

The Stations of the Cross



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

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.' *Matthew 16.24,25*

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace. *Ephesians 2.13,14*

HYMN

A minister may introduce the service

Collect

Let us pray

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station One: Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Matthew 27:22-26

Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Meditation and Prayer

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed.

It was a good question.

Jesus has annoyed the religious leaders, of that there was no doubt.

He had been critical of the social and religious structures,

He had healed the villagers;

He had told stories to the crowds;

He was probably a threat to law and order

But was this enough to condemn him, to end his life?

But he would not defend himself-

The storyteller was silent now

And the crowd was noisy

And Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

Let us pray for all who administer justice, all who face trial this day, all those incarcerated and those falsely imprisoned.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Two: Jesus receives his cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Mark 15:16-20

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Meditation and Prayer

Soldiers

Taking the chance for a bit of fun.

They had a heavy day ahead.

Soon they would have to put on their public face-

Disciplined, controlled, efficient.

But for now a bit of a lark with the lads

With no risk of recrimination.

Dead men tell no stories,

And Jesus was going to his death.

We pray that we might give our lives to the service of God, accepting the trials and difficulties of the pilgrimage of this earthly life.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Three: Jesus falls for the first time

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

John 12: 23-25

Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Meditation and Prayer

Jesus was exhausted.

He was in pain.

He was going to his death.

The cross was heavy and he fell.

He was flesh and blood like us,

He was struggling.

We pray for all who feel weighed down by anxiety, stress, or concern for those whom they love.

**Holy God,
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holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Four: Jesus meets his Mother

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Luke 2:22, 25, 34, 35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Meditation and Prayer

She was going to be there at his end-
She who had been there with Him at his beginning.
She was his mother.
She had fed him and cradled him
And watched over his growing.
Whatever he had said and done,
He was still her son
And she would not desert him now.
Whatever pain of his she could embrace she would.
And in the meeting of their eyes
There was love,
Suffering and shining.
We pray for all parents, those who look after loved ones who are sick
and suffering and children who suffer at the hands of others.

**Holy God,
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have mercy upon us.**

Station Five: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Luke 23:26

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Meditation and Prayer

Simon of Cyrene,

What a tale you have to tell!

You helped Jesus,

You gave him your strength on the streets of Jerusalem.

Willing or unwilling,

You Simon, have become part of his story,

And he part of yours,

For you helped him,

When he needed you.

What would we give to be Simon?

We pray for all who have helped us on our journey of faith. For all who are struggling with their faith at this time and all who have fallen away from the Church.

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have mercy upon us.**

Station Six: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Matthew 25: 25-36, 40

"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Meditation and Prayer

Wiping faces,

Faces full of sweat and tears.

Wiping faces is something we try to do gently and lovingly;

Something that cleanses and soothes.

For those in pain or in trouble,

Wanting them to know that they are loved and cherished.

And when we wipe the face's of God's little ones

We are wiping the face of God.

We pray for those who bring comfort and care to others. For all who work in the medical profession and all involved in work with aid agencies.

Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us.

Station Seven: Jesus falls a second time

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

Meditation and Prayer

I am finding it hard to watch you, Jesus,

To see you struggling,

To see you on the ground.

Into your silence I want to shout:

'Why do we keep on hurting you?

What have you done wrong?'

We pray for those caught up in warfare, for victims of terrorism, and
those who live in poverty because of the greed and injustice of others.

**Holy God,
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holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Eight: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Luke 23:27-28

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

Meditation and Prayer

Weep for the mothers and children of Jerusalem,

For Israeli and Palestinian,

For Jew, Moslem, and Christian,

For the strangers in their midst.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Pray that her people may live together in justice.

Pray that all people may live together in peace.

We pray for those who eagerly await the coming of the Kingdom and who try to witness to it as a present reality in their work for justice and peace.

**Holy God,
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holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Nine: Jesus falls a third time

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

John 15:18-20

'If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants are not greater than their master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

Meditation and Prayer

I am not sure if I can watch you much longer.

In his pain I see my pain,

In his falling I feel myself falling,

In his cross...in his cross

I am included.

He carried it for me-

For me, and my enemies, and my friends.

We pray for those whom I love, those whom I struggle to like and those who find me difficult; for the grace to truly accept difference.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Ten: Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Mark 15:22-24

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

Meditation and Prayer

Stripped now-

Of clothing

Of disciples

Of friends.

Alone,

Naked and vulnerable,

With nothing to protect you from the pain to come.

We pray for the downtrodden and the rejected. For the refugee, the victim of prejudice, all who are deprived of their rights of freedom.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Eleven: Jesus is nailed to the cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Luke 23:35, 49

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews." ' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

Meditation and Prayer

We look on from a distance:

A distance of time and space and culture,

And yet even for us it hurts to watch Jesus dying.

It hurts to know that we are rescued.

It hurts to know that we are cherished and loved.

We pray for all who contemplate ending their own lives. Those who work in hospices and face death daily and for those who await execution and can find no joy in being alive.

**Holy God,
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have mercy upon us.**

Station Twelve: Jesus dies

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Matthew 27: 45- 46

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Luke 23: 44-46

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

A period of Silence is kept

Station Thirteen: Jesus is taken down from the cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Mark 15:42-45

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth.

Meditation and Prayer

Pieta

Jesus is dead and lies in the arms of his mother.

Death is hard and final

And yet, whatever happens on this earth,

Children never die to their mothers.

In the memory of those who loved them, loved ones remain.

And for us, and for all God's people,

Our hope is safe in God.

From the swaddling bands to grave clothes,

All the days of our living and dying,

We are cradled and wrapped in love.

We pray for all families and especially those which have experienced the death of a child. We pray for all who mourn with no hope in the resurrection.

**Holy God,
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holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

Station Fourteen: Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you O Christ and we bless you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Mark 15:46-47

Joseph then laid the body in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Meditation and Prayer

The door is shut now,
And the world sighs and waits.
And we wait in night's darkness,
Longing for the morning,
Longing for the light.

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

HYMN

*We pray for the coming of God's kingdom
in the words our Saviour taught us:*

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

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.
Amen.

