

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: Please stand.

Instrumental of Behold the Cross (Hurd)

Leader and Readers will process in.

LEADER: We gather in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Lord we remember your love for us; in spirit we recount your sorrowful journey that you undertook out of obedience to your Father's will and your love for us. We remember your journey so that we may stir up in our heart strong faith, a vision of hope, and a burning love, as well as for our sins and a determination for conversion.

Be with us during our Lenten journey, FROM ISOLATION TO SPIRITUAL, that we too may find the way to You. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

PLAY CD: Like Burning Incense (Joncas) - fade out after incensing

Leader will incense the people and the cross.

LEADER: Let us now reflect on the times we have not carried the cross of Christ in our own lives and ask our loving Father for His mercy and forgiveness.

SONG: Kyrie Eleison

LEADER: We will now journey through the Way of the Cross. These fourteen steps that we are about to take, we do not take them alone. Christ walks with us.

The life of Jesus Christ was incomplete until he crowned it with His death. Our fourteen steps will only be complete when we have crowned it with our own lives.

FIRST STATION: PILATE CONDEMNS JESUS TO DIE

LEADER: The First Station

READER 1: Pilate condemns Jesus to die,

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Jesus innocent of any wrongdoing, accepts the way of the cross. His love for God and for all people brings Him to this moment of facing His enemies without fear.

READER 1: O Lord, how many times in life have we been guilty of unjustly condemning each other and blaming those who are poor for being poor and judging others because of the race or ethnicity. Forgive us, O merciful Lord, and help us to know how to accept every human judgment and to not allow ourselves to ever judge or condemn our enemies or neighbors (Silence for a few minutes.)

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SECOND STATION: JESUS IS GIVEN THE CROSS TO CARRY

LEADER: The Second Station

READER 2: Jesus is given the cross to carry.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Pilate had Jesus scourged. The soldiers made Him a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, then mocked Him. They made a cross for Him to carry to the place of crucifixion. Jesus without confrontation or hesitation accepted the

cross given to Him. Each of us gathered here this evening carries our own cross, sickness, weakness, struggles and pain.

READER 2: Jesus, you were made to carry a heavy cross. You chose to pay the price of love. Help me to have the courage and the heart to care for the poor, the hungry and the poor. Teach me to choose love, justice and life so that I may carry my cross with patience and dignity.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection)

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

LEADER: The Third Station.

READER 1: Jesus falls for the first time.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: The scourging and crowning with thorns had weakened Jesus, and carrying the cross added to His burden. Eventually He fell ...and gathering His strength, he carried on.

READER 1: In our world and nation, many of our sisters and brothers live in poverty. Mother Theresa said, "People and children die every day not because of lack of food, but because we stopped caring.

Jesus, the weight of the cross crushed you to the ground. Yet, knowing that death lay ahead, you still got up and went on. When burdens of sorrow weigh heavily upon me, I often find it difficult to go on with my life. When I stumble and fall, when I mourn for what is lost, give me your strength to rise and walk anew.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SONG: Jesus, Remember Me (3 times)

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

LEADER: The Fourth Station.

READER 2: Jesus meets his mother.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Here, the broken Son stands before His grieving Mother. He is silent. What word could heal a Mother's wounded heart? Mary is called in faith to accept this time of trial as part of God's plan for her.

READER 2: (Pause)

Jesus, when you met your mother on the road to Calvary, you felt her pain in seeing you suffer. Each of you wanted to ease the suffering of the other. Yet, through this sorrow, you knew her broken heart would become a source of comfort to mothers in other times and places. Open my heart so that when, like Mary, I see a loved one suffer, I may become a source of compassion to others.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection)

FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS CARRY THE CROSS

LEADER: The Fifth Station

READER 1: Simon helps carry the cross.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: A man named Simon was coming in from the fields. Because the soldiers feared that Jesus would not make it to the place of crucifixion, they forced Simon to help. A crossbeam was put on Simon's shoulder to carry along behind Jesus. Simon helped Jesus in time of need, although he was not willing at first.

READER 1: (Pause)

Jesus, how often do I take for granted the backbreaking labor of others to produce the food I eat or the clothes I wear? How many times have I passed you by in the struggling person whom I didn't stop to help? Simon was forced to help you when the soldiers pulled him from the crowd. Yet, when Simon lifted your cross, he knew the gift of a burden shared.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection)

SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

LEADER: The Sixth Station:

READER 2: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: As Jesus walked to Golgotha, one woman, seeing His pain and discomfort, stepped out from the crowd and gently wiped the face of Jesus. Recall the poor around us, we responded with food and clothing. Recall the needs of our retired religious men and women, we gave from our hearts. When sickness or tragedy strikes, we as individuals and community are present - to pray ... to touch ... to give ... to heal ... to love.

READER 2:

Jesus, Veronica saw your pain and felt it very deeply. She dared to break through the crowd to take some of your pain away.

Teach me to let go of the things that hold me back from reaching out to others. Give me the courage of Veronica to be willing to risk all in the name of compassion.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SONG: Jesus, Remember Me (3 times)

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

LEADER: The Seventh Station

READER 1: Jesus falls a second time.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Again Jesus' own strength failed Him. While he was being mocked and ridiculed by the soldiers, He fell a second time; but again, He rose and went on.

To some, the fall of Jesus was considered a disappointment. In our times of weakness, failure and defeat, we return and yearn for God's strength and healing power.

READER 1: Jesus, we face the most difficult of trials all the time. But our challenge is to use these trials to show your Love in our hearts to others.

