

The Traditional Stations of the Cross



A Liturgical Devotion for Holy Week

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross, or the Stations of the Cross, first came into use in Western Christendom in the fifteenth century. Its origin was in the time of the Crusades, when pilgrims to the Holy Land marked off the sites associated with our Lord's Passion in Jerusalem, which they called stations. On returning to their homes in Europe, they continued the devotion by erecting in their churches, or in the fields, memorials of these stations or stopping places. The number of the stations, no less than the scenes and occasions of the Passion story, varied a great deal. In the eighteenth century they were fixed at fourteen in number; five of these have no basis in the Gospel accounts of the Passion, but are the creation of legend or devotion. However, since most of the parishes which use this devotion have fourteen stations permanently affixed to the walls of the church, the fourteen stations have been kept. Any parish with fewer stations may adapt these devotions to any number.

The content of these devotions has never been determined by any official Church authority, for they have generally been considered acts of private prayer and meditation. They have often been observed, however, by groups of worshippers, united in common prayers at each station, and in the singing of hymns (usually the *Stabat Mater*) as they passed from one station to another.

The original conclusion of the Way of the Cross ends with the Body of our Lord being placed in the tomb. Modern Christians reject ending on this note, but once again proclaim that it is the resurrected and living Lord whom men worship.

Preparation

*At the Cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful mother weeping,
Where he hung, the dying Lord.
For her soul of joy bereaved,
Bowed with anguish, deeply grieved,
Felt the sharp and piercing sword.*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

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. *Amen.*

God forbid that I should glory
Save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us Pray.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*



I. Jesus is Condemned to Death

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

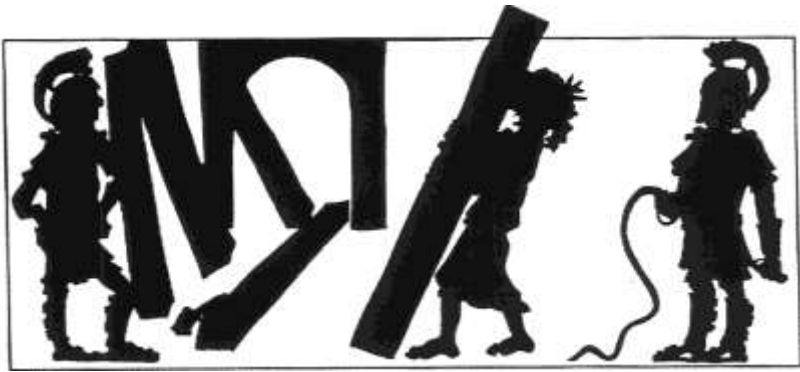
And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then delivered he him unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

God spared not his own Son
But delivered Him up for us all.

Let us pray.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace *may* mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

*Who, on Christ's dear mother gazing,
Pierced by anguish so amazing,
Born of woman, would not weep?*



II. Jesus Takes Up His Cross

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,

Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb, dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

For the transgression of his people was he stricken.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified; Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

*Who, on Christ's dear mother thinking,
Such a cup of sorrow drinking,
would not share her sorrows deep?*



III. Jesus Fall the First Time

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou has redeemed the world.

Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is the Lord our God.

Surely he hath borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows.

Let us pray.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*For his people's sins chastised,
she beheld her Son despised,
Scourged, and crowned with thorns entwined.*



IV. Jesus Meets His Mother

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

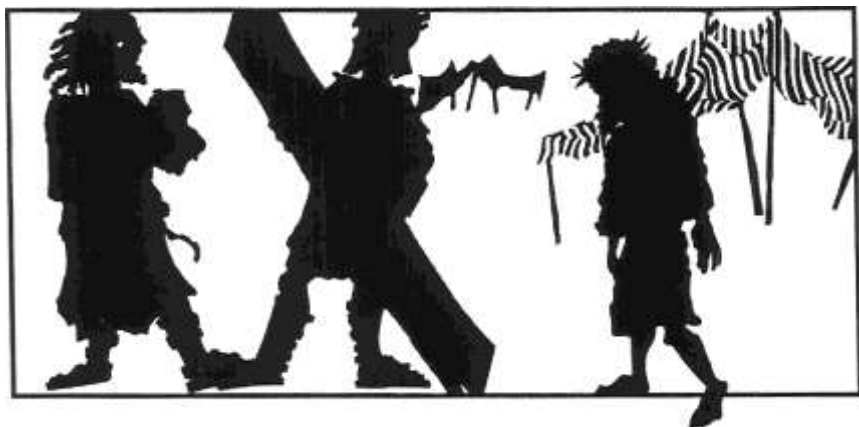
What shall I testify unto thee? What shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? For thy ruin is deep as the sea: who can heal thee?.. .Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted... The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also
That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Let us pray.

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Saw him then from judgment taken,
And in death by all forsaken,
Till his spirit he resigned.*



V. The Cross is Laid Upon Simon of Cyrene

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me,
Cannot be my disciple.

Let us pray.

