



## Come Walk

### Preparation

The Stations of the Cross provide us a vision to help us enter into God's overwhelming love for us. We use visual images of each Station to help focus and direct our prayer.

With each Station, let us place ourselves in the moment. What does the cross look like? What do the crowded streets feel like? What does nails piercing the hands and feet of Jesus sound like? Enter in and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to a deeper spiritual place.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges and continues to reveal much to us about our humanity. The goal of praying the Stations is not just to get through them. It's not just a nice tradition. The goal is to contemplate the depth of love God demonstrated on the Cross. The other goal is to learn how to carry our own crosses with Christ. In praying the Stations, we learn compassion. We enter into the suffering of Christ to better understand our suffering and the suffering of others.

Let us begin our walk with Jesus.

*Jesus, Lord, condemned, defiled,  
May we, too, be meek and mild  
As we tread Your holy way.*

*May we feel no bitter hatred,  
When we, too, are persecuted,  
Left alone to walk with You.*

## First Station

### Jesus is Condemned to Death

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Though the Lord stands innocent, they find Him guilty. Jesus Christ, the only one with the true power to condemn humanity, has not been condemned by it. Standing bloodied and broken, the Lord refuses to defend Himself. He speaks only when necessary, offering truth to any hearts open to receiving it. Pilate, confused by the man in his presence, gives in to the mob who demands Jesus be crucified. The true criminal is released as the Lord and giver of Life is sentenced to die. The decision has been made and the road to Calvary awaits Jesus.

Public passion for your faith often brings condemnation from a self-centered world. Any time we share God's truth with conviction we run the risk of being 'convicted' for it. Maybe it's our cross that draws people's criticism. Perhaps our stance on modern sexuality or opposition to abortion has made you the target of others' aggression. You may not suffer physically as our Lord did, but you will likely feel the sting of mockery, gossip or even betrayal as Jesus felt. Standing with Christ often brings loneliness – times in which you see who your true friends are and are not. Remember Jesus' promise, "*Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*" (Matthew 5:11).

*Now the Cross has Jesus bore it,  
Has become for us who share it,  
The jeweled Cross of Victory.*

## Second Station

### Jesus Takes Up His Cross

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The journey that began in a lovely garden has now thrust Jesus into the overcrowded streets. Thousands of people in town for Passover watch as the convicted man marches to His death. He had told His apostles of the suffering that awaited Him and Jesus now bears the weight of that Cross upon Himself. The splintered crossbeam digs into His shoulders. The wood is stained with the blood of the Lamb. Though His suffering would bring life, His walk was one of death. Jesus embraces more than the physical pain in this moment. With each step forward Christ takes on our sin. He takes our death sentence as His own.

God alone knows your most intimate fears and struggles. Only the Lord fully understands the pains or fears you carry deep within. Only Christ knows the full weight of the cross you carry each day. Some crosses appear smaller than others, but everyone has a Cross they carry. Even God carried a cross – and His included yours. Jesus knows the deepest longings of your heart and the greatest burdens you shoulder. In this time of isolation and loneliness, invite Him into your struggle. Pray to Him. You are not journeying alone. Prayer is where the cross changes shoulders.

*Weakened, prodded, cursed and fallen,  
His whole body bruised and swollen,  
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.*

### Third Station

#### Jesus Falls the First Time Under the Cross

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The human body is not designed for this type of physical or emotional stress. Betrayed and beaten, dehydrated and dying, His legs give out. His body succumbs to intense fatigue. Jesus' back is shredded and His limbs are weary from the beatings that had begun hours earlier. Though fully divine, Christ's humanity is clearly seen in this moment as He falls to His knees. Every exhale reveals our Lord's exhaustion. Every inhale sends shockwaves of pain throughout His body. Strength slowly returns to His legs as our Lord rises to continue on the way of sacrifice.

Do you ever feel like things you cared for were stolen from you? Does it feel like hope is seeping away? Do you feel like your ability to worship was taken from you and you are struggling to live your faith? You might be feeling tired. At times you might feel abandoned. It might seem like it's just you against the world. No matter how hard you try the odds seem to be stacked against you. You feel weak. Take a deep breath and keep moving forward. Breathe in the Spirit. Through your unwavering love of Christ, you will sense His loving presence.

*Jesus met His grieving Mother,  
She who made the Lord our brother;  
Now the sword her heart has pierced.*

**Fourth Station**  
**Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother**

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The only pain more intense than Jesus' own physical suffering must have been seeing the effect it had on His mother – our mother. How badly Mary must want to take His place. The deep love of the mother for her only Son reveals something about the Father's love as well. The prophecy of Mary's own suffering unfolded before her tear-filled eyes and still she trusts. Mary believed God would bring joy through the sadness. Her gentleness brings Jesus temporary relief from the pain but could not save Him, for He had not yet saved us.

