

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



Opening Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ:

You suffered a great deal for me. I cannot even fathom just how much You accomplished for me through Your sacrifice. I have trials I want to get rid of. But You have shown by your journey to the Cross and Your death that I should embrace my sufferings as a journey that will lead to glory. Please help me to unite my sufferings with Your Way of the Cross, so that I may be healed, purified, and strengthened, and so that I may become Your instrument of healing love for others.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

1st Station
Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Accusers brought many false charges against Jesus, but He spoke not a word in His own defense. "Crucify him!" they shouted.

Pilate washed his hands, to show the decision was not his own, but he did not dare to side publicly with Jesus; instead, he was willing to content the people.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, when You were misunderstood,
You silently forgave;
but we so often respond in anger.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, You gave us opportunity to choose Jesus,
but for so long we have chosen the rebellion
that demanded Your death.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

2nd Station

Jesus Receives the Cross

Jesus was scourged. The whips cut His back until it was shredded and bathed in blood. A crown of thorns was set upon His head in mockery. Then they returned His robe to Him, and brought Him to the cross on which He was to die.

Jesus embraced the cross, resting it painfully on the smarting wounds on His back.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, You were scourged and wounded:

You deserved no punishment,
but were punished in our place.

Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus.

When you were already hurting,
You embraced the cross.

Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

3rd Station

Jesus Falls for the First Time

Jesus had willingly embraced the cross, but His physical body was weak from lack of sleep, from the pressures of arrest and trial, and from torture and beating.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus said, "Yes", but His body hesitated and He fell to His knees, determined to rise again even in His weakness.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, You embraced and shouldered Your cross,
but Your body was weak.

Your people shrink from the weight of suffering.

In our weakness, Lord, let us pray:

Your will be done.

Your will be done.

Jesus, You were first a carpenter:

build us into what You desire,

Plane the rough surfaces of our relationships.

We are Your workmanship -

Your will be done.

Your will be done.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

4th Station

Jesus Is Met by His Blessed Mother

As Jesus again shouldered the cross and bore its burden, He glanced ahead and saw His mother. He could not stop to talk, to explain, to gather her in His arms and comfort her. All His energy was being soaked into that cross.

Who are My mother and brothers? Those who do the will of My Father. Not My will Father, but Yours.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, You had to leave the security of home and family, twice.

You left Your Father to be a man with us, and left Your human family to die for us.

You had to pray to Your Father:

My God, I trust in You.

My God, I trust in You.

Lord, when we leave all and follow you and it hurts those we love,

help us to know that You have been there, too;

That no one leaves behind father, mother, or loved one but is more than rewarded in the end.

Help us to pray:

My God, I trust in You.

My God, I trust in You.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

5th Station

The Cross Is Laid on Simon of Cyrene

Simon carried the cross of Christ. At first it was just a tiresome and unwelcome task he was forced into by the soldiers; only later did he recognize his privilege in shouldering the burden of the One who made the worlds.

He was compelled to carry the cross part of the way for Jesus. Simon, himself a stranger, an outcast, often misunderstood, perhaps identified with Jesus, and felt the gratitude of the Man above all men; and amid the pity Simon felt for Him, he felt a burning compassion flowing back to him from Jesus, a burning, life-changing love. Simon carried the cross of Christ.

Let us pray (keep silence)

As Simon took the weight of the cross from Jesus,
You have taught us that we must bear one another's burdens,
and so fulfill the law of Christ.

May we carry Your cross.

May we carry Your cross.

Simon was one just passing by, but suddenly he was compelled
to change direction, and with all his strength carried the
cross to the Place of the Skull.

Sweet Jesus, like Simon,
may we carry Your cross.

May we carry Your cross.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

6th Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

An act of compassion. A woman called Veronica places a cool cloth upon His hot and tired face. He feels the coolness of the cloth, and the love with which it is offered. And through His pain He smiles - a smile never to be lost, never to be extinguished.

She reaches out to touch His face and He leans His head into her hands, within her reach.

Oh, blessed day! The Master touched her life, her heart, her outstretched hands. What faith! What lovely face! What timeless meeting...O Blessed Christ.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Christ of the human road, let us,
like Veronica, reach out to touch You,
and, sweet Christ,
show us Your lovely face.

