



Stations of the Cross Lent 2015

Praying the Stations of the Cross or the Way of the Cross is a traditional way of praying during Lent. We pray this familiar prayer to be with Jesus Christ who walked this journey, carrying the Cross, the instrument of his death, out of love and commitment to us. We pray it also because we wish to become close to who this Jesus is who loves me and us so deeply. We walk this journey with him to get a glimpse at the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, who is alive today and experiencing the journey to the Cross wherever our sisters and brothers are suffering throughout the world. We give thanks as we walk this journey – his way of the Cross has brought hope and the possibility of new life into the dark places of our human existence. Journeying with Jesus Christ allows us to become aware of where God is walking with us in our lives, and where we are called to be with others on their journey.

Often we pray the Stations of the Cross alone in a quiet moment at home or in our local church; at other times, they are the prayer of the community, gathered together to recall Jesus' journey to the Cross, and the journey to the Cross being made by people all over the world in their everyday lives.

Praying alone

If you are praying alone, you might like to take a different station each day, and let your prayer be with and for those who are experiencing that particular station at this time. Begin with your own life, and your experience of this part of Jesus Christ's journey. Let your heart be touched by Jesus and respond to him as you spend time with him. Think also of your loved ones and your friends, your neighbours and your community as a whole – include them in your prayer, as you recall those who are experiencing something of Jesus Christ's journey at this time. Remember also our world and God's people scattered, north, south, east and west. Recall the people who are in the news at this time and how they are sharing in Jesus Christ's journey to the Cross today.

Doing the Stations of the Cross as a group

Each church building is different. In preparing to lead the Stations of the Cross, you will have some decisions to make:

- Will all or only a core group move from station to station?
- Is the use of symbols possible at the stations? Do you want to use all of them? Use some of them?
- If the majority of people are seated in the pews, how will you involve them? - e.g. would it be possible to project images for each station onto a screen so that all can see them?

The Stations of the Cross may be prayed without the use of symbols by omitting the lines in italics.

Music

Choose music to set the tone of the prayer time and accompany people from station to station. It is not necessary to sing between every station – moving in silence allows people to stay in the experience of the prayer. Yet, to have only silence might not be helpful either. Ideally, let the cantor use the sense of the prayer and the mood of the praying group to determine when it is helpful to sing, and when to move in silence. Possible hymn choices are 'The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor' (John Foley SJ) or another version of Psalm 34, or a mantra e.g. Stay here and keep watch with me. After the twelfth station, the refrain, 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom' would be apt.

Introduction

[Invite people to stand]

Leader: When we pray the Stations of the Cross, recalling Jesus' journey to the Cross on Good Friday, we bring to mind all the people of the world who find themselves mistreated and abused. As we journey with Jesus, we journey also with our sisters and brothers who find themselves condemned, falling time and again, being stripped, or nailed to the cross in our world today.

This year Trócaire invites us to walk with the people of Sebeya, Ethiopia – a small village community where the periods of droughts have been increasing in volume and intensity. As a result, people find it almost impossible to grow food to sustain them. It is a tough, unforgiving, unyielding land and the people who live and survive there have to be strong, determined and resourceful. We pray with and for them today.

A journey brings us from one place to another. Something happens along the way that invites us into a new place. So we need courage and openness as we set off on this journey. Who and what we will meet along the way will ask questions of us, challenging and troubling us, inviting us to look afresh at our God, ourselves and others.

Let us journey together and with people the world over, that we might hear anew God's invitation to us.

First Station: Jesus is condemned to die

[A candle with barbed wire around it is placed at the first station]

Leader: Jesus is condemned to die. As we pause here at the first station, we take a moment just to be present to Jesus. He had been captured and held prisoner, but now he hears his fate, he is to die. We imagine ourselves drawing close to him as he hears this news.

