

WE ADORE YOU,
O CHRIST,
AND WE BLESS YOU

Because by your Holy Cross
YOU HAVE REDEEMED THE
WORLD



PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
OUR LADY OF VICTORIES CHURCH
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Stations of the Cross

THE PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Dear Beloved brothers and sisters, with hearts filled with reverence and spirits ignited by faith, we gather in the sacred space of prayer to embark on a profound journey - the Stations of the Cross. As we stand at the threshold of this spiritual pilgrimage, let us come together as one, united in purpose and devotion.

The Stations of the Cross offer us a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to witness His sacrifice, and to reflect upon the profound love that led Him to Calvary. In this sacred endeavor, let us not only remember but actively participate, bringing our intentions to the forefront of this divine encounter. I invite each of you to take a moment to form your intentions. In this sacred space, let us lift up our desires, hopes, and supplications to the heavens. The Church, in its wisdom, grants us this beautiful opportunity for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin - a chance to draw closer to God and bring solace to those who have gone before us. Let us seek, with unwavering faith, the grace of a plenary indulgence for ourselves or for the souls of our departed loved ones.

Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be

fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence. Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ The Sign of the Cross

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you, I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

Leader: Dear Brothers and Sisters: Lent has arrived. We are here to relive, listening to the Word, the final passage of the life of Christ: from the Garden of Olives to the tomb hewn in the Garden.

Via Crucis, the path of suffering, which Christ treads in obedience to the saving plan of the Father. His path and ours: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16,24).

Via Crucis, the event which reveals the love of the Trinity: of the Father, who “so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn 3,16); of the Son, who so loved his

friends that he laid down his life for them (cf. Jn 15,13); of the Spirit of peace, mercy and consolation.

Via Crucis, the school of life according to the Gospel, where the disciple, gazing upon the Crucified One, learns how to love God above all things and spend his life for his brothers and sisters; how forgiveness can triumph over injury and evil be requited with good; how the heart can open to a friend and the pain of the afflicted find relief.

Via Crucis, an appeal for reconciliation and peace, so that conflicts may cease all over the world, bloodshed may come to an end, so that, by the power of the Spirit, all hardness of heart may be shattered and “enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the ways of peace together” (Roman Liturgy). Peace to those nearby and those far away! Peace to you, Jerusalem, City beloved of the Lord! Peace to you, America, may we be faithful following God rather than man.

All: Holy and merciful Father, grant that we may walk with faith and love along the way of the Cross. As we share in Christ’s passion, may we come at last with him to the glory of your Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

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.

Leader: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

Consider, that Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross. My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins, that condemned You to die. I beseech You, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in its journey toward eternity.

All: I love You, my beloved Jesus; I love You more than myself; I repent with my whole heart of having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

SECOND STATION

JESUS IS MADE TO BEAR HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. (Matthew 27:31)*

Consider, that Jesus, in making this journey with the cross on His shoulders, thought of us, and offered for us, to His Father, the death that He was about to undergo.

All: My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations that You have destined for me until death. I beseech You, by the merits of the pain You suffered in carrying Your cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love You, Jesus, my love, I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from You again. Grant that I may love You always, and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all. (Isaias 53:6)*

Consider, this first fall of Jesus under His cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, His head crowned with thorns, and He had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that He could scarcely walk, and yet He had to carry this great load upon His shoulders. The soldiers struck Him rudely, and thus He fell several times in His journey.

All: My beloved Jesus, it is not the weight of the cross, but of my sins, which has made You suffer so much pain. Ah, by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love You, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

- V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *So you also are now in anguish. But I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. (John 16:22)*

Consider, the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

All: My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow You experienced in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Your most holy Mother. And you, my Queen, who was overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by your intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of your Son. I love You, Jesus, my love; I repent of ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always, and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

FIFTH STATION

SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

- V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*

Consider that the Jews seeing that at each step Jesus, from weakness, was on the point of expiring, and fearing that He would die on the way when they wished Him to die the ignominious death of the cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the cross behind Our Lord.

