

# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



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The liturgy for Palm Sunday invites us to follow our Lord through Holy Week “from the glory of the palms to the glory of the resurrection by way of the dark road of suffering and death”.

One way of drawing near to Christ this week is through participating in an ancient form of devotion known as the Stations of the Cross. This holy practice dates as far back as 381 AD when a Spanish pilgrim, Egeria, made a pilgrimage from the Mount of Olives to the Church of The Holy Sepulchre, built over the place of Jesus crucifixion and burial. Today, the stations are commonly used as a pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station. This year our pilgrimage will look different than it has in the past, but we trust it will be no less powerful and transformative and offer this resource for you to use in your homes and families.

To the original six stations several more have been added through time. Since the 1700's there have been typically fourteen. Nine come from the Gospels; five others from medieval European piety —Jesus falling three times along the way, Jesus meeting his mother, and Veronica wiping his face. In your own practice, you may modify as it suits your devotions, time, and space.

At each station, we recall and meditate on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers and reflections may be read silently or recited.



# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Take your time as you pause to recall that particular moment in our Lord's Passion, remember those whose lives are particularly touched by this moment in our Lord's suffering, and ask his mercy upon them. As you move through the stations pray that we may grow in our identification with his patience and perseverance and that it would be reflected in our own lives.

Throughout Scripture, in both Old and New Testaments, God's people are called to remember. But they are not called to remember events for the sake of the event. They are called to remember because those events are part of who they are and what they will become. It is in this mode of remembering, of re-presenting the events of the past as part of a living story that has not yet ended, a story in which we still participate, that the events become more than dates and places. They become markers of a journey as those who were no people become a people (Ex 6:7, 1 Peter 2:10), as those who grope awkwardly in the darkness come into the light of God's presence (Isa 9:2, John 8:12), as those who were far off draw ever nearer to God and his grace.

In this time of isolation, when so many of our practices have to be altered, we can still be a people of remembrance. In our individual remembrances we make a collective journey and in the process draw closer to God and each other.





# STATION 1: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



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

**Scripture:** Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. *Matthew 27: 20 - 26*

**Reflection:** 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. As the journey begins ask to be with Jesus.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy, but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified; Mercifully grant that we, walking the Way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



## STATION 2: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS



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

**Scripture:** The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. *Matthew 27: 27-31*

**Reflection:** 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 walks in the path of human misery and suffering and experiences its crushing weight. This journey is for us. He welcomes us to suffer with Christ now so that with Christ we will also share in the Resurrection and new life.

**Prayer:** O Lord our God, whose blessed Son gave his back to be whipped and did not hide his face from shame and spitting: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



# STATION 3: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



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

**Scripture:** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. *Hebrews 2: 17 - 18*

**Reflection:** See our Savior enduring so much suffering, so many insults, and oppressed with the heavy burden of the cross, for love of us. Contemplate the Son of God, Redeemer of the world, and how much He is suffering. In his sufferings we see the gravity of our sins. Lord have mercy!

**Prayer:** Almighty God, you gave your only Son to be for us both a sacrifice for sin and an example of godly living: Give us grace thankfully to receive his inestimable benefits, and daily to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



## STATION 4: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



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

**Scripture:** And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." *Luke 1: 30 - 33*

**Reflection:** Mary seeks her Son, Jesus and meets him on the way to Calvary; she sees Him bound, crowned with thorns, and with the cross on his shoulders. In her ongoing Yes! to God's will Mary submitted faithfully to her Son's Way of the Cross, however painful that would be to bear.

**Prayer:** O God, the King of saints, we praise and glorify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course in your faith and fear: for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; and for all your other righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we pray that, encouraged by their examples, and strengthened by their fellowship, we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## STATION 5: SIMON HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS



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

**Scripture:** And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. *Luke 23: 26*

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. *Matthew 16:24*

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. *Matthew 11: 29,30*

**Reflection:** Jesus 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. Those who suffer tribulations, suffering, persecutions, and are despised for the love of God are helping Jesus carry His cross. If they persevere, they will be partakers of His glory in heaven.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage, we ask you, to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



## STATION 6: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



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

**Scripture:** Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, '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 welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' *Matthew 25: 34 - 40*

**Reflection:** We see so much struggle and darkness and pain and death around the world; it's overwhelming. What can possibly be done? Those who know Christ are called to be present to the suffering, to meet the needs of the suffering, to make sure they are not forgotten and that someone is there for him. In every such action, Christ is with us.