Reader 1: And Jesus said to the woman, 'Has no one condemned you ... Neither do I condemn you ... '

Reader 2: We pause and think of those who are condemned:

- We pray for people who are condemned to lives of poverty due to others' greed

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for those who have been sentenced to death

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all whom we condemn by our judgemental attitudes

Lord, hear us R./

[The candle with barbed wire around it is now lit.]

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Second Station: Jesus carries his cross

[There is a basket with splinters of wood in front of the second station]

Leader: Jesus is handed his cross, a heavy clumsy cross on which he will be hanged and crucified. We feel the weight of what he is given to carry and we remember his courage, standing up for the poor and the outcasts, the prostitutes and the tax-collectors.

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Come, follow me'.

Reader 2: As you take a splinter from the basket, I ask you to carry it with you as we make this journey of the Cross with Jesus. I invite you to think of your own heavy burdens, the relationships and other situations that are weighing on you, symbolised in this small splinter of wood.

We remember all who are carrying crosses:

- We pray for the situations in our own lives that weigh heavily upon us, that we fear will crush us

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all people who are experiencing the cross in their lives

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for the people of Tigray in Ethiopia as they carry the cross of lack of rainfall for crops

Lord, hear us R./

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

Leader: Jesus falls for the first time. He is burdened by his heavy cross and he falls under the weight of it. Jesus falls to the ground.

Reader 2: Who are the people who have fallen under their burdens today? Who do we see on the ground? Under our feet? We pause and remember those who have fallen down.

- We pray for the homeless

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for those struggling with depression or addiction

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for refugees throughout the world, who have fled their homes in fear

Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'What is your name?'

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

Leader: Imagine the mixture of joy and sorrow in Jesus as he meets his mother, this woman who has always been there for him, who has loved him all of his life ... and now his joy in seeing her, is mixed with the sorrow that he is causing her, the sorrow he sees etched on her face ...

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'

Reader 2: We remember all people who love and support others:

- We pray for all mothers

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all who try to support and love others unconditionally
Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for parents struggling to feed and clothe their children
Lord, hear us R./

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his Cross

Leader: Jesus is struggling to carry his cross and the soldier enlists the help of a passer-by. Simon helps Jesus as the weight of the cross grows heavier and he becomes weaker.

Reader 2: We remember those who help others in their difficulty:

- We pray for all who give generously of their time and talents as volunteers in all the different aspects of our parish life.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all who make our country a better place to live through their generous support and commitment to charities and support organisations

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all who have gone abroad to work in the developing world, offering places their commitment and love, education and skills to peoples and countries in need.

Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Insofar as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.'

Reader 2: I now invite you to hand your splinter of the cross to someone else and to take their splinter. Alone our crosses can overwhelm us, but walking together with Jesus, we can carry one another.

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes Jesus' Face

[Bowl of water is placed at this station]

Leader: In the heat of the day, labouring under the cross, Jesus is sweating profusely. A woman comes to his aid, wiping his face clean of the grime and blood and sweat of his ordeal

Reader 2: I invite each of you to come forward and to touch the water ... to sprinkle your face ... to feel the refreshment water offers us ...

Reader 1: Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, 'Give me something to drink.'

Reader 2: We remember all those who come to the assistance of others:

- We pray for all aid workers throughout the world.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray that we may see others' needs and respond as best we can.

Lord, hear us R./

- We thank God for the gift of water and pray for all peoples without the basic necessities of life every day.

Lord, hear us R./

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time

Leader: Even with the help of Simon of Cyrene, the weight of the cross is too much for Jesus ... he falls a second time.

Reader 2: What is it like to fall a second time? The first fall is humbling, shocking ... but when we fall again, it is easy to give up hope, to give in, to give up.

- We remember those who struggle to keep going in the face of adversity

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for the people of Ethiopia who have faced poor harvest after poor harvest due to climate change.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for people struggling with recurring illnesses.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for people feeling too bowed down by their failures.

Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.'

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Leader: On his journey to Calvary, Jesus meets some of the women of the town, weeping for him and weeping for their own losses.