All: My most sweet Jesus, I will not refuse the cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it. I accept in particular the death that You have destined for me with all the pains which may accompany it; I unite it to Your death, I offer it to Thee. You have died for love of me, I will die for love of You, and to please You. Help me by Your grace. I love You, Jesus, my love; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always, and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us.*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

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.

Leader: *Even as many were amazed at him - so marred was his look beyond that of man, and his appearance beyond that of mortals. (Isaiah 52:14)*

Consider that the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him with a towel with which He wiped His adorable face, leaving on it the impression of His holy countenance.

All: My most beloved Jesus, Your face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. My soul also was once beautiful, when it received your grace in Baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins. You alone, my Redeemer, can restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Your Passion, O Jesus. I love You with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

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.

Leader: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.*
(Hebrews 4:15)

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the cross, a fall which renews the pain of all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

All: My most gentle Jesus, how many times You have pardoned me, and how many times have I fallen again, and begun again to offend You! Oh, by the merits of this new fall, give me the necessary helps to persevere in Your grace until death. Grant that in all temptations which assail me I may always commend myself to You. I love You, Jesus, my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Did you weep with the women on the way?*

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.

Leader: *Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.* (John 15:6)

Consider that those women wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in so pitiable a state, streaming with blood, as He walked along. But Jesus said to them, "Weep not for Me but for your children."

All: My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the offenses that I have committed against You, because of the pains which they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure which they have caused You, who has loved me so much. It is Your love, more than the fear of hell, which causes me to weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love You more than myself; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.* (Philippians 2:6-8)

Consider the third fall of Jesus Christ. His weakness was extreme, and the cruelty of His executioners excessive, who tried to hasten His steps when He had scarcely strength to move.

All: My outraged Jesus, by the merits of the weakness You suffered in going to Calvary, give me strength sufficient to conquer all human respect and all my wicked passions, which have led me to despise Your friendship. I love You, Jesus with my whole heart; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us.*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

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.

Leader: *In the same way, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33)*

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to His torn flesh and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Savior thus cruelly treated, and say to Him:

All: My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment which You have felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in You, Who are so worthy of my love. I love You, O Jesus, with my whole heart: I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

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.

Leader: *I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and petition; and they shall look on him whom they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a first-born. (Zachariah 12:10)*

Consider that Jesus, after being thrown on the cross, extended His hands, and offered to His eternal Father the sacrifice of His life for our salvation. These barbarians fastened Him with nails; and then, raising the cross, left Him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

All: My Jesus, loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Your feet, that it may ever remain there to love You, and never quit You again. I love You more than myself; I repent of having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

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.

Leader: *He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. (Philippians 2:8-9)*

Consider how Jesus, after three hours of agony on the cross, consumed at length with anguish, abandons Himself to the weight of His body, bows His head, and dies.

All: O my dying Jesus, I kiss devoutly the cross on which you have died for love of me. I have merited by my sins to die a miserable death, but Your death is my hope. By the merits of Your death, give me grace to die, embracing Your feet and burning with love of You. I commit my soul into Your hands. I love You with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: *Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried. (Luke 23:50-53)*

Consider that, our Lord having expired, two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Him down from the cross, and placed Him in the arms of His afflicted Mother, who received Him with unutterable tenderness, and pressed Him to her bosom.

All: O Mother of Sorrow, for the love of this Son, accept me for your servant and pray to Him for me. And You, my Redeemer, since you have died for me, permit me to love You. I love You with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended You. Never permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN HIS TOMB

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

Consider that the disciples carried the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by His holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulcher with her own hands. They then closed the tomb and all withdrew.

All: Oh, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses You. But You rose again the third day. I beseech You, by Your resurrection, make me rise glorious with You at the last day, to be always united with You in heaven, to praise You and love You forever. I love You, and I repent of ever having offended You. Never

permit me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You; and then do with me what You will.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Behold, O kind and most sweet Jesus, I cast myself on my knees in Your sight, and with the most fervent desire of my soul, I pray and beg You to impress upon my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, with true repentance for my sins, and a firm desire of amendment, while with deep affection and grief of soul I contemplate Your five most precious Wounds, having before my eyes that which David spoke in prophecy: "They pierced My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones." God has loved us from all eternity. So He says: "Remember I first loved you. You had not come to be, nor did the world yet exist, but I loved you already. From all eternity I have loved you."