**Prayer:** O Lord our heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served, but to serve: We ask you to bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; endue them with wisdom, patience, and courage, that they may strengthen the weak and raise up those who fall, and, being inspired by your love, may worthily minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the sake of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



# STATION 7: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



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

**Scripture:** Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. *Isaiah 53: 4-5*

**Reflection:** Store up in your heart the image of Jesus on the ground being brought low, knowing that you never need to feel along in your sufferings. Jesus knows deep suffering and he profoundly understands our fatigue and our defeats.

**Prayer:** O God, almighty and merciful, you heal the broken-hearted, and turn the sadness of the sorrowful to joy. Let your fatherly goodness be upon all whom you have made. Remember in pity all those who are this day destitute, homeless, elderly, infirm, or forgotten. Bless the multitude of your poor. Lift up those who are cast down. Mightily befriend innocent sufferers, and sanctify to them the endurance of their wrongs. Cheer with hope all who are discouraged and downcast, and by your heavenly grace preserve from falling those whose poverty tempts them to sin. Though they be troubled on every side, suffer them not to be distressed; though they are perplexed, save them from despair. Grant this, O Lord, for the love of him who for our sakes became poor, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



## STATION 8: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



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

**Scripture:** And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

*Luke 23: 27-28*

**Reflection:** The women of Jerusalem and their children come out to comfort and thank Jesus. They had known 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. Remember this same tender, compassionate, and merciful love is for each of us.

**Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



# STATION 9: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME



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

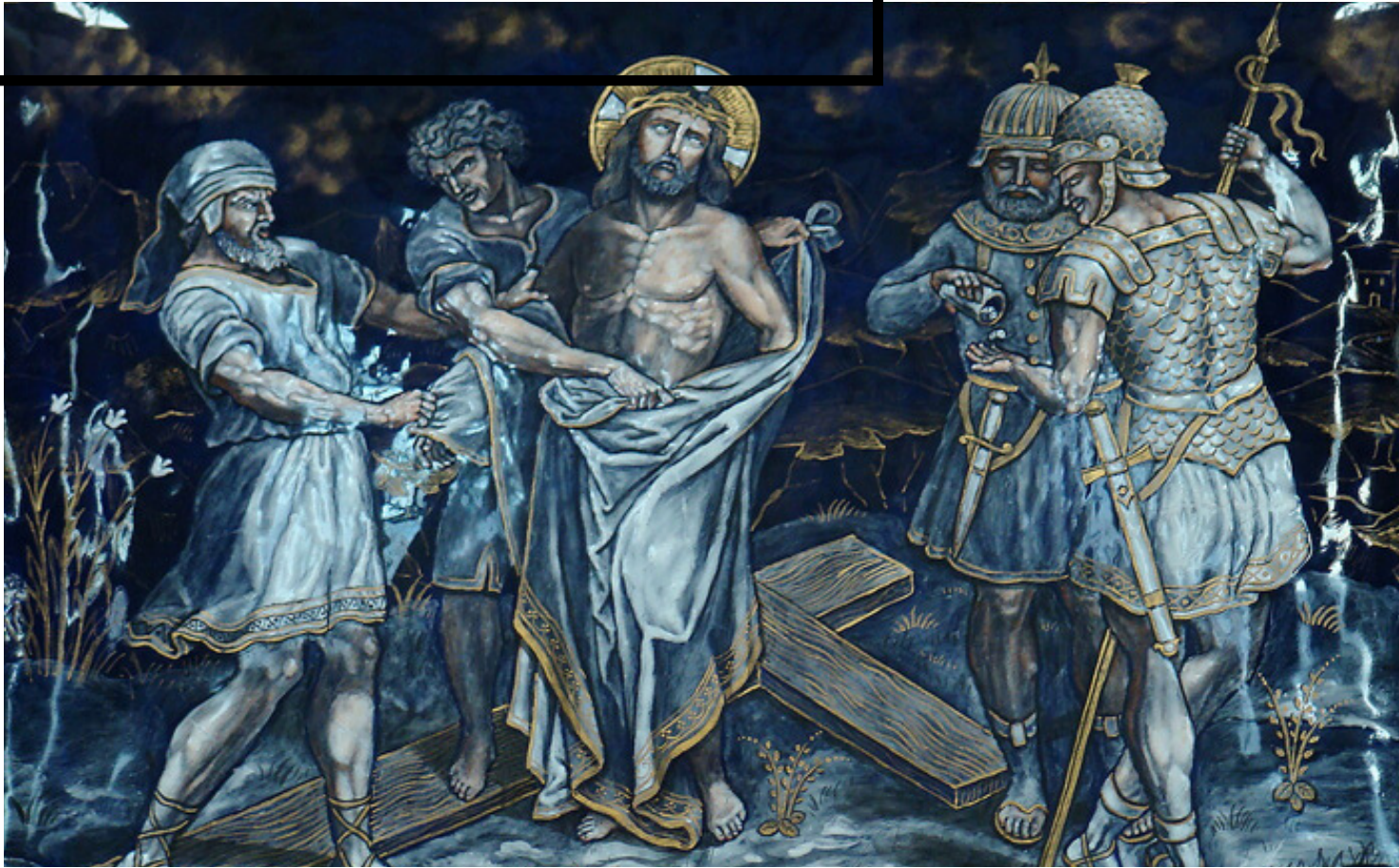
**Scripture:** For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. *1 Peter 2: 20-24*

