



ST. LAURENCE
CHURCH
FAITH | FAMILY | TRADITION



STATIONS

of the cross

2020

Lent

Opening Devotions

Stabat Mater

*At the cross her station keeping
Stood the mournful mother weeping
Where he hung, the dying Lord.*

*For her soul of joy bereaved,
Bowed with anguish, deeply grieved,
Felt the sharp and piercing sword.*

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

Officiant: Lord have Mercy

People: Christ have Mercy

Officiant: Lord have Mercy

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Officiant: Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

All are invited to follow the way of the cross, walking with the procession.

*O how sad and sore distressed
Now was she, the mother blessed
of the sole-begotten one.*

1 Jesus Is Condemned To Death

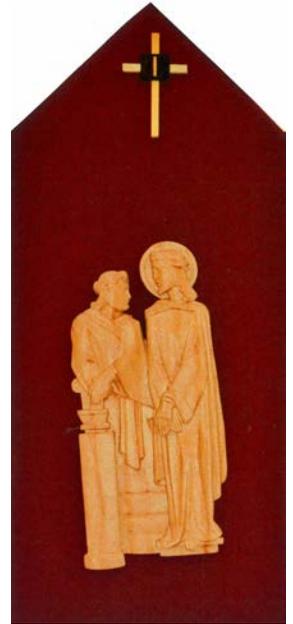
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

As soon as it was morning, the chief priest, with the elders and the scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate. And they all condemned Him and said, "He deserves to die." In the court-house not a single disciple stood up for our Lord. The only person who bore witness to His innocence was Pilate's wife who did her best to win her husband's sympathy for Jesus. By this time, however, the Roman governor was too deeply involved: he dared not pull out because it would have made him look like a fool. Fear of looking foolish has often prevented me from doing what I know to be right. So I have washed my hands of the whole thing and turned away.

Officiant: God did not spare His own Son,
People: But delivered Him up for us all.

Officiant: Almighty God, whose blessed Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption, give us courage to take up our cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen

*Deep the woe of her affliction,
When she saw the crucifixion
Of her ever-glorious Son.*



2 Jesus Takes Up His Cross

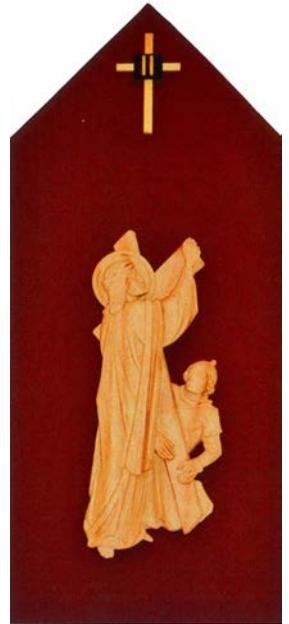
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

Made of two planks, the cross must have weighed about as much as a fully equipped infantryman carries on the march. Troops are not expected to shoulder such a burden either fasting, sleepless, or without previous training. Jesus had neither slept nor eaten since His arrest, and He was used to traveling light. Yet when the cross was forced upon Him, and not gently one may guess, Jesus received it with love. It was in loving obedience to His Father's will, and in loving concern for the salvation of His tormentors. Am I ready to accept all that the Father gives to me? Do I live with Christ-like obedience?

Officiant: The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all;
People: For the sins of my people was He stricken.

Officiant: Almighty God, whose most dear son went not up to joy but first He suffered pain, and entered not into glory before He was crucified; Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Who, on Christ's dear mother gazing
Pierced by anguish so amazing,
Born of woman, would not weep?*



3 Jesus Falls For The First Time

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

Although Jesus was the perfect man, every muscle and nerve without flaw, His agonies under the lash and consequent loss of blood had exhausted His strength. As divine man, He could have overcome His physical weakness but He chose to be as other men, human and with human limitations. So He fell to the ground, His knees hitting the hard road. He was falling for each one of us -- in sympathy for our moral failures and appealing to us to get up again. He fell for us and He got up for us. Am I ready to pick myself up after sinning and walk again with the Lord or do I linger in the dust?

Officiant: Surely He has borne our griefs,
People: And carried our sorrows.

Officiant: O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright. Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Who, on Christ's dear mother thinking,
Such a cup of sorrow drinking,
Would not share her sorrows deep?*



4 Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother

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

The hearts of Jesus and Mary were so united, their minds so completely directed toward doing the Father's will, that they may have felt no need to say anything to one another at this final meeting. Partings sometimes can be better endured without words. Perhaps this last meeting was a short embrace or simply a sorrowful look. Imagine the bitterness of the moment for the Blessed Virgin Mary watching her son on His way to be executed. She knew to trust her son -- that he knew what He was doing -- but it must have been awful to see Him go through it. Sometimes in life we watch with sadness our children, or those we love, endure incredible pain. I can learn from Mary, to be near to them and to share in their pain, confident of God's goodness. She trusted that her son's suffering was part of the plan. May I too learn to trust God that much.

