

Station of the Cross-Lenten Home Devotion

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

The First Station: Jesus is condemned to die.

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.

The Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross.

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.

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time.

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.

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother.

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.

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross.

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.

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

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.

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time.

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.

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem.

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.

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time.

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.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped.

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.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

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.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on The Cross.

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."

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down from The Cross.

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

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Laid in The Tomb.

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.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to You. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in Your steps and so come to share Your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

Dedicate your Lenten Prayers for emergency responders and health care workers.

