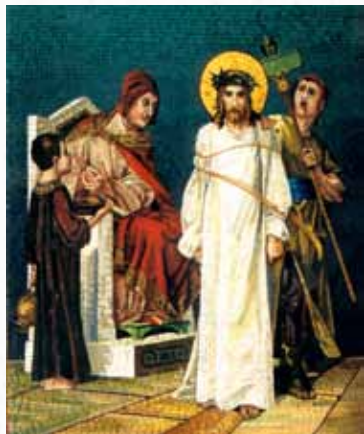


Christ's Way of the Cross

Walk With Jesus During Holy Week



AT EACH STATION

LEADER: The [number] Station of the Cross, [Name the station]. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world!

I The First Station: Pilate Condemns Christ

LEADER 1: "The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted. So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished." — Luke 23:24-25
READER 2: Pilate condemned Jesus because of vanity — he was worried what others would think. Caiaphas condemned Jesus because of pride — he wanted his way, no matter what. Herod condemned Jesus because of sensuality — he was indifferent to whatever failed to entertain or interest him. What about me? Which of these most often drives my sins? What can I do about it?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, help us to imitate the loving way you accepted your Father's will — even though it meant others would be set

against you, humiliate you and cause you great pain. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

II The Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross

LEADER 1: "And carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha." — John 19:17
READER 2: Contrast the two thieves crucified with Christ. The Bad Thief ridicules Christ for accepting his cross. We can presume the Bad Thief's life up to that point consisted in getting what he wanted by doing whatever he could get away with. I, too, at times, try to get by with the minimum as I seek to please myself. What crosses do I reject?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, the Good Thief accepted his cross in the end, and it brought him to paradise. Help me to accept the crosses you send me for my sanctification. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

III The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

LEADER 1: "No slave is greater than his master. If they perse-

cuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And they will do all these things to you on account of my name." — John 15:20-21
READER 2: Jesus' followers were distressed when they saw Christ condemned in the courtyard, then scourged and burdened with the cross. But they still might have expected him to rise up and strike down the Romans at last. When he fell, it began to hit home. The soldiers were winning! Setbacks and failures in my life test my faith, too. How quick am I to doubt when the chips are down?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, it is easy to speak with eloquence about the cross. But you know that the cross isn't eloquent. It's real — hard and heavy. Give me the grace to reject discouragement anyway, just like you did. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

IV The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

LEADER 1: "When Jesus saw his Mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his Mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.'" — John 19:26-27

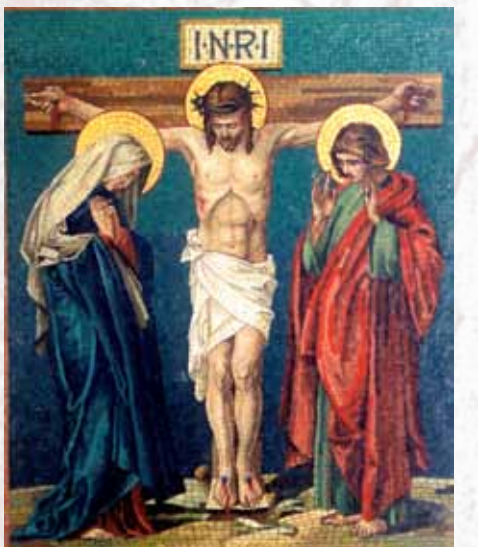
READER 2: Mary had great concern for Christ. What great sorrow she feels at the suffering inflicted on her Son! They are my sins that Christ is suffering for. It's my guilt he carries. Do I count myself among those who caused Mary this great sorrow?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, thank you for making your Mother our mother, too — we take comfort in our trials when she tells us, "I'm here." Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

V The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Carry the Cross

LEADER 1: "As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross." — Matthew 27:32
READER 2: Simon's human nature, like ours, balks at the idea of carrying the cross with Christ. But once he starts, it's hard to stop. As deadly as sin is, virtue is even more powerful. What about me? Am I still stuck in that moment of indecision, not willing to say Yes or No to the cross?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, when I am afflicted by the cross, help me remember that it is you and I, together, arms around each other, carrying the cross up the hill. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

VI The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

LEADER 1: "Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins." — 1 Peter 4:8
READER 2: Charity can cover up a multitude of sins, St. Peter says. Veronica shows that. Of all the people in the crowd, she stands out because of her charity. I love Christ, and his suffering pains me. Have I translated that love into action, or am I like those who merely stand on the sidelines and weep?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, you rewarded Veronica's charity by giving her your true image. Help us always remember that we only find happiness by serving the needs of others, not our own. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...



