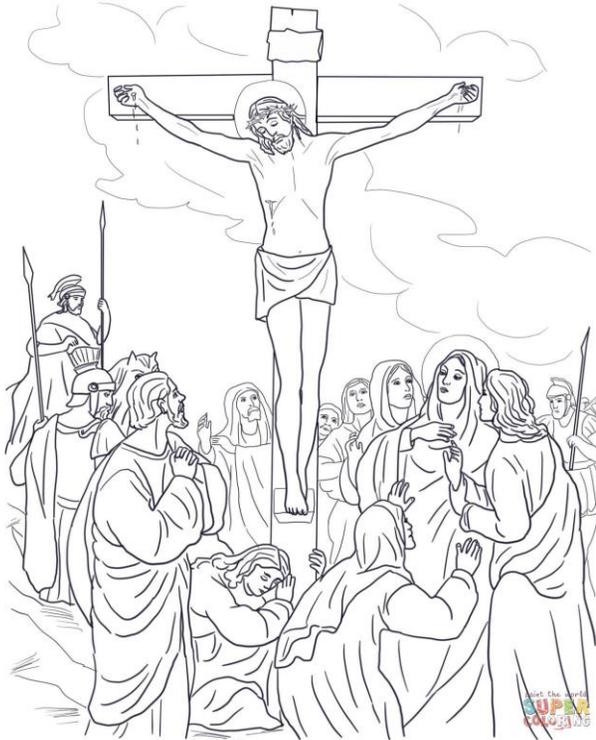


## Stations of the Cross



**Tuesday of Holy Week**  
**March 27, 2018**

*Inspired by and adapted from "The Way of the Cross"  
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## Stations of the Cross

**Reader 1:** On this day we gather to remember Jesus our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. Let us draw near in full assurance of God's endless love and mercy. We give our thanks and praise to Jesus Christ who carries our sorrows, heals our wounds and redeems us from sin and death.

**Reader 2:** The service tonight is based on the Stations of The Cross - a devotion that was developed in the Middle Ages by the Franciscans as a way of allowing people who could not travel to the Holy Land to walk where Christ walked on the day of his passion. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century many churches had stations, or stops, ranged at intervals along their walls, each with a cross, and under that cross a representation of an event in the passion narrative. Nine of the fourteen stations are taken directly from scripture and the other five come out of the earliest traditions of the church.

**Reader 1:** Let us pray: God, our Father, as we walk through the events of your Son's passion and death, may we draw closer to him. Move our hearts, fill us with devotion and love for Jesus, and fill us with compassion for all who suffer even now. In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

## **STATION ONE: Jesus is Condemned to Death**

**Reader 1:** It is Friday - early in the morning. Jesus is brought from Caiaphas the High Priest to Pontius Pilate, the Governor, on trumped-up charges of treason and is condemned to death.

**Reader 2:** The crowd cries, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate sits on the judge's bench asking the crowd of leaders and people, "Shall I crucify your King?" and they cry out, "We have no king but the Emperor!" It seems so callous and unjust. The world is so often unjust. We ourselves can be callous and unjust. I wonder now how often I have participated in allowing an innocent person to suffer. How often have I judged and dismissed persons as unworthy - as not due my care or compassion? How often have I taken part in carrying out the judgement of others - without question, without thought, without even a tear?

**Reader 1:** O, Lord Jesus, when have I seen you hungry, or sick, or in prison, or without clothing, or alone, and not helped you? Help me to remember how you came to us, how you come to us now - and how we have so often responded to your coming with words of condemnation - or with silence. Grant me, grant us all, the grace to reach out to you when you next come, to reach out with words and deeds of love and justice. **Amen.**

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

## **STATION TWO: Jesus Accepts His Cross**

**Reader 1:** A heavy cross is thrust into Jesus' arms. He is ordered to carry it to the site of His execution. Jesus accepts the cross. Carrying it by himself, he goes out to the Place of the Skull - Golgotha - to be crucified with two other men.

**Reader 2:** He went out carrying his cross.... like so many others before him and after him. Beaten, mocked, bent over, bleeding. A horrible sight that people fail to see even as they gather on the streets to gossip and to stare. It is so hard to see the suffering around us, lest we somehow end up feeling the pain, the burden, that the one who is afflicted must carry. Humanity is burdened with many crosses - war, hunger and famine, greed and poverty, sickness and death. Everywhere you look there are people who bear those crosses - people who are afflicted, people whom we look at but do not see, people struggling, alone, people who bear the image of Jesus. This Jesus - he walked that road of sorrow - like so many before him. Alone. Carrying the burden that he did not earn. Without a word. In silence.

