



The Stations of the Cross

By: Fr. J. McGoey

St. John the Evangelist Parish - Weston

How to pray the Stations of the Cross:

1. For each station, sing or say the verses of the ***Stabat Mater***.
2. Announce the name of the Station.
3. Genuflect and say, "***We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You. Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world***".
4. Meditate upon the reflection for each Station and then respond with the given response.
5. End the Stations of the Cross with one Our Father, one Hail Mary, one Glory be.

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

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

O Lord, inspire us as we ponder the journey of Your Son from the tribunal of Pontius Pilate to the tomb in which He was laid. May our contemplation of His suffering bring us a clearer more profound understanding of the part our personal sins played in His death. May the sorrow inspired in us by His sufferings create in us a deep regret for sin. How much easier it is to be ashamed of our sins than sorry for them! Yet our shame shows only the greatness of our pride; it is sorrow for them which is the measure of our love. Stir up in us the love to be truly sorry for our sins and to atone for them by a good life of faithful service to you. Amen.

✘THE FIRST STATION – JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE✘

*Jesus, Lord, condemned, defiled,
May we too be meek and mild
As we tread your holy Way.*

*May we feel no bitter hatred,
When we too are persecuted
Left alone to walk with You.*

REFLECTION

Look at Jesus, God, innocent, standing before Pilate, man, guilty, to hear himself condemned to death, without complaint. How human, how weak was Pilate! Even when admitting the innocence of Christ, he dared not go against public opinion to acquit Him. Yet, washing his hands of Christ, he absolved himself from guilt, disclaimed all responsibility for his actions.

RESPONSE

How often we behave like Pilate, even when in our own hearts we know that we are guilty! We deny all wrongdoing; we reject and resent the slightest criticism. How well we recognize the sin of Pilate since we ourselves are so quick to please the crowd, to follow the irresponsible majority! How we fear to stand alone even for the truth, the right, the good! How quickly we wash our hands of the responsibility for sin by denying our guilt, by pointing to someone else!



✠THE SECOND STATION – JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS✠



*Now the Cross as Jesus bore
Has become for us who share it,
The jeweled Cross of victory.*

REFLECTION

Crucifixion held terror for the strongest men. It was too horrible a death for any Roman citizen, but it was good enough for Jesus Christ. Jesus not only suffered this death but saw it coming long before it happened. Christ suffered an agony for us every day.

RESPONSE

How much You willingly suffered because You love us! How little we deny ourselves to avoid offending You! As You anticipated Your suffering for us, help us to anticipate our sins and to make every sacrifice to avoid them.

✠THE THIRD STATION – JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME✠

*Weakened, prodded, cursed, and fallen,
His whole body bruised and swollen,
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.*

REFLECTION

Watch, as Jesus is crushed beneath the weight of the cross, into the filth of the streets trod by the animals on their way to sacrifice before Him. Covered as He is with dirt, blood, spit, sweat, who can believe that this wretched sight is truly the Son of God? We claim that we do, we who put Him there by our sins.

RESPONSE

Help us to be sorry, and never to sin again. Yet we know that we will. How often we put others down, the weak, the innocent, the children, the poor, the sick! Lord, help us to see what we are doing and to stop it.



✘THE FOURTH STATION – JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER✘



*Jesus met his grieving Mother,
She who made the Lord our Brother;
Now the sword her heart has pierced.*

REFLECTION

Everyone around Him but His mother had added something to His pain. And now when He meets her, He sees her sufferings and knows that they are because of Him. She willed what He willed, She wanted what He wanted. He had chosen to die on a cross and she had to suffer with Him. What excruciating pain for Him!

RESPONSE

O Lord, how wonderful such a love for us! How wonderful a Mother who, knowing what we had done to You, could love us still! Liberate us too from the self-pity which keeps us from loving those who even accidentally harm us.

✘THE FIFTH STATION – SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS✘

*Simon stopped in hesitation
Not foreseeing his proud station,
Called to bear the Cross of Christ.*

REFLECTION

Lord, when You became too weak to carry your cross, where were the lepers You had cleansed, the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb that You made whole, and those You freed from demons? Where were Your very own chosen apostles? They fled in terror for their lives. A total stranger was compelled to carry the cross our sins had thrust on You.