Reader 2: For whom should we weep? What are the situations in our world that cause us to cry, to cry out to God in desperation and in need?

- We pray for all people caught in war zones and conflict.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all people who are denied their human dignity and human rights.

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for the women of Palestine.

Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus wept at the death of his friend, Lazarus.

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

Leader: Under the weight of his cross, Jesus falls again. Bowed down, he buckles under the burden of the cross and falls to the ground.

Reader 2: Imagine for a moment what life is like from a different perspective. What is it like to fall again, and again, and again?

- We remember those who have been knocked down, again and again

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for people caught in the poverty cycle

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all people who are abused and mistreated

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for each person who has lost hope in getting up again

Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For the least among you all, that is the one who is great.'

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped

Leader: Having reached the place where he is to be crucified, Jesus is stripped of the little clothing he has. His dignity is unprotected.

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Do this in memory of me'.

Reader 2: We stand with all the refugees of the world stripped of their homeland, of their families, of their neighbourhoods, of their futures ...

- We pray for all people whose lands have been exposed to unjust deforestation

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all victims of pornography and sexual exploitation

Lord, hear us R./

- We pray for all who feel themselves stripped bare

Lord, hear us R./

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Leader: Having carried the cross, the instrument of his death, Jesus is now nailed to it. Using nails and hammer, Jesus is fastened to the cross.

[Nails are now hammered into the cross and the sound is allowed to echo throughout the church.]

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Just as I have loved you, you must love one another.'

Reader 2: We pause and remember those whose love for others has been borne at great cost to themselves:

- We pray for all martyrs
Lord, hear us R./
- We pray for all people who have been persecuted in the cause of justice.
Lord, hear us R./
- We pray for all who have been tortured, unjustly accused or victimised.
Lord, hear us R./

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Leader: Jesus dies on the cross.

Reader 2: I invite each one to kneel and to remember all those who have died:

- We pray for all the dead
Lord, hear us R./
- We pray for all those who have died through violence and hatred
Lord, hear us R./
- We pray for all who are dying this very day
Lord, hear us R./

Reader 1: Jesus said, 'Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.'

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

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.



Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross

- Leader:** After his death, Jesus is taken down from the Cross.
- Reader 1:** Jesus said, 'If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet
- Reader 2:** We remember all those whose fate is held in other people's hands
- We pray for children and young people
Lord, hear us R./
 - We pray for those who work in the justice system
Lord, hear us R./
 - We pray for all world leaders, that truth and justice may be the guiding principles of all they do
Lord, hear us R./
- Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
- All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world



Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

[The splinters are now gathered into a basket and placed at the station.]

- Leader:** Having been taken down from the Cross, Jesus is now laid in a tomb.
- Reader 1:** Jesus said, 'I am the Resurrection.'
- Reader 2:** We remember all those who feel entombed
- We pray for the people of Sebeya struggling with climate change, depleting crops, food and income
Lord, hear us R./
 - We pray for all who have lost their hope in life
Lord, hear us R./
 - We pray for places throughout the world, where the darkness of war, greed and violence is rampant
Lord, hear us R./
- Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
- All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

Leader:

We make this journey to the Cross with Jesus Christ, because it is a source of hope for us. We believe that the darkness of life will not extinguish us, as it could not extinguish Jesus. We pray that by walking these stations, we may grow in solidarity with our sisters and brothers throughout the world, especially those whose lives are marred by injustice and suffering. For a moment, we stand in solidarity with the people of Sebeya, Ethiopia.

I invite you now to come forward and to place a lit candle on the cross here in the centre of the sanctuary, as a sign of our solidarity with them, and a sign of our hope in God.

[Each one takes a candle and places it on the cross in the sanctuary]

Leader:

God, our loving Creator and Father, open our hearts and our lives that we might become beacons of hope and solidarity in our world today. May we grow in awareness of the needs and struggles of our sisters and brothers and strive to fight injustice and suffering. We ask this prayer, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our brother.

All:

Amen.

[All leave in silence]