Officiant: A sword will pierce your own soul also,
People: And fill your heart with bitter pain.

Officiant: O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother, mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in His passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of His resurrection, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender child
All with bloody scourges rent.*



5 Simon Helps Jesus To Carry The Cross

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

From among the crowd of spectators, Simon of Cyrene is called upon by the soldier in charge of the operation to lift the weight, or part of it, from our Lord's shoulders onto his own. The measure was not chosen out of sympathy for Jesus but from a fear that the man condemned to die on the cross might die on the way and thus involve a court-martial. What the soldiers did not know, and what neither the crowd nor Simon knew, was that from all eternity it was decreed that Christ would be crucified and not die a moment before the appointed time. And as for Simon, he was singled out not only because he was obviously a stranger in Jerusalem and so could be counted on not to protest, or cause a disturbance, but because again from all eternity he had been singled out by God to lighten Christ's burden. It is the same with us: I am chosen to do a service to our Lord not by chance but because the providential will of God is giving me the grace to do it.

Officiant: If anyone would come after me,
People: Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Officiant: O God, whose blessed Son overcame death for our salvation: Mercifully grant that we may take up our cross daily and follow Him: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*O thou Mother, font of love,
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord.*



6 Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus

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

Where Simon was forced into assisting our Lord with His cross, the service which Veronica performed was volunteered. Scripture records Simon's act but Veronica's comes to us only through tradition. If she was the wife of a Roman official as the legend proclaims, her generosity and courage are astounding. She risked arrest -- not to mention her pagan husband's displeasure -- as well as the jeers and jokes of the crowd. For us she is an example of heroic faith and of heroic charity. Would I have paid any attention to a bedraggled prisoner and reached out to help Him? I doubt it. Wouldn't I have said it was none of my business? Wouldn't I have said it was a job for one of His own people? But charity is for all. Veronica was rewarded for her faith and love. The veil, with the impression of our Lord's face on it, would be evidence enough for who He really was.

Officiant: Restore us O Lord God of hosts;
People: Show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

Officiant: O God, who inspired St. Veronica to minister to our Lord on His way to the cross: Bless all who give themselves to the service of others that they may minister with wisdom, patience and courage to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy, for the love of Him who laid down His life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

*For the sins of His own nation,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.*



7 Jesus Falls A Second Time

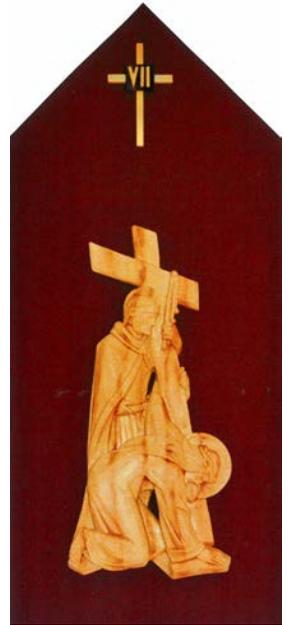
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

With the jolt of each fall, the wounds from the scourging and crowning of thorns must have opened and added to the pain caused by the weight of the cross. New sores from the wood were rubbing on shoulders already bruised and torn. Jesus is all the while praying for the soldiers who are beating Him with whips when He is down, pulling Him to His feet with blows, pushing Him on when He stumbles. Was there ever such an agonizing procession? The only explanation possible is Christ's love for souls -- Roman souls, Jewish souls, yours and mine.

Officiant: We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;
People: And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Officiant: Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for mankind you sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also share in His resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Make me feel as thou hast felt,
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.*



8 Jesus Meets The Women Of Jerusalem

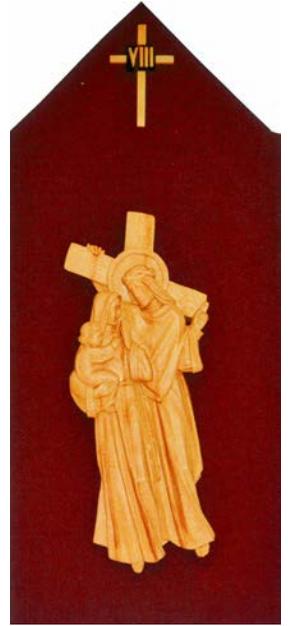
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

It seems it was the custom at that time for groups of devout women to accompany condemned prisoners on the way to execution. Societies existed for the purpose. So at one point on the way of the cross Jesus was able to halt -- perhaps the guards were exhausted by this time and were glad to have a break -- and show gratitude for the mourning and weeping. But He was not just complimenting the women on their piety, He was explaining to them the mystery of suffering and the consequences of sin. "Weep for your children," He told them, "and for the men and women of future ages who will repeat this sort of thing and who will be even more guilty than this present generation." Have I ever thought how the future age of which Jesus spoke in prophecy may be the one I am now in? Have I ever thought that I may be one of the guilty ones?

