

Let Us Pray.

LEADER: Lord Jesus, as we follow your steps on the day you died for us, spiritually unite us with the reality of your suffering and death, so that we can know you better, love you more, and imitate you in what we do and say.
ALL: Amen.

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!*

The First Station: Pilate Condemns Christ

READER 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 23:24-5
READER 2: Pilate condemned Jesus because of vanity — he was worried about 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. 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 ...*

The Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross

READER 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. 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 ...*

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

READER 1: "No slave is greater than his master. If they persecuted 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. Setbacks and failures in my life test my faith, too.
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 ...*

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

READER 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!
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 ...*

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Carry the Cross

READER 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.
LEADER: Lord Jesus, when I am afflicted by the cross, help me remember that it is you and me, together, arms around each other, carrying the cross up the hill. Amen.
ALL: *Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...*

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

READER 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 ...*

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

READER 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. How often do I make

Christ's Way of the Cross

the perfect enemy of the good in my spiritual life? Do I realize Christ doesn't expect perfection — he expects 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 ...*

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

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

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

READER 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. Do I ever give Satan reason to think he is winning?
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 ...*

The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

READER 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 represented 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 ...*

The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

READER 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 ...*

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

READER 1: "Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom." — Matthew 27:50-51
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.
LEADER: Dear Lord, the Crucifixion is the greatest sign of hope in the world. Amen.
ALL: *Our Father ... Hail Mary ... Glory be ...*

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down From the Cross

READER 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 ...*

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

READER 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: 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.
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 ...*

The Fifteenth Station: Jesus Rises (Omitted during Lent)

READER 1: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins." — 1 Corinthians 15:17
READER 2: The story of sin and death doesn't sum up the story of our Christian lives either. Christ came to rise and to live with us forever.
LEADER: Lord Jesus, we are moved by the words, "Behold, I am making all things new!" It is at your resurrection that you fulfilled this promise. Make us new men and women in 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.

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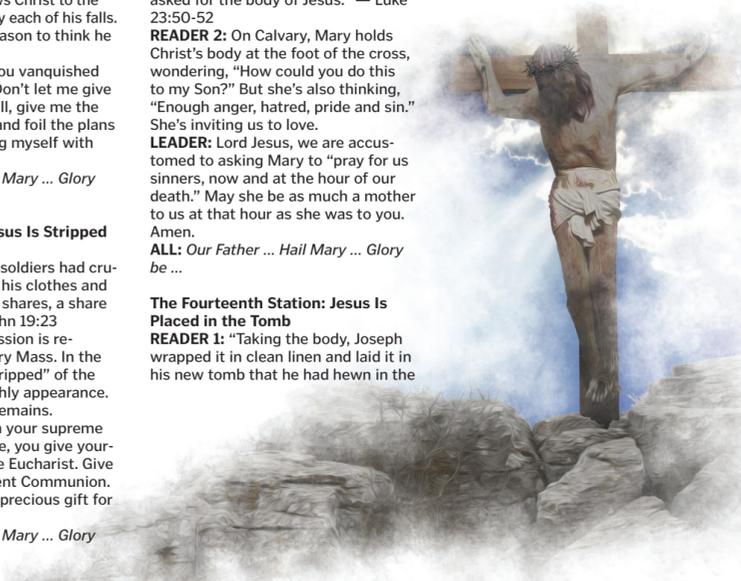
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