VII The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

LEADER 1: "Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." — Philippians 2:6-8
READER 2: Christ isn't an Achilles or a Superman. He doesn't carry the cross with physical perfection. He falls over and over again. Do I realize Christ doesn't expect perfection — but he does expect sacrifice?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, I long to finally learn the lesson of your humility. Help me always to struggle to become more holy — even when I fall again and again. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.' — Luke 23:27-28
READER 2: We are in the position of the weeping women. We watch Christ's suffering, and we are deeply moved. But have we gone to the next step, as Christ requests? Have we looked more deeply at our own lives?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, don't let us be content with watching you pass by. Give us the grace to take up our cross and follow you. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

IX The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

LEADER 1: "Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings." — 1 Peter 5:8-9
READER 2: Satan follows Christ to the cross. He is delighted by each of his falls. Satan failed to defeat God when he revolted in heaven. He failed to tempt Christ in the desert. The Way of the Cross convinces him that he has won after all.

Do I ever give Satan reason to think he is winning? By persisting in sin, do I tell him that Christ's death was in vain?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, you vanquished Satan for all eternity. Don't let me give in to his lies. When I fall, give me the grace to get up again and foil the plans of my enemy by uniting myself with your sacrifice. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

X The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

LEADER 1: "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier." — John 19:23
READER 2: Christ's passion is re-presented to us at every Mass. In the Eucharist, Christ is "stripped" of the "garments" of his earthly appearance. But his real presence remains.
LEADER: Lord Jesus, in your supreme act of humility and love, you give yourself to me totally in the Eucharist. Give me the grace of frequent Communion. Never let me take this precious gift for granted. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

XI The 11th Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

LEADER 1: "They crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle." — John 19:18
READER 2: Our sins don't just make Christ suffer; they make it impossible for him to do his work — they pin him to the cross; they stop his grace in our lives.
LEADER: Lord Jesus, you said, "Forgive them," even as they killed you — or perhaps I should say "we." Let this forgiveness change my life. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

XII The 12th Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

LEADER 1: "Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom." — Matthew 15:37-38
READER 2: There is drama in the Crucifixion: The earthquake and the darkness remind us that Christ's death cleaved time itself in two and left nothing unchanged. But if the destruction of our sins shook the cosmos, I must never forget what this means: Our sins are never merely private to



VIII The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

LEADER 1: "A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him.



XIII The 13th Station: Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

LEADER 1: "Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus." — Luke 23:50-52
READER 2: On Calvary, Mary holds Christ's body at the foot of the cross, wondering, "How could you do this to my Son?" But she's also thinking, "Enough anger, hatred, pride and sin." She's inviting us to love.
LEADER: Lord Jesus, we are accustomed to asking Mary to "pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." May she be as much a mother to us at that hour as she was to you. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

XIV The 14th Station: Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

LEADER 1: "Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed." — Matthew 27:59-60
READER 2: This station is about a special time in the Church. It's Holy Saturday. The King, at long last, is resting, and we're awaiting the Resurrection. It's analogous to the times we live in. Christ has ascended, but he will return one day in glory. Am I ready?
LEADER: Lord Jesus, in the trials of our lives, we are strengthened — and kept alert — by the knowledge that you will return one day. Help us to watch and pray as we await you. Amen.
ALL: Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...

TO CONCLUDE THE STATIONS

LEADER: Let us pray the Apostles' Creed for the intentions of the Holy Father.
I believe in God ...
Lord Jesus, our Way of the Cross devotion is done. But now we begin another way of the cross, as we take up our cross to follow you each day. Help us carry our crosses with joy, knowing that you share our burdens with us.
ALL: Amen.