**Reflection:** It is Jesus' brokenness that makes me whole. His surrender gives me life. Pause to experience and receive how completely he loves you. He is indeed completely poured out for the world.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



# STATION 10: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



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

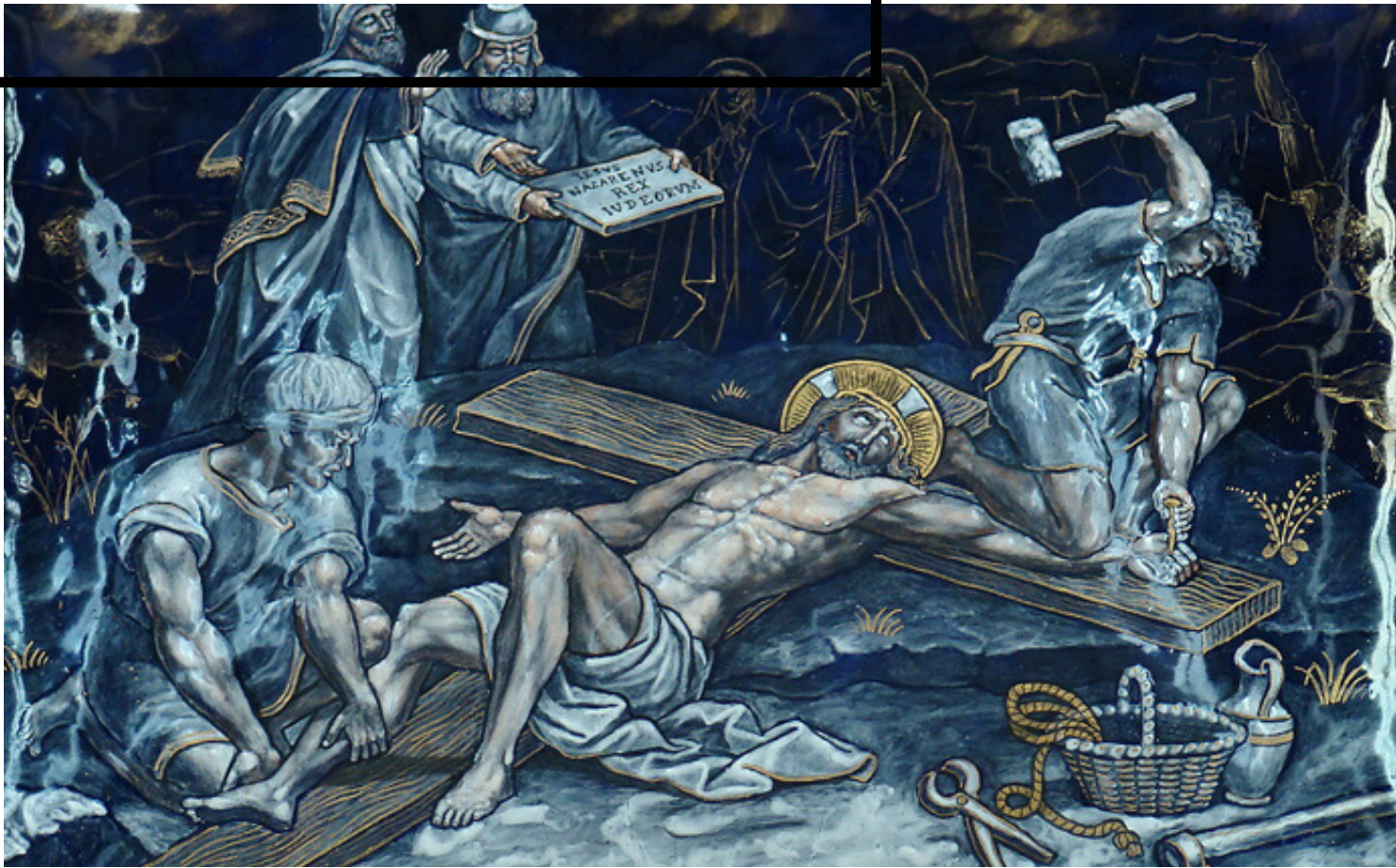
**Scripture:** When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things. *John 19: 23-24*

