



Pray the Stations with St. Joseph

By Fr. Edward Looney

St. Joseph wasn't at Calvary, but these Stations turn to his intercession as we walk beside his Son.

Pope Francis has gifted the Church the Year of St. Joseph. Maybe your Lenten focus has been to grow in a deeper appreciation for him, as universal patron of the Church and father of the Christ child. After all, his feast on March 19 falls during the season of Lent.

Perhaps, like so many, you are undertaking Fr. Calloway's Consecration to St. Joseph or taking up some sort of devotion to St. Joseph.

What about experiencing the Stations of the Cross with St. Joseph? Maybe that seems out of place. Joseph was not at Calvary. He did not experience the Passion alongside Jesus. Yet, I believe we can parallel the life of the Holy Family to that of the Stations of the Cross and ask the intercession of St. Joseph in this traditional Lenten devotion.

Connections can be made and drawn, making the life of St. Joseph worthy of our meditation and also helping us to connect the lives of Joseph and Jesus with Christ's ultimate sacrificial and redemptive act.



I Run to the Cross (Repeat Chorus in between Stations):

I run to the Cross, I fall in your arms, and I know I'm forgiven, yeah I know I'm forgiven.

I run to the Cross, I lay down my heart, and I am not forsaken, yeah I am not forsaken.

1. THE FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Jesus was born to die, and now begins those steps to our salvation and redemption. St. Joseph knew to some extent that this would one day happen, because Simeon prophesied this in the temple, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted” (Luke 2: 34). I know that as Joseph died, and Our Lord died, one day I too will close my eyes in death.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, please pray for me, that I may receive the grace of a happy and holy death.*

2. THE SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

A cross is handed to Jesus, and now he will carry it on his shoulders to the top of Calvary. St. Joseph was a carpenter. Some artistic depictions of Jesus in the carpenter’s shop imagine Jesus making a cross out of wood. The cross in these stations was not made by Jesus, but is one that he now picks up, accepts, and makes his own as he carries it.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, help me to accept the crosses of life that I am handed.*

3. THE THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

As Jesus walks with the cross, the weight becomes too much for him, and he falls for the first time. St. Joseph, who took Jesus as his own, remembered that first fall of Jesus. Any parent does, as they look on and see the hurt and pain of their child. For the first part of his life, Jesus had Joseph who could come to his aid, and now Mary, nearby, looks on, and wishes to console her son.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, in my stumbles in life, be an intercessor for me.*

4. THE FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Mary, close by, finds her son, and mother and son lock eyes. The glance of Jesus consoles her suffering heart, if only for a moment. By the announcement and power of the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived Jesus in her womb and on that first Christmas morning, mother and son met, her eyes full of joy at seeing her newborn child, with St. Joseph not far away from the manger. But now, she is there alone, without her spouse to share in this sorrowful moment.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, be present to families who encounter the illnesses and sorrows of their loved ones.*

5. THE FIFTH STATION: SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

The Roman soldiers conscript a bystander to help Jesus for a few brief moments. Jesus needed the help of his father Joseph, who listened to the words of an angel in a dream and fled into Egypt. Joseph protected Jesus during his infancy, when even then someone wanted to put him to death.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, ask the Lord to send me the people I need when I need them most.*

6. THE SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. **All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Veronica, a woman looking on from the crowd, sees the blood and sweat falling down Jesus' face. She wishes to do something, so she takes a cloth and presses it upon his face. Consider the care and love of St. Joseph for Jesus as a child. With fatherly love, he attended to Jesus' wounds. With a father's touch, he wiped the tears of Jesus.

All: *Dear St. Joseph, pray for me that I may be more aware of those who need help.*

7. THE SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

A second time, the cross becomes too heavy. Slowly and surely, Jesus picks up the cross and again continues on his way. A third visit from an angel tells St. Joseph it is safe to return home from Egypt. Think of what it must have been like for St. Joseph as he returned to Nazareth. His return to daily life was an act of trust. When I fall in my life, I need greater trust in the Lord's plans for me.

Dear St. Joseph, help me to trust in God like you did.

8. THE EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Jesus speaks to the gathered women saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." As Jesus expresses these words during his Passion, I can only imagine what he shared with St. Joseph during those hidden years. Surely his words taught, healed, and consoled his father.

All: Dear St. Joseph, pray for me, that the words Jesus speaks might transform and change my heart.

9. THE NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Jesus falls a third time under the weight of the cross. Maybe life seemed heavy at times for St. Joseph. Maybe he did not understand everything that was happening in his life. In the temple, after being lost for three days, Jesus tells his parents he must be about his Father's business. Jesus was lost; Joseph, seeking to understand. St. Joseph had a lifetime to understand the mysteries of the kingdom.

All: Dear St. Joseph, pray for me, that I may gain wisdom and understanding of the divine mysteries.

10. THE TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

In birth, a child is born naked, only to be clothed by his parents. And now Jesus in death is stripped of his garments. The cloak he wore, perhaps weaved by his mother Mary. As an infant, the Christ child needed to be tended to, and most certainly St. Joseph attended to his needs. Now, as the hour of torture and death approaches, he is prepared for death by the hand of someone else.

All: Dear St. Joseph, tend to my wounds, intercede for me, that I might be clothed in the love of God.

11. THE ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

Jesus' body is pierced with nails. Blow after blow, until he is raised above the earth. These nails are not the carpenter's nails familiar to Joseph and Jesus. They are nails of torture. They are the nails of our salvation.

All: Dear St. Joseph, help me to be silent, so I may never crucify anyone by my words.

12. THE TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

St. John tells us that Mary stood beneath the cross of Jesus. Mary experiences another death of someone she loves. First her parents, her relatives St. Elizabeth and Zechariah, then St. John the Baptist, but closest to her, St. Joseph – and now her son. By Jesus' entrusting of Mary to St. John, we know that St. Joseph had already passed from this life. As Jesus draws his last breath, let us recall the last breath of St. Joseph, who died in the company of Mary and Jesus. *(Please kneel)*

All: Dear St. Joseph, watch over families who have experienced a recent loss; be with the widowers and comfort the bereaved.

13. THE THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

As Jesus is taken down from the Cross, he also descends to the depths of the netherworld. He breaks the prison bars of death, leading forth Adam, Eve, Abraham and Moses, the Prophets, but most especially his dear father St. Joseph. By his death, he gives life to all who awaited salvation and redemption. Now, the gates of eternal paradise are open.

All: Dear St. Joseph, please pray for my family and friends who are still in Purgatory. By your prayers and those of Mary, may they soon come to enjoy the vision of Heaven.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and bless you. ***All: Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.***

From his infancy, his death already was foreshadowed. The kings' gift of myrrh anticipated this day of burial. Received first by Joseph and Mary, now the body of Jesus has been anointed, and for three days Christ sanctifies the tomb for all who believe in him. Let us not forget that wherever St. Joseph might have been buried, Jesus would have visited the tomb.

All: Dear St. Joseph, please pray for me as I draw my dying breath.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for allowing me to walk these stations with you. Thank you for giving us St. Joseph as an intercessor in our time of need. As I journey my own way of the cross for the years ahead, may I always remember that I have St. Joseph whose help I can turn to, in imitation of you my dear Savior, and your Blessed Mother.

Recessional: Lay it Down

Everything I am, everything I long to be I lay it down at Your feet

Everything I am, everything I long to be I lay it down at Your feet

I lay it down, I lay it down I lay it down at Your feet

I lay it down, I lay it down I lay it down at Your feet