Show us Your lovely face.

Legend of living person, Veronica, by example,
teaches us to be Your witness, that others may gaze
into Your loving eyes and know Your smile.

Show us Your lovely face.

Show us Your lovely face.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

7th Station
Jesus Falls for the Second Time

The pain, the exhaustion, the love that drives Him on - but the cross is so heavy. Again He falls beneath the weight; and in bitter resolution - Thy will be done - and in fatigue, Jesus again drives Himself up against the cross, and carries it on towards the fateful Hill of Death.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Will it never end?

I never knew it would be like this.

But this is my firm choice:

Lord, I will go on with You.

Lord, I will go on with You.

Lord, often I fall,

And the temptation is not to rise again

And continue with You.

When I fall and others watch and laugh,

Or say, "I told you so, you'll never make it."

Give me the strength to fulfill my promise:

Lord, I will go on with You.

Lord I will go on with You.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

8th Station

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

As Jesus continued, painfully stumbling along the road to Calvary, a group of women joined themselves to the procession, wailing in the manner normally considered appropriate for a funeral procession. But Jesus told them instead to cry out to God for themselves and their own children.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, some of us are never far from tears,
and some of us have forced ourselves not to cry.
Bring our tears to You,
that they respond to Your voice.
You have the words of eternal life.
You have the words of eternal life.
Lord, You have the words of eternal life.
You have the words of eternal life.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

9th Station
Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Jesus fell again. “Oh God, how many times must I fall and pick up that cross again? As many as seven times? Or seventy times seven times? For ever; until this never-ending road is ended; until the impossible is completed, the unbearable borne through all eternity. For the sake of My children, My sons, My loved ones, My people, I must go on. I will not, I must not, give up now. The way of sorrows, the way of pain the way of self-renunciation, the way of My cross.”

Let us pray (keep silence)

How long the road You came for us, Lord.

With your smarting burden! O Lord,

Your love has no limits.

Your love has no limits.

You picked up the weight of Your cross, the weight of our sins.
We are Your burden; but that burden is sweet to You.

Your love has no limits.

Your love has no limits.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

10th Station

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

At the time of death the King of life is stripped of His clothes. Naked, He came into the world; naked, He is taken from the world. He was a crying, helpless, dependent baby. Now, vulnerable, exposed, His heart, His life, His body all bared before the world, He will be hung up to be mocked. But God is not mocked - His very nakedness is a parable, a sacrament, a picture of the Father's hurting heart exposed in love to us.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Lord, You were stripped of the robes You wore,
But You were the same - it didn't change You.
Things meant little to You; You never hid behind them.
You showed us the Father's heart, so open and broken:
may we be open to You, and to each other.

May we be open to You, and to each other.

Lord, for our sake You left the riches of heaven and became poor. You came within our reach.

May we be open to You, and to each other.

May we be open to You, and to each other.

You did not hold on to even the little.

You had left to call Your own.

May we be open to You, and to each other.

May we be open to You, and to each other.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

11th Station
Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

The journey was at the end. Jesus was quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The soldier felt for the depression at the front of the wrist; he drove a heavy, square, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moved to the other side and repeated the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly. The title "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was nailed into place, and the crossbar lifted into position. The left foot was pressed backward against the right foot. With both feet extended, toes down, a nail was driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed.

Let us pray (keep silence)

Jesus, our sin put the nails in Your feet.

It was love that held You there.

It was love that held You there.

The soldiers hoisted Your cross on high.

You were their prisoner; but no one took Your life away.

You gave it willingly, freely. It was love that held You there.

It was love that held You there.

You were lifted high upon that cross, You promised:

"If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Me."

It was love that held You there.

It was love that held You there.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

12th Station

Jesus Dies Upon the Cross

As Jesus slowly sagged down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shot along the fingers and up the arm to explode in the brain. As He pushed Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He placed His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there was searing agony as the nail tore through the nerves. As the arms fatigued, great waves of cramps swept over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. Jesus fought to raise Himself, in order to get even one short breath. *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* To the thief dying at His side: *“Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.”* To His mother and His closest friend: *Woman, behold thy son - Behold thy mother.”* Then He cried: *“My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?”*

Let us pray (keep silence)

Father God, You waited through the long hours of agony when He was robbed even of the sense of Your love, when the sin, hatred and darkness overwhelmed Him. He was wounded for my transgressions.