Have you ever seen a family member go through intense pain but been unable to help them? If so, you've peered into the heart of your Blessed Mother Mary. Have you ever questioned God's plan when you witness someone in great pain? If so, ask Mary to pray with you, to reach out to you as she did to Jesus along the way. Her intercession will help you to grow in trust. Just as your own mother came to your aid in your weakness and sickness as a child, Mother Mary will always rush to your side in moments of personal pain or hardship. Like Jesus, you, too, are Mary's child and she's there to pray with you now...and at the hour of your death, just as she was with the Lord.

*Simon stopped in hesitation,  
Now foreseeing his proud station,  
Called to bear the Cross of Christ.*

## Fifth Station

### Simon of Cyrene is Forced to Take Up the Cross

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

As Jesus grows increasingly tired, a man named Simon is pulled from the crowd and pressed into service. Does he understand that the cross he is now carrying plays a part in his own salvation? Could he begin to know the blessings that would flow from this act of service? Simon the Cyrenian looks into the eyes of mercy and shows compassion in return. The two continue down the road together. Simon's strength eases some of our Lord's burden, but only to a degree. Only one man can carry the full weight, the full burden of sin and His name is Jesus Christ.

God does not want you to fail. God hears your cries. God sees your struggles. God is proactively working for your salvation even when you are not. Just as God sent His Son to do what we could not, God still sends people into your life – people you don't even know – to help you along your way. Some whom God sends will walk with you for a lifetime and others for only a short time, but all are important and all are gifts from your heavenly Father. Look around your life for those whom God has sent to help you on your walk, to lighten your load and to offer strength to you when you need it most. Be sure to thank those souls and to thank God for them.

*Brave but trembling came the woman,  
None but she would flaunt the Roman,  
Moved by love beyond her fear.*

## Sixth Station

### Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Sacred blood runs down the Savior's face. Sweat drips into His swollen eyes as He sees a figure moving slowly toward Him. A woman named Veronica extends more than a cloth to her Lord. She offers a compassionate heart to a passionate soul. The Holy Spirit animates this daughter of God to offer her hands and her towel in service of the wounded Son. Evil may have spit in the face of Love, but love would now wash it clean again, if only for a moment. No gesture of love, no act of charity, however small, is forgotten in the Kingdom of God.

It's easy to get jaded by the world. We all go through times of loneliness, wondering how many people really care about us and how many only think of themselves. It's easy to feel like it's "you against the world." Wipe away the tears, though, and you'll see that people do care. Even small acts of charity and kindness can be huge graces from God as we carry our cross each day. The same way that selfishness alienates us, acts of selflessness are still possible during a pandemic. They bring us into community, offer us hope and keep us going. A smile, a kind word, a care package at the door, or an affirming call or text – any of these can bring relief to souls who need it. They wipe the face of Jesus, hidden beneath all of those faces.

*Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,  
Flogged in body He resembled  
All our brothers poor and scorned.*

Come Walk (page eight)

## Seventh Station

Jesus Falls a Second Time

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The Passover crowds press against Him as Jesus makes His way through the narrow city streets. Every bump or collision with the crowd sends shockwaves of pain throughout His body. His open wounds clot to the wood of the Cross. His Sacred Heart races; His blood pressure drops. And Jesus falls once again. How easy it would be to give up, but He did not. Overwhelmed not by pain but by love – the Father’s perfect love for us – Jesus presses on. He slowly rises, for He knows His walk is not yet done.

Jesus fell. He knew well the battle between the flesh and the spirit. He agonized in the garden. He cried and He bled and, now He falls again. You will fall, too. Most times when you fall, though, it’s because of sin. You choose self because love has not yet been perfected. You run into sin and, because of it, suffering follows. Even when you run away from Jesus, however, He doesn’t run away from you. He runs after you. Perfect love doesn’t turn its head; it seeks to transform pain into joy. It turns death into life. Reconcile with Jesus. Don’t stay on the ground, weighted down by the weight of your sins. Look to Jesus and He’ll give you grace to stand and move forward. Remember, the saints are the sinners who fell down and got back up.

*May our sympathy for Jesus  
Turn to those who hear now need us,  
May we see Christ bruised in them.*

*May we feel no bitter hatred,  
When we too are persecuted,  
Left alone to walk with You.*



## Eighth Station

### Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The sound of crying could be heard over the taunts and the jeers. It was a wailing so passionate that it caught our Lord's attention even in the midst of His own agony. Jesus' eyes scanned the onlookers, spotting a group of women weeping for Him. And now Christ, the Suffering Servant, would reach out to ease others' suffering yet again.