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others. Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened,

suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

SECOND WEEK OF LENT

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Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence. Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a

moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ **The Sign of the Cross**

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

□ Our Father

□ Hail Mary

□ Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you, I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

Leader: Dear brothers and sisters, the shadows of evening have fallen on our world, just as they did that evening on the houses and gardens of Jerusalem. We too will now go out to the olive trees of Gethsemane and follow in the steps of Jesus of Nazareth during the final hours of his life on earth.

It will be a journey into pain, solitude and cruelty, into evil and death. But it will also be a path trod in faith, hope and love, because the tomb which is the final stop on our way will not remain sealed forever. Once the darkness has passed, at the dawn of Easter, the light of joy will arise, silence will be replaced by the word of life and death will give way to the glory of the Resurrection. Let us now pray, and join our words to those spoken by an ancient voice of the Christian East.

All: Lord Jesus, grant us the tears we lack, that our sins may be washed clean. Grant us the courage to implore your mercy. On the day of your final judgment tear out the pages listing our sins and consign them to oblivion. Lord Jesus, you repeat to us this evening the words you once spoke to Peter: "Come, follow me". Obedient to your summons, we wish to follow you, step by step, along the way of your Passion, so that we too may learn to think as God thinks and not by human standards.

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

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.

Pilate said to them: "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said: "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked: "What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more: "Let him be crucified!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. (Matthew 27:22-23,26)

Leader: We know this scene of condemnation all too well: we see it played out daily! But one question troubles our hearts: why does God allow himself to be condemned? Why does God, the Almighty, show himself clothed with weakness? Why does God let himself be attacked by pride, insolence and human arrogance? Why does God remain silent? God's silence pains us, it is our testing and trial! But it is also what purifies our hasty judgments, and heals our thirst for revenge. God's silence is the soil in which our pride dies and true faith springs up, a humble faith, a faith which does not challenge God, but surrenders to him with childlike trust.

All: Lord, how easy it is to condemn! How easy to throw stones: the stones of judgement and slander, the stones of indifference and neglect! Lord, you chose to stand on the losing side, on the side of the ignominious and the condemned! Help us never to cause pain to our vulnerable brothers and sisters. Help us to take a courageous stand in defense of the weak. Help us to reject the water of Pilate, which does not cleanse our hands but sullies them with innocent blood.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

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.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews!". They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. (Matthew. 27:27-31)

Leader: In Christ's passion, hatred was unleashed: our own hatred, and the hatred of all humanity. In Christ's passion, our evil recoiled before goodness, our pride exploded with resentment in the face of humility, our depravity was outraged by God's radiant clarity. And thus, we became ... God's cross! We, in our silly rebellion, we, with our foolish sins, have made a cross of our own anxiety and our own unhappiness: we devised our own punishment. But God takes the cross upon his shoulders, our cross, and he confronts us with the power of his love. God takes the cross! Unfathomable mystery of goodness! Mystery of humility, which shames us at our unbending pride!

All: Lord Jesus, you entered human history and found it hostile to you, defiant towards God, maddened by the pride which leads us to think that we stand as tall as our shadow! Lord Jesus, you did not attack us, but let yourself be attacked by us, by me, by everyone! Heal me, Jesus, by your patience, cure me by your humility, cut me down to my rightful size, that of a creature, a tiny creature yet the object of your infinite love!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Surely, he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah. 53:4-6)

Leader: In our human way of thinking, God is incapable of falling, and yet he falls. Why? It cannot be a sign of weakness, but only a sign of love: a message of love for us. Falling beneath the weight of the cross, Jesus reminds us that sin is a heavy burden, sin lowers us and destroys us, sin punishes us and brings us evil: in a word, sin is evil! Yet God still loves us and desires what is good for us; his love drives him to cry out to the deaf, to us, who are unwilling to hear: “Abandon sin, because it hurts you. It takes away your peace, your joy; it cuts you off from life, and dries up within you the very source of your freedom and dignity”. Abandon it! Abandon it!