**Reader 1:** Lord Jesus, you accepted the cross - even though it did not belong to you - even though you did not deserve it. You carried the burden that belongs to us. Teach us how to bear each other's burdens. **Amen.**

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

### **STATION THREE: Jesus Falls the First Time**

**Reader 1:** The cross is heavy and the road to Calvary, the road to Golgotha - the place of death - is long. Jesus, weary from lack of sleep, loneliness, fear, and the beatings he received, slumps to the ground. Soldiers quickly drag him to his feet again.

**Reader 2:** All around Jesus are the mockers and those who take delight in human misery and those who wanted rid of him. It is hot and sticky in the crowded little street. The air is filled with foreboding on this day of Preparation for Passover. These people should have their hearts on pondering the things of God. Instead they are intent, in the name of God, to do this evil. The world is filled with people who have fallen and struggle to rise and often there are no hands to help them. Often there are those who believe they deserve their plight, or simply ignore it, or those who just get on with doing their job without thinking of the people they are dealing with.

**Reader 1:** Lord Jesus, so much of our wickedness rises out of our self-absorption and fear. So much happens because we fail in compassion for those who suffer. Forgive us and help us to see you in each person who suffers or falls. Help us never to be so absorbed in what we are doing that we fail to see the suffering around us.  
**Amen.**

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## **STATION FOUR: Jesus Meets His Mother**

**Reader 1:** In horror - stunned, numb - Mary watches Jesus sway and stagger down the street. Her son, who glances at her in his agony, is being dragged off to his death.

**Reader 2:** The look on her face. She stood there in anguish, tears pouring from her eyes. What mother would not feel the agony of Mary's helplessness and sense of loss? What father would not care? In a world filled with death and destruction from wars and earthquakes, from riots and terror, from drought and starvation, there are so many mothers, so many fathers, facing what Mary faced.

**Reader 1:** Lord Jesus, help us to remember Mary your mother as she stood alone in grief. Help us to remember all the other Marys of this world when they suffer. May we be a true source of grace and comfort to them, comforted as we are, by you. **Amen.**

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## **STATION FIVE: Simon Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross**

**Reader 1:** Jesus is faltering under the load. The soldiers fear that he might die along the way. They seize Simon of Cyrene, put the cross on his shoulders as he stands behind Jesus and make him help shoulder the load.

**Reader 2:** A perfect stranger, coming into the city, just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. Or was it the right place at the right time? Was he reluctant? Was he afraid? Or was he glad to help Jesus? Were there others standing there who would have liked to help Jesus, but were afraid to get involved? How often does that happen in this world? And yet, there was one person who did help, whether reluctantly or gladly, and this also happens so often in the world, often unobserved and uncelebrated.

**Reader 1:** Lord Jesus, we thank you for strangers in our midst, who often unwittingly, even unwillingly, do what needs to be done, help people who are struggling, share people's burdens with them. Open our eyes and hearts; enlarge our vision, that we may be ones who help you - and others - to bear the unbearable load. **Amen.**

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

## **STATION SIX: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

**Reader 1:** As Jesus passes by, a woman - Veronica we call her - reaches out of the press of the crowd and lovingly, gently wipes the blood and the sweat from Jesus' face.

**Reader 2:** A woman has done what no one else has done. She has reached out and helped the helpless - mopping the blood and sweat from his face. We may imagine that even the crowd quiets for a moment. What she has done is so full of love and compassion and courage. There are many like Veronica, quietly reaching out to help the afflicted, unknown, unseen often, so many good people who care so much and lovingly do what they can to help, even a little bit.

**Reader 1:** Increase our courage, O Lord, and our compassion. Help us wipe away every tear from the eyes of those who are oppressed - even when it may cost us to do so. Help us not to worry if we cannot solve all their problems, but to do what we can do, gently, lovingly, tenderly. **Amen.**

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

## **STATION SEVEN: Jesus Falls the Second Time**

**Reader 1:** Jesus falls again, despite the help of the Cyrene. He lies sprawled in the dirt, sweat beading on his face, mingling with the blood from the cuts on his forehead and the dust of these well-travelled streets. The soldiers, impatient and anxious to be over this job, roughly drag him to his feet again, cursing him.

