

## THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS: ADULT FAITH FORMATION

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

O Jesus, we recall, with sorrow and love, all that took place from the time when You were condemned to death to Your Resurrection. Grant us the grace of accompanying You in this Way of the Cross which shows Your great love for us.

*Our Father who art in Heaven...*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee...*

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...*

***The First Station: Jesus is condemned to die***

*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

*(John 15:13)*

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

Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced profound solidarity with so many on this earth, by being beaten and tortured. Now he is wrongfully condemned to punishment by death. His commitment to entering our lives completely begins its final steps. He has said "Yes" to God and placed his life in God's hands. We follow him in this final surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us.

Prayer: Let me remember all those condemned unjustly. Give me the wisdom not to 'go along with the crowd'

*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.*

*Our Father....*

***The Second Station: Jesus carries his cross***

*If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:23)*

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

Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences its crushing weight.

Prayer Let me take up my cross daily and ask for God's grace to help me through each day.

*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.*

*Hail Mary....*

***The third Station: Jesus falls the first time***

*He has broken my teeth with gravel, pressed my face in the dust; my soul is deprived of peace. I have forgotten what happiness is. (Lamentations 3:16-17)*

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

The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. How could he enter our lives completely without surrendering to the crushing weight of the life of so many on this earth! He lays on the ground and knows the experience of weakness beneath unfair burdens. He feels the powerlessness of wondering if he will ever be able to continue. He is pulled up and made to continue.

Prayer: Remember the deprived and the lonely. It is easy to fall but divine grace is always at hand.

*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....*

**The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother**

*Come, all you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like My suffering. (Lamentations 1:12)*

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

Jesus' path takes him to a powerful source of his strength to continue. All his life, his mother had taught him the meaning of the words, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord". Now they look into each other's eyes. How pierced-through her heart must be! How pained he must be to see her tears! Now, her grace-filled smile blesses his mission and stirs his heart to its depth. Love and trust in God bind them together.

Prayer: Let me dwell on the pain of all parents when their children are suffering and help seems unavailable.

*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.*

*Our Father....*

**The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his cross**

*Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me. (Matthew 25:40)*

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

Jesus even experiences our struggle to receive help. He is made to experience the poverty of not being able to carry his burden alone. He enters into the experience of all who must depend upon others to survive. He is deprived of the satisfaction of carrying this burden on his own.

Prayer: I remember the times I have struggled to bear my burdens and those who helped me.

*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.*

*Hail Mary....*

**The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

*Without beauty, without majesty we saw him, no looks to attract our eyes; despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. (Isaiah 53:2-4)*

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

Jesus' journey is at times brutal. He has entered into the terrible experiences of rejection and injustice. He has been whipped and beaten. His face shows the signs of his solidarity with all who have ever suffered injustice and vile, abusive treatment. He encounters a compassionate, loving disciple who wipes the vulgar spit and mocking blood from his face. On her veil, she discovers the image of his face – his gift to her. And, for us to contemplate forever.

Prayer: Let me break through the bustle of life and offer help where it is needed.

*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....*

**The Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time**

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)*

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

Even with help, Jesus stumbles and falls to the ground. In deep exhaustion he stares at the earth beneath him. "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return". He has seen death before. Now he can feel the profound weakness of disability and disease and aging itself, there on his knees, under the weight of his cross.

Prayer: When I feel abandoned by everyone let me remember how Jesus suffered for me.

*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.*

*Our Father....*

**The Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

A large number of people followed Him, including women who mourned and wailed for Him. Jesus turned and said to them, *“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children”* (Luke 23:27-28)

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

The women of Jerusalem, and their children, come out to comfort and thank him. They had seen his compassion and welcomed his words of healing and freedom. He had broken all kinds of social and religious conventions to connect with them. Now they are here to support him. He feels their grief. He suffers, knowing he can't remain to help them more in this life. He knows the mystery of facing the separation of death.

Prayer: How can I help and encourage those downtrodden by life's injustices?

*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.*

*Hail Mary....*

**The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time**

*Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted* (Luke 14:11)

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

This last fall is devastating. Jesus can barely proceed to the end. Summoning all his remaining strength, supported by his inner trust in God, Jesus collapses under the weight of the cross. His executioners look at him as a broken man, pathetic yet paying a price he deserves. They help him up so he can make it up the hill of crucifixion.

Prayer: Allow me, in my frequent failings, to know that God's grace is always available.

*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....*

**The Tenth Station: Jesus Is stripped**

*When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them* (John 19:21)

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

Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. The wounds on his back are torn open again. He experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenceless. No shield or security protects him. As they stare at him, his eyes turn to heaven.

Prayer: Remember those who suffer loss of dignity because of the inhumanity of others.

*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.*

*Our Father....*

**The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is nailed to the cross**

*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing* (Luke 23:34)

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

Huge nails are hammered through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. He is bleeding much more seriously now. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away.

Prayer: Let me remember the pain I cause when I neglect or reject the Christian way of life.

*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.*

*Hail Mary....*

**The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross**

*He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. Therefore God has exalted Him. (Philippians 2:8-9)*

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

Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary, John and Mary Magdalene to support him, Jesus surrenders his last breath: *"Into your hands I commend my spirit".*

Prayer: Lord give me the peace of Christ at the end of my life.

*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....*

**The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is taken down from the cross**

*In this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world as propitiation for sins (1 John 4:9-10)*

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

What tender mourning! Jesus' lifeless body lays in his mother's arms. He has truly died. A profound sacrifice, complete.

Prayer: Remember the tragedy of parents who receive the bodies of their children

*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.*

*Our Father....*

**The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is laid in the tomb**

*Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit (John 12: 24-25)*

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

They take the body of Jesus to its resting place. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. In this final act of surrender, who would have imagined this tomb would soon be empty or that Jesus would show himself alive to his disciples, or that they would recognise him in the breaking of bread? Oh, that our hearts might burn within us, as we realise how he had to suffer and die so as to enter into his glory, for us.

Prayer: Let the tomb be my source of new life. May I find light in times of darkness.

*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.*

*Our Father....*

*Hail Mary...*

*Glory be...*

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