RESPONSE

Lord, how we long to believe that, had we been there, we would have helped! Yet right here in our own city or town, there are those falling under the weight of their crosses, which are really Yours, yet we do not lift a finger to help. Give us courage, give us strength to reach out to those in need.



✠THE SIXTH STATION – VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS✠



*Brave but trembling came the woman,
None but she would flaunt the Roman,
Moved by love beyond her fear.*

REFLECTION

Lord, into the harsh, cruel world of men and misused power, a woman, regardless of the danger to herself, her personal fears, did what had to be done, did what no man there had the courage to do. She wiped Your sacred face clean of the blood, the tears, the spit, the sweat, the filth which blinded You. Let men everywhere be grateful for her love.

RESPONSE

Lord, how often as women, we have failed to be strong, to be loving! As men, how often we put women down, despise their virtue, refuse to see Your face in their loving hearts! Help us to draw

strength and goodness from this woman's love and seek her courage for us all.

✠THE SEVENTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME✠

*Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,
Flogged in Body He resembled
All our brothers poor and scorned.*

REFLECTION

Crushed again by the weight of our sins, is it possible to believe that You really had twelve legions of angels at Your beck and call? That You really had a choice in all this pain? Surely angels could never have resisted Your pitiful state! Is it possible that our sins could weigh so heavily? That everyone could care so little? Indeed it is; indeed we do.

RESPONSE

Lord, it is incredible that we could make You suffer so much for our sins. And yet, the news media show us daily that we extort the comforts of our lifestyles from the backs and sweat of those less fortunate. How we insist on the best of food and drink, always in greater quantities than we really need! Indeed we have our fingers on the buttons of instant gratification, lavish entertainment and privilege, while others go hungry, homeless, sick and poor. Lord, that we may see!



✠THE EIGHTH STATION – JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM✠



*May our sympathy for Jesus
Turn to those who here now need us.
May we see Christ bruised in them.*

REFLECTION

What a sight You must have been, how pitiful Your condition when even the women who dared not comfort You still wept for You! How deserving were You of their pity and consolation! And yet, You who read the hearts of all, knew their personal sins, pitied them instead, just as You pity us, the sinners. Surely You, the innocent, have reason to pity us the guilty, and even more, our blindness to it.

RESPONSE

Lord, we are so full of self that we have compassion for few, perhaps none at all. How quick we are to share in the pleasures of others,

but how slow to share their grief! Never let us become so engrossed in our own pains that we cannot imitate You and pity those who cause them.

✠THE NINTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME✠

*Jesus fell again in weakness,
Stumbling as we do, to lead us
Through our sorrow and our pain.*

REFLECTION

Lord, You had strength to go no further, neither to take another step, nor even to move a hand; what had yet to be done to You, would be done for You. You had already been borne to the altar by our sins and Your Father's love. You had arrived where You had to be. The hatred of the world, its sinners and its sins would kill You here. Your persecutors, Your executioners were ready.

RESPONSE

Lord, even little pains make cowards of us all. Small services asked of us are too great for us to bear, the least demand, a crucifixion. Help us through Your third fall to see that You will help us bear the load however great it is or seems. Let us share each other's burdens in gratitude for Your bearing ours.



✘THE TENTH STATION – JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS✘



*Stripped and jeered by his own nation,
Jesus stood in desolation,
Giving all He had to give.*

REFLECTION

Lord, You stripped Yourself of Your divinity to be one of us, to take our beatings, scourging and our crown of thorns. But even then you retained Your full humanity until we stripped You of that by exposing You naked to Your enemies and mockers. All that we inflict upon our fellow men has now been done to You.

RESPONSE

Lord, what can Your nakedness express to us if not Your atonement for our shameful cover-up of sin. How we hate to be caught in the evil things we do so willingly, yet try so desperately to hide! Help us to understand that we can

never hide our sins from You and must never try to hide them from ourselves.

