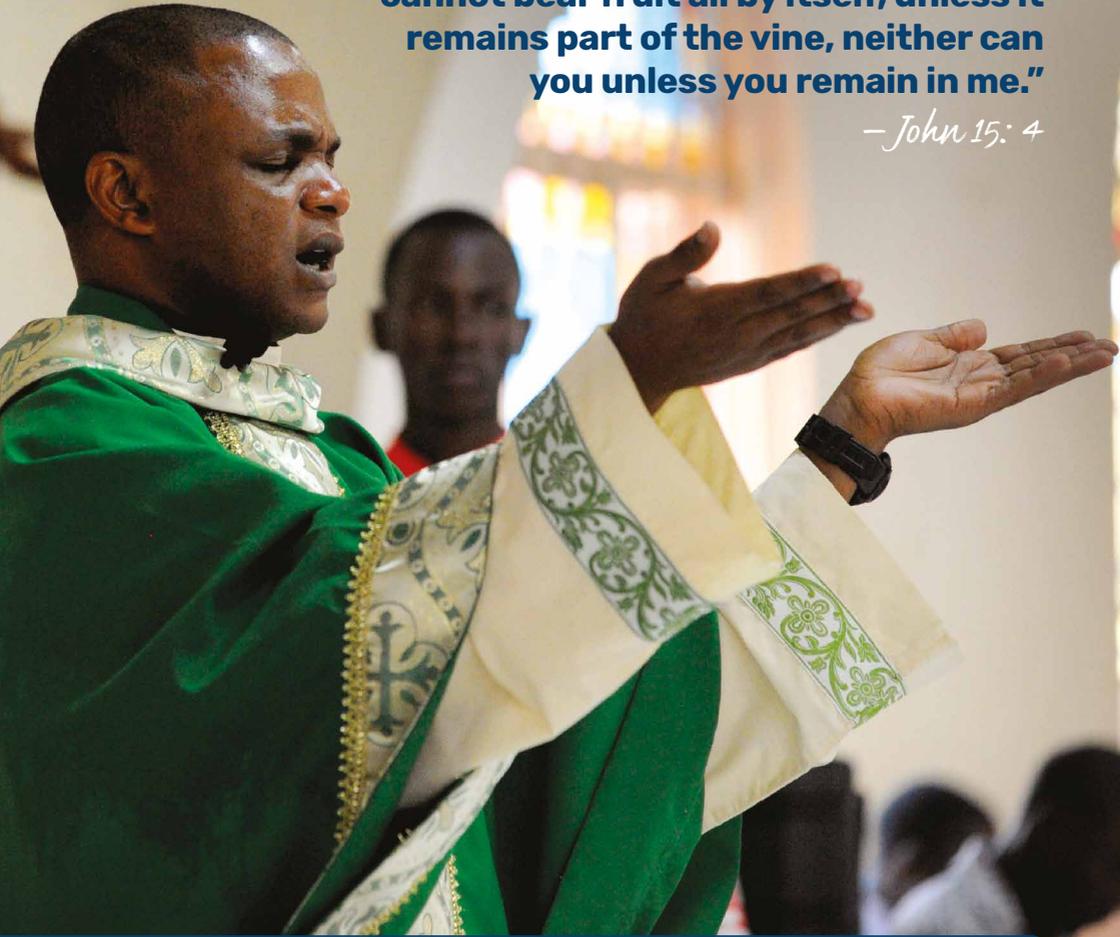


“Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.”

— John 15: 4



STATIONS OF THE CROSS AND PRAYERS FOR LENT 2019

Written by Fr Stephen Reilly



TO THOSE LEADING THE STATIONS

The Stations of the Cross have long been a feature of the Church's devotional life, especially during the season of Lent. When used in a parish setting, these stations may be a preparation for daily Mass or may follow immediately afterwards. As always, they may also be used in private prayer.

This year's Stations are written by Fr Stephen Reilly. We are grateful to Fr Stephen for his time and dedication to this resource.



OPENING REFLECTION AND PRAYER

In his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate*, Pope Francis speaks of empathy as an authentic way to holiness. He writes, "A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life's depths and finding authentic happiness. Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness." (76). The age-old practice of the Stations of the Cross encourages us to mourn Our Lord Jesus together with those who loved him most: his mother Mary, his beloved disciple John, Veronica, and the women who accompanied him to the cross. In this way we are to deepen and widen our human capacity for empathy, to "widen the space of our tents" (Isaiah 54: 2), creating a holy ground within, where the world's poor and mourning may find a place of compassion and solidarity.

OPENING PRAYER

God our Father,
as we enter into your Son's suffering,
passion and saving death,
grant us a heart capable of empathy,
so that we will not turn our backs on
the poor,
but rather embrace their pain, through
acts of solidarity.
May prayer soften our coarsened
hearts,
that we may be your compassionate
witnesses in the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"And though Herod and Pilate had been enemies before, they were reconciled that same day."

Luke 23: 12

The mysterious reconciliation of Pilate and Herod, who had been estranged for many years, comes about through the healing presence of Jesus, even as he is being condemned to death by them. Through his passion, Jesus breaks down the hostility between people: he is indeed the Prince of Peace.

Lord Jesus, we pray for peace in our troubled world. May strained and broken relationships be mended, healed, and strengthened once more.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

SECOND STATION

JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“My yoke is easy and my burden light.”
Matthew 11: 30

We know that God never gives us a cross too heavy for us to carry. As Jesus takes up his cross, we realise that our God does not remain distant when our burdens weigh us down: rather, his beloved Son Jesus steps into our need and carries the cross with us, and sometimes for us.

