

# STATIONS OF THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



**PRAYERFULLY WRITTEN BY: DR. MICHAEL DOWNEY**

## *Stations of the Cross*

**Leader:** Before setting out on the Way of the Cross, let us gaze on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane as he surrenders to the Father's will. (Pause)

**Leader:** In this lonely hour while others sleep, you come face to face with the Father in the deepest recesses of your heart at prayer. You ask the Father to relieve you of the horror that lies ahead, but in an act of surrender you lift your hands in prayer and give yourself over to the Father's will.

This is a moment of anguish and soul-searing struggle. But it is also a moment of luminous glory. Because it is here that you glorify the Father by the act of complete self-surrender. And begin the Way of the Cross that leads to Calvary.

**Response:** Amen

## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The First Station**



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus condemned to death. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Here we stand, members of your Body, Lord Jesus Christ. We gaze upon your face, your body, wearied and worn by betrayal, accusation, abandonment, and unjust judgment. In your innocence, in your holiness, truth, justice love, and peace, you face an excruciating and shameful death.

Look upon us and be merciful. We, too, have been misunderstood, judged unfairly, condemned by others for no good reason. We join you in your shame, your pain, your anguish, and we pray with you to the Father for all the innocent who stand alone under the weight of the unbearable suffering, condemned without cause. (Pause)

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**Leader: Together we pray.** Father by the gifts of your Spirit dwelling in our hearts, open us to trust as Jesus trusted even as he is condemned to die.

When we feel most alone, be with us and strengthen our hope.

**All:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The Second Station**



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus taking up his cross.  
(Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Look! Here I am before you, my own people. The weight of this cross cannot be measured. It is the weight of the jealousy, rage, hatred and revenge of others. It is the cost of announcing the good news of the Kingdom of God to all who listen. The Kingdom where the powerful are cast down. The Kingdom where the poor are first. It is the price of resisting the temptation to power, fame, and fortune. It is the cost of inviting you and the humble of heart into the world of the Beatitudes. Hear me! When you are wronged for doing right; when you are the target of anger and revenge; when you feel the burden of daily life and

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duty – come to me. When violence stings you and millions throughout the world – come to me. All of you. Come. You do not carry your cross alone. I am with you. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Ever-loving Father, as Jesus, your beloved Son, takes up his cross, he shows us another way to live. It is the path of peace and patience, humility and truth, perseverance and self-emptying love. By the gift of your Spirit, strengthen us to bear the weight of the crosses we receive and the crosses we cause ourselves. As we struggle under the cross with Jesus, lead us with him to the fullness of life never-ending.

**Response:** Amen.

Sing: May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The Third Station**



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**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus falling under his cross. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Here we stand, the members of your Body, gazing down at the Savior of the world falling in the dirt and mud of a long, lonely road. Just days ago your people hailed you. Their joyful shouts of Hosanna rang in your ears. Now raging screams cut you to the heart: “Crucify him! Crucify him.” Now you, our teacher and healer; our prophet and worker of miracles; even you fall under the weight of the cross. Your strength is gone.

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We, your people, fail. Over and over we fall. Suddenly our accomplishments, our reputation, our financial security, our health, our most cherished family members and friends can fail and we collapse. We are never the same. We can stay lying flat on our face in the dirt, or struggle up with you even though the path leads to Calvary.

**Leader: Together we pray:** Loving Father, your Son was born lowly in the crib of Bethlehem. Now he is brought lower under the weight of the cross as he trudges in sorrow to Calvary. By the gift of your Spirit enliven our hearts to recognize that when we fail and fall, we may share in the passion of Christ who fell to the ground under such a heavy burden. Open our eyes to recognize Christ himself in those who are weak and wounded, in those who are counted as worthless as the dust of the earth.

**Response:** Amen.

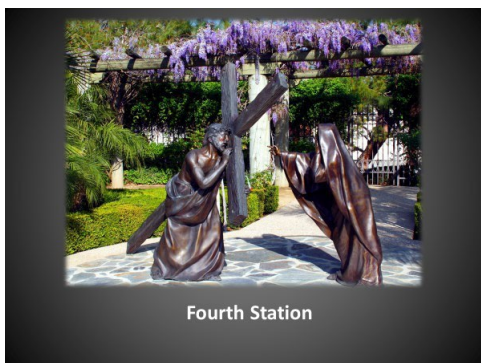
**Response:** May the Passion of Christ be ever in our hearts.

