and just.

All: **Help us to recognize you, O Cross of Christ.**

11.1 O Cross of Christ,

We see God who cares even to the end, and we see the hatred of those who want to dominate, that hatred which blinds the minds and hearts of those who prefer darkness to light.

All: **Save us, O Cross of Christ.**

11.2 O Cross of Christ,

Ark of Noah that saved humanity from the flood of sin, save us from evil and from the Evil One.

All: **Save us, O Cross of Christ.**

11.3 O Throne of David,

and seal of the divine and eternal Covenant, awaken us from the seduction of vanity! O cry of love, inspire in us a desire for God, for goodness and for light.

All: **Save us, O Cross of Christ.**

12.0 O Cross of Christ,

Teach us that the rising of the sun is more powerful than the darkness of night. O Cross of Christ, teach us that the apparent victory of evil vanishes before the empty tomb and before the certainty of the Resurrection and the love of God which nothing can defeat, obscure, or weaken.

All: **Amen.**

