

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

By Sister Miriam Varley, osc and Friar Stephen Kluge, ofm

Leader begins:

In the name of the Father....

Assembly responds: Amen.

Leader: Lord Jesus,
you willingly embraced the wood of the cross
as an act of total surrender in love for the Father
and the reconciliation of the entire universe.
This evening, as we retrace your steps,
send us your spirit
so that our hearts may be warmed
and our lives renewed.
May the example and invitation of your love
inspire us to forsake selfishness
and embrace wholeheartedly the way to victory,
for you live and reign, forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The first station: Jesus is condemned to death:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Unemployment, health issues, divorce: whatever the circumstances, we may at some point in our lives feel out of control. But Jesus knew that no matter how the outward circumstances appeared, a loving Father was in control and would use whatever was happening for good.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, when the circumstances of our life are challenging, help us to trust in Your loving presence. May whatever happens to us help us to grow in empathy for all who suffer. For you are Lord forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The second station: Jesus takes up His cross:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

His cross was made of wood. Our cross that we are called to carry might be a loved one, addiction, physical or emotional abuse, mental illness, physical diminishment: there are as many crosses as there are people in the world.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, sanctify the crosses we carry. By remembering Your example, may our fears and weakness be transformed into faith and strength. For this we pray:

Assembly responds: Amen.

The third station: Jesus falls the first time:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Heavy was the wood of Your cross. No matter the cross I carry, it too is heavy. My faith might be small and weak, so it's okay to fall under the weight of my cross.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, when we fall, and no matter how many times we fall, we know that You are with us and continue to love us. We trust that You will give us the strength and courage to pick up ourselves so we may continue on our journeys, for you live and reign forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The fourth station: Jesus meets His mother:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Throughout Your life, she was there to protect and to support You. And now, as You carry Your cross, she sees You before You ever see her face in the crowd. Though frightened and sad, her love for you never waivers and that gives You strength.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, at the cross You gave Your mother to us all. We now ask for the help of the Blessed Mother: Find our faces in the crowd, and smile tenderly at us. As we make the way of our own cross may you lead us to Your Son, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The fifth station: Simon helps Jesus:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Someone unknown to You is pulled from the crowd to help You carry the wood of the cross, and in this act, the man we know as Simon, is made unclean and unfit to celebrate the coming high holy days.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, if You needed help to carry a wooden cross, how much more do we need help to carry our crosses. Only one person helped you carry the cross, but You have given us so many to help us carry our crosses: family members, friends, counselors...the list goes on and on. We ask that you bless all those, known and unknown to us, who have given, or continue to give us help, support and encouragement, for you are Lord, forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The sixth station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Moved by the Spirit of Holy Compassion, a woman of courage cleans Your face of accumulated blood, sweat, and tears. Did she do this to others who were on their way to crucifixion? Was she there when you washed the feet of the disciples at your last supper? Was she the one who washed your feet with her tears?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, Countless are the men and women who have shown us compassion and comfort through a kind word, or a loving act, when we have been sick or felt alone and scared. As they have done for us, may we do for others as we too yield to the Holy Spirit of Compassion, in your name we pray.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The seventh station: Jesus falls again:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The cross feels heavier as time goes on, and You grow more tired. The road leading away from the city is potholed and uneven. Simon is gone from the scene; Veronica seems so far away. It's no wonder You fall again.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, our crosses are often times easy to bear, and sometimes even forgotten in the business of the day. But at other times we're crushed by the weight of our crosses. At these times give us the grace to remember that no matter how heavy, You help us to carry on and go forward, for you live and reign forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The eighth station: Jesus meet the women of Jerusalem:

**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

They may have heard You preach in the temple, or have heard rumors of the signs and wonders You had worked. Perhaps they were professional mourners who sang songs of hope-filled lamentation to the condemned on their death march. Either way, a miracle happens as You turn to them and offer comfort.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, once again You remind us that we are never alone as we shoulder our crosses, but rather that we are comforted by faithful friends and family. Through them, Your comfort reaches us, and through us You comfort others, for you are Lord, forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The ninth station: Jesus falls a third time:

**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

It's not the fall that is important, it's that for a third time you rise. You rise to show us the depth of Your love for us. You rise to show us that no matter how great the weight, no cross can keep us crushed. Your desire to do the Father's will gives You the strength to rise and continue.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, when we seem too crushed to continue, too depressed to feel Your presence, when we are faced with setbacks, give us Your courage to rise and continue on our journey with You and to You, in your name we pray.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The tenth station: Jesus is stripped of His clothes:

**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Throughout this ordeal, You have been stripped of Your dignity. Even though led by others, You know that Your Father is truly doing the leading. Arriving at Calvary, You are stripped now of your clothes, Your only possession, and like a new born, You are placed naked on the wood of the cross.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, it is often difficult for us to accept the fact that we need help from others. And we feel especially uncomfortable when we need the help of professionals. We don't like to feel humble. We don't want to be reminded of how impoverished we are. Clothe us, and comfort us, with Your Holy Spirit Who gives us strength, for you live and reign, forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The eleventh station: Jesus is nailed to the cross:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

You are stretched, and Your hands and Your feet are nailed to the cross. They want to make sure there is no escape. What holds really You is Your desire to do the Father's will, to show Your Father's compassion for us. And so You say we are forgiven; You say we are remembered; You say humanity is now complete. And for our sakes, You give Your Spirit into the loving hands of the Father.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, our sufferings seem so small when we compare them to what You have suffered on the cross. But they are our sufferings, and to us they are not small at all. Our reaction to our own suffering is a window through which we can see who we really are. Give us strength and patience to bear all the hurts that life brings to us. Help us to grow into a holy serenity that surpasses understanding, for this we pray:

Assembly responds: Amen.

The twelfth station: Jesus dies on the cross:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

When there were no more words to say; when You could give no more, Your earthly life came to an end.

(Pause in silence for a bit here, then continue)

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, one day we too will die. But before we die, show us how to live our lives following in Your footprints. Lead us out of the prison of selfishness and into the heaven of self-giving. Help us trust in You so that we may surrender ourselves into Your loving and healing hands. May our striving to live a life filled with holiness give birth when our time comes to a holy death, in your name we pray.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The thirteenth station: Jesus is taken down from the cross:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Your cross was Your throne of glory and of unimaginable love. Now the nails are removed but the scarred holes remain. The wound in Your side still open. Your dead body is placed into the loving arms of Your mother who holds you as if You were still a babe.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, with this, another sword pierced Your mother's heart. We too have felt pierced by swords: friends not understanding what we are going through; mental, spiritual, or emotional fatigue as we struggle with circumstances beyond our control. May Your open wounds remind us that we can find a safe refuge within You, and that in You, Your mother holds us close, for you are Lord forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

The fourteenth station: Jesus is laid in the tomb:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Swaddled once again, but now in grave cloths, You are laid to rest in a borrowed tomb. Your earthly poverty follows You even in death. No shepherds come, no angels sing, no star to guide the way, You are placed in a cave on the side of a hill in the midst of a garden. And all is still. And it all seems to come to an unsuccessful end.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, Your time in the tomb is so mysterious. But the Father is acting upon You; the Holy Spirit is welcoming You. We're afraid of tombs, and though we hate to admit it, sometimes we're afraid of the dark. When all seems dark sometimes the best thing that we can do is to wait in silence and remember that when all seems dark, Your light shines bright, for you live and reign, forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

(Move to in front of altar for closing prayer)

Closing Prayer:

Lord, During Your life, death by crucifixion was a sign that the condemned was damned by God. But You showed us that the Father is all loving, and wills the salvation of all. You will rise to new life, the fullness of human life which is divine life. Your memories and Your scars will remain as signs of Your everlasting love. We await your resurrection, the surprise ending, which is itself a new and glorious beginning.

You suffered out of love for us. You died out of love for us. You rose to new life for us. As our lives continue let our suffering be a source of hope to others. When we can finally put down our crosses, and our suffering comes to an end, may our endurance be a source of consolation to others. May the stations of OUR crosses create in us a more compassionate heart for others who suffer. May our wounds lead us to love. May our crosses be a door through which we live out our baptismal promises so as to enter into eternal life.

Amen.

The Lord be with you
And with your spirit.

Lord,
send down your abundant blessing
upon your people who have recalled
the death of your Son
in the sure hope of the resurrection.
Grant us pardon; bring us comfort.
May our faith grow stronger,
and our eternal salvation be assured,
for you are God forever and ever.

Assembly responds: Amen.

Let us go in peace.
Thanks be to God.