

Stations of the Cross – Good Friday, 2021

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

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, strength to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge. *(Solemn Intercession for Good Friday, 2020)*

**All: Lord, let me receive the cross gladly;
let me recognize Your cross in mine,
and that of the whole world in Yours.**

**Do not let me shut my eyes to the magnitude of the world's sorrow
or to the suffering of those nearest to me.
Do not let me shrink from accepting my share in that which is too big for me,
and do not let me fail in sympathy for that which seems trivial.**

**Teach me to accept myself—
my own temperament, my temptations, my limitations, my failures,
the humiliation of being myself, as I am.**

**Allow me, Lord, all my life long
to accept both small suffering and great suffering,
certain that both, through Your love, are redeeming the world.**

**And in communion with all, and above all with You,
let me accept joyfully, death
and the fear of death—
my death
and the deaths of those whom I love—
not with my will but with Yours,
knowing that you have changed sorrow to joy,
and that You have changed death to life.**

(Caryll Houselander)

**Sung: At the cross her station keeping,
Mary stood in sorrow, weeping,
When her Son was crucified.**

First Station***Jesus is condemned to death***

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: Again the high priest began to ask him, and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said to him, "I am. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." But the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" And they all condemned him as liable to death. (*Mark 14:61-64*)

Leader: How do we expect God to act in our lives? Who do we say that Jesus is? It may be easy to think of Jesus as a profound moral teacher, a wise sage, or a man who had the strength to bear persecution and suffering. Yet, the reality of Jesus being God is a scandal. It is a scandal because in Jesus God suffers and dies. When we behold the suffering that surrounds us, how can we possibly think that God does not understand it? God does not simply understand it, but God the Son—Jesus—experiences it.

All: Oh Jesus, how many times I want you to act in the way that I think you should act. Help me to have the courage, once again, to know that you are truly God.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

**Sung: While she waited in her anguish,
Seeing Christ in torment languish,
Bitter sorrow pierced her heart.**

Second Station***Jesus carries his Cross***

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: And Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!" But they cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away, bearing the cross for himself. (*John 19:14-17*)

Leader: How is it humanly possible that someone could *embrace* the very means of his execution? How can Jesus willingly embrace his cross? The answer is that it is simply impossible for someone to embrace his or her cross, his or her suffering. The notion that one needs to muster up the strength to accomplish the impossible is foolishness. The cross itself is foolishness—an embarrassment to a world that seeks the complete elimination of pain. Yet, Jesus embraces the cross *because* he is God. Jesus *needs* to embrace the cross because he is human. How do we as humans impart crosses upon each other?

All: Oh Jesus, the pains and sufferings that I have to contend with are impossible for me to embrace. Yet, you being God can embrace my cross. Allow my hands to become your hands so that you can accomplish the impossible through me.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: With what pain and desolation,
With what noble resignation,
Mary watched her dying Son.*

Third Station

Jesus falls the first time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I have spoken to you: No servant is greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also. *(John 15:18-20)*

Leader: The journey to the crucifixion is confusing. So many sounds, so many voices. While the weight of the cross is enough to cause us to fall, how many other people may want to push us down or distract us? The sufferings in our lives come from many sources, yet when we try to focus only on *one* cause, we may foolishly think that we can fix our pain by using our own strength.

All: Oh Jesus, you know the full depth of our suffering, since you have embraced every ounce of suffering that has ever or ever will exist. May I be willing to humbly fall in order that I may allow myself to be picked up by you.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: Ever patient in her yearning,
Though her tear-filled eyes were burning,
Mary gazed upon her Son.*

Fourth Station

Jesus meets his afflicted mother

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple

standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (*John 19:25-27*)

Leader: There is no bond like that between mother and son. How tragic it is when that bond is weakened or broken. Yet, the dysfunctions that may exist between parents and their children are not outside of God’s knowledge. This encounter between Jesus and his mother, while seemingly tender, also is dysfunctional. Jesus cannot offer anything to Mary and Mary cannot offer anything to Jesus. Yet, Jesus humbly allows John, his disciple, to be present to Mary, so that Mary can be present to John.

