

LIVING STATIONS OF THE CROSS



Titian, "Christ Carrying the Cross" - Public Domain

St. Michael Catholic Church

Bedford, Texas

PRESENTED ON GOOD FRIDAY
BY MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH MINISTRY

FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus stands strong in his silence, as he is condemned to die for a crime he did not commit. He has been betrayed by a friend, falsely accused, and judged wrongly. And yet, he accepts his punishment without a word of protest. When have you been misjudged or wrongly accused? When have you misjudged or wrongly accused others? Pilate represents the world with its ambitions, comfort, and empty promises. He hands Jesus over to be crucified. Have I become a Pilate to Jesus? Have I remained silent in public when Truth is denied, condemned, and rejected?

Let us pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who was unjustly condemned to die.

All: *Jesus, forgive me for all the times I have failed to defend you. Help me always to try and do the right thing even when I am threatened by the truth. Help me to accept it and grant me the strength to act with justice and compassion. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Through her heart, his sorrow sharing
All his bitter anguish bearing
Now at length the sword has passed.*

SECOND STATION: JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus begins his journey up the hill to Calvary. The weight of the cross bites into his shoulders, and he is reminded with each step that the pain he bears will be the cause of our joy. Despite his pain, his mind is filled with thoughts of us. The weight of the sin of the world is laid upon the already bruised, lacerated, and bleeding shoulders of Jesus. How excruciating is that cross that I helped fashion! And yet, for the love of me and for love of them, He stretches to embrace it and carries my guilt away. Jesus, in pondering this Station of the Cross, give me true sense of sin so that I might come to know true love. What crosses do you carry? What kinds of burdens do you bear? Think about the crosses that people around you carry.

Let us pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who was unjustly condemned to die.

All: *Lord, lighten the burden and weight of my cross. Grant me the strength and perseverance to carry my cross gracefully so that I might be a witness to others of how you console us in our times of trial and hardship. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Oh how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blest
Of the sole begotten One.*

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus stumbles along the hot, dusty, rocky road. He is crushed under the weight of the wood and is bruised and beaten down by the soldiers. He falls, for even though he is fully God, He is filled with the weakness of being fully human. This is the wonder of our God-become-flesh in Jesus. Oh the humility of God! We do not have a God who saves us from afar, but rather one who became like us in all things except sin. We do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with us, but rather one who allowed Himself to be affected by weakness. Under the crippling weight of the Cross, Jesus fell with me so that with Him I might get back up and follow Him. When have you felt like you have failed? Failed at school? At your job? Failed your friend? Your parents? Your sisters and brothers?

Let us pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who fell many times on his way to be crucified.

All: *Lord, lift me up from my fall. Grant me the stamina and endurance to begin again the journey to my goal, to holiness and to you. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Christ above in torment hangs
She beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying, glorious Son.*

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus - tired, sore, bruised, bloody, and on his way to his own execution - looks up to see the face of His mother along the road. What a moment for both of them. No words are exchanged, but Jesus can see the sadness and pain on her face. He knows that she was chosen for this road, chosen to bear Him into this world, but he still knows her pain. Behind the great man of sorrows is the grieving mother of sorrows. Jesus could have arranged for Mary to not be there on Good Friday, but he loved her more than that. He allowed her the privilege of being with Him in His sorrow. Mary loved Jesus enough to let Him suffer and die in order that we might live. You met Him along the way and were a consolation to Him in His pain and loneliness.

Let's pray together with Mary, who suffered with her Son.

All: *Mary, you felt the pain and frustration of seeing your son suffer and die, and yet you trusted in the goodness of God. In your wisdom, teach us to love and trust as you did. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Is there one who would not weep,
Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Just when Jesus begins to think that He can go no further, just when the soldiers begin to doubt that Jesus can make the long journey up the hill, they grab a man from the side of the road and force him to help carry the cross. Simon feels the bite of the wood on his shoulder, and certainly he must have wondered why he, an innocent man, should be asked to do this. Can you imagine what Simon was thinking? "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me," (Luke 9:23). Jesus, may I not be forced to help carry my cross, but may I willingly help you carry your cross in the sick, the lonely, the prisoner, and the dying.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who is always merciful, assisting us at all times and in all places.

All: *Lord, help me to see the areas in which you are calling me to carry my cross. Assist me in the works of love and teach me patience when carrying this cross. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Can the human heart refrain,
From partaking in her pain,
In that mother's pain untold?*

SIXTH STATION:

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Blood from the crown of thorns and the sweat from the hard work of carrying the cross mix in Jesus' face. This is not an easy way to show love. The blood and sweat drip from him and sting his eyes. From out of the crowd steps a woman named Veronica who lovingly wipes the face of Jesus. It is a simple but important act of love and compassion for the giver of all love and compassion. Little things done with great love. In extending mercy to Mercy, she receives mercy as His true image is left imprinted on her veil. Have I ignored someone who is in need? Or, when have you stopped to help someone in need? Never let me refuse to give and receive such little acts done with great love.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who is there to wipe the sweat and blood from our faces.