Suffering doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. He does. God does not desire your suffering but sometimes He does allow it for your own growth. When you faithfully suffer through isolation and sickness or other pains beyond your control, it bears witness to others of your unshakable love for God. Suffering broadens your perspective, helps you to grow in compassion, gratitude and dependence on God your loving Father. So, whether you are the one in pain or you are looking upon someone in pain, trust that God has an unseen plan – one that will ultimately lead you closer to Him. As St. Augustine said, "*God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.*"

*Jesus fell again in weakness,  
Stumbling as we do, to lead us  
Through our sorrow and our pain.*

Come Walk (page ten)

Ninth Station  
Jesus Falls a Third Time

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The spirit of Christ is willing but the flesh is showing weakness. It's as if the Lord's soul is now dragging His body along the Way of the Cross. Exhaustion builds. His lungs are failing. The temple that He would raise in three days – the temple of His body – has now fallen a third time. His knees are bloodied from the previous falls. His legs are almost lifeless. The weight of the Cross grows heavier and another step seems impossible. He rises from the ground one last time reminding us that perfect love endures all things.

Everyone wants to quit at some point in his or her life. Maybe you're exhausted. Maybe you've tried and tried and nothing has changed. Maybe you've lost your joy and you've begun to lose your hope. "It'd be easier to just give up" you think to yourself. You're already down and you don't think you can fall any further. Falling is human; rising is divine. It's natural to want to stop but it's supernatural – it's by God's grace – that you can keep going. It's when you've been knocked down and feel you've hit your limit that you look to Jesus, once again. Let His breath – His Spirit – fill your lungs. Let His grace fill your body and strengthen your legs to get up and walk again. It's when you just can't move any further that you realize you aren't moving...but Christ is moving within you.

*Stripped and jeered by His own nation  
Jesus stood in desolation,  
Giving all He had to give.*

## Tenth Station

### Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The walk has ended but the mockery has not. Jesus is now stripped of his last earthly possession – his clothing. Exposed for all to see, His wounds are clearly visible now – as are the fruits of our sins: the cruelty of man and the presence of evil. The shame of Adam’s nakedness bore witness to his sin but the shame of Christ’s nakedness bears witness to our sin. Onlookers stare and soldiers gamble as Jesus awaits the final insult.

Evil moves in both big and small ways in this world. God humbles but the devil humiliates. Have you ever been abused? Have you ever been the victim of great injustice? Jesus was. And although He had all power and majesty and could have taken vengeance on everyone who wronged Him, He did not. God was mocked for you. He responded to insults with silence. He returned abuse with forgiveness. Whether the assaults against Him were great or small, His response remained the same: love. You might experience great attacks against your dignity in this lifetime. You might be tempted to attack others’ dignity along the way. The way of Christ, however, is the way of love. Ask yourself, “Am I like Jesus right now? Or am I one of the soldiers, publicly stripping another of their dignity?” The answer often changes not only your day but also another’s life.

*Pierced the hands that blessed and cure us  
Pierced the feet that walked to free us  
Walked the hill of Calvary.*

## Eleventh Station

### Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The time has come. Shouts of pain echo as hammers strike nails. Roman soldiers were experts in torture and efficient in execution. Nails tear through sacred flesh and the blood that won our salvation flows out. As the Cross is lifted high for all to see, His body buckles under the weight and the stress. As He speaks words of love, compassion and forgiveness, we see that He is not just a criminal, teacher or prophet. He is God, and He is dying on a Cross for you.

Christ could have called on angels to save Him. Christ could have gotten off that Cross but He chose to save you instead of Himself. A God crucified is a God you can trust. He didn't choose the easy way out; He chose you. If He would have freed Himself or chosen not to suffer, how would you be able to really trust Him the next time you were in pain? When Jesus allowed Himself to be nailed to the wood, He was sending you a message. He was reminding you that there's no pain you endure that He can't understand. Christ was showing you how far He is willing to go to save you. He was proving to you that God would rather die than risk spending eternity without you. The sound of the hammer on the nails is the sound of a God who loves you (un)to death.

*Life eternal, death defiant,  
Bowed His head – the world was silent,  
Through His death came life anew.*

Twelfth Station  
Jesus Dies on the Cross

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The skies have grown dark. Rain falls. The earth quakes. Creation reacts to the loss of its Creator. Evil laughs as the Transfigured One now hangs lifeless and disfigured. The angels remain silent. The Lord let Himself be destroyed. No more words. No more miracles. Christ does nothing to save Himself yet offers everything to save us. It is finished.