All: Lord, we have lost our sense of sin! Today a slick campaign of propaganda is spreading an inane apologia of evil, a senseless cult of Satan, a mindless desire for transgression, a dishonest and frivolous freedom, exalting impulsiveness, immorality and selfishness as if they were new heights of sophistication. Lord Jesus, open our eyes: let us see the filth around us and recognize it for what it is, so that a single tear of sorrow can restore us to purity of heart and the breadth of true freedom. Open our eyes, Lord, Jesus!

Lord Jesus Crucified, have mercy on us

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: “Behold, this child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce through your own soul also. Then he came down with them and went to Nazareth. And his mother kept all these things in her heart. (Luke. 2:34-35,51)

Leader: Every mother is love made visible, an abode of tender affection and undying fidelity. Because a true mother loves, even when she is not loved in return. Mary is the Mother! In her, womanhood is unalloyed, and love is not poisoned by the waves of selfishness that constrict and smother human hearts.

Mary is the Mother! Her heart faithfully accompanies the heart of her Son, shares in his sufferings, carries his cross, and itself feels the pain of every wound inflicted on the body of her Son. Mary is the Mother! She continues to be a Mother, for us, forever!

All: Lord Jesus, we all need a Mother! We need a love that is faithful and true. We need a love that never wavers, a love that is a sure refuge at times of fear, at times of pain and trial. Lord Jesus, we need women: wives and mothers who can restore to our world the fair face of humanity. Lord Jesus, we need Mary: the woman, the wife and the mother, who never cheapens or refuses love! Lord Jesus, we pray to you for all the women of the world!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

FIFTH STATION

JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON THE CYRENE TO CARRY HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. Jesus told his disciples: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew. 27:32; 16:24)

Leader: Simon of Cyrene, you are one of the little ones, the poor, a nameless man from the countryside, someone overlooked by the history books. And yet you made history! You wrote one of the most beautiful chapters in the history of mankind: you carried the cross of Another, you lifted the cross, and prevented it from crushing its victim. You restored dignity to us all, by reminding us that we become truly ourselves only when we stop thinking only about ourselves. You remind us that Christ is waiting for us in the street, on the landing, in hospital, in prison, in the outskirts of our cities. Christ waits for us! Will we recognize him? Will we help him? Or will we die in our selfishness?

All: Lord Jesus, love is fading away, and our world is becoming cold, inhospitable, intolerable. Shatter the chains that hold us back from reaching out to

others. Help us, through love, to find ourselves. Lord Jesus, our affluence is making us less human, our entertainment has become a drug, a source of alienation, and our society's incessant, tedious message is an invitation to die of selfishness. Lord Jesus, rekindle within us the spark of humanity that God placed in our hearts at the dawn of creation. Free us from our decadent narcissism, and we will find new joy in life and burst into joyful song.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

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.

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces. (Isaiah. 53:2-3)

Leader: The face of Jesus is bathed with sweat, streaming with blood, covered with abusive spittle. Who would dare draw near him? A woman! A woman steps out of the crowd, keeping alight the lamp of our humanity, and wipes his Face and finds his Face! How many people today have no face! How many people are relegated to the margins of life, exiled, forsaken, by an apathy that kills the apathetic. Only those afire with love are truly alive, those who bend low before Christ who suffers and awaits us in those who are suffering: today! Today! For tomorrow will be too late!

All: Lord Jesus, a single step and the world could change! A single step, and peace could return to families, a single step, and the needy would no longer be alone; a single step, and the suffering could feel a hand reaching out to take their hand ... and bring healing to both. A single step, and the poor could find a place at table, lifting the sadness haunting the tables of the selfish, who find no joy in feasting alone. Lord Jesus, a single step is all it would take! Help us to take that step, for our world is slowly depleting all its store of joy. Help us, Lord!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Fret not because of the wicked, be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more, though you look well at his place, he will not be there, but the meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity. (Psalms. 37:1-2, 10-11)

Leader: Our arrogance, our violence, our injustices all press down upon the body of Christ. They weigh upon him and he falls a second time, to show us the unbearable burden of our sins. But what is it that today, in particular, strikes at Christ's holy body? Surely God is deeply pained by the attack on the family. Today we seem to be witnessing a kind of anti-Genesis, a counter-plan, a diabolical pride aimed at eliminating the family. There is a move to reinvent mankind, to modify the very grammar of life as planned and willed by God. But, to take God's place, without being God, is insane arrogance, a risky and dangerous venture. May Christ's fall open our eyes to see once more the beautiful

face, the true face, the holy face of the family. The face of the family which all of us need.