O God, whose blessed Son did overcome death for our salvation; Mercifully grant that we who have his glorious passion in remembrance may take up our cross daily and follow him; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

*Jesus, may her deep
devotion, Stir in me the
same emotion, Fount of love,
Redeemer kind.*



VI. A Woman Wipes the Face of Jesus

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

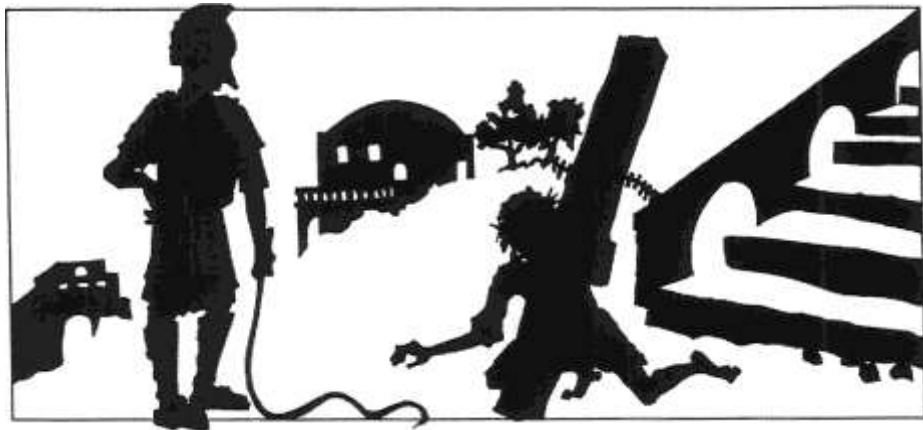
He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts
Show us the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

Let us pray.

O God, who, before the passion of thine only begotten Son, didst reveal his glory upon the holy mount: Grant unto us thy servants, that in faith beholding the light of his countenance, we may be strengthened to bear the cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

*That my heart fresh ardour gaining,
And a purer love attaining,
May with thee acceptance find.*



VII. Jesus Falls a Second Time

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

Surely he hath bourne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: for the transgression of his people was he stricken.

But as for me, I am a worm and no man
A very scorn of men, and the outcast of my people.

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Let me mourn, O Lord, beside thee,
For the sins which crucified thee,
While my life remains in me.*



VIII. Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

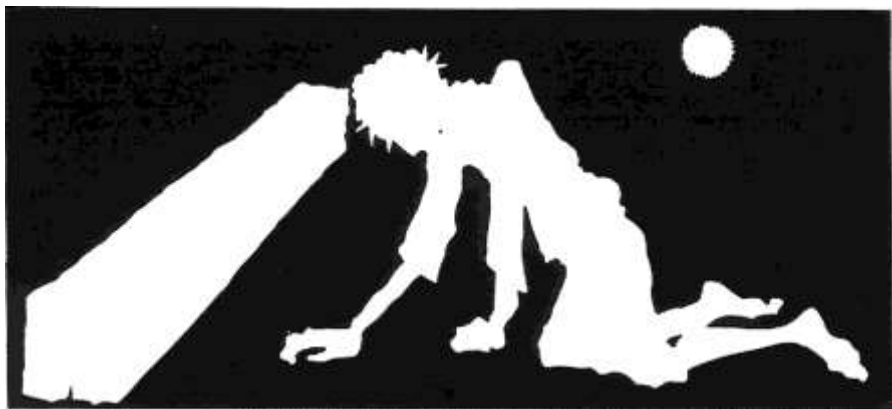
And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

They that sow in tears
Shall reap in joy

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

*True repentance, Jesus, win me:
Saviour print thy wounds within me.
Brand them on my stubborn heart.
As thou brought'st, through tribulation,
In thy passion, my salvation,
Let me bear therein my part.*



IX. Jesus Falls a Third Time

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me. Because I brought thee forth from the land of Egypt, thou has prepared a Cross for thy Saviour. Because I led thee through the desert forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into a land exceeding good, thou hast prepared a Cross for thy Saviour. What more could I have done unto thee that I have not done?

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter
*And like a lamb dumb before his shearer,
so opened he not his mouth.*

Let us pray.

Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Take beneath the cross my station,
And in all thy desolation,
so unite myself with thee.*



X. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they parted his garments, casing lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

They gave me gall to eat
And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let us pray.

O Lord God, whose blessed Son, our Saviour, gave his back to the smiter and hid not his face from shame; Grant us grace to take joyfully the suffering of the present time, in full assurance of the glory that shall be revealed; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Jesus, great beyond all other;
Turn not from me, heavenly brother;
Let me too bewail thy pain.*



XI. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. And with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his right hand, the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. O my people, what have I done unto thee? I did raise thee on high with great power: and thou hast hanged me upon the gibbet of the Cross.

I, if I be lifted up
Will draw all men unto me.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the passion of thy blessed Son hast made the instrument of shameful death to be unto us the means of life and peace: Grant us so to glory in the Cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss; for the sake of the same thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

*Let my soul, thy death declaring,
Thy unsparing passion sharing,
Count thy bruises one by one.*



XII. Jesus Dies on the Cross

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. And when he had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Christ for our sake became obedient unto death
Even the death of the Cross.

Let us pray.

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only-begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily from sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Let thy stripes and scourging smite me;
At thy holy Cross requite me,
Let thy blood refresh me there.*



XIII. The Body of Jesus is Placed in the Arms of His Mother

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

All ye that pass by, behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow...Mine eyes do fail with tears, my soul is troubled; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people.. .Call me not Naomi (Pleasant), call me Mara (Bitter); for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

Her tears are on her cheeks
She hath none to comfort her

Let us pray.

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*O how sad and sore distressed,
Now was she, that mother blessed,
Of the sole-begotten One*



XIV. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee,
Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple; he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell
Neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

Let us pray.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O sorrow deep!

Who would not weep?

With heartfelt pain and sighing!

God the Father's only Son

In the Tomb is lying.

Conclusion

*Jesus, may thy Cross defend me,
And thy saving death befriend me,
Cherished by thy deathless grace.
When to dust my dust returneth,
Grant a soul that to thee yearneth,
In thy Paradise a place. Amen.*

O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross
and precious blood hast redeemed us
Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

Let us pray.

Almighty Father, who has given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*O Jesus blest,
My help and rest,
With tears I pray thee, hear me;
Now, and even unto death,
Dearest Lord, be near me. Amen*

Now unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*