

Lenten Service



The Stations of the Cross

The Proclamation
of the Cross

The Gathering

The ministers 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 and follow me.
For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those
who lose their life for my sake will find it.” *Matthew 16:24*

Peace to you all
And also with you.

A minister may introduce the service.

Let us pray.

A brief moment of silence follows

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death on a 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 forever. Amen

Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.

**Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

First Station - Jesus is condemned to death



Story: 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: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: As I view the scene, I become moved by both outrage and gratitude. I look at Jesus. His face, the crown of thorns, the blood, His clothes stuck to the wounds on his back. Pilate washes his hands of the whole affair. Jesus' hands are tied behind his back.

This is for me that I might be free that I might have eternal life.

As the journey begins I ask to be with Jesus, to follow his journey. I express my love and thanks.

A half verse of the hymn, Stabat mater dolorosa, shall be sung after each station.

**At the cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful mother weeping,
close to Jesus at the last,**

Second Station - Jesus carries His cross

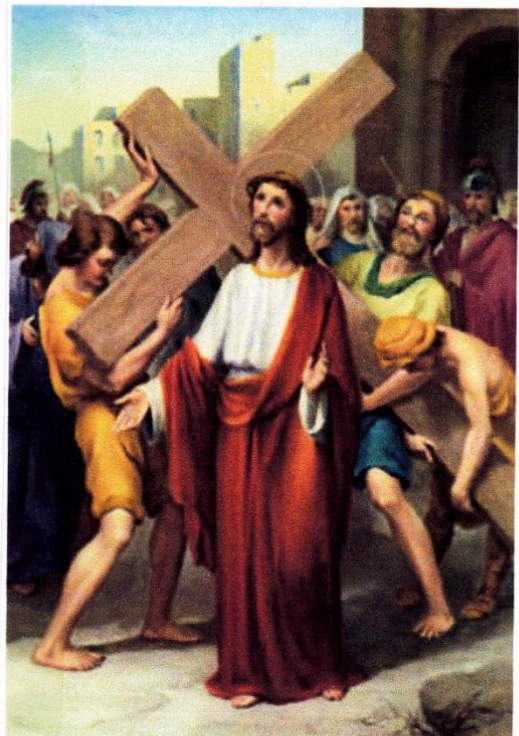
Story: Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences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

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I contemplate the wood of that cross. I imagine how heavy it is. I reflect upon all it means that Jesus is carrying it.

I look into his eyes. It's all there. *This is for me. So I place myself with him in this journey, in its anguish, in his freedom and surrender, in the love that must fill his heart.*

With sorrow and gratitude, I continue the journey. Moved by the power of his love, I am drawn to him and express my love in the words that come to me.



**Through her soul, of joy bereaved,
bowed with anguish, deeply grieved,
now at length the sword hath passed.**

Third Station - Jesus falls the first time

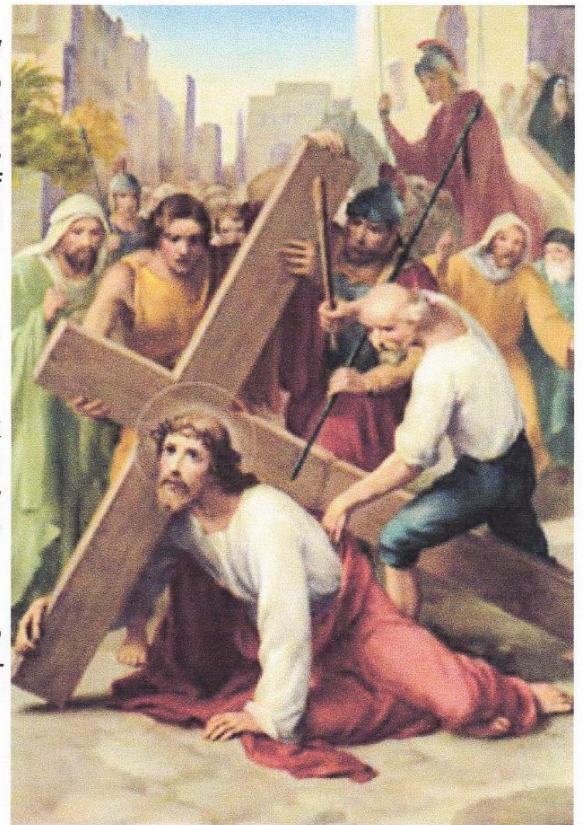
Story: The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. How could he enter our lives completely without surrendering to the crushing weight of the life of so many on this earth! He lays on the ground and knows the experience of weakness beneath unfair burdens. He feels the powerlessness of wondering if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

