

## Stations of the Cross

*We will not be gathering in Church this Lent to pray the Stations of the Cross. As we find ourselves in the midst of this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, may these reflections on the Stations of the Cross help you & your families feel Christ's presence with you.*

**Let us pray:** God of power & mercy, in love you sent your Son that we might be cleansed of sin & live with you forever. Bless us as we gather to reflect on his suffering & death that we may learn from his example the way we should go. We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**First Station Jesus is condemned to death** Why do we condemn the innocent of the world? We often condemn people for things that are totally out of their control: race, gender, disability. In some ways it is easier to condemn an “other,” an outsider. Jesus was an “other” in a sense, yet he was exactly who people were afraid of in his otherness. Yet, we know his otherness is what helps him relate so deeply with everyone that is condemned for being different. How can we change our condemnation of others this Lent?

**Second Station Jesus accepts the cross** Jesus is given the cross to carry to the Crucifixion. I can't imagine how heavy it must have been. How many pieces of wood splintered in his back or around his hands just in the process of starting the trek toward Golgotha? Each time we are hurt by someone we love, that is symbolic of the splinters of the cross. Each splinter Jesus encountered could be symbolic of each of our sins he carried. How many relationships in our lives are changed or harmed by the splinters of sin & misdeeds? Take a moment to think of those relationships & see if there is a way to smooth away any splinters.

**Third Station Jesus falls the first time** What an incredible weight Jesus is carrying. He's weakened from the weight of the cross & other beatings he has taken. How he has stood as long as he did is beyond me. There wouldn't be, shouldn't be, any blame in him not standing again after the first fall. Yet Jesus knows it is not the end. It is only the beginning of the journey. He has so much to teach us at this moment. How many of us want to quit after a fall? I sometimes want to quit, thinking things are too difficult to face. Yet Jesus gets up knowing something crushing awaits him further along the path. Can we stand again this Lent?

**Fourth Station Jesus meets his mother** My heart aches in this station. Poor Mother Mary has witnessed such terrible things happen to her beloved son. She has seen the beatings & the terrible strain of carrying the cross. Yet Jesus tries to comfort her. Repeatedly through the stations of the cross, we see Jesus' true unselfishness. At the time of his biggest trial he is comforting others. How can we become so selfless this Lent?

**Fifth Station Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross** Simon of Cyrene was an observer. He was suddenly called in to assist Jesus with carrying the cross. How often do we move from observer to action? How do we know when we are being called into action? Do we struggle with saying “yes” or being volunteered? Sometimes when I am volunteered, I feel bad because I should have known to volunteer or act in some way before others volunteered me. Yet each of these situations can be an invitation to open ourselves to what God is calling us to do.

**Sixth Station Veronica wipes the face of Jesus** What a gift Jesus gives to Veronica & to us in this station. Veronica was moved to help Jesus & Jesus leaves an impression on the cloth & on us. Veronica, as did Jesus frequently throughout the Gospels, was moved to pity & offered comfort to the one who was hurting. Who are the Veronicas in your life? Are you acting as a Veronica to others?

**Seventh Station Jesus falls a second time** It is getting harder & harder for Jesus to continue this journey. Even with the assistance of Simon of Cyrene, the weight of the cross & the loss of blood from his injuries are taking their toll. What can we take away from this? Perhaps the fact that Jesus refuses to stay down after this second fall can show us that we need to keep moving no matter what obstacles are in our way. May we all rise again & continue our own journeys.

**Eighth Station Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem** Oh, how they weep for Jesus. He's done so much for them & they express their sorrow. Yet Jesus tells them not to weep for him.

**Ninth Station Jesus falls for a third time** Jesus falls again. He's come so far & knows what's waiting for him just beyond the walk. He's carried the weight of the cross, he's suffering greatly, all while trying to comfort others along the way. How heavy his heart must be. Perhaps we should pray for others who have heavy hearts; that they may take courage in Jesus' rising once again from this third fall. We all need to rise from our own falls.

**Tenth Station Jesus is stripped of His garments** How much more humiliation can Jesus experience? Here we are after a long journey & Jesus is stripped of his clothes. His dignity is stripped. How do we strip the dignity from others in our lives? Are we stripping them of their God-given gifts by our jealousy or fear? Take a moment to see what needs to be stripped away in your own life so that others will not be stripped of their dignity.

**Eleventh Station Jesus is nailed to the cross** I cannot imagine the pain Jesus is experiencing at this moment. Pain beyond the lashes & crown of thorns placed on his head. Pain beyond comprehension. Those nails are our sins. Lord, have mercy.

**Twelfth Station Jesus dies on the cross** It is over. Jesus has died & the rest of the world must carry on. They do not know what we do; Jesus will come alive soon & forever. God's only son, Jesus, has left this earth. How do we move on without him?

**Thirteenth Station Jesus is taken down from the cross** Mary, who gave birth & loved her beautiful child, now receives this child in her arms. What sorrow she must feel at what has taken place. She has loved him through it all, pondered the meanings behind each of his actions. She must continue to ponder what has happened here this day. She is not alone.

**Fourteenth Station Jesus is laid in the tomb** The final resting place, the tomb, is not empty now. Jesus comes to the end of the journey as we know it. Yet he knows something we don't know, on the other side of that stone enclosure is the beginning of a new life in Christ. How do we learn to say goodbye to the ones we love when it all seems so final?

*Let us pray:* Lord Jesus, I humbly kneel before You in sorrow for my sins. Thank You for Your sacrifice on the cross. When I think of how You suffered for me, my heart breaks. Please help me, that I may love & obey You as You loved & obeyed Your Heavenly Father. Amen.