

We Make the Journey of the Cross with Jesus

AN ECUMENICAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS



The Stations of the Cross developed from perhaps the most ancient reflection on the Passion of Christ, beginning in, and recorded by, the 4th century of the common era. It saw people walking the Way of the Cross in the streets of Jerusalem, following especially the Via Dolorosa – "the way of sorrow."

Over time, the practice of walking the way of the cross, and stopping at each of 14 traditional stations, spread throughout the Western Church, initially in the streets of various cities and towns (in Holy Week, it is still followed around the streets of Assisi, for instance); or inside church buildings.

Given the architecture of St George's, "walking the way of the Cross," traditionally so much a part of this reflection, is not possible. Therefore, as you are able, as each station is announced, *please turn to that station on the walls of the church.*

The Stations are:

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus carries his cross
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets his mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus' clothes are removed
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus' body is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

**In a spirit of Christian unity,
we use these ecumenical reflections developed by the
Roman Catholic–United Methodist Dialogue.**

We enter in silence.

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

Amen.

Jesus told his disciples,
*'If any want to become my followers,
let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and
follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and
those who lose their life for my sake will save it.'*

(Luke 9: 23-24)

Let us pray:

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and
humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.



THE 1ST STATION

Jesus is condemned to die.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: On the Jewish feast of the Passover, it was the custom for the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, to give freedom to one prisoner chosen by the people. Pilate wants to release Jesus because he could not find him guilty of any crime. But Pilate gives in to the demands of the crowd: he frees a murderer named Barabbas instead, and hands Jesus over to be scourged and crucified.

PRIEST: Imagine we are praying in the Garden with Jesus. The disciples are sleeping. Then the soldiers come and take Jesus away to the courtroom and we listen as Jesus is condemned to death. Even though Jesus knows he doesn't deserve it, he remains silent and prays for the people who want him to die.

We pray: Dear Jesus, it isn't right! You did nothing wrong. You are the Son of God and you became a man to bring your Father's justice and mercy into the world, because without you we could not hope for heaven. You came to teach us to love you, and to love one another as you love us. Help me always to love you more. Help me to learn how not to judge others. Teach me to be understanding and forgiving with the people in my life. Show me how to see with your eyes, Jesus.

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 2ND STATION:
Jesus takes up his Cross.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: After severely whipping and beating Jesus, soldiers dress him in a royal purple robe, and place a crown of sharp thorns on his head. Then they humiliate him, shouting "Hail, King of the Jews!" He is given an impossibly heavy wooden cross to carry to Calvary, the place where he will be crucified.

PRIEST: We imagine that we see Jesus pick up his heavy Cross. If we tried to lift it, it would be too heavy. "Can Jesus carry this heavy Cross by himself all the way to Calvary?" we wonder. Jesus patiently, lovingly lifts the Cross to his shoulder, knowing that this is what his Father wants him to do: to save us from the punishment of our sins, and to carry the Cross for us.

We pray: Dear Jesus, I am afraid when my problems seem too heavy for me. Give me the grace I need to do the hard things I must do, and the wisdom to turn to you when I need help. I know you are always here to help me, especially in difficult times. Teach me to be kind, because now I can see how much you suffer when I hurt other people or disrespect them.

All: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 3RD STATION:
Jesus falls the first time.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus is already weak from being cruelly whipped. He falls under the weight of the Cross. But his determination to do his Father's will is stronger than his physical suffering, and he struggles back to his feet and goes forward.

PRIEST: We imagine that we are in the crowd following right behind Jesus when he trips and falls. It is frightening to see

someone so kind and gentle having to suffer all alone. Jesus stands up again and looks back at us with his gentle smile. "We can make it," his eyes seem to say. I believe we can.

We pray: Dear Jesus, it is because we fall into sin and selfishness that you now fall beneath the weight of our Cross for us. Teach us to be strong like you. When we are tempted, keep our consciences true and help us to remember that you are there to keep us from falling. Lift me up, Jesus, so you and I can continue to walk together always.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 4TH STATION:

Jesus meets his Mother, Mary.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*
Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus sees Mary, his mother, in the crowd at the side of the road. Their meeting is short, only a pause, and Mary is crying silently. The disciples tried to keep Mary at home today, to avoid the anger and false judgment of the crowd. Mary insists on being there, to see for herself how much her Son loves his people, the Son who was given to her by the Father and the Holy Spirit.