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

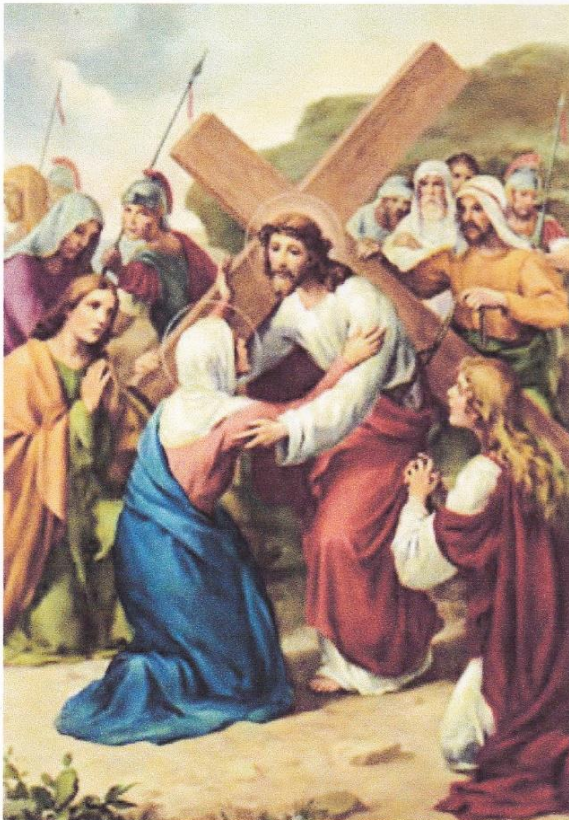
Meditation: I stare at the weakness in his eyes. I can look at his whole body and see the exhaustion. As I behold him there on the ground, being roughly pulled up, I know forever how profoundly he understands my fatigue and my defeats.

This is for me. In grief and gratitude I want to let him remain there. As I watch him stand again and gain an inner strength, I accept his love and express my thanks.

**O, that blessed one, grief-laden,
blessed Mother, blessed Maiden,
Mother of the all-holy One;**



Fourth Station - Jesus meets his mother



Story: 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.

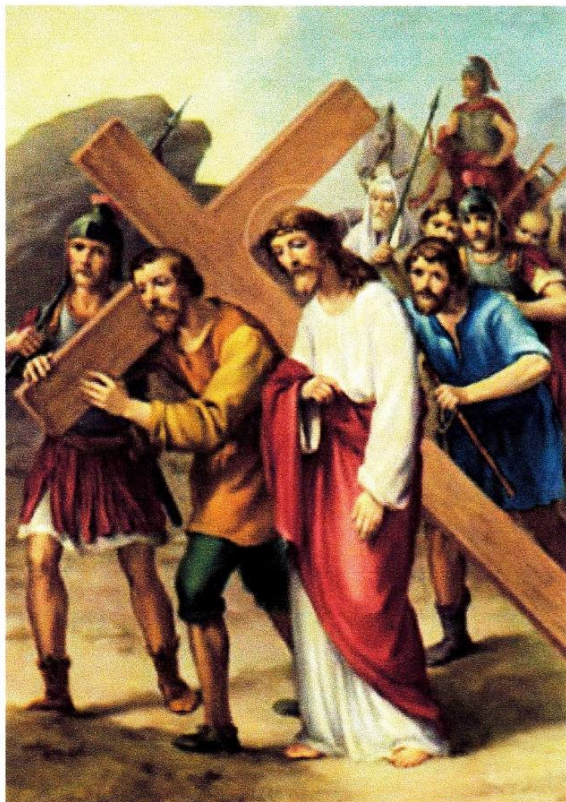
Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: As I watch them in this place along the way, I contemplate the mystery of love's power to give strength. She knows the sorrow in every mother's heart who has lost a child to tragedy or violence. I look at the two of them very carefully and long for such love and such peace.

This is for me, such incredible freedom, the availability of a servant. I find the words to express what is in my heart.

**O that silent, ceaseless mourning,
O those dim eyes, never turning
from that wondrous, suffering Son.**

Fifth Station - Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross



Story: 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: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I look into his face and contemplate his struggle, His weariness and fragility, His impotence. I see how he looks at Simon, with utmost humility and gratitude.

