

Courage to Walk with Christ

Stations of the Cross Good Friday 2021 10 am

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

Opening Prayer

Jesus, you picked up your cross, though you knew it would lead to your death. Walk with us during the times we feel uncertain and afraid. Grant us the courage to dedicate ourselves to serve you, and work to transform our world.

I Love you Jesus, my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always and then do with me what you will.

1. Jesus is condemned to death.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

The chief priests and the elders had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" they said, "Barabbas." "But in that case," Pilate said to them, "what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" Then Pilate saw that a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands and said: "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern." And the people, shouted back: "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released Barabbas. He ordered Jesus first to be scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

Matthew 27:20-26

Lord, so many times people are condemned: judged and rejected for who or what they are. Forgive me for the times that I have washed my hands of my responsibilities and have not had the courage to speak out or do what is most loving. Help me never to be indifferent, but to accept and love others as you did.

Glory Be.

2. Jesus takes up his Cross.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium. There they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak and, having twisted some thorns into a crown, they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him ...

Matthew 27:27-31

Lord, I take up my daily cross, whatever it may be: disappointments, worries, sickness, loneliness, hard work, hurts from others. I unite my sufferings with yours, so that in carrying my cross I am carrying yours with you. Help me never to complain and become embittered, but to trust that you will bring forth from my cross only that which is good and redemptive for me and for others.

Glory Be.

3. Jesus falls the first time.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Already weak from the beatings; Jesus was pushed roughly along by the soldiers. Stumbling blindly, He sprawled on the ground receiving bloody knees, grazed hands, and searing pain. There was more laughter and shoving. Yells of: 'Get yourself up!' He looked foolish; utterly humiliated; for all for our sakes.
The God of love 2:17-18

Lord, I often fall in my journey towards you, through sin or human weakness. I have also caused others to fall. Help me to realise that it is not falling that really matters, but getting up again, like you did, and carrying on. Let me keep my eyes focused on you and your merciful and unconditional love. May I always be compassionate to those who have fallen and give them all the support I can.

Glory Be.

4. Jesus meets his afflicted mother.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Watching and waiting. A helpless bystander, just another face in the crowd. Flashbacks to that first encounter with the angel. Words too mysterious to take on board. A child? How can this be? Joseph's gentle acceptance. Then the day we almost lost him - an ache tearing my soul in two. Even then he was marked out as special; more God than man: the miracles, signs and wonders. Such love and compassion for the poor and the lonely, the hungry and the outcast. Such love ... and now this: the mob braying for his blood - insults, jeers, humiliation. A sword pierces my heart.

Dear Jesus, your mother sees you carrying your cross, and she can feel every one of your wounds. What profound expression of pain and love must have been in her eyes as you met on the way to Golgotha. A sword pierced her heart, and you knew that she shared your agony. Your mother's suffering caused you pain, and yet her loving presence strengthened you. May we always have the support of the loving presence of our loved ones when we need them most.

Hail Mary

5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his Cross.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross.
Matthew 27:32

Lord, give me a willingness to help carry other people's burdens. Let me to realise that when I help other people I am being like Simon of Cyrene, that I am helping you and giving you strength. I am identifying with Simon each time I carry something for someone else, listen to someone patiently, or pray for someone. I know, Lord, that you are the one I help when I feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the sick. May I always remember that any kindness I extend to others, I really give to you.

Glory Be.

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

She was moved to pity by Jesus' plight. The crown of thorns dug deep into his forehead: blood and spit mixed together; sweat and tears streamed down his face, so humble and full of compassion. There was a sudden spontaneous movement; pushing through the crowd; not stopping to think how the soldiers might react; no time to be troubled about her own safety, Veronica gently wipes his face with her veil; eases his suffering with a loving gesture; a small act of kindness in a world bound up in hatred and cruelty.

Lord Jesus Christ, your face is everywhere where suffering exists and you await me to wipe away your blood and tears. Every time I have the courage and compassion to wipe your suffering face, I will be transformed, so that you will live and love in me. Help me then to reveal your loving and beautiful face to others. Help me to see you present in others.

Glory Be.