**Reader 2:** The weight of the cross is so much and Jesus is so very weak by this time. He is bearing a heavy burden - like so many others in our world - and he has been forced once again to his knees - like so many have before him and so many will after him. How do the spectators feel as they watch this? Did they recognize their own pain? Do they try to hide that pain by laughing at it, as we have all done at times? Do they reject that pain by jeering at him? Do they really know what is happening - how this Jesus is enduring what he should not have to endure? How he is a victim of the evil that is in us all?

**Reader 1:** Lord, we have offended greatly. We have shrugged off the burdens of others so carelessly. We have neglected mercy and loving kindness. Too often we think only of ourselves. Forgive us. **Amen.**

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

## **STATION EIGHT: Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women**

**Reader 1:** A large crowd of women have followed Jesus' path to Golgotha. They are weeping and wailing in traditional mourning for this man, their friend. They are overcome by their grief and by their helplessness. Jesus says to them, "Don't weep for me but for yourselves and your children."

**Reader 2:** They cry, these women who follow Jesus, as so many are crying inside. The tears are a start, to really feel compassion for the suffering, and that will inevitably lead to action, compassionate action, prophetic action. Jesus speaks to them, barely heard over their wailing. "If you must weep," he says, "weep for yourselves and your children." Is this a word of judgement - or compassion? Jesus in his suffering, feeling compassion for those who are still mired in this world, still ensnared in the evil systems that condemn the innocent to suffering and death.

**Reader 1:** Help us Lord to shed the tears, to feel the compassion, and to remember that it is not just you that we must weep for, but ourselves, our children, our society. And show us what we may do to save our world - our children - from suffering as you have suffered. **Amen.**

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## **STATION NINE: Jesus Falls the Third Time**

**Reader 1:** No sleep, nothing to eat or drink since supper the eve before, the interrogations, the scourging, the mockery - they have all taken their toll. Jesus falls again to the dust and grime of the crowded streets of Jerusalem amidst the noise of weeping and heckling.

**Reader 2:** This is almost too much. How much more will he have to endure? How much more will we have to endure? Jesus has become a pathetic spectacle - just as these crucifixions are meant to be. The laughter as he struggles once more to his feet is awful. How can people laugh? Or just walk away? Don't they feel any pity? And yet, there is so much suffering in the world. It is overwhelming, so hard to be aware of it, so hard to really feel compassion for all. It becomes too much for us and we turn away, occupy ourselves with other things, try not to think about it.

**Reader 1:** Lord Jesus, you have put up with so much for us. How great your despair must have been that day. Teach us Lord, from your example, to not add to the pain of this world. Help us to keep open hearts, so that we do not turn away from our neighbours who are in pain. Give us a greater capacity to feel, enough love to bear the pain: your love. **Amen.**

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## **STATION TEN: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**

**Reader 1:** Finally, they arrive at the place where Jesus will be crucified. People dump their garbage very near the place known as Golgotha. Hurriedly, roughly, his clothes are stripped from his back leaving him naked in front of the crowd - naked, exhausted and humiliated.

**Reader 2:** The soldiers stripped him. It's their job. To expose him. To humiliate him. They did their job, some with more glee than others, wondering who would get his robe, a robe that despite the blood and the grime and tears, might fetch a good price. Jesus just stands there - swaying. With nothing. Is this his poverty? or is it ours that we see? They took his clothes, took his dignity, much like this world strips naked hundreds and thousands of its people every day with its greed and its uncaring. Yet, in some strange way, he retains a dignity that most of us do not have. In some strange way, he has so much more than we have.

**Reader 1:** Dear Lord, we reach out and grasp greedily for so much, searching for what will satisfy us, only it so often doesn't. We don't know how to let go of things that don't matter and turn to you. Often, we don't even know what does matter. Even when we get that right, we go astray. Forgive us. Heal us. Show us the way. **Amen.**

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## **STATION ELEVEN: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

**Reader 1:** Roughly, contemptuously, the soldiers thrust Jesus down onto his cross. Holding him down - some sit on him - they pound the nails through his hands and feet. After he is lifted up, the soldiers throw dice for his clothing to fulfil the scripture, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." Yet even there he feels compassion, says, "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing."