He was wounded for my transgressions.

Father, what love is this of His: What love is this of Yours that His dying love reflects Your forgiveness for me.

He was wounded for my transgressions.

He was wounded for my transgressions.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

13th Station

Jesus Is Taken from the Cross

Jesus could not feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. And with a loud voice He cried, *"It is finished."* His mission of atonement had been completed. Finally, He could allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again pressed His torn feet again the nail, straightened His legs, took a deeper breath, and uttered His seventh and last cry: *"Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit."* A while later, the soldier pierced a long spear into His side to His heart. The watery fluid and blood that flowed out show us He had literally died of a broken heart - not the usual crucifixion death of suffocation. The friends of Jesus were allowed to remove His holy body, and for a moment His mother held Him again upon her lap, cradled in her arms. It is finished.

Let us pray (keep silence)

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and
sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown?

It was for me.

It was for me.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of
Christ my God. All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood:

It was for me.

It was for me.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your promise in my heart;

that I may not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord;

instruct me in your statutes;

I will meditate on your commandments;

and give attention to your ways.

14th Station
Jesus Is Placed in the Sepulcher

Laid in a borrowed tomb, awaiting the sign of Jonah,
the only sign that would be given to His generation,
that after three days and nights in the womb of the earth,
the belly of the fish, the grace and hell, He would come forth to do His
Father's will.

Jesus the humble Son of God, the exultant Son of Man,
the eternal contradiction, the Blessed One.

The end is not yet. Weeping endures for a night, but
joy comes in the morning. The good news - "He is risen"
will burst upon the Son-rise. Therefore with joy shall we draw water
out of the wells of salvation.

Let us pray (keep silence)

When all is dark,
and hope is buried,
It is hard to trust His words
that promised, before the pain:
He died that I might live.
He died that I might live.

In His death is my birth.
He died that I might live.
He died that I might live.

In His life is my life.
He died that I might live.
He died that I might live.

My Jesus! He died that I might live.
He died that I might live.

Hymn: Were You There When They Crucified My Lord? - H172

*Courtesy of Celtic Daily Prayer:
Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*

The 14 Stations are represented around the inside of the church as they have been in years past with a numbered wooden cross and a votive. Starting here and going left around the circumference, the last, #14, is here at the foot of the chancel steps. This station is named: Jesus is laid in the Sepulcher.

As you look beyond the station...you see promise of the Resurrection. The Sacrament of His Living Presence awaits. Tomorrow morning at 7:00 is the next celebration.

This year The Stations are going to be prayed from our places in the pews. On the screen we will see a picture accompanying each station.

Why the Celtic Cross

The Way of the Cross service we are using for praying The Stations comes from the monastics of the Northumbria Community in North East England. The Northumbria Community is a diverse and ecumenical group whose daily prayer and life together is rooted in the spiritual heritage of Celtic heritage.

Brief History of the Stations of the Cross

Also called the **Via Dolorosa** or **Way of Sorrows**, the tradition as chapel devotion began with St. Francis of Assisi and extended throughout the Roman Catholic Church in the medieval period. It is commonly observed in the Lutheran and amongst the Anglo-Catholic wing of Anglicanism. The devotion may be done at any time, but is most commonly done during the Season of Lent.

The Stations of the Cross originated in pilgrimages to Jerusalem. A desire to reproduce the holy places in other lands seems to have manifested itself at quite an early date. There has been nothing found until about the 15th century of the devotion of the Way of the Cross in the modern sense. An English pilgrim, William Wey, who visited the Holy Land in the mid-15th century, described pilgrims following the footsteps of Christ to the cross and then in 1521 a book was printed with illustrations of the stations in the Holy Land. During the 15th and 16th centuries the Franciscans began to build a series of outdoor shrines in Europe to duplicate their counterparts in the Holy Land. The number of stations varied between seven and thirty; seven was common. In 1731, Pope Clement XII fixed the number at fourteen.