**Reflection:** Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride or dignity. He experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenseless. No shield or security protects him. Contemplate all that has been taken from him and how much he has given for us. He hangs on the cross in total humility for you.

**Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, in your tender love for us you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our nature, and to suffer death upon the Cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and come to share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



# STATION 11: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



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

**Scripture:** And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." *Luke 23: 33 - 34*

**Reflection:** We can only imagine the cruelty and the unrelenting agony which Jesus experienced during the crucifixion. We enter into the realm of mystery: why did God, who became man for love of us, let himself be nailed to a piece of wood and lifted up amid atrocious physical and spiritual torments? As God, Jesus could have released Himself from the hands of His executioners. He did not powerlessly succumb to being nailed to the cross; He willed it for our salvation. Allow this triumphant surrender by God because of a love we can only glimpse here on earth to wash you anew. Hear it call you to see Christ in everyone you encounter. The cross renews a love inside each of us for Christ and the world he came to save.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.



# STATION 12: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



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

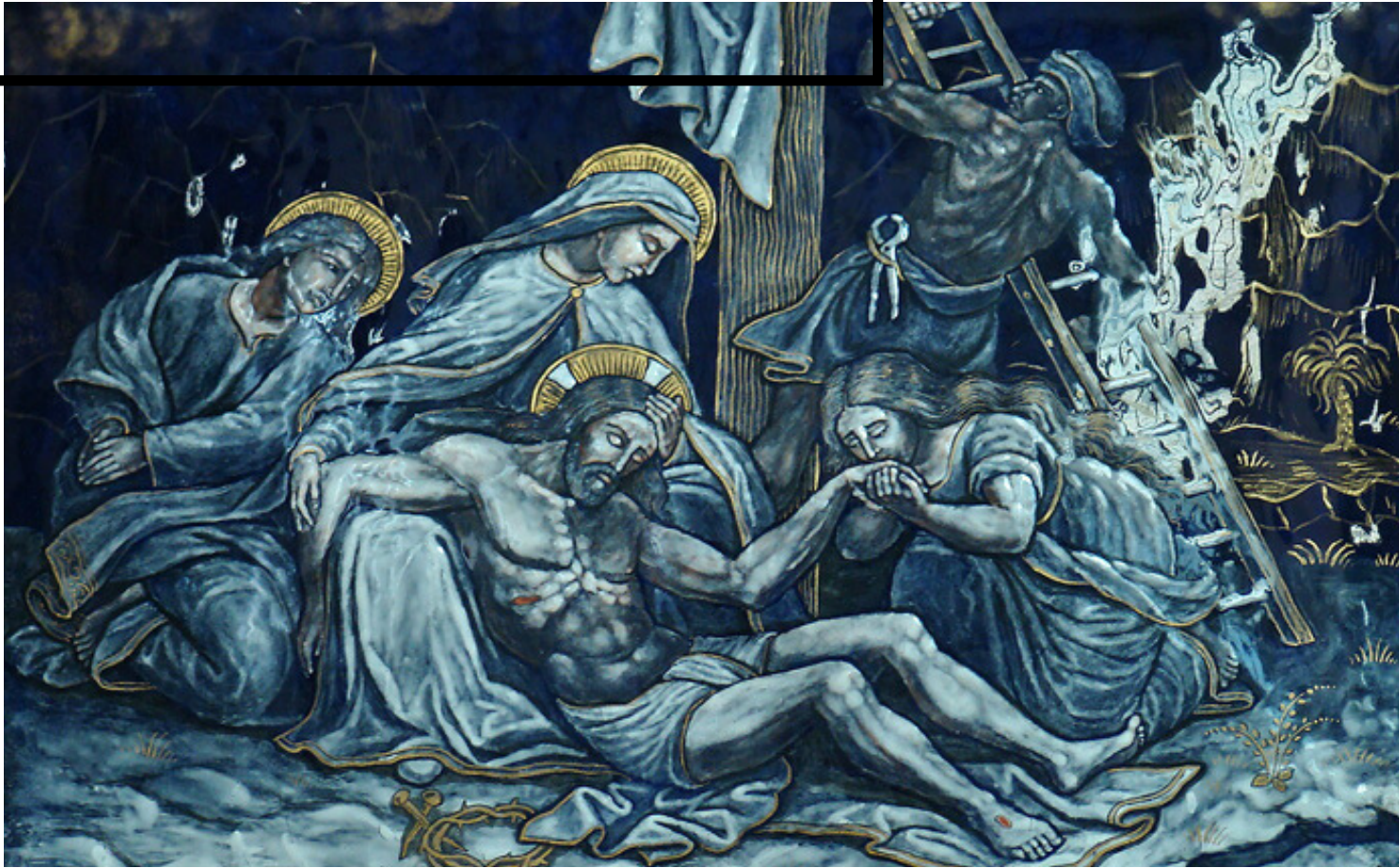
**Scripture:** It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. *Luke 23: 44 - 46*