All: **Oh Jesus, there are so many ways that I want to be present to those in need, yet the dysfunction of the current circumstances makes it impossible for me to do so. Help me to empower others to help those whom I love, now that I am unable to do so myself. Help me to get out of the way.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Sung: *Who, that sorrow contemplating,
On that passion meditating,
Would not share the Virgin's grief?*

Fifth Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reader: And when they had mocked Jesus, they took the purple cloak off and put his own clothes on him, and they led him out to be crucified. Then they forced a certain passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, to take up his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, a name meaning ‘the place of the skull’. (*Mark 15:20-22*)

Leader: How many people do we pass by on any given day? How many people do we see on television or on the internet over the course of an hour? Far more than we could imagine. Yet, the same God who willed us into existence has willed each of these people into existence! Just because we do not personally know each person that we encounter, does not mean that God does not know him or her. Simon did not know Jesus—he only knew that he was a convicted criminal. The person that we reject because of our assumptions is precious in the eyes of God who willed him or her into existence.

All: **Oh Jesus, your humanity enables me to share in your divinity. Help me to know that your divinity is present in each person that I encounter—especially those that I do not personally know.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Sung: *Christ she saw, for our salvation,
Scourged with cruel acclamation,
Bruised and beaten by the rod.*

Sixth Station

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reader: “Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?” And answering the king will say to them, “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.”
(Matthew 25:37-40)

Leader: Jesus was not just sentenced to death on the cross, he was extensively scourged before he began his journey to be crucified. The lacerations that covered his body were literally a bloody mess. Yet, Veronica was moved to wipe the blood and dirt from his face. Why just his face when his entire body could have been cleaned? Because Veronica yearned for the gaze of Christ. Gazing into Jesus’s eyes she could see her true identity reflected in his eyes.

All: **Oh Jesus, I am called to be your presence in a broken world. Help me to know that I am your presence when I allow your gaze to penetrate me. When I encounter suffering and feel overwhelmed, may I be content with your simple gaze.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Sung: *Christ she saw with life-blood failing,
All her anguish unavailing,
Saw him breathe his very last.*

Seventh Station

Jesus falls the second time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reader: It was our weaknesses that he carried, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the punishment that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

Leader: As the journey to the place of crucifixion gets closer, the voices get louder and the evil behind those voices is more pronounced. Yet, evil cannot exist on its own—it is a deviation of that which is good. You cannot understand what it means to be healthy unless you are

sick. The sickness of this world tries in vain to eliminate suffering through means that often cause more suffering.

All: **Oh Jesus, the sickness that is in this world is brought about by my selfishness—intentionally or unintentionally. Help me to better understand the selfishness of those around me so that I can better understand my own selfishness.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Sung: *Mary, fount of love's devotion,
Let me share with true emotion
All the sorrow you endured.*

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reader: There was following Jesus a great crowd of people, and among them were some women who were bewailing and lamenting him. Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." (*Like 23:27-28*)

Leader: What does it mean to be a sympathetic person? Why do we show sympathy? Is it possible that our sympathy might stem from a place of guilt? Why do others suffer and we do not? Might it be from a place of justification? In other words, we show sympathy because that is what is expected of us. Yet, how does our sympathy compare to the unconditional love of God for those who suffer?

All: **Oh Jesus, I often think that by extending sympathy towards another I am performing an act of charity. Help me to understand my personal need for healing rather than being upset that others are not experiencing relief in the way that I think they should.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Sung: *Virgin, ever interceding,
Hear me in my fervent pleading:
Fire me with your love of Christ.*

Ninth Station

Jesus falls a third time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reader: I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life according to your word. I declared my ways, and you answered me; teach me your commands. Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds. My soul weeps for sorrow; strengthen me with your words. *(Psalm 118:25-28)*

Leader: The weight of the cross, the pushing and shoving, and the volume of the noise lessen the space between Jesus and the ground. It is hard to recover from this third fall. From this point forward, Jesus will be dragged to the place of crucifixion. How often do we drag through our days, not knowing if and when we might find some source of relief? Others around us seem to be moving along just fine, yet here we are dragging our feet. Is it possible that we are not allowing those around us to bring us comfort? Are we prideful? Do we wallow, dragging our feet and expecting others to pity us?

All: Oh Jesus, there are so many times that I want others to pay attention to me. I often want people to pity my pain or to impress others with how “well” I can handle suffering. Help me to realize that my suffering can be comforted by your presence in others. Allow me to be picked up by those around me.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: Mother, may this prayer be granted:
That Christ's love may be implanted
In the depths of my poor soul.*

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: They gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall; but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. Then after they had crucified him, they divided his clothes, casting lots, to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, “They divided my clothes among them, and upon my garments they cast lots.” *(Matthew 27:34-35)*

Leader: It so easy to cover up our true selves. We do this by “impressing” others with our knowledge, our financial stability, our social media status, our fashion, our relationships, and a host of other “noteworthy” traits. Yet, isn’t this all just a distraction from our true identity? When all of our “securities” are stripped away, it is almost comical how little we can attribute to ourselves.