Officiant: Those who sowed with tears,
People: Will reap with songs of joy.

Officiant: Almighty God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.*



9 Jesus Falls A Third Time

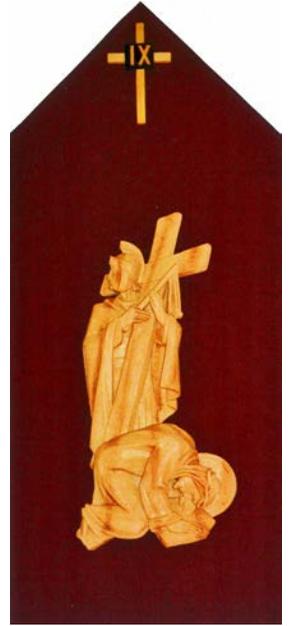
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

One wonders if our Lord could see the two thieves who were also on their way to crucifixion. Whether they were ahead of Him or dragging their crosses along the road behind Him, He would surely have been praying for them as He fell this last time. "Father, forgive them...give the grace for a last minute conversion." They have fallen morally, and perhaps physically as well, but He has been sinless all His life. His falls are for them and for us. The effort to rise from the ground and start on the final stretch of the way is for them and for us too, showing that to get up after failure is the important thing. Jesus did not lie down where He fell; nor should we lie down in our guilt.

Officiant: He was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
People: And like sheep that before its shearers is mute, so He opened not his mouth.

Officiant: Heavenly Father, uphold your Church with your perpetual mercy; and, because without you we cannot help but fall, by your grace keep us from all things hurtful and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourned for me
All the days that I may live.*



10 Jesus Is Stripped Of His Clothes

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

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. And they stripped Him of His garments and divided them among themselves by casting lots. This station represents a worse suffering than any that have gone before. It is the shame of having to stand naked in front of women and children, in front of people who He had ministered to in Jerusalem, in front of mocking men who were using the occasion to shout coarse jokes. Traditionally this tenth station has been offered by Jesus, and by the faithful down the ages, in atonement for the sin of impurity. Our morally permissive society has much to answer for. The virtue of modesty is not much valued today; the word itself provokes a smile. May the shame and shrinking of Jesus as His clothes were torn from Him counter the shamelessness of our time.

Officiant: They gave me gall to eat,
People: And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

Officiant: Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave His back to the smiters and hid not His face from shame: Grant us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
This I ask for thee to give.*



11 Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

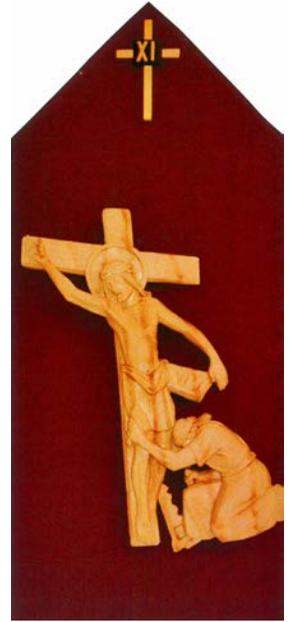
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified Him; and with Him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. Just as our Lord kept silent before Herod, so we may believe He kept silent now. No protesting innocence, no cry for mercy. He was addressing his Father in acceptance and praise, He was not shouting words of reproach to His persecutors or to the priests and judges who had been responsible for sending Him here. Not only did He have no quarrel against Pilate, who was only an instrument, but He bore no grudge against Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest of the temple hangers-on. He loved them, and as God He had created them for love. No bitterness, no accusations. Stretching Himself upon the cross He offered no resistance. His body shrank from the crucifixion, His will did not. Where am I in the scene? If I cannot find it in me to be one with Him in His total surrender, may I at least not be one of those who do the nailing. When suffering comes to pin me to the cross let me not call upon my friends to take out the nails. I shall be where I am meant to be, and there, let me stay.

Officiant: They pierced my hands and my feet;
People: They stare and gloat over me.

Officiant: O God, who in the passion of your blessed Son made an instrument of shameful death to be to us the means of life and peace: Grant us so to glory in the Cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss; for the sake your Son our Lord. Amen.