**Reader 2:** The ring of the hammer on the nails, Jesus' torture, captures our imaginations. We care so deeply for Jesus, slowly giving up his life for us, forgiving us with his last breaths. And yet, these things still happen every day. From utter brutality to the unkind word that flays the soul - they still happen. The ease with which the soldiers threw the dice beneath his feet as if nothing were happening, is repeated today. Decisions are made, and we speak of "collateral damage." It is so painful to see the human faces who bear the consequences of those decisions, so much easier to close our eyes.

**Reader 1:** O God, our God, we have forsaken you, fled from the crosses you ask us to bear, turned to endless distractions to numb our pain. We have not taken the care to see what we are doing with our decisions. Help us to turn to you, to open our eyes, to embrace the cross you have offered us. Help us to regain our humanity. **Amen.**

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## **STATION TWELVE: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

**Reader 1:** The nightmare of pain and suffering, the agony of betrayal and loneliness, come to an end. After three mercifully brief hours on the cross, suspended between earth and sky, Jesus dies. Choking on the hyssop dipped in wine he gasps out the words, "It is finished." He bows his head and gives up his spirit.

**Reader 2:** It was unnaturally dark during the time he spent dying. But there was more than enough light to see what happened. People could see the sign that was nailed above his head. They could hear the passers-by mocking him, and hear the words he spoke to his mother and his friend, and what he said to the thief on the cross next to him. It was not too dark to see his agony and his death, or the spear thrust into him to make sure that he was dead. And seeing him die, even the centurion spoke the words that came to his lips as unbidden as the tears, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

**Reader 1:** "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death." (Psalm 22:1, 3, -15) **Amen.**

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## **STATION THIRTEEN: Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross**

**Reader 1:** He is dead. His body hangs limply, heavily. The darkness which had filled the sky since noon begins to fade. A wild rumour that the curtain of the temple had been torn in two from top to bottom was circulating. The soldiers yank out the nails to get him down. Everyone, including the women who had followed him and were looking on from a distance, stands back awkwardly, and watches the scene before them. Bleeding, broken, limp and heavy in his death - they place him in the arms of his mother.

**Reader 2:** How did she feel? Mary, the mother of Jesus, how did she feel? With infinite tenderness, she gently held him and wiped his bloodied brow as her tears fell on his lifeless body. How did she feel? She shoos away the hands that would have parted her from her son. "Just one more moment," she whispers. How did she feel? "A sword shall pierce your own soul, also." Simeon's prophecy is fulfilled in this moment.

**Reader 1:** "I cry to you, O Lord;" I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low." (Psalm 142:5-6) When a sword pierces our souls, O God, be there to hear our cries. Be our refuge and our strength. **Amen.**

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## **STATION FOURTEEN: The Burial of Jesus**

**Reader 1:** Relatives and friends carry his body to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man who was also a disciple of Jesus. They lay his body, wrapped in a clean linen cloth, in the new tomb which has been carved out of the hill, and then they roll a boulder across the entrance and silently withdraw.

**Reader 2:** The place where they laid the body to rest was in a garden. The garden seems strangely silent and still after the hubbub, weeping, shouting, catcalls and noises of the crowd on Golgotha. The women creep in to see where he is laid. Perhaps some of the other disciples sneak back quietly, to see, to weep at his grave. It seems the end of so many hopes, so many dreams. So hard, at that point, to see the meaning of it all.

**Reader 1:** Loving God, it says in your word that you did not withhold nor spare even your own Son, but gave him up for all of us. Teach us what this means. Give us new hope - we ask it in his name. **Amen.**

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

**Reader 1:** Let us pray:

**May we who have turned our eyes on Jesus this night, keep our sight fixed on him throughout our lives. May we learn to recognise his presence in the poor and the naked, the hungry and the thirsty, the sick and the suffering. May we learn to see Christ in the face of each person we meet. And may each person we meet see the face of Christ in us. Amen.**

**Reader 1:** Father, send down your abundant blessing upon your people who have devoutly recalled the death of your Son. Grant them pardon and bring them comfort. May their faith grow stronger and their eternal salvation be assured. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord and one another.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Please join us for our other Holy Week Services:*

Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 pm, Stations of the Cross

Wednesday, March 28, 10:00 am, Healing Service and  
Eucharist

Thursday, March 29, 5:30 pm, Holy Communion with  
Dinner and Footwashing in the hall, followed by  
Stripping the Altar.

Friday, March 30, 10:30 am, Ecumenical Good Friday  
service at Emmanuel.

1:30 pm, Anglican Good Friday Liturgy

Saturday, March 31, 8:00 pm, The Great Vigil of Easter