All: *Lord, lend me the strength and courage that I need to follow Veronica's example - to offer comfort and consolation to those who need it. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender child,
All with bloody scourges rent.*

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus had been racked with pain, but he has been comforted by the care of Simon and Veronica. He continues on his journey, feeling the rhythm of the road beneath his feet. As he falls again, all the pain is renewed. A jolt of agony shoots through his body, but he rises again and continues on his way. He is thinking about you. In his pain and suffering, Jesus pushed on as we are all called to do. Pray to him for the strength to lift yourself from a second fall and get up again. When have you felt like giving up, but choose not to? How did God give you strength?

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who lifted himself from his falls to be crucified for us.

All: *Lord, grant me the courage and determination to walk once more with you toward my destination. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*For the sins of his own nation,
Saw him hang in desolation,
Till his spirit forth he sent.*

EIGHTH STATION:

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM WEEP FOR JESUS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: As Jesus walked along the road toward his death, some people laughed. Some stood in silence and wondered who he was. Some cheered, but one group of women, seeing him hurting, tired, and beaten down, cried. This small act of faith and courage in the face of hardship supported Jesus in his grief, perhaps when he needed it the most. Jesus stops when he notices this group of women weeping and has words for them. His head is pounding, his body faints from loss of blood; his lips are swollen from the many falls and ensuing blows of the soldiers. Jesus lovingly bears it all to enter the sufferings of others. Jesus help me to forget my own suffering and become sensitive to the suffering of my brothers and sisters.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who hears our cries.

All: *Lord, be with me when I am in trouble, then teach me your mercy so I can ease the pain of others. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*O thou mother! Font of love,
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord*

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: You can now see Golgotha in the distance. He knows the end is near. He is parched and dry, so weak from the loss of blood and the sheer pain that he can barely stand, much less carry the heavy cross. He falls again. Still, his executioners mercilessly urge him on. The addict and the habitual sinner all find the inspiration and the strength to continue the daily battle with themselves as we each continue our own battles with ourselves, the world, and the temptations as Jesus slowly rises again and sets his face toward Calvary. Jesus gives us hope. Jesus let me become an apostle of hope for all those tempted to despair.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who fell three times on the way of sorrows.

All: *Lord, grant me the spirit of hope that inspired and encouraged you to lift yourself three times from the ground to complete your mission.*

Sing Together:

*Make me feel as thou has felt
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ, my Lord.*

TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus finally reaches the top of the hill - the place of his death. His reward for completing this part of his journey is to be savagely and brutally stripped. His open wounds cling to his garments so the pain is excruciating as the soldiers rip his garments from his body, taking the flesh and blood along with the cloth. To be forced to stand naked before the jeering crowd is humiliating for Jesus. The temple of God, once radiant in beauty, is robbed of his dignity.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who suffered for us through humiliation and scorn.

All: *Lord, be with us win our own humiliations. Teach us what it means to only cling to you and nothing of this world.*

Sing Together:

*Holy mother, pierce me through,
In my heart each wound renew,
Of my savior crucified.*

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: With the thief to his left and right and encircled by a crowd of onlookers, Jesus gently and willingly stretched out his hands and accepted the torture of the nails. A soldier, hammer in hand, selected some large nails from a bucket. Breathless, Mary watches. The pounding of the hammer begins. In the midst of the most intense agony, his heart remains on his people.

Jesus: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Leader: As he had taught his disciples, Jesus forgives and prays for his enemies.

All: *Lord, help us to endure the times when we are the victims of injustice and help us to refrain from persecuting others. Help me forgive all those who cause me pain.*

Sing Together:

*Let me share with thee his pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torment died.*

TWELTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus didn't immediately die when they nailed him to the cross. He suffered for three long, agonizing hours at first. Jesus lifts his eyes toward heaven and prays a final time:

Jesus: "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit."

(all kneel who are capable of doing so)

Leader: He gave up his spirit. The giver of life, who stood side by side with the Father at the moment of creation, is now dead. His mission on earth was nearly accomplished. A soldier, seeing the manner of his death, said:

Roman Soldier: "Truly, this was the Son of God."

Leader: Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who lives on past his death, death on a cross.

All: *Lord, by the mystery of your death and resurrection, we know life everlasting. Comfort us all in our grieving and remind us of your promise of hope. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live.*

THIRTEENTH STATION:

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus had died, a few of Jesus' followers were brave enough to ask for his body so they could bury it. Two men carefully removed the body from the cross and lay him in the arms of his waiting mother. Tears run down Mary's cheeks as she holds the son given to her so many years before. At the foot of the cross, Mary adores God, dead in her arms. Life had died and all seems empty of promise. Yet, Mary hopes against hope. She believes his words, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit," (John 12:24). Mary waits, so must I.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, who is always merciful and loving.

All: *Lord, lead us in the ways of kindness and mercy. Teach us to be as loving and merciful to others as you are. Teach us to hope in your resurrection. Amen.*

Sing Together:

*By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
All I ask of thee to give.*

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: *For by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Mary and the friends of Jesus prepare his body for burial and lay it in a tomb. They have forgotten - or perhaps failed to believe - the promise Jesus made to them. He will rise from the dead. The sacred body of Jesus, lifeless, remains the Son of God. God experiences being a corpse and is buried. The great silence of Holy Saturday prolongs the self-emptying of Jesus. What is emptied will soon be filled.

Let's pray together to Jesus, our Lord, for the trust and patience we need to wait for God to answer our call.

All: *Lord, grant us an end to our waiting. In our anxiety and restlessness, bring us the peace that comes in your name. Let me remember that your passion ends with the joy of the resurrection. Amen*