*Virgin, of all virgins blest!
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief with thee.*



12 Jesus Dies On The Cross

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

There has been a three hour wait between the crucifixion and death. Much has happened during that time. One of the thieves, roped to their crosses and not nailed, has received the grace of conversion and been promised a place in Paradise. Our Lady and St. John have been entrusted to one another. The military, their main job over, have sat down and gambled for "the coat woven without seam throughout." Some women, braver than the disciples who apart from St. John have not shown themselves, are standing close to the cross. They are publicly proclaiming themselves as followers. This is brave of them because they must have known there would be both Roman agents and agents of the high-priest among the crowd. Then there is the darkness which covered Jerusalem and Calvary "and all the land until the ninth hour." At about the ninth hour (our three o'clock) Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These were not His last words. His last words, "Into your hands I commend my spirit," show us that the Father had not deserted Him, and that Jesus knew this at the last. And so He bowed His head and handed over His spirit.

All kneel in silent prayer.

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, for ever and ever. Amen.



Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Officiant: Christ for us became obedient unto death,

People: Even death on a cross.

Officiant: O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by His glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with Him in the joy of His resurrection; through your Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let me to my latest breath
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.*



13 The Body Of Jesus Is Placed Into The Arms Of His Mother

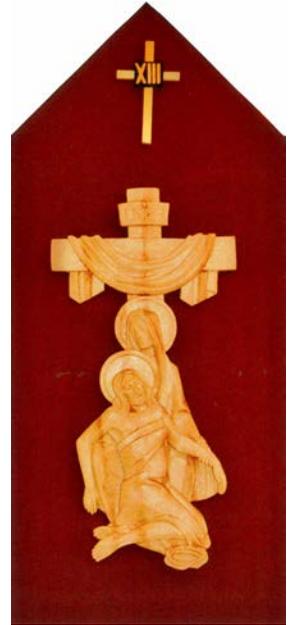
Officiant: We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,
People: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.

At last two men admit to being followers: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, he who before had shown fear but now was coming out strongly as a disciple. They take down the dead body and place it in Mary's lap. This is the last time she will hold Him in this way; the first was thirty-three years before when He was a baby on Christmas morning. The crowds have drifted away, wanting to keep the Day of Preparation. What a sad response this is from them: being strict about a ritual law while not being above witnessing a brutal death. You would think the law of justice and charity would come before a law of temple observance. As the blood thirsty crowds depart we see Mary weeping there in sadness. Yet what do we know of Mary's sadness? As we look at her holding the lifeless body of her son, we have to confess that our sins have brought about His death. But she is the mother of compassion, not of reproach. So we can ask her to pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Officiant: Her tears run down her cheeks,
People: And she has none to comfort her.

Officiant: Grant, O Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let His stripes and scourging smite me,
At His holy cross requite me,
Let His blood refresh me there.*



14 Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

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

Our Lord's body was washed clean of the blood and mud, was bound tight with bandages, was covered with a sheet, and carried to the tomb which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb was new and had not been occupied before. What with the spices and ointments of His anointing, the careful bandaging, the clean winding sheet, and now the costly tomb given by a rich man, Jesus was getting the care which had been denied Him since He had set out to preach. He had lived in poverty all His life, and now He was the most precious relic the world had ever known. But He was more than a relic: He was a dead body which would rise again on the third day and so prove to the world, and to mankind until the end of time, that what He had taught was true. His rising again would show beyond all question that His work on earth had been blessed by the Father all along. It was His doctrine of love vindicated. We think of the story of Christ's life ending with the fourteenth station, the burial, but it would be better to think of it as just beginning.

Officiant: You will not abandon me to the grave,
People: Nor let your Holy One see corruption.

Officiant: O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on the Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the third day, and rise with Him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*When the flames of hell would end me
At the judgment day, defend me,
Gentle Virgin, with thy prayer.*



Concluding Devotions

*Christ, when thou shalt call me hence
Be thy mother my defense,
Be thy cross my victory.*

*While my body here decays,
May my soul thy goodness praise,
Safe in paradise with thee.*

Officiant: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us;
People: Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

Officiant: Let us Pray. We thank you, heavenly Father that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by His death He has recalled us to life, so by His love He may raise us to eternal joys. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

A Note on Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross began as the practice of Christian people in Jerusalem who would retrace the final journey of Jesus Christ to Calvary. The route was walked with great devotion, the early pilgrims stopping (or making "stations") for prayer and meditation at the traditional points where special events took place along the way. Later, for the many who wanted to walk the same route but could not make the trip to Jerusalem, a practice developed that eventually took the form of the fourteen stations found in our Church.

We walk this way each year during Lent to remember the last moments of our Lord's life -- moments lived in great suffering for our sake. As we read these meditations, say these prayers, and sing these hymns we remember the Lord's commandment, "If anyone would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

There are no official prayers or meditations written for the Stations of the Cross. The version contained in this booklet has been adapted from a series of meditations written by Hubert Van Zeller.



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