This is for me. So I feel anguish and gratitude. I express my thanks that he can continue this journey. That he has help. That he knows my inability to carry my burden alone.

I say what is in my heart, with deep feeling.

**Who, on Christ's dear mother gazing,
in her trouble so amazing,
born of woman, would not weep?**

Sixth Station - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

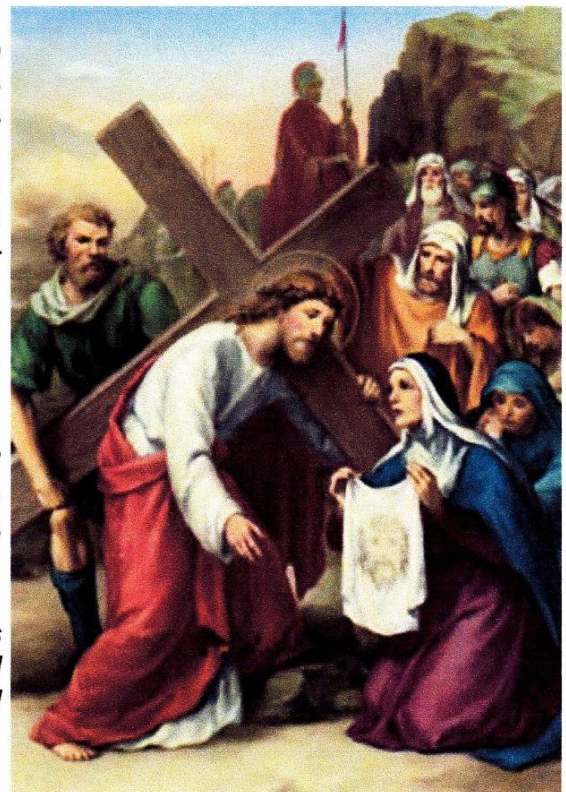
Story: Jesus' journey is at times brutal. He has entered into the terrible experiences of rejection and injustice. He has been whipped and beaten. His face shows the signs of his solidarity with all who have ever suffered injustice and vile, abusive treatment. He encounters a compassionate, loving disciple 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: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: What does the face of Jesus hold for me? What do I see, as I look deeply into his face? Can I try to comfort the agony and pain? Can I embrace him, with his face so covered with his passion?

The veil I behold is a true icon of his gift of himself. This is for me. In wonder and awe, I behold his face now wiped clean, and see the depth of his suffering in solidarity with all flesh.

**Who, on Christ's dear Mother thinking,
such a cup of sorrow drinking,
would not share her sorrows deep?**



Seventh Station - Jesus falls the second time

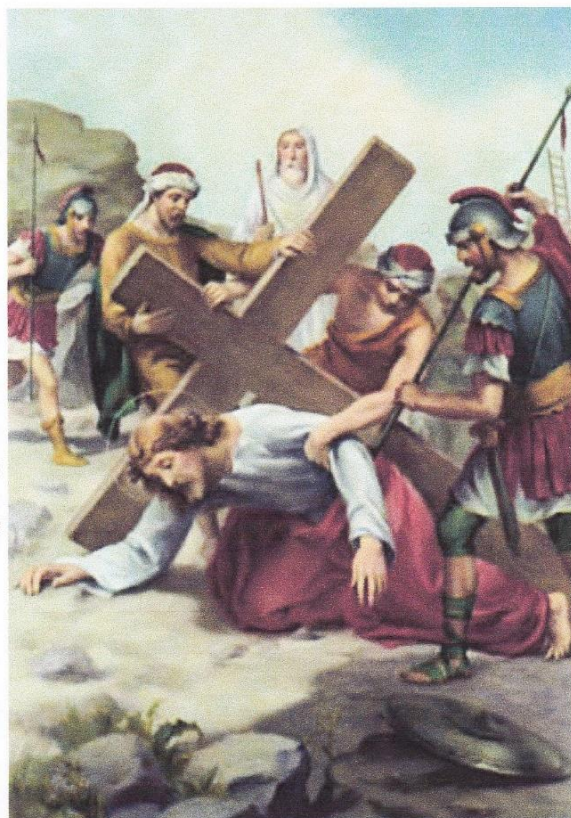
Story: Even with help, Jesus stumbles and falls to the ground. In deep exhaustion he stares at the earth beneath him. "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." He has seen death before. Now he can feel the profound weakness of disability and disease and aging itself, there on his knees, under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

