

With physical distancing and our inability to participate in the many rituals and rites that are celebrated during this Lenten and Easter season, we at St Mary want to offer these stations of the cross for you to do as a family.

Here are several other on line programs that will allow you to join the church during this season: "Word on Fire" & "Formed". Also please check the DioceseofCleveland.org for live telecasts of Holy Week masses at the Cathedral.

General Reflection as you begin the stations of the cross

We are all born into a family, as Jesus was. We grow up in a family, as Jesus did. Whether we live alone or with several generations, we all live most of our lives in the context of family relationships, as Jesus did. The Stations of the Cross (The Way of the Cross) is an opportunity for each member of our parish family to reflect on how each station applies to our daily lives.

One of the most important elements of this devotion is the effect it can have on our daily lives and how it can change our hearts. The Stations are not moments of failure for Jesus or the people involved in His passion and death. They were moments of great courage, compassion and hope. Each station is a reflection of key moments in our lives; moments that often occur daily. Each station gives us an opportunity to reflect on important life issues and our relationship with God and one another. It is our hope and prayer that this journey of faith will help us to experience courage, compassion and hope in our own 'Way of the Cross'.

THE FIRST STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus is sentenced to death.*

Jesus was accused of many crimes he did not commit. He humbly and silently accepted the accusations and punishment given to him by those who witnessed his miracles. We ask ourselves how could they have accused and condemned him to death when all he did was love everyone he met.

How often have we condemned others falsely because of their appearance, a comment they made, their actions that did not conform to mine.

Reader (2) :

How do you feel when someone blames you for something you didn't do? Recall a time when you were misunderstood or when you misjudged someone else. How did you deal with the situation? There are times in our lives when it is easier to go along with the crowd, even though we know it is wrong. It takes real courage to stand up for what is right.

Response:

Dear Jesus, forgive me for the ways I have condemned others with my words and actions. Help me to have the courage to do what is right even when I am being criticized. Help me to be kind to others, even when it is not the popular thing to do.

THE SECOND STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus takes the cross.*

Jesus carried the heavy cross without complaining.

Jesus has not slept all night, he has been betrayed by a friend and all of his friends have deserted him. He has been beaten, stripped of all dignity and now he is given the weight of his cross to bear; the cross that is the weight of all of our sins.

Reader (2) :

What crosses, burdens and struggles are weighing us down? Perhaps it is being confined with our families, caring for another, worrying about coronavirus if we interact with another, struggling with an addiction or needing to be reconciled with God.

Each of us have worries and concerns at times like this that weigh us down. There are no perfect families. Sometimes we too feel tired and weak and we become cross and upset and allow these things to bring us down..

Response:

Prayer: Dear Jesus, Help us to be honest with one another and encourage one another to share their burdens praying that God will give us the strength to carry our crosses and our difficulties, whatever they may be.

THE THIRD STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus falls the first time.*

Jesus finds the weight of the cross is heavy, he falls. As Christ walks through the streets every movement, every jolt burns and reopens his wounds. The pain and weight of the cross is too much for him to bear and he falls.

Reader (2) :

How often in our lives, in our families do we feel we are being crushed by the weight of our crosses; by the demands of our jobs or loss of our job, our home, family members, our children, the demands of home school and lack of sports? Are we able to prioritize our life and put it into God's hands?

Can we laugh at ourselves and learn from our mistakes? Are we able to forgive ourselves even knowing God has forgiven us? Are we able to truly let go and allow God to direct our lives in this time of crisis?

Response:

Dear Jesus, Each time I fall help me to get back up. Help me to be an example for my children and others. Help me to show that in our human weakness, in this time of crisis we may fail, despite our best efforts but we will always be there for one another just as Christ is there for us. With God's help we can get back up when we have fallen and continue to carry on.

THE FOURTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus meets his mother.*

When Jesus meets his mother he understands the sorrows and worries of all mothers.

Amid the pain, the agony and stress of carrying the cross Christ sees his mother, He sees the anguish, the pain and the sorrow in her eyes. He finds comfort in her presence knowing that she has always been there for him.

Reader (2) :

Just as our parents love us and are always there for us .Christ's mother Mary loves us and is there for us. We continually need to reflect on all the things that God has blessed us with; our parents, family and friends and all the things they do for us and don't get time to do for themselves. We need to remember how much they love us and we need to thank them for all that they do.

Response:

Dear Jesus, Your mother Mary, our parents (and grandparents) love us very much, and we don't always take the time to thank them or hug them because we are too busy or interested in other things. Jesus, I thank you for the gift of my family. Help us to reach out to one another in this time of crisis.

THE FIFTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Simon helps Jesus to carry the cross.*

Jesus is grateful to Simon for his help. The soldiers realize that Christ is weak and may not be able to carry his cross to Calvary. Rather than show compassion themselves for Christ, they force Simon of Cyrene to help Christ carry his cross. With his help Christ is able to carry on.