All: Oh Jesus, you desire for me to be comfortable with my true self, not with my earthly comforts. Help me to understand that vulnerability is not a sign of weakness but an opportunity to affirm my true identity, which is found in communion with you—a Son of God, a Daughter of God.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: At the cross, your sorrow sharing,
All your grief and torment bearing,
Let me stand and mourn with you.*

Eleventh Station

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: When they came to Golgotha, the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus and the robbers, one on his right and the other on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (*Luke 23:33-34; John 19:18*)

Leader: How often do we feel stretched out by seemingly endless commitments? How often do we feel bound and nailed down by those commitments? How often do we long for freedom? How often do we long just to breathe? Yet, how important do these commitments make us feel? Is *that* feeling worth the feeling of being pierced by nails?

All: Oh Jesus, I so desire to be an important person, yet I do not realize how important I already am to you. You became human, so that I could realize that I am meant to become who you are—a Child of God the Father. Help me to love your presence in those around me who are also beloved Sons and Daughters of God.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: Fairest maid of all creation,
Queen of hope and consolation,
Let me feel your grief sublime.*

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the curtain of the temple was torn in the middle. Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, "It is finished. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Then, bowing his head, he died. (*Luke 23:44-46; John 19:30b*)

Leader: The most important symbol in Christianity is the crucifix. In practically every Catholic church one is greeted with the image of a dead man on a cross. A public execution is the rally cry of Christians. How ridiculous is this? Why would anyone desire to live his or her

life for a dead man, let alone die a martyr's death for one? Perhaps a God who knows death so personally is the only God worth knowing.

All: **Oh Jesus, whether I think about it or not, I fear death. I do not like to dwell on my mortality. I spend most of my time making plans that foolishly avoid the inevitable. Help me to understand that the mystery of my own death is what frees me to fully engage the mystery of my life, one moment at a time.**

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: Virgin, in your love befriend me,
At the Judgment Day defend me.
Help me by your constant prayer.*

Thirteenth Station

The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead so that they did not break his legs, but one of them opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water. Joseph of Arimathea, because he was a disciple of Jesus (although a secret one for fear of the Jews), besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave permission. (*John 19:33-34, 38a*)

Leader: To say that this is not a pretty sight is putting it mildly. Yet, how many beautiful pieces of art have been made that depict the corpse of Jesus being placed tenderly into the arms and lap of Mary his mother? Reverence for the body is bestowed upon both the living and the dead. How often do I make distinctions upon *which* body I should reverence? The lifeless Body of Christ held by Mary is the same Body of Christ broken in the Eucharist and the same Body of Christ in the brokenness of my brothers and sisters.

All: Oh Jesus, your hidden presence can be discovered at any moment, in any place, in any person. Help me to tenderly behold that which may appear to be lifeless, knowing that my life is sustained by that which I behold.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

*Sung: Savior, when my life shall leave me,
Through your mother's prayers receive me
With the fruits of victory.*

Fourteenth Station***Jesus is laid in the tomb***

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, and wrapping it in a clean linen cloth he laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn out of rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and departed. (*Matthew 27:59-60*)

Leader: A new tomb and new linens surround a dead body. How can a dead man enjoy such “comforts?” How often do we allow our “dead bodies” to be surrounded with the latest and greatest luxuries that the world offers? Yet, dying to ourselves in Christ can enable us to view the material things that surround us as gifts to be received and given to others—not to hoard and bury away.

All: Oh Jesus, it is impossible for me to live in this world without the necessities of food, shelter, and clothing. Help me to realize that even those things that are “unnecessary” can find necessary meaning and purpose when they are understood as blessings that can bless others.

Jesus, may your grace open my heart and mind to true joy and freedom. May I long for the peace that surpasses understanding.

**Sung: *Let me to your love be taken,
Let my soul in death awaken
To the joys of Paradise.***

Fifteenth Station***The Resurrection of Jesus***

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might go and anoint Jesus. Very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had just risen, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, “Who will roll the stone back from the entrance of the tomb for us?”, for it was very large. But looking up they saw that the stone had been rolled back, and upon entering the tomb they were amazed to see a young man sitting at the right side and clothed in a white robe. He said to them, “Do not be terrified. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.” (*Mark 16:1-6*)

Leader: Jesus, I trust in you. Help me to trust in my desire to live for all of eternity without pain and suffering. Help me to seek the eternity of heaven by seeking heaven on earth.

All: **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.
Amen.**

Leader: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

All: **Amen.**