



**The Way of the Cross
(*Stations of the Cross*)**

Reading and Prayers

Jesus' journey to the cross

A Brief History

The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion at Passiontide for many centuries because they enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.

In the late fourteenth century the Franciscans were given the responsibility for the holy places of Jerusalem and they erected tableaux to aid the devotion of the visitors. These kinds of images are now commonplace inside churches, and occasionally outside them.

The number of stations has varied immensely through the centuries from as few as five to as many as thirty-six; the traditional fourteen were established by Clement XII in 1731 – nine scriptural stations and a further five based on popular devotion. Owing to the increasing ecumenical popularity of this devotion there have been attempts to create a wholly scriptural set on which to focus.

The selection of stations presented here all have their root in the biblical story of Jesus rather than drawing on legend or popular, yet unscriptural, stories. This development makes the Stations of the Cross more accessible to all traditions within the Christian Church.

Opening prayers

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

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

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.**

First Station

Jesus in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'

Mark 14.32-36

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you entered the garden of fear
and faced the agony of your impending death:
be with those who share that agony
and face death unwillingly this day.
You shared our fear and knew the weakness of our humanity:
give strength and hope to the dispirited and despairing.
To you, Jesus, who sweated blood,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen

Second Station

Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

Mark 14.43-46

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed by the kiss of a friend:
be with those who are betrayed and slandered and falsely
accused.

You knew the experience of having your love
thrown back in your face for mere silver:
be with families which are torn apart by mistrust or
temptation.

To you, Jesus, who offered your face to your betrayer,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen

Third Station

Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands".' But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven".' Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death.

Mark 14.55-64

Prayer

You faced the condemnation of fearful hearts:
deepen the understanding of those who shut themselves off
from the experience and wisdom of others.

To you, Jesus, unjustly judged victim, be honour and glory
with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen

Fourth Station

Peter denies Jesus

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept.

Mark 14.72

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as Peter betrayed you,
you experienced the double agony of love rejected and
friendship denied:

be with those who know no friends and are rejected by
society.

You understood the fear within Peter:
help us to understand the anxieties of those who fear for
their future.

To you, Jesus, who gazed with sadness at your lost friend,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen

Fifth Station

Jesus judged by Pilate

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15.14,15

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency:

be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful.

You were the victim of unbridled injustice:

change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters to your way of peace.

To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen

Sixth Station

Jesus scourged and crowned with thorns

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

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.

Mark 15.17-19

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you faced the torment of barbaric punishment
and mocking tongue:

be with those who cry out in physical agony and emotional
distress.

You endured unbearable abuse:

be with those who face torture and mockery in our world
today.

To you, Jesus, the King crowned with thorns,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen

Seventh Station

Jesus carries the cross

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

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.

Mark 15.20

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough streets of Jerusalem:

be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength.

You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross: help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love for us.

To you, Jesus, bearing a cross not your own, be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. . Amen

Eighth Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Mark 15.21

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue:
be with those from whom life drains all energy.
You needed the help of a passing stranger:
give us the humility to receive aid from others.
To you, Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in need of
help,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever . Amen

Ninth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Reading - from the Gospel according to Luke.

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. For the days are surely coming when they will say, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.” Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us”; and to the hills, “Cover us.” For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’

Luke 23.27-31

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you:
move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.
You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the ‘city of peace’:
bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound
peace.

To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept for the city of
peace,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever . Amen

Tenth Station

Jesus is crucified

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.
And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them,
casting lots to decide what each should take.

Mark 15.24

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you bled in pain
as the nails were driven into your flesh:
transform through the mystery of your love
the pain of those who suffer.
To you, Jesus, our crucified Lord,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. . Amen

Eleventh Station

Jesus promises the kingdom to the penitent thief

Reading - from the Gospel according to Luke.

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

Luke 23.39-43

Prayer

Lord Jesus, even in your deepest agony you listened to the crucified thief:

hear us as we unburden to you our deepest fears.

You spoke words of love in your hour of death:

help us to speak words of life to a dying world.

To you, Jesus, who offer hope to the hopeless,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen**

Twelfth Station

Jesus on the cross; his mother and his friend

Reading - from the Gospel according to John.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

John 19.26,27

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed with you to the bitter end,

yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them:

be with all broken families today

and care for those who long for companionship.

You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes:

give us a love for one another

that is stronger even than the fear of death.

To you, Jesus, loving in the face of death,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever. Amen

Thirteenth Station

Jesus dies on the cross

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Mark 15.34-37

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree of
shame,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever . Amen

Fourteenth Station

Jesus laid in the tomb

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Mark 15.46

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us:
be with those who feel worthless and as nothing in the
world's eyes.

You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from sight:
be with all who suffer and die in secret,
hidden from the eyes of the world.

To you, Jesus, your rigid body imprisoned in a tomb,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever . Amen

Fifteenth Station

Jesus risen from the dead

Reading - from the Gospel according to Mark.

When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16.4-8

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were dead but now you are alive:
transform the torments of this world's sin
that we may see your radiant glory.

You were raised from death to life:
may the power of your resurrection live in us,
that we may be channels of your true life beyond measure.
To you, Jesus, who have broken free from the bonds of death,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever . Amen

Conclusion

Te Karakia O Te Atua
(The Lord's Prayer)

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
(Our Parent in the spirit world)

Kia tapu tou Ingoa
(Sacred is your Name)

Kia tae mai tou rangatira-tanga.
(Bring us Your Chiefly rule);

Kia meatia tau e pai ai
(May it happen in the way that is to You, good)

ki runga i te whenua,
(may it happen on earth)

kia rite ano ki to te rangi.
(In the same way as in spirit world).

Homai ki a mātou aianeī
(Give us now)

he taro mā mātou mo tēnei ra.
(The food we need this day).

Murua o mātou hara
(Strip us of our sins);

Me mātou hoki e muru nei
(Give us back what we have lost);

i o te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
(So that we, the slaves of sin, may be with you again).

Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whaka-waia;
(Do not lead us into temptation);

Engari whaka-orangia mātou, i te kino:
(May we be whole, away from things evil);

Nou hoki te rangatira-tanga, te kaha,
(Through your chiefly position, is the power)

me te kororia,
(and the glory).

Ake, ake, ake. Āmine.
(Forever 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

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Christ was manifested in the body,
vindicated in the spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
glorified in high heaven.

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

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

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