

## Stations of the Cross for Life

On Good Friday in 1991, Pope St. John Paul II celebrated a variation of the traditional Stations of the Cross. In the following text, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities incorporated the titles and Scriptural readings he used and added the prayers following each Scriptural reading.

### FIRST STATION: JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

*Matthew 25:36-41*

#### *Prayer*

In your agony, Lord, your must have felt alone and afraid. Even your most beloved – Peter, James, and John – could not keep watch with you. Each day, Lord Jesus, thousands of babies are killed, participants in your passion. Each day, Lord Jesus, those who have grown very old, alone and abandoned, participate in your passion. Keep us awake, O Lord, that we might watch with you and accept the cup God gives to us in every moment of our lives. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

### SECOND STATION: JESUS, BETRAYED BY JUDAS, IS ARRESTED

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

*Mark 14: 43-46*

#### *Prayer*

Hear our prayer, heavenly Father, for all who cooperate in the evil of abortion. For nurses and clerks, for doctors and aides, for relatives and friends, for spouses and parents: Give them clear vision, Lord, to see the evil before them, Give them the grace of repentance and true contrition, that they may turn from their sin and vow to never cooperate with this evil again. We ask this through him who is our Truth, Christ the Lord. Amen.

### THIRD STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY THE SANHEDRIN

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

*Luke 22: 66-71*

#### *Prayer*

They so desired your death, Lord Jesus, that they bent the truth to kill you. Banish from our hearts the hate that wishes to kill, and all desire to be seduced by violent revenge. To the killer give the grace of repentance, and to the victim the desire for justice and mercy. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

### FOURTH STATION: JESUS IS DENIED BY PETER

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

*Matthew 26: 69-75*

#### *Prayer*

Hear our prayer, O merciful Lord, for every child betrayed by those who should be first to love them. Grant eternal peace to the innocent victims of abortion, and gently soften the hearts of the parents who took their lives. Grant them repentance, healing and peace. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

### FIFTH STATION: JESUS IS JUDGED BY PILATE

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. ... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified.

*Mark 15: 1-5, 15*

*Prayer*

Hear our prayer for all judges, Lord, and especially for those who sit upon the highest court in our land. Unlike Pilate, may they see whom their decisions may kill and put aside all earthly pride, embracing only the wisdom that comes from you. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**SIXTH STATION: JESUS IS SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

*John 19: 1-3*

*Prayer*

Hear our prayers for all we crown with thorns, O Lord: especially for the elderly, whom we scourge with our neglect. Fill our hearts with a love for them. In their weakness, may we see your suffering, in their pain may we find your cross. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**SEVENTH STATION: JESUS BEARS THE CROSS**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

*John 19: 6, 15-17*

*Prayer*

As you carried the cross, Lord, you fell again and again. Hear our prayer for all who bear the weight of fatal diseases. May their love for life give them hope, and their confidence in the creator of life bring them joy. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**EIGHTH STATION: JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON THE CYRENIAN TO CARRY THE CROSS**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

*Mark 15: 21*

*Prayer*

We share in your way of sorrows, Lord, whenever we are ridiculed for our defense of those little ones whom everyone else has forgotten. Be with those who seek to carry your cross wherever life is threatened, and when they are tempted by despair, send an angel to assist them with their burden. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**NINTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

*Luke 23: 27-31*

*Prayer*

You loved the women of Jerusalem, Lord, as you loved their children. Yet you warned them of the dire evil which threatened to destroy their lives and their very souls. Open the ears of all women to your plea for life, O Lord. Grant them the grace to turn away from the sin of abortion and to walk with you this way of the cross. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

**TENTH STATION: JESUS IS CRUCIFIED**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."]

*Luke 23: 33-34*

*Prayer*

Could there be any greater sin, O Lord, than nailing the innocent Son of God to the cross? Yet still today, we slaughter innocent children in their mother's wombs. Deliver us from this madness, O Lord, and teach us how we might preach the Gospel of Life through the merits of your Passion and Glorious Cross. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

## ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS PROMISES HIS KINGDOM TO THE GOOD THIEF

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

*Luke 23: 39-43*

### *Prayer*

Grant repentance, O Lord, to all who have sinned against the Gospel of Life: to doctors who abort, mothers who abandon their children, those who would execute prisoners, or euthanize the old. To researchers who refuse to follow your will, or those who would profit on the sufferings of others: give a full portion of your grace and your mercy, that they too might turn from their sin and find you, who are Lord forever and ever. Amen.

## TWELFTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO HIS MOTHER AND THE DISCIPLE

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

*John 19: 25-27*

### *Prayer*

A mother's love, O Lord, is like no other. So you entrusted the youngest apostle to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Entrust the child in her mother's womb to the Blessed Mother, Lord, Entrust the prisoner who sits on death row to her care. Entrust the work of the scientist who seeks a cure to her, and the life of the old man in a hospital bed, as well. May we all live under the protection of Mary, our mother, from our conception to natural death. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

## THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

*Luke 23: 44-46*

### *Prayer*

Be with all who die today Lord, and bring the merits of your Passion to their aid. To those who die alone, send an angel of peace. To those who die of violence, cradle them in your arms. To all who die, grant the mercy and

peace of the Gospel of Life that they may rest in you, through whom they were born, and with whom, we pray, they might live forever. Amen.

#### **FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB**

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

V. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*Reader:* When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

Matthew 27: 57-60

#### *Prayer*

Your tomb, Lord Jesus, was not an end. In the glory of the paschal morning your empty tomb stood testament to your glorious destruction of sin and death. Destroy the culture of death, O Lord: Obliterate it in the light of your risen glory, that all who live and breathe might give you glory and celebrate the miracle of the life they have received from you. For you are Lord, forever and ever. Amen.