Reader (2) :

How often have we passed up an opportunity to help someone? Have I allowed the opinion of others or this crisis to stand in my way? Do I see it as an obstacle that will not allow me to finish a task that I think is more important? Helping someone can be difficult in this time of isolation but if we put our concerns before God he will guide us in ways to help others. Perhaps we have a difficult time asking someone for help, we may see it as a sign of weakness. When someone helps us do something do we say thanks or do we just expect it?

Response:

Dear Jesus, sometimes I pretend not to hear when someone calls out for me or I am just too busy to offer my help. You gave help to everyone. When you needed help, you accepted it. Help me to have courage to offer help when I see that it is needed and also to accept help when I need it.

THE SIXTH STATION

Reader (1): *Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.*

Veronica showed love for Jesus by her kindness and Jesus was grateful. By now your face is bloody and it is almost impossible for you to see as it runs down off your forehead. With the exception of your mother all who pass by shout and jeer at you, some spit at you, and mock you. As Veronica comes up to you, she shows compassion and love. She wipes the sweat and the blood from your face and for just a moment is able to restore your human dignity .

Reader (2) :

How often have I forgotten that each person has been created in the image and likeness of God and deserves to be respected and treated like Christ? Am I able to look at individuals and see in them the gift of God's creation? Help me to remember that like Veronica, we can wipe someone's face, by extending a smile, calling them with an encouraging word or a card. Small kindnesses mean a lot because they can ripple and grow and affect others. Help all of us to see the many little ways we can be kind to others in this time of physical distancing.

Response:

Dear Jesus, there are times when I see someone who is sad or lonely or worried. Just as Veronica wiped your face to comfort you, help me to always be kind to others in whatever way I can.

THE SEVENTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus falls the second time.*

Jesus falls a second time under the weight of the cross and the treatment of the guards.

The soldiers are enraged, why isn't Simon's help enough? They beat Jesus all the more and shout and taunt him, yet he knows that this too is part of the Father's will for Him; so he raises up under the weight of the cross and continues on.

Reader (2) :

How often have I failed to follow through on my promises, to God, to my family, to my friends? We all fall, we make mistakes, but our failures can be for good if we get back up and learn from them and keep trying in spite of them. Often times they can teach us to be more understanding of others. How many times have we failed to encourage others to try again, when they made some silly mistakes?.

Response:

Dear Jesus, sometimes when things are going well for me, they are not going so well for others. Help me to watch out for others who need help and re-assure them that you are with them and will always hear their call.

THE EIGHTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.*

The women saw Jesus suffering and were very sad, but Jesus gave them hope.

The women cry and weep as though Jesus is already dead, because they know he is on his way to die on the cross. Yet in this moment of pain and suffering consumed by death you speak words of life and hope to them.

Reader (2) :

In this time of crisis do we speak words of life and hope to others? Do we allow the gospel of life to permeate our hearts and our words? We all experience sadness and grief due to death, separation, serious illness or addictions; sometimes it is easier to just think about ourselves, rather than what is going on around us or about problems that we face. It takes courage to think about others, to comfort them and feel their sadness.

response:

Dear Jesus, I get selfish at times and think only of myself. Help me to reach out to others as you did. Help me to see the needs of others and put their needs above mine.

THE NINTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus falls the third time.*

Jesus falls down again dropping his cross but gets up.

This time Jesus falls from sheer exhaustion. His strength is completely spent. How difficult it is knowing this is what God is calling you to do and yet your humanity feels excruciating pain and every bone in your body says stop, I can do no more. By sheer will you are able to rise up and continue on.

Reader (2) :

When we have really tried to do our best, and have not been able to succeed, it is easy to feel like Jesus when he fell a third time. Sometimes people will criticize us for something we do, or make fun of the way we do something. There are times in our lives when we feel we can't continue with something as we have tried and tried without success. In this time of crisis we need the help of Jesus and others to lift our spirits and pick us up so we can start again,

Response:

Dear Jesus, help us to know that you are always there to answer our call and to show us a way forward.

THE TENTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus is stripped of his robes.*

Jesus' clothes are taken away. Jesus realizes the end is near and yet it is terrifying because the most excruciating pain is still to come. It isn't just the indignity or the embarrassment of having his clothes removed; it is the agony of having the blood soaked cloth torn from his body sending new waves of pain as his wounds are opened up again.

To be without clothes in front of everyone is a humiliating and embarrassing experience. Our bodies are sacred, a unique and special gift from God, all bodies are precious.

Reader (2) :

Are we respectful of our own body? Are we doing our part to practice distancing and good hygiene to protect ourselves as well as others. Do we judge others by what they do, the way they look, by how they act? Do we define our own identity and self-worth by what we do, what we wear and how we look to others? Are we able to humble ourselves, turn away from our pride and accept ourselves as the person God has created us to be?