Help me to learn from your perseverance, Lord. Help to see that these are my brothers and sisters. Help me to rise up again, after falling multiple times because of ignorance and arrogance. Give me your spirit, Jesus, and help me to continue in spite of terrible odds.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross

(Pause for silent reflection)

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

LEADER: The Eighth Station

READER 2: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Many people followed Jesus as He walked the road to Calvary. Among the crowd of people were some women who were weeping because Jesus was in such pain and treated so unjustly. Jesus looked kindly upon them and said: "Women of Jerusalem! Do not cry for me but rather for yourselves and your children." Even in His own agony, the suffering of others touched Jesus.

READER 2: Jesus, your strength shines forth in these sorrowing women. All over I see women exploited and abused. When I am called to speak out and stand up

for others, I sometimes hold back. I'm afraid of what others may think. Give me your courage, Jesus, in situations that call for taking a risk. Help me to remember that your spirit is within me always, comforting me in time of opposition.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

LEADER: The Ninth Station

READER 1: Jesus falls a third time.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Having suffered other falls, it becomes increasingly difficult for Jesus; however, Jesus stood and continued on the way of the cross, suffering unjust pain and insults.

READER 1: As Jesus neared the end of the way, he was tired, afraid and had little strength left. It is when we are vulnerable that we are most likely to fall. How difficult it is to struggle to our feet and begin again.

Jesus, when did I see your face in the least likely - the homeless, the outcast, the abandoned pass you by?

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SONG: Jesus, Remember Me (3 times)

TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

LEADER: The Tenth Station.

READER 2: Jesus is stripped of his garments.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: When Jesus arrived at Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion, the few possessions He had by way of clothing were taken from Him. Later the soldiers took the clothes of Jesus and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. The robe that Jesus wore was made from one piece of woven cloth and the soldiers didn't wish to tear it so they threw dice to see who would get it. Minorities, the poor, the disabled, the aged, youth and women (even to this day) are stripped of their rights of equality, dignity and justice. Our ego and selfishness blinds us to the needs of God's people.

READER 2: The violence against the elderly in our country especially against minorities has become part of our news story during the last few weeks.

God, we stand before you, naked in body and spirit. You alone know the violence raging within us. Give us the grace to disarm our hearts. May we be stripped of everything that provokes violence, causes division and demeans humanity.

(PAUSE)

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection)

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

LEADER: The Eleventh Station

READER 1: Jesus is nailed to the cross.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: When they arrived at the place of crucifixion, Jesus was nailed to the cross. An inscription proclaiming His offense read: "The King of the Jews"; this was placed over His head. People who passed by insulted and laughed at Jesus, saying such things as: "Save yourself by coming down from the cross." The chief priest and scribes also joined in and taunted Him: "He saved others but He cannot save himself! Let the Messiah, King of Israel come down from the cross now so we can believe in Him." This led Jesus to pray: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are saying." Even in the pain of the cross Jesus forgives those around Him.

READER 1: Jesus is executed by being nailed to a piece of wood, hung naked, exposed to taunts, reduced to an object of ridicule.

Jesus, each time we refuse to speak up for justice and life, we nail you to the cross of indifference. Give us the courage to speak up in times of injustice and darkness.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SONG: Were You There (all verses)

TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

LEADER: The Twelfth Station

READER 2: Jesus dies on the cross.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit" ... and He breathed His last.

PLEASE KNEEL OR BOW YOUR HEAD FOR A TIME OF SILENCE.....
(15 SECONDS)

READER 2: Jesus, You accepted death on the cross that we might live. Fill me with your spirit. Help me to choose life in all situations and be a source of hope for others. Heal my heart torn by division during this political climate. Touch my family in times of trial; heal our faith community in times of disagreement and tragedies. (PAUSE)

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

SONG: Jesus, Remember Me (3 times)

THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

LEADER: The Thirteenth Station.

READER 1: Jesus is taken down from the cross.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: As evening drew near, Joseph from Arimathea, requested the body of Jesus from Pilate. Joseph took Jesus down from the cross and following Jewish burial custom, anointed Him with perfumed oils and wrapped Him in fine linen. In times of doubt, how do we meet the demands of love? Let us remember that love is kind...never jealous...never self-seeking.

READER 1: Jesus, after you died only a few friends stayed behind to take your body down from the cross. Some of your followers turned away in disappointment; others fled in fear. Give me the strength to be a faithful friend. Help me to be consistent in my love for others, so that I stand by them in good times and in bad, in joy and in sorrow, and in their struggle for justice.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection.)

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS BURIED

LEADER: The Fourteenth Station

READER 2: Jesus is buried.

LEADER: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

ALL: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Near the place where Jesus had been crucified was a garden. Joseph took the body of Jesus and buried Him.

READER 2: Jesus, you had no burial place of your own. Yet, when your body was taken down from the cross, your friends reverently placed it in a borrowed tomb. Help me always to remember that each person is a sacred object to be treated with reverence both in life and in death.

LEADER: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

ALL: Lord God, give me the strength to carry my cross.

(Pause for silent reflection)

SONG: Jesus, Remember Me (3 times)

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Leader will recite petitions and a "Hear our Prayer". Response will be sung.

CONCLUSION

LEADER: His life was not complete, until he crowned it by his death.

READER 1: Our "way" is not complete unless we crown it by our life.

READER 2: Accept each moment as it comes, with faith and trust that all that happens has the mark of Christ on it.

LEADER: A simple fiat, this is all it takes, breathing in our heart, "I will it, Lord."
So seek Christ not in far off places, He is close at hand.

READER 1: Our desk

READER 2: Our office

READER 1: Our school

READER 2: Our home

LEADER & READERS: These are altars where we offer love. And he is with you there. Take your cross and with your life, complete your way!

LEADER: As the Body of Christ, let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:
Our Father...

SONG: Touch Me Lord

SONG: Behold the Cross (Hurd)

Leader will lift the cross to make it stand for 3 verses before laying it back down
and processing out with the readers.