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

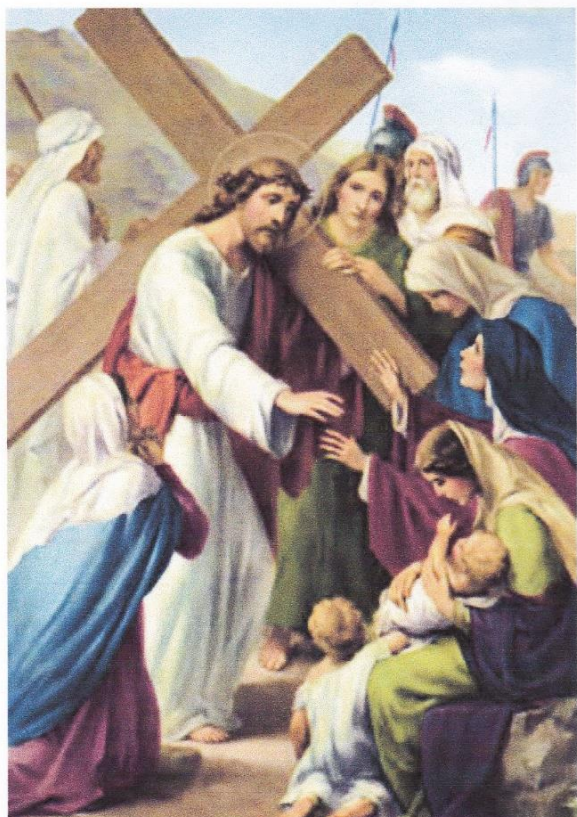
Meditation: I contemplate Jesus brought very low. As I behold him there on the ground, with all the agony taking its toll on him, I let my heart go out to him. I store up this image in my heart, knowing that I will never feel alone in my suffering or in any diminishment, with this image of Jesus on the ground before me.

This is for me, so I express the feelings in my heart.

For his people's sins, in anguish,
there she saw the victim languish,
bleed in torments, bleed and die.



Eighth Station - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



Story: 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.

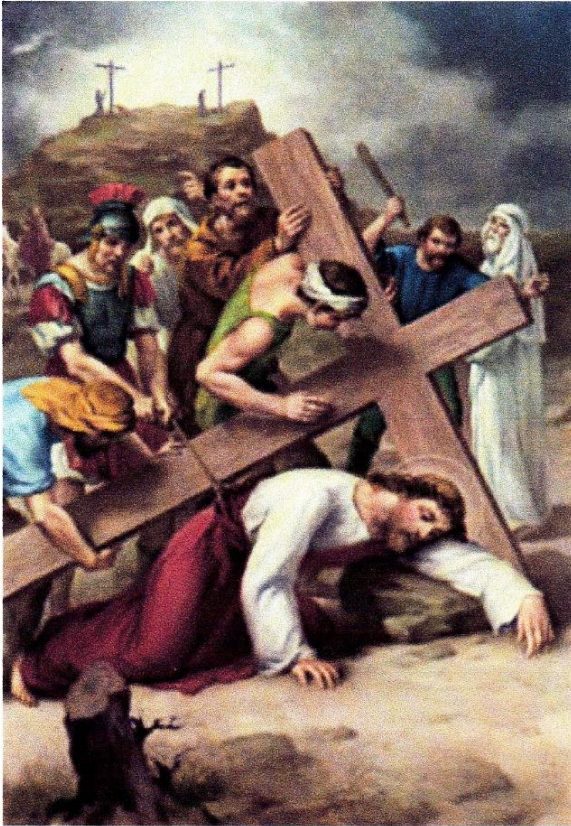
Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I look at their faces so full of love and gratitude, loss and fear. I contemplate what words might have passed between them. I remember all his tender, compassionate, merciful love for me. I place myself with these women and children to support him.

This is for me. So, I let this scene stir up deep gratitude.

Saw the Lord's anointed taken,
saw her Child in death forsaken,
heard his last expiring cry.

Ninth Station - Jesus falls a third time



Story: This last fall is devastating. Jesus can barely proceed to the end. Summoning all this 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: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I pause to contemplate him there on the ground: The brokenness that makes me whole; the surrender that gives me life. I pause to experience and receive how completely he loves me. He is indeed completely poured out for me.