When Jesus breathed His last breath, His enemies thought it was finally over. They were wrong. The work of salvation was not over; the stronghold of sin was over. Sin, not God, was being destroyed. Jesus did what you could never do – He paid your debt. His sacrifice makes you worthy of heaven. It's not about your words. It's not about how many prayers you pray or how many pages of Scripture you read. It's not about how many acts of charity you perform or Masses you attend...you cannot earn your salvation. Your salvation is a gift; the cross and the Sacraments are an invitation to live forever with God. And all you 'do' for God – all the prayers and acts of service and all those Sundays at Mass – are all a response to His love and to His invitation to eternal life. *"There is no greater love than to lay down your life for another."* (John 15:13). Christ laid His down for you. How many do you lay your life down for? He did what you cannot, but there is still much you can do. He died so that you might live. Live in a way that will help others to know Christ and the fullness of life He offers.

*Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother  
In your arms was placed our brother,  
"Full of grace" now filled with grief.*

## Thirteenth Station

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

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The sun begins to set. Only a few people remain at the scene. Out of reverence, permission is granted to remove the lifeless body from the blood-covered tree. The body that was taken is now given and received. A man named Joseph holds Jesus in his arms. Mary reaches to swaddle her Son. The scene is familiar but drastically different than Christmas morning. How could God use such a death to bring life?

That Friday night was a celebration of sin. The enemy had seemingly won. The Lord's body was broken. Most of His followers had turned their backs, but the Cross remained – a visible example of defeat at the hands of a selfish culture. Maybe you've seen loved ones turn their backs or even deny Him. Possibly you have shed thousands of tears and prayed from the depth of your heart. You wonder if you're the only one left who cares. You question if they will ever return or if your prayers will ever be answered. No soul is ever completely lost when so many tears are shed and so intense the prayer. Give it time. Sometimes it takes more than one sunrise for faith to take root. It just takes time for Love to reach what seems lost.

*Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted  
In three days You resurrected  
You did first what we shall do.*

Come Walk (page fifteen)

## Fourteenth Station Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

**V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

**R. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

All is quiet now. The Corpus Christi – the Body of Christ – has been laid inside the rock-hewn tomb. Burial clothes enwrap Him and incense covers Him. A cave now holds the Lord we no longer could. The stone is moved over the entrance. Darkness fills the tomb, our hearts and the world. Faith is shaken. Love has died but hope has not.

Christ's body was prepared and placed in the tomb, set apart by itself. The tomb was silent as creation waited for the Creator's heart to beat again. To be holy means 'to be set apart.' Sometimes God has to remove you from your surroundings. At times God might move you away from certain friends or even from loved ones – to prepare you. You might be 'set apart' at different stages of your life in order to grow in holiness. These are times of preparation for your greater mission in the Kingdom. Embrace such times of physical or spiritual solitude as gifts. Seasons of silence offer opportunities for quiet reflection that don't come very often in this culture. Trust that if God sets you apart in a spiritual tomb for a period of time, He has great plans for you. Christ's tomb was not just a place of death...it is also the site of the resurrection. New life begins here.

*Jesus, Risen, be our lover  
In your food and in our brother  
Lead us home to heaven with You.*

***The above content was excerpted and slightly modified from the  
LIFE TEEN ® A Teen Guide to Stations of the Cross.***

## Concluding Thoughts

2021 has been designated by Pope Francis as the Year of St. Joseph. It is a time when the world is threatened and filled with isolation. Joseph was chosen from billions of men. It wasn't an accident or arbitrary that the protector of Mary and Jesus denied himself and carried his own cross.

Let us close these Stations with an intercessory prayer to St. Joseph so as to love Jesus more and more. He will protect your heart.

Tradition tells us that Joseph was dead just prior to the passion and death of Jesus because his role as protector of Jesus was done. He was spared seeing Jesus suffer and taken at the hands of evil.

Come Walk (page sixteen)

*Unless otherwise noted, Scripture passages have been taken from the Revised Standard Version, Catholic edition. Copyright ©1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

*Quotes are taken from the English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church for the United States of America (indicated as CCC), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Copyright ©1997 by United States Catholic Conference – Libreria Editrice Vaticana.*

*©2010 Life Teen, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this text...may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior written permission from the publisher.*

*The information contained herein is produced by Life Teen, Inc. The resources and practices are in full accordance with the Roman Catholic Church. The Life Teen® name and associated logos are trademarks registered with the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office. Use of the Life Teen® trademarks without prior permission is forbidden. Permission may be requested by contacting Life Teen, Inc. at 480-820-7001.*

*Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to this project in its original form. A special thanks to Fr. Nathan March, Mark Hart, Lisa Epperson and Katie Heller.*