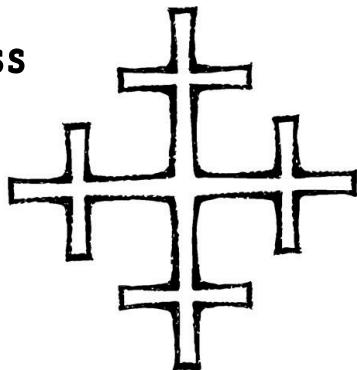


# The Way of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross have been part of Christian devotion during Lent and Holy Week for many centuries. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to literally follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Their current form allows us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus, and the version used here connects the passion of Jesus to the suffering of people in our contemporary context.

Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” – Matthew 16.24-25



## + GATHERING +

Take some time to center yourself as you prepare for this liturgy. Minimize other browser windows, mute notifications, and remove distractions as much as possible. If available, you might light a candle or set a cross or icon near you.

As the liturgy begins, you may make the sign of the cross as a reminder of the sign that is marked at baptism.

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God.

Amen.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The liturgy transitions to the first station as the hymn stanza is sung:

Kneeling in the garden grass,  
Jesus groans against his death,  
Let this cup of sorrow pass,  
while he prays in that same breath:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.

to the tune of "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (ELW #347)

## + THE FIRST STATION +

*Jesus is condemned to death.*



We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.  
By your holy cross you have redeemed the  
world.

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate spoke to the crowd: "What do you wish me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?" They shouted back,

"Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So, after flogging Jesus, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

(from Mark 15)

A brief silence

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency: be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful. You were the victim of unbridled injustice: change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters to your way of peace.

Jesus, innocent though condemned, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

The liturgy transitions to the second station as the hymn stanza is sung:

**While the court and priests conspire  
how to slant the evidence,  
Jesus calmly bears their ire  
as his prayer grows more intense:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

## + THE SECOND STATION +

*Jesus takes up his cross.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.  
**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Carrying his cross by himself, Jesus went out to the place called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

*(from John 19)*

*A brief silence*



Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough streets of Jerusalem: be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength. You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross: help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love for us.

Jesus, bearing a cross not your own, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

The liturgy transitions to the third station as the hymn stanza is sung:

**When the massive cross of wood  
bends and bruises Jesus's frame,  
hear him seek eternal good  
as he prays in heaven's name:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

## + THE THIRD STATION +

*Jesus falls the first time.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

(from *Philippians 2*)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you fell under the weight of the cross: be with those who cry out in physical or emotional distress. You endured abuse and shame: be with those who face torture and mockery in our world today.

Jesus, our humble Savior, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the fourth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*



**Jesus falls beneath the weight  
of the cross he's forced to bear,  
yet its load of sin and hate  
do not crush his hope and prayer:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

## + THE FOURTH STATION +

*Jesus meets his afflicted mother.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

(from Lamentations 2 and Matthew 5)

A brief silence

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, whose love is like that of a mother: as you suffer, a sword pierces the heart of your blessed mother. Comfort parents who grieve the loss of children to drugs, gangs, prison, or death, and give us strength to offer support and encouragement.

Jesus, heart of compassion, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the fifth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Jesus reads in Mary's eyes  
all the sorrow mothers bear,  
and he prays his friend supplies  
grace to strengthen her own prayer:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**



## + THE FIFTH STATION +

*The cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

(from Matthew 27)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue: be with those from whom life drains all energy. You needed the help of a passing stranger: give us the humility to receive aid from others.

Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in need of help, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the sixth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*



We with Simon of Cyrene  
help the Savior bear the cross.  
Step by step we slowly glean  
what true faith and prayer will cost:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.

## + THE SIXTH STATION +

*A woman wipes the face of Jesus.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

We have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, for by his stripes we are healed.

(from *Isaiah 53*)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you touched others with your healing presence, and your love is made known in acts of selfless compassion: draw near to all who suffer pain, deprivation, and degradation, and open our eyes to see your beauty in each person.

Jesus, healer of our every ill, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the seventh station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Seek the courage and the grace  
that Veronica\* displays  
when she wipes the bleeding face  
of the one who bravely prays:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

\*the name traditionally given to this woman



## + THE SEVENTH STATION +

*Jesus falls a second time.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to their own way; and the Lord has 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 my people was he stricken.

(from *Isaiah 53*)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, bearer of our sins. comfort all who stumble under life's burdens: bless those who give of themselves for the service of others, that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to all those who suffer.