As I treasure this gifted experience, I express what is in my heart.

**In the passion of my Maker,
be my sinful soul partaker,
may I bear with her my part;**

Tenth Station - Jesus' clothes are taken away

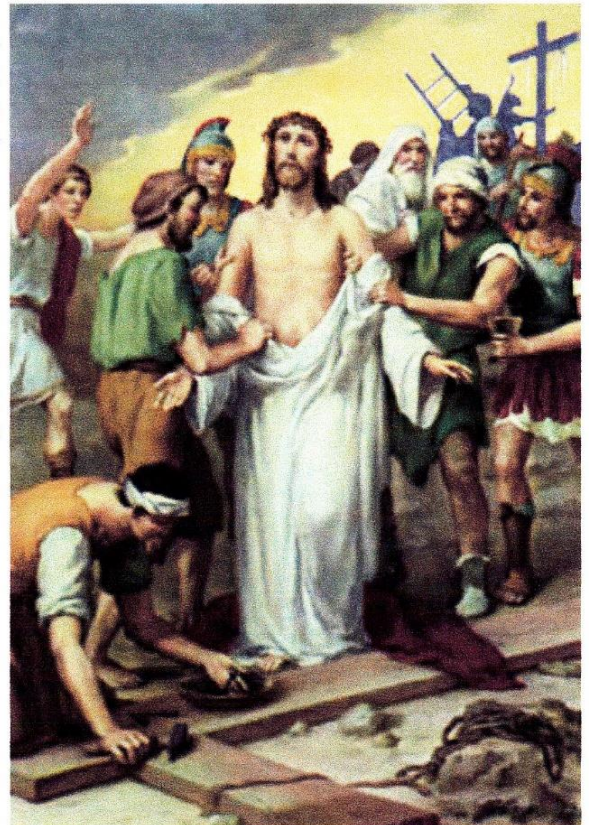
Story: Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. The wounds on his back are torn open again. He experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenseless. No shield or security protects him. As they stare at him, his eyes turn to heaven.

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I pause to watch the stripping. I contemplate all that is taken from him and how he faces his death with such nakedness. I reflect upon how much of himself he has revealed to me holding nothing back.

As I look at him in his humility, I know that this is for me, and I share my feelings of gratitude.

**of his passion bear the token,
in a spirit bowed and broken
bear his death within my heart.**



Eleventh Station - Jesus is nailed to the cross

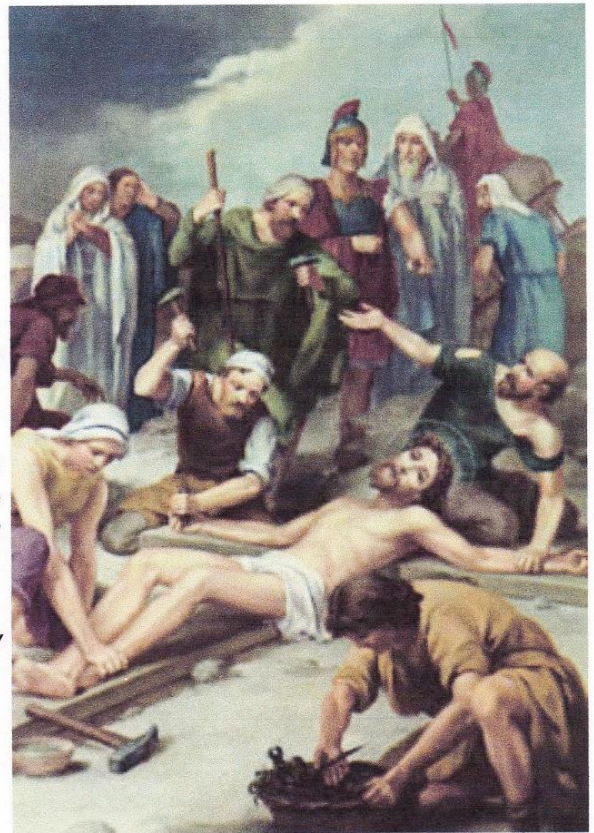
Story: Huge nails are hammered through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. He is bleeding much more seriously now. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away.