7. Jesus falls the second time.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Another fall; another humiliation. Not wanting to see this thing through; hoping against hope that there might be another way, an easier way; that God would not require such a difficult sacrifice; that this cup will pass Him by. But no: He must suffer falls and humiliation to become truly human; to share fully in the utter degradation endured by so many. This way, He can look them in the eye and say: 'I understand your pain, I am one with you.'

Lord, I know the humiliation of failing and the fear of ridicule and rejection. May I learn from your second fall how important it is to keep loving you and loving others. Let me never sink into the trap of self-pity, remorse, and self-condemnation. Even though I may feel that I cannot go on, let me give my burden to you, trust in you and carry on. I trust that you are always with me. With you I can do all things.

Glory Be.

8. Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me: weep rather for yourselves and for your children..."

Luke 23:27-28

Lord you said: "Blessed are those who mourn...". With the women of Jerusalem we mourn and grieve over the evil that is being done in the world, and over our own sins. Although your suffering is great, you reach out to others and give them counsel. I often become short-tempered with others and impatient when I am suffering. Help me to control my tongue when the situation is difficult, and to remain gentle and loving.

Glory Be.

9. Jesus falls the third time.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Yet another fall, this time worse than the two before. He scarcely has enough strength to get up again. This agonising pain is almost too much to bear. He truly is a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief; bruised and broken; degraded, despised, demoralised; crushed and pitiful. A lamb led to the slaughter, never even opening his mouth.

Sometimes I may plunge into the darkness of despair, falling very low. May I never give in to that despair. Even when all my strength is gone, let me struggle up and keep going, one day at a time. Your purpose to redeem the human race and to reveal the Father's love enabled you to carry on. May I never lose sight of the purpose and meaning of my life: to know, love, praise and serve you.

Glory Be.

10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

They took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, "Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it". In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: 'They shared out my clothing among them. They cast lots for my clothes.'

John 19:23-24

Jesus, you have faced the worst of humiliations and insults. You have been denied dignity and treated as inhuman. When you were in prison, did we visit you? When you were naked, did we clothe you? Bring perseverance to our battle against discrimination and prejudice. Bring passion to our fight against torture and injustice.

Glory Be.

11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Does man's inhumanity to man know no bounds? Concentration camps; ethnic cleansing; torture; mindless violence; murder; rape; gun crimes on the streets; suffering caused by damage to God's wonderful creation. A man nailed to a cross. Left to die a slow, agonising death in the heat of the mid-day sun. What super-human reserves of love are required to truly forgive the tormentors? A heart full to overflowing with love and compassion.

How many times do we 'nail' Jesus to the cross with our harsh words; our lack of consideration for others; our self-centredness? Lord, help us to overcome the dark side of our natures and to focus on the light so that we may reflect your love in the world around us.

Glory Be.

12. Jesus dies on the Cross.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle, and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." With these words he breathed his last.
Luke 23:44-46

We pause to remember what great love Jesus showed for us

When people let us down and there seems no way forward we glimpse a little of the suffering Jesus endured in his final moments on the cross. For a moment it seemed as though even God had deserted him. But without Jesus' death there could be no resurrection and no promise of eternal life.

Lord, when the problems of life seem to overwhelm us, remind us that tomorrow will bring a new day, full of new possibilities and hope.

Glory Be.

13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus - though a secret one because he was afraid of the Jews - asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away.

John 19:38

Your mother's grief is heart-rending when your lifeless body is laid in her arms. I must also part from those I love and behold them as they lie in death or as they wave good-bye. Help me to let go and thus to discover new life which will dawn. As Mary shared in your Passion, so help me to be united with you in all that I have to endure.

Glory Be.

14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

*We adore you Oh Christ and we bless you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, following the Jewish burial custom. At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish day of preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:40-42

Jesus, in the darkness of the tomb you were surrounded by love, by grief and by fear as your body was prepared for burial. May we feel the comfort of your love for us. And may we turn outwards to share that love with others, with the same generosity and gentle loving kindness that you showed to all.

I Love you Jesus, my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always and then do with me what you will.

Glory Be.

Closing prayer

Jesus, you share your joy, your light and your peace with us all. Walk with us and show us how to be witnesses of your love, to live in joy and share the good news. Show us how to act in love, for the good of all, so that our brothers and sisters around the world may know your glory and we may be transformed by your light

*Our Father,
Hail Mary,
Glory Be,
Sign of the cross*