

# Stations of the Cross: Compassion

## Introduction

Jesus took the road of subservience. He entered into darkness and human weakness to take on everything but he was to rise again, with all his brothers and sisters in humanity to his beloved Father. Jesus invites all of us to follow him on this journey in order to rise in the glory of the Father.

## The 1st Station: Jesus is sentenced to death

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

Jesus, bound hand and foot, with a crown of thorns and wearing a purple robe was brought before Pilate. The people proclaimed: "Crucify him, crucify him!" Disillusion was hidden behind these words. "He has deceived us. We thought that he would free us from the oppression of the Romans". They did not want a messiah who sought not power but only the communion of hearts. And us, where are we today? Are we close to the men and women condemned by illness, humiliation, violence and poverty?

**Prayer: Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, Jesus bound hand and foot, king of hearts give us your heart relinquished into the hands of the Father. Help us never to condemn others, those who are different or who are outsiders**

*I love You, Jesus, my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for 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...*

## The 2nd Station: Jesus takes on the burden of the cross

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

Jesus, exhausted welcomed onto his fragile shoulder the beams of heavy wood. He welcomed the ordeal. He kept quiet. We are all called each day to bear his cross. For each one of us, there are crosses that we have to bear.

**Prayer: Jesus thank you for going before us. We want to follow you. Give us the strength of the Holy Spirit so that, day after day, we are able to become more like you. Help us to find you in the difficulties and disappointments of our lives.**

*Glory Be...*

## The 3rd Station: Jesus falls the first time

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

Jesus collapsed with exhaustion. He fell under the weight of the great beams, his burden of human sin and the cruelty of men. He fell in front of those who mocked him and others who watched in horror but did not step forward to help pick him up.

**Prayer: Today as so many people fall prey to depression, ground down by sadness, isolation, violence – devastated by feelings of guilt. They are unemployed, refugees, have fragile health or just cannot cope with life. Their friends have abandoned them. These are the people who have fallen; Jesus, give us the compassion to help pick them up.**

*Our Father...*

#### **The 4th Station: Jesus meets his mother**

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

The mother of Jesus did not bury her head in the sand. She knew that he was the beloved son of God, her beloved son, her unique son. She knew about his mission of love and accompanied him to the very end. They looked at each other. With a loving and sorrowful face, Mary said to him "I am always with you. I trust in you."

**Prayer: Father, give us the love and trust to remain close to those who are suffering, to commit ourselves to those bearing the cross of rejection, to look with love upon those who are suffering, to never flee but to accompany them to the end, to say with all our being "I have trust in you. I am with you."**

*Hail Mary...*

#### **The 5th Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross**

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

Simon returning from the fields was commandeered by the soldiers to help Jesus. The soldiers were afraid that Jesus was exhausted, that he would be unable to keep going to the end. Simon was moved by his suffering and the sorrowful peace in Jesus' gaze. Are we ready to walk with those who are crushed by suffering, to help them carry their cross, perhaps without saying anything?

**Prayer: Jesus, you who are there, hidden in those who fall and cry, give us the strength and love to be there to help carry their heavy burden with them.**

*Glory Be...*

#### **The 6th Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

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

Veronica! You who dared leave the crowd to wipe his face, his eyes blinded by blood and sweat. Jesus looked at you with such tenderness and such gratitude. His face both so beautiful and so disfigured was now imprinted in the memory of your heart. You would never forget this loving and grateful look.

**Prayer: Today Jesus, give us the courage and the strength of love to leave ourselves, our comfort, and our fears, to leave the indifference of the crowd to wipe your face in the face of the poor and vulnerable, to look at you in the gaze of the needy and neglected.**

*Our Father...*

#### **The 7th Station: Jesus falls for the second time**

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

Despite this meeting with his mother, the presence of Simon and the kindness of Veronica, Jesus falls for the second time. His flesh was bloody. But despite the pain, suffering and humiliation he knows this journey is for all of us, therefore, he struggles on.

**Prayer: At times, we too fall under the weight of depression, the agony of bereavement and separation, in physical and psychological suffering. We hope that someone will come; be there to pick us up, give us back the confidence in ourselves and in life. Will you be there, my brother, my sister?**

*Hail Mary...*

### **The 8th Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

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

The women of Jerusalem see Jesus' battered and bruised body on his journey and they reach out to him. Their charity and goodwill challenges us to be in solidarity of those who suffer in mind, body and spirit.

**Prayer: Jesus, broken and bruised, never let us pass by when my brother or sister needs our help. Help us to awaken hope to all who need our compassion and help.**

*Glory be...*

### **The 9th Station: Jesus falls for the third time**

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

Jesus, crushed by the violence and the beatings, was once again overcome. He who had taken our sins on himself. Him, the gentle one, who loves each one of us. His heart was torn apart by the blocks of fear and hate that live in us and prevent us from welcoming love. He too sank into the very depths of despair

**Prayer: Jesus, your prophet, said: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." Break our hearts of stones, take away our fears, open us up to love and to your presence. You came to live a communion of heart with each one of us and to give us life.**

*Our Father...*

### **The 10th Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments**

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

Jesus was stripped, stripped of energy and any movement, stripped of honour and dignity, and finally, stripped of his clothes. He was there, naked, left to the view and mockery of the people.

**Prayer: Jesus, give us the courage and strength to clothe those who are naked, stripped of their dignity and help us to cover them with our respect.**

*Hail Mary...*

### **The 11th Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross**

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

Jesus' arms and legs were fastened in a way that only brought greater pain and suffering. Still he did not complain. His thoughts were with the two men crucified with him. When one of them asked for mercy, his response was stunning.

**Prayer: Jesus, give us your strength to open our hearts to mercy and compassion even for those who are the most hateful to us.**

*Glory be...*

### **The 12th Station: Jesus dies on the cross**

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

Jesus had been seized tortured and crucified by fear and hatred. He who only offered love had been put to death. He cries out "Father into your hands I commend my spirit."

*Pause.....*

**Prayer: Jesus, by your death, you teach us to embrace love and so to live a full life. May we have solidarity with those who suffer, mercy towards our enemies and generosity to the poor.**

*Our Father...*

### **The 13<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross**

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

Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and John took down the body of Jesus from the cross. Water and blood flowed from his pierced heart. They placed his body, so beautiful, so delicate so wounded, in Mary's arms. We are called in this holy moment to care for the body of Christ, but that body today takes the form of all those suffering in the world.

**Prayer: Mary, we ask that you hold us as you did your dear son, may we show the same tenderness and love that you did to your son to all who need our compassion.**

*Hail Mary...*

### **The 14th Station: Jesus is placed in the tomb**

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

The stone sealed the tomb. Mary Magdalene cried, Peter and the apostles were distressed and confused. Mary kept the words and promises of Jesus her son in her heart. She began a great silence on Holy Saturday, a day of expectation and a day of trust. When it all seemed to be over, the hope in the promises of Jesus remained.

**Prayer: When our hearts are broken and crushed, when despair threatened to overcome us, we pray Jesus, that you will plant the seed of hope in us.**

*I love You, Jesus, my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for 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...*

### **Concluding prayer**

*Thank you O God of mercy and compassion, for this journey of faith. May this journey move our hearts so we become agents of your mercy, and spirit-filled witnesses of your everlasting love.*

### **Sign of the Cross**

Loosely based on the Way of the Cross from the L'Arche community, The Stations of Mercy with Pope Francis, and Praying the Stations of the Cross with Faith and Courage by Richard Gribble CSC.