✘THE ELEVENTH STATION – JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS✘

*Pierced the hands that blessed and cured us,
Pierced the feet that walked to free us,
Walked the hill of Calvary.*

REFLECTION

Lord, how we dread the thought of being rejected! Yet how great Your rejection on the cross! Those hands raised to bless the children, to break the bread, to feed the hungry, to relieve the blind, the deaf and dumb, to cleanse the leper and to raise the dead were nailed in absolute rejection to the cross. The feet which carried the Good News to the poor and to the imprisoned, which sought out the lost and alienated, were pinned immobile to the altar of the cross.

RESPONSE

Lord, You suffered our rejection so that we might be spared a final separation from Your Father, that we might know how grievously we sinned without having to experience rejection for ourselves. By Your merciful love save us from ourselves. Teach us, too, to reach mercifully out to those others rejected so often by so many.



✘THE TWELFTH STATION – JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS✘



*Life eternal, death defiant,
Bowed his head - the world was silent,
Through his death came life anew.*

***Please kneel**

REFLECTION

Lord, so incredible and overwhelming was Your love that Your dying prayer was Your excuse to the Father for the evil in us. So stupid are we, You told Him for us, that we could not really understand what we did by sin. It was indeed Your death which won forgiveness for us. Help us always to love to forgive as you have done.

RESPONSE

Lord, let us not compound the blasphemy of our sins by laying down conditions for our belief in You, as did so many at the foot of Your cross. In the forgiveness that You won, may You come with the Father and the Spirit of Your love and move us to become good and faithfully forgiving servants. ***Please stand**

✘THE THIRTEENTH STATION – JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS✘

*Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother
In your arms was placed our Brother,
“Full of grace” now filled with grief.*

REFLECTION

Lord, how profound the suffering of her whose suffering was the closest human image to Your own! What thoughts she must have had of the beautiful Child she had given so generously to a cruel world, only to receive back from that world the mangled wreck which was her Son, when it had finished with Him. How deeply she could have hated but, like You, would not.

RESPONSE

Lord, in spite of all our offenses, You would not hate, nor would she, nor can any of Your followers hate and still love You. Yet how many of us hate so deeply for so long and with so little cause! Help us to realize that we betray You doubly in doing so and destroy ourselves completely in the process. Help us to be faithful to the example of Your Mother.



✠THE FOURTEENTH STATION – JESUS IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHRE✠



*Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted
In three days You resurrected,
You did first what we shall do.*

REFLECTION

Lord, You have the whole world in Your hand and yet neither in life nor in death did You have a place to lay Your head. You were buried in the tomb of another. Man, to whom You offered so much, offered so little in return to You. To what loneliness we condemn ourselves by loving things and using people as we so often do!

RESPONSE

Lord, how much we want so many things which are not even good for us! How many times we beg You in prayer, for things which, if received, could ruin us forever? Help us to establish true values, right priorities, that we may always

think first of the things of Your kingdom, of all that is good and right and beautiful.

*Jesus, Risen, be our Brother
In your Food and in each other.
Lead us home to heaven with You.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, whose love for us led You to calvary, give us the grace to recognize and to pick up our crosses to follow You. May Your death for our sins manifest its power by setting us firmly on the road to what is right and good. May our awareness of sin, and sorrow for it, not pass with the emotion of the moment, nor leave us wallowing in self-pity or shame for what we have done. Let us be convinced that Your divinity did not spare You the pain and the anguish which so heavily weighed You down. Inspire us with the hope that we can and will really change, become better, more truly loving people, more eager to share the burdens of others, beaten down with harsh injustice or persecution. Grant that, sharing willingly in Your Cross, we may one day share happily in Your glory, for surely, without the cross there can be no glory. May Your Way be our way, Your Truth be our truth, and Your life be our life. Amen.

Our Father...
Hail Mary...
Glory be...

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



Pietà by Michelangelo - St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City - Public Domain

THE WAY OF THE CROSS adapted from Fr. J. McGoey

© 1981. The author and copyright holder authorizes any use whatever for the greater glory of God, the good of the individual or the community.

© Images from St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Parish, Weston (York), Ontario, 2021. The parish authorizes any use whatever for the greater glory of God, the good of the individual or the community.