Response:

Dear Jesus, help us to think before we act or say something to others. Give us the strength and the courage to make good moral decisions, even when doing the right thing is difficult.

THE ELEVENTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus is nailed to the cross.*

Jesus forgives those who hurt him. When Jesus came into the world he was laid in a wooden manger with love by his Mother. Now he is nailed to that wood out of love for us. Crucifixion is horrific pain and suffering. His hands are stretched onto the wood and nails are driven through them into the wood. His feet are placed against the wood and a nail is driven through them, with each blow of the hammer, pain shoots through the body of Jesus.

When we look upon the crucified Lord we ask ourselves, why are they doing this to him, an innocent man, a man who loved everyone. As we reflect, we realize we are like those in the crowd, and how many times have our sins been like a hammers blow as Christ is nailed to the cross.

Reader (2) :

Our challenges are as much a part of life as our rewards. Coronavirus is our challenge today. We didn't ask for it, we don't want it but it is the cross that we must bear. When we are unfairly treated, when we speak unkind words, when we are bullied, when we bully another or take unfair advantage of another, we are Crucifying Christ. In his Crucifixion Christ was able to forgive those who

persecuted Him, can we do the same to those who hurt us? Can we accept our crosses and offer up their pain suffering and isolation as Christ offered up his life for us?

Response:

Dear Jesus, sometimes I say or do things that hurt others. Help me to bring your love to others and not allow my pain or suffering to be passed on to others. Help me to forgive others and accept the forgiveness that others extend to me for my actions.

THE TWELFTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus dies on the cross.*

Jesus died for us all. Over the head of Jesus are the words “King of The Jews” and you no longer look the part. Yet every word you speak is one of love and compassion. You look on those around you and see whom you are doing this for and finally you say Father into your hands I commend my spirit... it is finished. You take your last breath.

Reader (2) :

Death is never easy because it seems to have taken away all we have ever known about someone. We need to be aware of the hurt experienced by those who lose a loved one. We are part of God’s family, and we must have compassion and kindness for all.

Response:

Dear Jesus, The death of a loved one causes us grief and sadness perhaps more so when we are isolated from them in their time of need. In our isolation may we never forget your love for us. Help us to know that you died for each and every one of us. Fill us with comfort in our sorrow, knowing that we never suffer alone you are always there each step of the way.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus is taken down from the cross.*

Jesus’ mother and friends gently care for his body. Your mother now holds your lifeless body. She sees not only the man but the child she once held and her heart is pierced, she can only draw comfort in her sorrow from the love of God the Father.

Reader (2) :

We all know people who are saddened with grief over the loss of a family member, a close friend or a loved one. They often have feelings of being alone, afraid, abandoned and can be angry with life and God. At times like this, it is our faith, our love of God, and the love and support of family and friends that can get us through. At times like these, it takes courage to be there for others when we live in these isolated times and our words seem so inadequate.

Response:

Dear Jesus, sometimes it is risky to step out and help people who are in need. Help me to be willing to be a risk-taker and reach out to others. Mary, mother of Jesus, help us to care for others and show them our love and compassion in these most difficult times.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Reader (1) : *Jesus is laid in the tomb.*

Jesus’ body is wrapped in clothes and placed in the tomb.

Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, Jesus Mother wrapped his body in clean linens and laid it in the tomb. A stone is rolled over the entrance. Until this point, death is final. All those who accompanied Jesus in life are in sorrow believing all is over. How often has the death of a loved one felt like the end? You are left wishing you had the opportunity to say “I love you” just one last time.

Reader (2) :

During this crisis in our lives we can become discouraged and things seem hopeless. When nothing seems to work out the way we planned. Problems with family, friends, school and work can seem hopeless. Do we put our trust in Jesus or do we lose hope?

How do we work to overcome discouragement and hopelessness? When living in isolation with family, loss of our job, mounting bills, having to home school, do we put our trust in God? Do we seek out or accept help those around us, or our parish community?

Response:

Dear Jesus, even when things look impossible and we feel helpless, may we have the courage and faith to trust that God will bring new life and hope. Jesus I need you and I trust in you.

Conclusion

As a part of a family, as members of the family of the one body of Christ, we realize that suffering and death are not meaningless; because by Christ's passion death and resurrection we have the promise of eternal life. We too will die and through our love for one another we will rise to new life and be able to stand up under the crosses we must bear in our earthly life.

We are all living in our shortness of life.. It is a gift from God that allows us to love and care for one another just as Christ did as he walked the earth with his disciples. May we be his disciples and have the courage to live our lives as loving members of our families.

Final blessing

By Christ's passion, death on the cross and his resurrection he has shown us his love for us and given us the example to follow as we take up the crosses we must bear in this life.

May we have the courage to follow in his footsteps.

May God continue to Bless all of us. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit

Amen