All: Lord Jesus, the family is one of God's dreams entrusted to humanity; the family is a spark from Heaven shared with all mankind: the family is the cradle where we were born and are constantly reborn in love. Lord Jesus, enter our homes and lead us in the song of life. Rekindle the lamp of love and make us feel the beauty of being bound to one another in an embrace of life: a life warmed by God's own breath; the breath of the God who is Love. Lord Jesus, save the family, and save life itself! Lord Jesus, save my own family, save our families!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Did you weep with the women on the way?*

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.

A great number of people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed!'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"
(Luke. 23:27-29, 31)

Leader: The tears of the mothers of Jerusalem flood with pity the path trod by the Convict, soften the ferocity of an execution and remind us that we are all children: children come forth from a mother's embrace. But the tears of the mothers of Jerusalem are but a small drop in the river of tears shed by mothers:

mothers of the crucified, mothers of murderers, mothers of drug addicts, mothers of terrorists,
mothers of rapists, mothers of psychopaths: but mothers all the same! Yet tears are not enough. Tears must overflow into love that nurtures, strength that gives direction, firmness that corrects, dialogue that builds, a presence that speaks! Tears must prevent other tears!

All: Lord Jesus, you know well the tears of every mother, you see in every home the corner of pain,
you hear the silent cry of the many mothers hurt by their children: bearing deadly wounds ... yet still alive! Lord Jesus, dissolve the clots of callousness that prevent love from circulating in the arteries of our families. Make us, once again, conscious of being children, so that we can give our mothers – on earth and in heaven – pride in having borne us, and joy in blessing the day of our birth. Lord Jesus, wipe away the tears of all mothers, so that a smile may return to their children's faces, to the faces of all.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Are you not from of old, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? "Write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 1:12-13; 2:2-3)

Leader: As Pascal insightfully observed: “Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world; and we cannot sleep during this time”. Where is Jesus in agony in our own time? In the division of our world into belts of prosperity and belts of poverty ... this is Christ’s agony today. Our world is made of two rooms: in one room, things go to waste, in the other, people are wasting away; in one room, people die from surfeit, in the other, they die from indigence; in one room, they are concerned about obesity, in the other, they are begging for charity. Why don’t we open a door? Who don’t we sit at one table? Why don’t we realize that the poor can help the rich? Why are we so blind?

All: Lord Jesus, those who live to hoard riches are the very ones you have called fools! Yes, those who think they own anything are really fools, since there is but one Owner of the world. Lord Jesus, the world is yours and yours alone. Yet you have given it to everyone so that the earth can become a home where all find nourishment and shelter. So hoarding riches is robbery, if their useless accumulation prevents others from living. Lord Jesus, put an end to the scandal that divides the world into castles and slums. Lord, teach us once more the meaning of brotherhood!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

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.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also, his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so, they said to one another: “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be”. This was to fulfil the Scripture: “They

parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots". (John. 19:23-24)

Leader: The soldiers take Jesus' tunic from him with the brutality of thieves; they also try to rob him of his modesty and his dignity. But Jesus is the modesty, Jesus is the dignity that belongs to man and the human body. And the scorned body of Christ becomes the indictment of all the scorn ever shown to the human body, which God created as the mirror of the soul and the language to speak of love. Today bodies are constantly bought and sold on the streets of our cities, on the streets of our televisions, in homes that have become like streets. When will we realize that we are killing love? When will we realize that, without purity, the body can neither be alive nor life-giving?