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

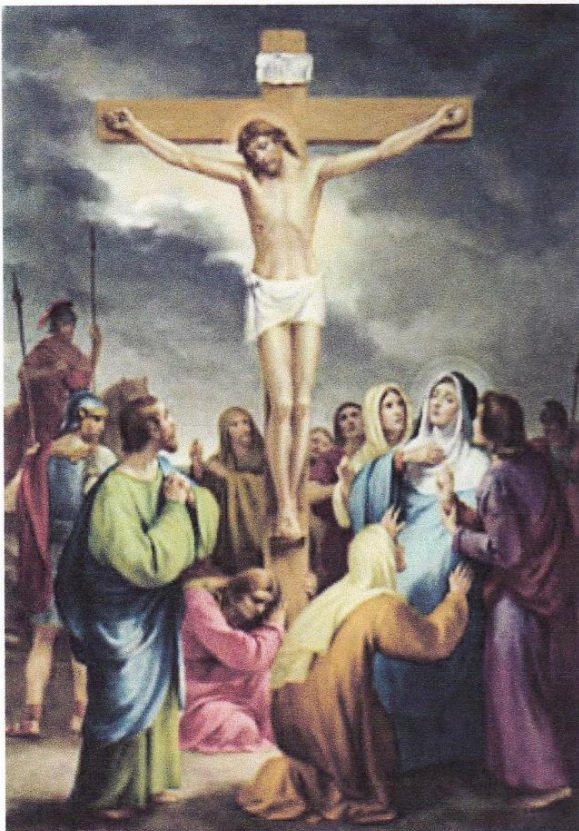
Meditation: I make myself watch the nails being driven through his flesh. And I watch his face. I contemplate the completeness of his entry into our lives. Can there be any pain or agony he would not understand?

This is for me, nailed to a cross to forever proclaim liberty to captives. What sorrow and gratitude fill my heart!

May his wounds both wound and heal me,
he enkindle, cleanse, and heal me,
be his cross my hope and stay.



Twelfth Station - Jesus dies on the cross



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

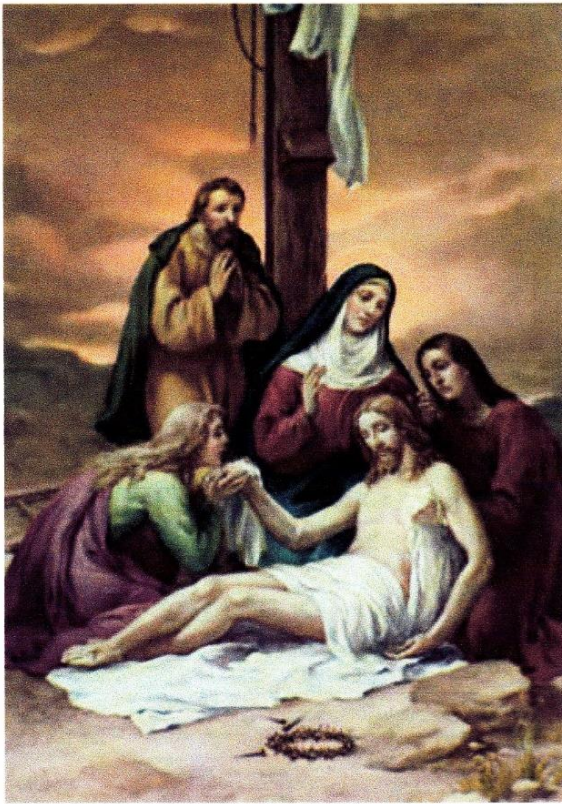
Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I stand there, at the foot of the cross, side by side with all of humanity, and behold our salvation. I carefully watch and listen to all that is said. And then, I experience the one who gives life pass from life to death, for me. I console Mary and John and Mary. And let them console me.

This is the hour to express the deepest feelings within me.

May he, when the mountains quiver,
from that flame which burns for ever
shield me on the judgment day.

Thirteenth Station - The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross



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

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I behold this scene at the foot of the cross. I contemplate touching, caressing his body. I remember all his hands have touched, all who have been blessed by his warm embrace. I pause to let it soak in. He knows the mystery of death. He has fallen into God's hands.

That I might love as I have been loved. I pour out my heart to the God of all mercies.