PRIEST: We imagine how much pain both Jesus and Mary must feel. Mary, his mother, suffers because she sees her Son in so much pain and humiliation. Jesus suffers even more because he loves his mother very much and knows how much this hurts her to watch. Jesus stops with the Cross for a moment and they look into each other's eyes. They are both peaceful, because they both know how important Jesus' suffering is for the salvation of the world.

We pray: Dear Jesus, you have given us your mother Mary to be our mother, too, to comfort us and be with us. As I follow you, I know the way will be hard. Help me to turn to her and ask her for her special help. Also, help me never to hurt my own family mother and father, the ones who care for me, and suffer with me as Mary did for you on the way to Calvary.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 5TH STATION:

Simon helps Jesus carry the Cross.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genulfecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: The soldiers do not want Jesus to die before he gets to Calvary, but he is very weak from the scourging he has received from them. They grab an onlooker from the crowd, Simon of Cyrene, to help Jesus carry the heavy Cross.

PRIEST: We see Jesus getting more and more weary. We know that Jesus taught us that we must take up our own cross and follow in his footsteps,

but what can we do now? Are the soldiers looking around for somebody to help Jesus? What if they choose me? Would I be strong enough to help Jesus in this way? But the soldiers choose Simon, a man passing by, to carry the load for us.

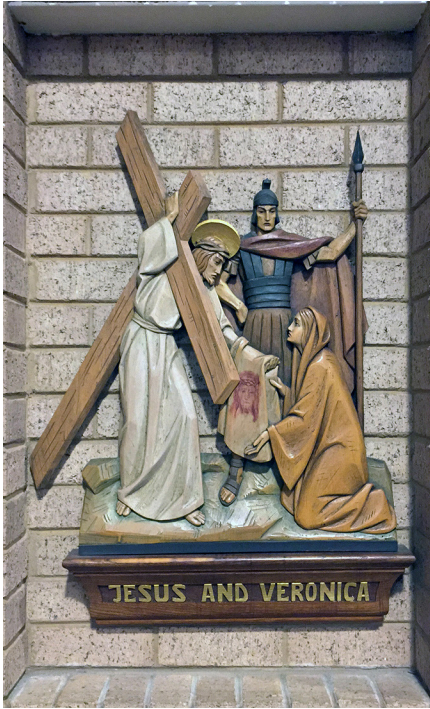
We pray : Dear Jesus, I wish now that the soldiers had chosen me to help you. You are so good and gentle, and if everyone had taken just a little bit of the weight of the Cross, your burden would have been lighter. Help me to know the ways in which I can help you, even if it is just a small part of your work today. Help me to be generous in my neighborhood and my church, knowing you call us to help you heal the world.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 6TH STATION:

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL genuflecting:

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: As Jesus struggles along the way of the Cross, he continues to bleed from the crown of thorns and the wounds he has received. He is covered with sweat, and blood is getting in his eyes. A woman in the crowd, Veronica, is overcome with compassion. She runs to Jesus and, taking her veil, she wipes his face.

PRIEST: We imagine Jesus so worn out and tired. Could anyone be brave enough to step in front of the cruel soldiers and comfort Jesus? Veronica is. Does she even know Jesus, or does she always take the risk to care for those who are unjustly treated, even strangers? She has a lot of courage, to help Jesus now when everyone else has turned their backs on him.

We pray: Dear Jesus, I want to do what is right and good, but sometimes I am afraid of what others might say. Help me to be brave like Veronica, to act without fear in saying and doing the right thing. Help me to stand firm in my faith and my desire to love you more each day, even when others have turned their backs on you.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 7TH STATION:

Jesus falls the second time.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus' legs are wearing out with each new step. He falls again. The weight of the Cross forces him to the ground, but he gets up again, a second time, and keeps going.

PRIEST: We imagine how the angry crowd suddenly becomes silent when Jesus falls a second time. "Is he dead?" you hear someone ask. We want to kneel down next to Jesus and hold him and

whisper, "Jesus, I'm sorry." We realize that he is falling for us, and add, "Jesus, don't give up." And, giving him your hand, you help him back to his feet.