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.



## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The Fourth Station**



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus seeing his mother.  
(Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** There in the crowd I see the woman who gave me life. She knew the time would come, this day when the sword would pierce her own heart. She has been with me from the beginning. She will stay beside me to the end, boldly standing at the foot of my cross while I am ridiculed and mocked. She feels a mother's love, a mother's loss, a mother's lament. As she stands with me, she will stand with you. As she tries to console me in my darkest hour, she will embrace and comfort you.

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Listen! Blessed is she among women. Blessed is she who hears the word of God and keeps it, pondering the Father's love in her heart. Learn from her. She proclaims the greatness of the Lord even in this terrible time. Call upon her, your Blessed Mother Mary. In this hour, she becomes *Mater Dolorosa*, the Mother of Sorrows, enduring the deepest possible sorrows of the human heart. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father of Mercy, fill us with compassion. In our suffering and struggle, send your Spirit, the Holy Comforter. With Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, help us stand close to those whose suffering we cannot relieve. If we can bring relief or only be present to their suffering, strengthen us to do so for the glory of your name.

**Response:** Amen.

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Fifth Station***



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**Leader:** Let us gaze on Simon helping Jesus carry his cross. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Simon was minding his own business, rushing through the crowded city street before the Sabbath. Unlike others, he did not take delight seeing the man headed for the horror of crucifixion. It was not his concern. He was not involved. But the soldiers feared that Jesus might not make it to Calvary, so they pulled Simon from the crowd and forced him to help. Simon was not like the Good Samaritan who stopped on his way willingly when he saw a dying man in need. Simon is shoved into

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the middle of the scene. Now he faces someone in great need. As he helps Jesus bear the terrible cross, he begins to feel compassion.

We, members of your Body, are so often too busy, too tired, too weak to get involved. We are absorbed or overwhelmed by our own responsibilities and concerns. But sometimes we suddenly come face to face with someone in need or pain. We can shut our heart to compassion, or draw near to Christ who suffers in our neighbor, and like Simon share with them in Christ's saving passion. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father of mercy, in Simon we see someone like ourselves, busy with our lives. As you brought him face to face with your suffering Son, he crossed over from his own concerns and took on those of Jesus who needed him. Through your Spirit move us to mercy like Simon to support those in need.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Sixth Station***



**Leader:** Let us gaze upon Veronica wiping the face of Jesus. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** My face is filthy because of the dirt and dust of this city street, the dust of my Father's creation. I suffer with the degradation of the poor. Sweat streams down my face, clouding my vision. I cannot see the road. How much further to go?

Veronica sees me sweating, straining, bleeding. I glimpse her as she breaks rank and pushes into the street. A small step; a bold act. I feel her hands wiping my grimy face with her veil. With one act of kindness she gives my body and heart a moment of relief. My bloodied face leaves its mark,

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a silent reminder of the costliness of a love both tender and brave.

Look upon the bloodied face of enduring love for you, my people. The look of love cannot be erased. Veronica's veil soothes and comforts in the midst of the long and lonely journey. See my bloodstained face not only on Veronica's veil, but on the faces of all those in need of some small act of comfort; all the lonely victims of power and envy; all those who suffer from the pollution of mother earth. Step out with Veronica from the throngs of the indifferent.  
(Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Lord, our God, source of mercy and compassion, your beloved son calls us to be compassionate as you our Heavenly Father are compassionate. By the presence and power of the Spirit, increase our trust that our acts of mercy and care for all your people and all your creation, no matter how small, give you praise and leave their mark never to be blotted out.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The Seventh Station**



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus falling again. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Yet again your strength fails. Your face is caked with filth; every inch and ounce of your energy is gone. The weight of this cross is more than anyone can bear. It seems impossible to go on. You stumble. You fall. Again. Your heart weakens under strain of fighting what looks like a losing uphill battle. Why not give up? Give in? Turn back? The pain, the humiliation, this horror is beyond the mind's grasp.

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Shaken to the very roots of your being, to the very depths of your soul, you find some strong and silent strength. Flat on your face, you feel the stirrings of your Father's love summoning you forward to fulfill your purpose. You have collapsed but you do not quit. You do not stay down. You rise and once again move forward, straining to see this through to the end. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father, the light of your Spirit guides us on our way as we struggle to make good on the life you have given us. Time and again we fall. Our failures are beyond counting. At times the obstacles and discouragements we face seem unbearable. Strengthen us to get up and try again, comforted in the knowledge that Christ your Son fell under the weight of his burden, yet did not quit his long and lonesome Way of the Cross.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.



## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Eighth Station***



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus meeting the weeping women of Jerusalem. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** I have wept over Jerusalem, because of the hardened hearts and sinfulness of God's own people. These women I meet on the way of sorrows know how to weep. They are able to cry. Their hearts are ripped open at the very sight of me. Their tears show that they are not indifferent to suffering and pain. The weeping women respond as the human heart should in the face of such degradation and anguish. In my encounter with them, I invite them to the depths of compassion.

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I speak a word to them: Do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children. My passion, my suffering is not mine alone, but is for all those who damage others and themselves by their sin.

Through their tears, the women see in my suffering the suffering of so many others. There is more here than my own pain. It is the pain of the whole world that I carry on my shoulders. They see this and lament. By their compassion they share in the love that alone triumphs over the power of evil and sin. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father, Jesus wept over Jerusalem. The women wept at the sight of Jesus in his anguish. Give us, we pray, the gift of tears so that we may see more clearly the degradation caused by evil, by our own sin and the sins of others. Through the gift of the Spirit may we, like the weeping women of Jerusalem, share in the passion and suffering of Christ by which our sinful human nature is transformed by self-giving love.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### **The Ninth Station**



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus falling the third time. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Will this be the last time? How long can this go on? Falling face first into the dirt and the dust once more. Against all the odds, you have picked yourself up twice before knowing that this road ends at Calvary. If you know that you may fall yet another time, can you dare to get up again? Why carry on down the road of endless failure? Surely this must be the last time.

Until now, Lord Jesus, you have been moving, walking, putting one foot in front of the other, even though laden with such unbearable weight. But now you can no longer move. You cannot do anything more. You are empty. You have nothing left. Your whole being is immobilized. From this point on you must be passive in this passion. You are at the ultimate end of your

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capacity even to actively take up your cross to Calvary. In the beginning of this way of sorrow, you were condemned to death. Now you are delivered into the hands of death. Fallen the third time there is nothing more to do but let yourself go into the hands of those who will strip you, nail you, hang you on a tree. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father, at this moment in his passion, your son reaches the end of his strength. He cannot go on. There is nothing left for him to do. He willingly accepts to be handed over to death at the hands of his persecutors. By the gift of your Spirit, when we are at the end of our road give us the courage to turn everything we are and all that we do into your hands, knowing that the cross leads not only to Calvary, but through it, to the gift of joy never-ending.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Tenth Station***



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus in his humiliation as he is stripped of his garments. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** I have reached the end of my road. I can go no further. The Roman guards rip my clothing from my beaten, blood-stained body. Stripping me of the last of my few possessions – the very clothes on my back – they take from me the last thread of my dignity. I am naked before the throngs who want my blood. They make my body an object of insult; my clothing becomes a prize in a game the guards play to humiliate me even further.

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In becoming human, I took the lowest place in a stable at Bethlehem. While I lived among you, I lived with those at the lowest rung of the ladder. But now I am brought lower still. I have lost everything, like those throughout the world who are degraded and debased – stripped naked by rape, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

My own body and blood were shamed by my persecutors. Yet in my passion I take on the shame of all those who are stripped and shamed in ways beyond imagining. (Pause)

**Leader:** **Together we pray:** All-loving Father, your beloved Son was stripped and shamed. In our own time there are so many who are stripped of what is needed to live. Still more are without the love and support that give life value and purpose. Mother earth, too, has been stripped of her loveliness. But in the poor of the earth and in the beaten, worn out earth itself, something can come into being, something will spring forth. The promise of life. New life.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### *The Eleventh Station*



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus as he is nailed to the cross. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Nails pierce your wrists. Nails are hammered through your feet. The sound of it. The sight of it. Excruciating. Even your persecutors wince as they drive the nails into your body. Your flesh is ripped open with such violence. Your eyes gaze heavenward, delirious with pain beyond measure. Your chest heaves in an effort to breathe, to keep on living until the hour soon to come has

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come. You are fastened to a tree with no escape possible. What wondrous love is this that endures such brutality in giving your life and giving it to the full. So that we might have life.