**Jesus, may thy cross defend me,
and thy saving death befriend me,
cherished by thy deathless grace:**

Fourteenth Station - Jesus is laid in the tomb

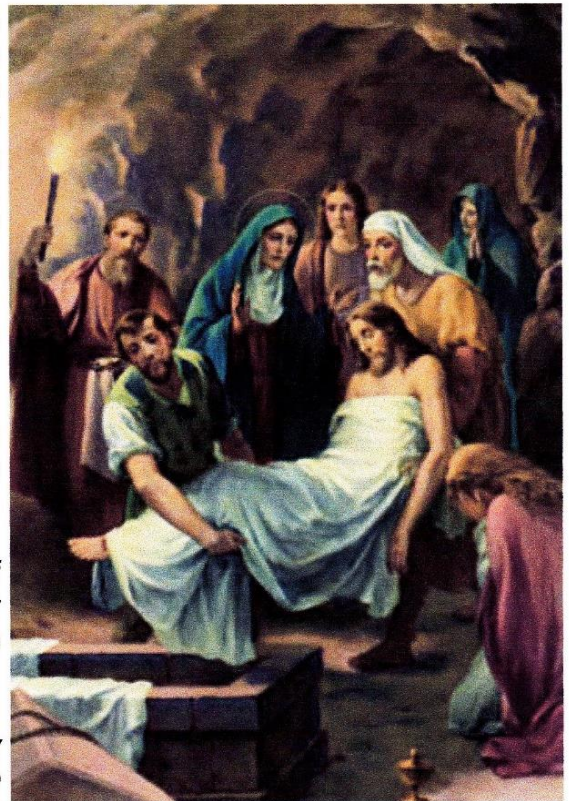
Story: They take the body of Jesus to its resting place. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. In this final act of surrender, who would have imagined this tomb would soon be empty or that Jesus would show himself alive to his disciples, or that they would recognize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

Prayer: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Meditation: I pause to contemplate this act of closure on his life. In solidarity with all humanity, his body is taken to its grave.

I stand for a moment outside this tomb. This final journey of his life has shown me the meaning of his gift of himself for me. This tomb represents every tomb I stand before with fear, in defeat, struggling to believe it could ever be empty.

In the fullness of faith in the Risen One I express my gratitude for this way of the cross. I ask Jesus, whose hands, feet and side still bear the signs of this journey, to grant me the graces I need to take up my cross to be a servant of his own mission.



**when to dust my dust returneth,
grant a soul that to thee yearneth
in thy paradise a place.**

To conclude the Stations all say the Prayer of St. Richard.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for all the benefits you have won for us, for all the pains and insults you have borne for us. Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

The Proclamation of the Cross

A wooden cross or crucifix may be brought into the church and placed in the sight of the people who may come forward and offer prayerful reverence.

Hymn

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

The minister says these devotions.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and praise you for your mighty resurrection;

**by virtue of your cross
joy has come into our world.**

God be gracious to us and bless us:
and make his face shine upon us,

Let your ways be made known on earth:
your liberating power among all nations

Let the peoples praise you, O God:
let all the peoples praise you.

We glory in your cross, O Lord,
and praise you for your mighty resurrection;

**by virtue of your cross
joy has come into our world.**

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
may we know your love for us,
that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

The Conclusion

The minister says

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for you live and reign now and forever.

Amen

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom
in the words our Savior taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved mankind: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross, we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The ministers depart in silence.

Stations of the Cross

From the earliest of days, followers of Jesus told the story of his passion, death and resurrection. When pilgrims came to see Jerusalem, they were anxious to see the site where Jesus was. These sites become important holy connections with Jesus. Eventually, following in the footsteps of the Lord, along the way of the cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit. The stations, as we know them today, came about when it was no longer easy or even possible to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's, villages all over Europe started creating "replicas" of the way of the cross, with small shrines commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem. Eventually, these shrines became the set of 14 stations we now know and were placed in so many Churches in the world.

The Proclamation of the Cross

The second part of this Good Friday Service looks back to the ancient ceremony of the Veneration of the Cross. Roman Catholics have never ceased to value this act of devotion, but it fell into general disuse in the Church of England after the break with Rome. In the 19th century it was reintroduced by the "high" church, and in recent years has become more generally used. Careful distinction should be made between the worship due to God alone, and an act of veneration or reverence offered to a significant person, place or object. The form used here is that authorized by the Anglican Bishops of England. Members of the congregation should do as they feel comfortable. Some will want only to stay in their place and sing "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", others will choose to approach the cross and offer some mark of respect for the principal symbol of the Christian faith, a bow a touch, or the traditional kiss.

Acknowledgements

The text of the Stations is from a Jesuit Source

<http://www.creighton.edu/Collaborativeiistry/stations-prn.html>

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