We pray: Dear Jesus, it is my sin that continues to be so heavy that you fall again. Yet, I sin again and again. Like your way to Calvary, in my confessing you give me your forgiveness again and again. You give me your hand, and I have the strength to get up and start over. Thank you for never giving up on me. Help me to never sin against you again, and grant that I may love you always.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 8TH STATION:

Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus then sees a group of women weeping, and crying out how badly He was treated. They are terrified by the brutal violence of this scene. He says to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

PRIEST: When we recall Jesus’ passion, we know that he cannot suffer again. Our tears, then, should be for our own sins.

We image how wonderful is this Son of God, that in the middle of his own terrible pain, he stops to teach us that he is doing all this for us so that we might turn away from our selfishness toward him, toward the new life of grace he offers.

We pray: Dear Jesus, even as you suffer, you teach us to seek your truth and not miss the point of what is happening here. Help me to be more concerned with others instead of always worrying about myself. Gather together our community in the active worship of God and the life of the Sacraments. Don’t let us pass up the opportunity of the new life you offer us.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 9TH STATION:
Jesus falls a third time.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus, having gone about as far as he can, falls again under the Cross. Clearly, he is near dying. But, again, he slowly gets up and continues the way of the Cross.

PRIEST: We imagine that we are with Jesus as he falls again. He could have called to his Father for help, but he accepted the plan his Father had for him. That is because he understands

the purpose of his suffering. We say to Jesus, "Get up, Jesus. I can't travel this way of the Cross without you." And, again, he continues with us.

We pray: Dear Jesus, Your failing strength makes me see how helpless I am. Help me to rely on your strength, to see how much I need you. Give me the faith I need to remember that you always walk with me, that you will never leave me. In moments of suffering or hardship, help me always to see the value in making it an offering to you, as you have done for me.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 10TH STATION:

Jesus is stripped of his clothes.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus finally comes to the place where he will be crucified. The soldiers tear away his clothing from his wounded body and Jesus, humiliated, stands now before the crowd with no possessions at all. The soldiers take his clothes and divide them up among themselves.

PRIEST: We imagine Jesus standing alone without anything or anyone to comfort him.

“How I wish I could give him my coat,” we think. “He has given me so much; what can I give him?” Even though he has nothing to make him look like a king, no one can rob him of his dignity as God’s own Son and ruler of all souls.

We pray: Lord Jesus, seeing you so cruelly treated makes me think about how sometimes my own possessions are way too important to me. I am too concerned with my own accomplishments. I have to have my way too often. Teach me to share the things I have with people in need. Teach me to seek the things in this life that are really important and pleasing to you, and beneficial to me and others. Help me to let go of those things in my life that distract me and prevent me from growing closer to you and to others.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 11TH STATION:
Jesus is nailed to the Cross.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL genuflecting:

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: The soldiers lay Jesus down on the Cross and drive heavy nails through his hands and his feet so that he can no longer move. They move the Cross to a hole in the ground and set it upright, and Jesus hangs on the Cross that he has carried, crucified between two thieves. Even now, Jesus forgives the soldiers and the people who were making fun of him and shouting at him, and he prays to

his Father, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

PRIEST: As we stand nearby, all we can hear is the sound of the hammers as the nails are driven into Jesus. This is suffering we can't even imagine, and Jesus is going through it for me. The crowd grows quiet; Jesus doesn't even cry out. There is nothing we can do now to save Him from this new pain.

We pray: Dear Jesus, the pain you felt on the Cross was for me. Now, when I hear people laugh at you or use your name in anger, give me the strength to stand up for you and tell them of your great love for them. When I feel angry or hurt because of something wrong done to me, teach me not to hold a grudge. Help me to see your example and pray for the strength to forgive that person.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 12TH STATION: Jesus dies on the Cross.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL genuflecting:

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: After several hours of agony, Jesus cries out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." He gives his mother, Mary, to his beloved disciple, St. John, who is also there, standing at the foot of the Cross. Finally, he breathes his last breath and darkness comes over the earth. The great curtain made of iron in the Holy of Holies in the temple is torn in two, top to bottom; we are no longer separated from the

temple of Jesus' Body, which he will rebuild in three days.