All: Lord Jesus, purity has everywhere fallen victim to a calculated conspiracy of silence: an impure silence! People have even come to believe a complete lie: that purity is somehow the enemy of love. But the opposite is true, O Lord! Purity is necessary as a condition for love: a love that is true, a love that is faithful. In any event, Lord, if we cannot be the master of ourselves? how can we give ourselves to others? Only the pure are capable of love; only the pure can love without cheapening love. Lord Jesus, by the power of your blood poured out in love, grant us pure hearts, so that our world may see a rebirth of love, that love for which our hearts so deeply yearn.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

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.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews". Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying: "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross". So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying: "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the Cross and we will believe in him". (Matthew 27:35-42)

Leaders: The hands that blessed everyone are now nailed to the cross; the feet that walked everywhere, bringing hope and love, are now bound to the stake. Why, O Lord? Because of love! Why your passion? Because of love! Why your cross? Because of love! Lord, why didn't you come down from the cross, to respond to our taunts? I did not come down from the cross, because then I would have made power the lord of the world, whereas love alone is the power capable of changing the world. Why, Lord, did you pay this dreadful price? To tell you that God is Love, infinite Love, all-powerful Love. Do you believe me?

All: Jesus, Crucified Lord, everyone else can deceive us, abandon us, delude us: you alone will never delude us! You let our hands nail you brutally to the cross, as a way of telling us that your love is true, sincere, faithful and irrevocable. Jesus, Crucified Lord, our eyes look upon your hands pierced with nails, yet still capable of granting true freedom; they look upon your feet, nailed to the cross, yet still capable of walking and making others walk. Jesus, Crucified Lord, the illusion of a happiness apart from God is dead. Let us return to you, our sole hope and freedom, our sole joy and truth: Jesus, Crucified Lord, be merciful to us sinners!

Lord Jesus Crucified, have mercy on us

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

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.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”, that is: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. (Matthew 27:45-46, 50)

Leader: People foolishly thought: God is dead! But if God is dead, who will still give us life? If God is dead, what is life itself? Life is Love! So the cross is not God’s death, but the moment when the fragile shell of the humanity taken up by God is shattered and a flood of love bursts forth to renew all humanity. From the cross was born the new life of Saul, from the cross was born the conversion of Augustine, from the cross was born the joyful poverty of Francis of Assisi, from the cross was born the radiant goodness of Vincent de Paul; from the cross was born the heroism of Maximilian Kolbe, from the cross was born the amazing charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, from the cross was born the courage of John Paul II, from the cross was born the revolution of love: so the cross is not the death of God, but the birth of his Love in our world. Blessed be the cross of Christ!

All: Lord Jesus, in the silence of this evening, your voice is heard: “I thirst! I thirst for your love!”. In the silence of this night, your prayer is heard: “Father, forgive them! Father, forgive them!”. In the silence of history, your cry is heard: “It is finished”. What is finished? “I have given you everything, I have told you everything, I brought you the most beautiful message of all: God is love! God loves you!”. In the silence of the heart, we can feel the caress of your final gift: “Behold, your mother: my mother!”. Thank you, Jesus, for giving Mary the mission of reminding us each day that the meaning of everything is to be found in love: the Love of God planted in the world like a cross! Thank you, Jesus!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND GIVEN TO HIS MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them: “The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day”. And they were greatly distressed. (Matthew 27:55, 57-58; 17:22-2)

Leader: The deed is done: we have killed Jesus! And Christ’s wounds continue to sting in Mary’s heart, as one sorrow envelops both Mother and Child. The Pietà! The sorrowing Mother and her Son!

The scene cries out to us, it brings distress and pain even to those used to inflicting pain on others. The Pietà! We almost seem to feel compassion for God and yet – once again – it is God who feels compassion for us. The Pietà! Our pain is no longer hopeless, nor will it ever be hopeless again, for God has come to suffer with us. And with God, can we ever be hopeless?

All: O Mary, in your Son you embrace every son and daughter, and share in the anguish of every mother throughout the world. O Mary, your tears continue to fall in every age; they bathe the faces and mirror the grief of every man and woman. O Mary, you have known sorrow ... yet you still believe! You believe that clouds do not darken the sun, you believe that night gives way to dawn. O Mary, you

who sang the Magnificat, lead us in the song that conquers sorrow like the birth pangs that bring forth new life. O Mary, pray for us! Pray that we too may experience the infectious power of true hope.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

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.

Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher. (Matthew 27:59-61)

Leader: There are times when life seems like a long and dreary Holy Saturday. Everything seems over, the wicked seem to triumph, and evil appears more powerful than good. But faith enables us to see afar, it makes us glimpse the break of a new day on the other side of this day. Faith promises us that the final word belongs to God: to God alone! Faith is truly a little lamp, yet it is the only lamp that can light up the night of the world: and its lowly light blends with the light of a new day: the day of the Risen Christ. So, the story does not end with the tomb, instead it bursts forth from the tomb: just as Jesus promised us, it happened, and it will happen again!

All: Lord Jesus, Good Friday is the day of darkness, the day of blind hatred, the day when the Just One was put to death! But Good Friday is not the final word: the final word is Easter, the triumph of Life, the victory of Good over Evil. Lord

Jesus, Holy Saturday is the day of emptiness, the day of bewilderment and dread, the day when everything seems over! But Holy Saturday is not the final day, the final day is Easter, the Light that is kindled anew, the Love that conquers all hatred. Lord Jesus, whenever we experience our own Good Friday, and we feel the anguish of Holy Saturday, give us Mary's unwavering faith, so that we can believe in the reality of Easter; give us her clear-sighted gaze so that we can see the brilliant dawn that announces the final day of history: "new heavens and a new earth" already present in you, Jesus, Crucified and Risen.

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Jesus, you have become the least among men, you let yourself fall onto the earth like a grain of wheat. Now, from this seed there sprouts the tree of Life that embraces the universe. Just as the pious women went early to the tomb with spices and ointments, Lord, grant that we will come to you with the scents and aromas of our poor love. Jesus, in our churches you are waiting: you wait in expectation for someone who will be small and humble like you in the Eucharist, adore you and bear witness to you before the people, recognize you in the poor and suffering. Grant that each one of us will adore you and be your witness in the Eucharistic tabernacle and in the sacrament of the hungry, the thirsty, the sick. To you, Jesus, whose face is peaceful in the solemn rigidity of death, our love and our adoration at this evening hour and on the day which knows no end. Amen.

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others.

Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened, suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Dear Beloved brothers and sisters, with hearts filled with reverence and spirits ignited by faith, we gather in the sacred space of prayer to embark on a profound journey - the Stations of the Cross. As we stand at the threshold of this spiritual pilgrimage, let us come together as one, united in purpose and devotion.

The Stations of the Cross offer us a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to witness His sacrifice, and to reflect upon the profound love that led Him to Calvary. In this sacred endeavor, let us not only remember but actively participate, bringing our intentions to the forefront of this divine encounter. I invite each of you to take a moment to form your intentions. In this sacred space, let us lift up our desires, hopes, and supplications to the heavens. The Church, in its wisdom, grants us this beautiful opportunity for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin - a chance to draw closer to God and bring solace to those

who have gone before us. Let us seek, with unwavering faith, the grace of a plenary indulgence for ourselves or for the souls of our departed loved ones.

Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence. Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ The Sign of the Cross

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this

journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

OPENING PRAYER

All: Lord Jesus, you invite us to follow You in this, your final hour. In You, each one of us is present and we, though many, are one in You. In Your final hour is our life's hour of testing, in all its harshness and brutality; it is the hour of the passion of Your Church and of all humanity. It is the hour of darkness: when "the foundations of the earth tremble" and man, "a tiny part of your creation", groans and suffers with it; an hour when the various masks of falsehood mock the truth and the allure of success stifles the deep call to honesty; when utter lack of meaning and values brings good training to naught and the disordered heart disfigures the innocence of the small and weak; an hour when man strays from the way leading to the Father and no longer recognizes in You the bright face of his own humanity. This hour brings the temptation to flee, the sense of bewilderment and anguish, as the worm of doubt eats away at the mind and the curtain of darkness falls on the heart. And You, Lord, who read the open book of our frail hearts, ask us today, as once you asked the Twelve: "Do you also wish to leave me?"