Lord Jesus, as you once took up your cross for our sake, and promised that you would lighten the burden of your disciples, we ask you to share the load of all those who are weighed down by life's woes.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust every day of your life.”
Genesis 3: 14

The Book of Genesis tells us that the first consequence of The Fall caused by sin was that the snake should crawl on the earth. The Son of God, the new Adam, came to reverse the curse of our sin, even if he himself must crawl on the ground to achieve our freedom.

Lord Jesus, you did not shy away from lowliness and humiliation, so great was your desire to save and restore us. Raise up all whose rights and dignity are trampled down today.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary "let what you have said be done to me."

Luke 1: 38

At the Annunciation, Mary put herself entirely at God's service. Here she puts herself in the lowest place, serving a convicted criminal on his way to the cross.

Lord Jesus, help us to take the lowest place, after the example of your mother, and yourself. Give courage and strength to all who serve the God in the poorest and most downtrodden.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

FIFTH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"They seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus."

Luke 23: 26

Simon must have been dazed, coming in from the country to the noise, the jostling and the chaos of execution day in the big city. Yet, his small act of kindness towards a condemned man restores some order and harmony to the scene, repairing some of the damage to the fabric of God's harmonious and merciful creation, allowing a glimpse of how the world was created to be.

Lord Jesus, your Father wove balance and harmony into the very fabric of creation, and tasked us with being its stewards. Help us to be kind to the earth and all its inhabitants.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."
Matthew 25: 40

The words of Jesus in the parable of the Last Judgement are reversed here: Veronica has the singular privilege of serving Jesus, and in doing so symbolically feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and visits the sick and imprisoned of every time and place.

Lord Jesus, inspired by the heroic Veronica, may we carry out the corporal works of mercy in this present age, and share the reward which awaits us in the age to come.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth."

Romans 8: 22

In the Book of Genesis, the second consequence of The Fall caused by sin was the pain experienced in childbirth, which St Paul compared to the groaning of a creation awaiting rebirth. As Jesus prepares to die for that fallen world, he groans under the weight of the cross, but his Resurrection will open new life to all.

Lord Jesus, grant health and strength to all expectant mothers as their time arrives to bring a child into the world. May we always welcome new life as a gift, and defend the right to life of all God's children.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

EIGHTH STATION

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.”

Matthew 5: 5

To the disciples mourning his death on Easter Sunday morning, the Risen Christ appeared, bringing comfort and peace, and commissioning them to go out and forgive sins. They are to be no less than missionaries of mercy. The same holds true for the women of Jerusalem: they are to be missionaries of God’s mercy, comforting the condemned by their solidarity and tears.

Lord Jesus, we pray for those who mourn. May they be comforted, and may they in turn comfort others by tender words and gestures born from shared grief.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Luke 23: 43

The final consequence of The Fall caused by sin, Genesis tells us, was the loss of the garden of paradise. Jesus, crucified with the dust of the earth on his hands, will make the garden bloom once more, as he throws wide the gates of paradise to welcome redeemed humanity.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all gardeners, farmers and conservationists who protect and nourish the fruitfulness of the earth. May they prepare the way for the new heavens and new earth which God has promised.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHING

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5: 3

St Paul reminds us that Jesus emptied himself, not clinging to his equality with God, when he became one of us in all things but sin. He ate with the poor and sinners, and now he stands stripped, possessing nothing, a poor man dying with the poor.

Lord Jesus, you lived and died as a poor man, with nowhere to lay your head. Help all who lack shelter, clothing, food and security to find these basic necessities of life.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11: 28

The arms of Jesus are stretched wide on the cross, leaving him vulnerable, exposing him to ridicule and pain. Yet in every church today, the outstretched arms of the crucified Jesus welcome and embrace all who enter and look upon the crucifix, reassuring them of God's love.

Lord Jesus, may the embrace which you extend to the world, so visibly manifested by the crucifix, be a continual source of inspiration and challenge to our parishes, families and schools, to be places of welcome and affirmation.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

TWELFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom."
Matthew 27: 51

When Jesus spoke of the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple during his ministry, "he was speaking of the temple of his own body." At the same time as the curtain of the Temple is torn in two, exposing the Holy of Holies, the place where God dwells, Jesus' side is pierced with a lance, opening the new place of encounter with God, Jesus' Sacred Heart.

Lord Jesus, may your Sacred Heart be the place where all the broken hearted can come for solace, and by your wounds may they be healed.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND PLACED IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"All are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and your daughters being tenderly carried."
Isaiah 60: 4

Jesus is borne to his grave by those who love him most: his mother and closest disciples. We see this mirrored in the mourners who carry a coffin into a church or to the deceased's final resting place. May the angels truly lead them to paradise, and may they have eternal rest.

Lord Jesus, bless all who show tenderness to those who have died: hospital staff, undertakers, council staff and loved ones: may their respect and professionalism be a powerful witness to the dignity of the human body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

“Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here.”
Luke 24: 5-6

How often do we say or think with a heavy heart when a loved one has died, and we can no longer share a story or an experience: ‘he is not here’. It is especially painful when we have shared a home with the person, and we feel the pang of their absence: ‘she is not here’. Yet this is the very phrase used by the angel to proclaim Jesus’ Resurrection: “He is not here, he is risen!”

Lord Jesus, the tomb could not hold you, and your Resurrection ended the reign of death. Help us to live as a people of hope, proclaiming boldly, sometimes through our tears, that death is not the end.

All:

I love you Jesus, my love above all things;

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never permit me to separate myself from you again.

Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God our Father, we praise and bless you, for granting us the privilege of accompanying your Son in the final hours of his obedient journey to the cross. Help us to imitate his selflessness, that we may share his risen life. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

For the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis:

**Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be.**



Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

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