PRIEST: We imagine that now we are alone. The angry crowds have gone, and we are there with Mary and John, mourning the cruel death of Jesus, our brother and our friend. There is a terrible silence as Jesus, the Word of God, has spoken his last words. But the silence is not empty: it now speaks louder than all other words in the world. He spent his life teaching us how to live. He gave us faith, hope and love. He gave us his mother, and his Holy Spirit. In his gift of the blood and water that flowed from his side on the cross, his Church is born and we are reconciled with God. How deep is this love our God is showing for us! How much deeper my love must be in return!

We pray: Look upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while I kneel here. Make my soul strong in faith, hope and love. Make me really sorry for my sins that I may never sin again. As I think upon your five wounds with deep sorrow and compassion, I recall, good Jesus, the words of your prophet, David: "They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones." I love you, Jesus. Grant that I may love you always.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



THE 13TH STATION:

Jesus' Body is taken down from the Cross.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: The crowds have all gone home. Joseph of Arimathea, a follower and friend of Jesus, goes to Pilate and asks for Jesus' Body. With tenderness he goes to Calvary and carefully takes the lifeless, damaged Body of Jesus down from the Cross, and prepares it for burial.

PRIEST: We imagine Mary holding the lifeless Body of her Son. This was her baby not so long ago in Bethlehem. This was her boy who helped St. Joseph and learned

the trade of a carpenter. This was the young man who taught a new way of life, a new truth. Who worked wonderful miracles, healing the sick and restoring goodness where He found suffering and evil. Simply, she says to us: "Behold, the Son of God." She smiles at us through her tears, and asks us to follow her as she adores the Body of Christ sacrificed for our salvation on the altar of the Cross.

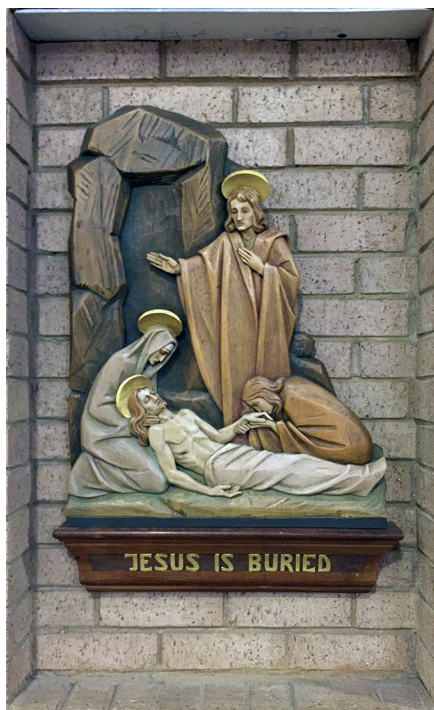
We pray: Dear Jesus, fill the sadness of our hearts with faith and hope in the life that is yet to come. Keep your everlasting love always before us, and guide us on the road that leads to you in your heavenly Kingdom. Help us to place our lives in your gentle hands.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.



STATION 14

Jesus' Body is laid in the tomb.



PRIEST: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise you.

ALL *genuflecting:*

Because, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

READER: Jesus' body is placed in a tomb which has been carved out of rock. A large stone is rolled across the entrance, and everyone hurries home, for the sun is setting and Sabbath has begun.

PRIEST: We now follow the funeral procession with the few people who have remained to the end. But we know that his death is not the end, because

he told us that on the third day he would rise from the dead. The tomb is dark, but we know that this darkness is only a doorway to the holy light of the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We pray: Dear Jesus, by your three days in the tomb you have made holy the graves of all those who have died in the hope of rising again. You were laid to rest in the darkness of the tomb that we might rise to eternal life, a place of light and peace. Help us never to fear death. Help us always to remember your promise of life even in the darkest times. You have died for us. Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on us. Teach us to recognize your presence with us always, especially in the Eucharist when the memorial of this great Mystery of the Cross is made present to us.

ALL: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

The Stations end.

Genuflecting, we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil. Amen.**

Standing, we say:

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the
world.**

PRIEST:

Lord, send down your abundant blessing upon your
people who have devoutly recalled the death of your Son
in the sure hope of the resurrection.

Grant them pardon; bring them comfort.

May their faith grow stronger
and their salvation be assured.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Let us depart in peace and holy solemnity.

**Our Good Friday worship continues with the
Solemn Liturgy of the Passion at noon.**