**Reflection:** Let us be immersed in a sea of sorrow over the death of Jesus and say to Him: "Lord, we thank you for having died on the cross for our sins." We stand at the foot of the cross, side by side with all of humanity, and behold our salvation.

**Prayer:** Almighty God, we beseech you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the Cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



**STATION 13:  
JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN  
FROM THE CROSS**



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

**Scripture:** After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. *John 19:38*

**Reflection:** Jesus has truly died. A profound sacrifice, complete. We pause to remember that even in the hour of darkness, he is still here.

**Prayer:** O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



# STATION 14: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



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

**Scripture:** So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. *John 19: 40 - 42*

**Reflection:** Contemplate this act of closure on Jesus' life. In solidarity with all humanity, his body is taken to its grave. In the fullness of faith in the Risen One express gratitude for this way of the cross. Ask Jesus, whose hands, feet and side still bear the signs of this journey, to grant us the graces needed to take up our own crosses to be servants of his own mission.

**Prayer:** Grant, Lord, that we who are baptised into the death of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ may continually put to death our evil desires and be buried with him; and that through the grave and gate of death we may come to our joyful resurrection; through his merits, who died and was buried and rose again for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Stations of the Cross at the Smithsonian American Art Museum**

An online eighteen-stop tour walking the road of Jesus recognizing many other paths of sorrow present in the world today.

<https://artandtheology.org/2018/02/11/saamstations/>

### **The O'Connell Paintings**

These Stations were painted by David O'Connell (1898-1976) and the style of these paintings is quite different from the style of the Stations that usually adorn the walls of churches.

[http://www.msperu.org/espirit/liturgia/viacrucis/pic\\_viacrucis/O%27Connell/Stations%20&%20O%27Connell%20Paintings.htm](http://www.msperu.org/espirit/liturgia/viacrucis/pic_viacrucis/O%27Connell/Stations%20&%20O%27Connell%20Paintings.htm)

### **Barnett Newman**

A collection of 15 abstract modernist paintings by Barnett Newman made between 1958 and 1966.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/barnett-newmans-stations-of-the-cross-draws-pilgrims-to-the-national-gallery/2017/04/13/e2cfc882-1ef0-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/barnett-newmans-stations-of-the-cross-draws-pilgrims-to-the-national-gallery/2017/04/13/e2cfc882-1ef0-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7_story.html)

### **The Stabat Mater**

The Stabat Mater is a 13th-century Christian hymn which portrays Mary's suffering during Jesus' crucifixion. It is traditionally used in conjunction with the stations of the cross.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHQVtYzjLao>



## Sources:

The Book of Common Prayer 2019

Common Worship

Thurston, Herbert (1914). *The Stations of the Cross: an account of their history and devotional purpose*.  
London: Burns & Oates

'Stations of the Cross' PDF  
[www.hopeanglican.us](http://www.hopeanglican.us)

The Stations of the Cross  
[www.stmarymagdalenes.weebly.com](http://www.stmarymagdalenes.weebly.com)

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