Jesus, who laid down your life for us, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the eighth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*



**Jesus trips and falls again  
as he struggles through the street  
where the mob's unceasing din  
mocks the prayer his lips repeat:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

## + THE EIGHTH STATION +

*Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

A great number of the people followed Jesus, and among them were women who were wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

(from Luke 23)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you: move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world. You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the 'city of peace': bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound peace.

Jesus, the king of peace who wept for the city of peace, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the ninth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Christ directs the women's tears  
toward the coming judgment day  
when God weighs our faithless years  
with our willingness to pray:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**



## + THE NINTH STATION +

*Jesus falls a third time.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath; God has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; God has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation and has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago. Though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. God has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!

(from *Lamentations 3*)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, servant of all: in your humiliation our fallen world is lifted up and rescued from the hopelessness of death. Grant perseverance to those at the limits of their mental, physical, or moral strength, and strengthen those who counsel the despairing or suicidal.

Jesus, who offers hope to the hopeless, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the tenth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*



**Jesus stumbles one last time,  
nearly broken by the load,  
yet by prayer finds strength to climb  
Calv'ry's final stretch of road:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**

## + THE TENTH STATION +

*Jesus is stripped of his garments.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When they came to a place called Golgotha, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. The soldiers divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

(from Matthew 27)

*A brief silence*

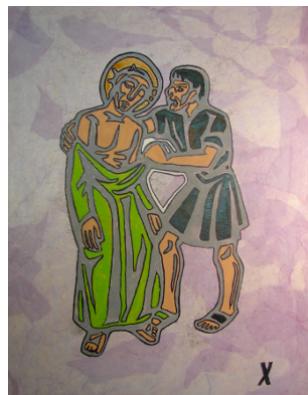
Let us pray: Lord Jesus, bearing our shame, as you are stripped of your dignity: we remember all those exposed to ridicule, abuse, violence, and exploitation because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation. Clothe them with your mercy and bestow on them dignity that belongs to them as children of God.

Jesus, whose body is for us the image of God, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the eleventh station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Naked to the sun and clouds  
and the jeers and gawking stare  
of the soldiers and the crowds,  
Christ continues with his prayer:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**



## + THE ELEVENTH STATION +

*Jesus is nailed to the cross.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When they came to the place that is called the Skull, there they crucified Jesus; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, and one on the left.

(from Luke 23)

A brief silence

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, source of infinite life: we remember all who suffer unjustly. We mourn the ways our earth has been tortured and abused. Bring us to your cross and preserve us until the resurrection.

Jesus, wounded for our broken world, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the twelfth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*



While the soldiers throw their dice,  
they ignore their victim's groans,  
lost to them the sacrifice  
and the prayer that Jesus moans:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.

## + THE TWELFTH STATION +

*Jesus dies on the cross.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And when Jesus had received the vinegar he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

(from John 19)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed with you to the bitter end, yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them: be with all broken families today and tend to those who long for companionship. You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes: give us a love for one another that is stronger even than the fear of death.

Jesus, trusting to the very end, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the thirteenth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Jesus gives one loud last cry  
at the moment of his death  
while his prayer moves heaven's sky  
with his final, parting breath:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.**



## + THE THIRTEENTH STATION +

*The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

All who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is tumult; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi, which means Pleasant, call me Mara, which means Bitter. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

(from Lamentations 1 and Ruth 1)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you died on the cross and entered the bleakest of all circumstances: give courage to those who die at the hands of others. In death you entered into the darkest place of all: illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.

O crucified Jesus, temple of God and gate of heaven, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the fourteenth station as the hymn stanza is sung:*

As they take the body down  
and they wrap it in a sheet,  
in their hearts they hear the sound  
that his lips no more repeat:  
Not my will but yours be done,  
not my will but yours be done.



## + THE FOURTEENTH STATION +

*Jesus is laid in the tomb.*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

(from Matthew 27)

*A brief silence*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us: be with those who feel worthless in the world's eyes. You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from sight: be with all who suffer and die in secret, hidden from the eyes of the world.

Jesus, seed planted in the earth, have mercy and hear us.

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,  
have mercy and hear us.**

*The liturgy transitions to the conclusion as the hymn stanza is sung:*

**Quiet is the hollowed cave.**

**Peace and tears and grief descend.**

**Mourners offer at the grave**

**what they learned from Christ their friend:**

**Not my will but yours be done,**

**not my will but yours be done.**



