



# Seven Statements from the Cross

## Liturgical Actions and Reflections

At the beginning of Lent, place seven candles in the Sanctuary or in the Sacred Space in your church where they can be viewed easily....The purpose of the candles is to represent each week of Lent and is connected with each of the seven final statements which Christ said on the Cross.

This activity can also be used in the home during lent or amongst various ministry groups in the parish that might meet during Lent.

## Getting set up

Beginning on the First Sunday of Lent, all seven candles are lit. Gradually, each Sunday of Lent (including Good Friday) a candle is extinguished. Each week, you will begin with one less candle than the previous week.

## Setting the Space:

- Seven candles
- A tin bucket or a deep tray
- Bag of sand (to fill bucket)
- A candle snuffer to quench the flame

### You will need:

- 1 reader (for the prayer)
- 1 person to extinguish the candle each week
- Musicians (If you would like music played as the action is undertaken)

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## Introduction:

Today we begin our journey through the holy season of Lent. To complement our prayers and sacrifices this Lenten season, each Sunday we will recall one of Jesus' final seven statements on the Cross.

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## 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'

**Presider:** Jesus Said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (Lk 23:34)

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light, we recognise the many injustices in our world and the pain and suffering which they cause to others in our world.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, your Son laid down his life for us and taught us the ultimate act of love which is forgiveness. Even on the Cross and in his suffering, his thoughts were focused on others. Each week we will witness how we slip further into darkness when we fail to love our brothers and sisters in need like Christ did. Open our hearts to trust in the Lord and his steadfast loving mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

**Presider:** Jesus spoke to the thief on the Cross saying 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Lk 23:43).

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light, we reflect on the irreversible harm we are causing the earth and its eco-systems.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, creator of the heavens and the earth, we call to mind the environment around us. The trees, the animals, the birds in the air, the oxygen we breathe and the water we drink. Help us to remember that we are mere parts of this creation and not owners of it. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'

**Presider:** When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' (Jn 19:26-27).

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the love and care of parents across the world.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Our Father who art in Heaven, out of love for us, you call us all your children. ... 'Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God. If we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' (Rm 8:14-17). Today we thank you for the gift of love which you have given us, and we acknowledge the beautiful love exchanged between the human family, parents and children, brothers and sisters, carers, protectors and guardians. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

**Presider:** At about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mt 27:46)

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light we remember those who feel alone or abandoned in our world.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we pray for those who are troubled by thoughts of fear, sickness or anxiety, for those living with depression and those who feel lonesome. Awaken in us a spirit of Christian love and support for them in their time of need. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

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## 'I am thirsty.'

**Presider:** Jesus knew that everything was now finished, and to fulfill the Scriptures he said, 'I am thirsty.' (Jn 19:28).

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light, we pray for those in our world who thirst for their basic human rights, freedom, equality, inclusion, education, employment and acceptable living standards.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we ask for the courage to play our part in standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need so that people's basic needs are met and their dignity restored. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## 'It is finished!'

**Presider:** ...'It is finished!' (Jn 19:30).

### ***Silence***

As we extinguish this light we call to mind those who have lost their faith.

### ***Candle is extinguished***



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we pray for those who struggle with their faith or have lost touch with Christ. May they come to know Jesus as their friend and loving Saviour, and one day find the strength and conviction to believe again. May we too be constant models of love, forgiveness and welcome into the Christian community. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'

**Presider:** Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last. (Lk 23:46).

### ***Silence***



As we extinguish this light we remember all who are deceased and those who mourn them.

### ***Candle is extinguished***

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we pray for those who have left this world. Although they no longer sit in their familiar chair, greet us with a hug, kiss us goodbye or laugh and chat with us here on earth, we know that you have welcomed them into your loving eternal home. On the day when your glory will be revealed, and in the company of each other, may we share forever the happiness of your kingdom. We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Concluding Words:** Today we conclude our Lenten journey by extinguishing our final candle. Over the past few weeks we have heard and reflected upon the final seven statements of Christ on the Cross. We prayed on these statements as we too journeyed nearer to the cross with Christ. We carried our Lenten promises as he too carried the Cross through the streets of Jerusalem towards Calvary. Our Lenten promises ensured that we too felt the sacrifice and suffering of Christ as he became a ransom for the sins of humanity. May we remember that this suffering was not in vain and that Christ Jesus died on the Cross to redeem humankind and to save us from our sins because of his salvific love for us.