Lord Jesus, the blood of your wrists, of your feet, drenches the cross soon to be lifted up. It soaks the earth which you embraced in becoming one of us: walking among us, eating and drinking, resting and rising, teaching and touching, loving and being loved. In accepting our lot for love of us, you knew that your life, like ours, would come to an end. But who could imagine that a life of holiness, truth, justice, love and peace would come to an end such as this. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, your beloved son was nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of his body. He did not try to escape or to lessen his suffering. May we never flee from what we are called to be and to do. Through the gift of your Spirit enable us to alleviate the suffering of others, and to accept our own as a share in Christ's path to the life without end that you have promised.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.



## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Twelfth Station***



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**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus dying on the cross.  
(Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** All has been taken from me. There is nothing left. She stands there, my beloved mother. Faithful to the end. My beloved disciple is by her side. I must leave even her, the one who brought me into this world. I entrust them to one another at this moment of parting.

## *Stations of the Cross*

In my final hour, I gaze inward and upward, straining for some sense of my Father's love and presence, His assurance which has never failed. The sun is darkened. My soul cries out, cut off from His presence. His face is hidden from me. Even to Him I have become a stranger. All I know is desolation and darkness. I am "made sin." I find no compassion, no mercy for myself. Yet from my depth comes a word of hope for those who persecute me: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." My tongue cleaves to my mouth; my lips are parched. Yet, even now will I trust. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Pause)

**Leader:** **Together we pray.** Father, your only Son, who did not know sin, became sin, experiencing the horror of being separated from you in his suffering and dying on the cross. Yet with his last breath he thrust himself into your hands. Help us to recognize your face in our hour of darkness and trial. Help us to believe in you and to follow you in our hour of hopelessness and need. Be with us, too, as we breathe our last so that we might surrender ourselves into your hands without reservation and with boundless confidence.

**Response:** Amen

**Sing:** May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Thirteenth Station***



**Leader:** Let us gaze on Jesus being taken down from the cross (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** Lord Jesus your broken, lifeless body is taken from the cross and placed in the care of your loved ones to prepare it for burial. At the end of your sufferings we see that for all the hatred and violence of those who wanted your life's blood, you were not left alone. Here are the faithful ones who remained with you. Soaked and saturated in sorrow,

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at the Cross stand Mary, your Mother, her sister, Mary Magdalen and the disciple whom you loved. Joseph of Arimathea, a man of means, appears on the scene and provides his own tomb for your burial.

In this hour of immense grief, darkness and despair they do not walk away from you. A glimmer of hope is present in the way they treat your body so lovingly and tenderly. Give us the grace to see, as the faithful ones did, that the God whose face was hidden even from you in your darkest hour continues to be the God of life, ever near to us.  
(Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father, the body of your beloved son was taken from the cross with reverence and care. Yet each day so many members of his living body, the church, are tortured and crucified. People of every race, land, language and religion suffer crucifixion in so many different ways. Through the gift of your Spirit may we see in victims of hatred, violence, and oppression the members of your living body. Let us not leave them alone, but give us the courage and strength to take them down from the cross in the hope of new life.

**Response: Amen**

**Sing:** May the passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*

### ***The Fourteenth Station***



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**Leader:** Let us gaze on the dead body of Christ being laid in the tomb. (Pause)

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

**Response:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Leader:** In the death and burial of my only beloved Son, he has become the grain of wheat of which he spoke when he was among you. He has become the lifeless grain of wheat which produces abundant fruit for every age and for all eternity. From his tomb light will shine forth in every generation, calling the whole world to faith, to hope, and to love. By his Incarnation, his ministry, his suffering, dying and death, the very Word in flesh has been among you, ever near. He puts himself into your hands and into your hearts through the gift of the Spirit,

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so that you may grow into the fullness of life in Christ Jesus.

Through the death of this grain of wheat, now laid in the tomb, my beloved Son has given himself to you, so that you too can dare to lose your life in order to find it, so that you too can trust the promise of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies. (Pause)

**Leader: Together we pray:** Father, as the stone is rolled over the tomb of your son, his loved ones depart to prepare for the Sabbath. Desolation and utter grief caused by the crucifixion of Jesus their hope, grip them. Despair and sorrow are ever-present. Loss of life, love, home, family, health, relationships and hope can wound us deeply and break us apart. We pray for strength to be present to one another especially times of doubt, confusion, and hopelessness. Through the gift of your Spirit make us strong enough to share in the mourning of others, to overcome despair, and to receive the love of Christ that alone casts out all fear.

**Response:** Amen.

**Sing:** May the passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

## *Stations of the Cross*



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