Lord, we cannot and would not leave you, for You alone "have the words of eternal life", You alone are "the word of truth" and Your cross alone is the "key that opens to us the secrets of truth and life". "We will follow You wherever you go!" Following You is itself our act of worship, as from the horizon of the not yet a ray of joy caresses the already of our journey. Amen.

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

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.

Pilate said to Jesus, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again, and told them, “I find no crime in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?” They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:37-40)

Leader: Pilate finds in Jesus no cause for condemnation, yet he does not find within himself the strength to oppose the sentence. His inner hearing is deaf to the word of Jesus; he fails to understand Jesus’ testimony to the truth. “To hear the truth is to obey it and believe in it”. It is to live freely under its aegis and to entrust one’s heart to it. Pilate is not free: he is conditioned from without, yet the truth he has heard continues to echo within, knocking at his heart and troubling him. So he goes out to the Jews; “he went out again”, the text emphasizes, in an attempt, as it were, to flee from himself. And the voice coming to him from without prevails over the word within. Here is where the condemnation of Jesus, the condemnation of the truth, is decided.

All: Jesus most humble, we too let ourselves be conditioned from without. We no longer know how to hear the quiet, exacting and liberating voice of our own conscience which lovingly invites us, appealing from within: “Do not go out, return to yourself: it is in the inner man that the truth dwells”. Come, Spirit of Truth, help us to encounter in the “inner man, hidden deep within our hearts” the Holy Face of the Son who renews us in the Divine Likeness!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

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.

When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." Then Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So, they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his cross, to the place called the place of the skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. (John 19:6-7, 16-17)

Leader: Pilate hesitates; he seeks a pretext to release Jesus, but yields to the outcry and the will which dominates, which appeals to the Law and spreads innuendo. The history of the wounded human heart continues to be repeated: with its pettiness, its inability to see beyond itself, to escape the illusions of petty self-interest, and thus to find freedom, to take flight and to soar in the broad expanse of goodness and honesty. The human heart is a microcosm. Within it the great fortunes of humanity are decided, its conflicts resolved or intensified. But the decisive factor is always the same: whether to cling to, or to let go of, the truth which sets us free.

All: Jesus most humble, in the ebb and flow of daily life our heart looks down to its own small world, and, all consumed by ledger of our own wellbeing, remains blind to the outstretched hand of the poor and needy which begs for a hearing and asks for help. At most we are touched, but we do not stir. Come, Spirit of Truth, touch our heart and draw it to yourself. "Keep sound our inner sense of taste, that it may eat and drink of wisdom, justice, truth and eternity"!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

Leader: The story of Jesus falling three times along the Way of the Cross is not part of the biblical account; it is a legacy of traditional devotion, carefully preserved and cultivated in the hearts of those who pray. In his first fall, Jesus turns to us, shows us a path, becomes our teacher. He invites us to come to him whenever we experience human powerlessness, and to discover there he closeness of God’s power. He shows us the path leading to the fount of true refreshment, of the grace which is sufficient. He teaches us the lesson of a meekness which quells rebellion and a trust which supplants arrogance. As our teacher, the fallen Jesus gives us, most of all, the great lesson of humility, “the path that brought him to the resurrection”. The path that, after every fall, gives us the strength to say: Now I will begin again, O Lord, with you and not alone!”

All: Jesus most humble, our own falls, born of our shortcomings and sins, bruise the pride of our hearts, close them to the grace of humility and halt our journey on the path that leads to you. Come, Spirit of Truth, free us from every pretense of self-sufficiency and grant that we may recognize in every fall a step upon the stairway that rises to you!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

- V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, 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 to his own home. (John 19:25-27)

Leader: Saint John shows us Jesus' Mother standing beneath his cross, but no Evangelist tells us outright of an encounter between the two. And yet this "standing" of his Mother at the cross is truly an encounter in the most profound sense of the word. The seemingly static verb – "to stand" – actually expresses deep inner movement and vitality. It is the intense movement of prayer joined to tranquil acquiescence. To pray is let oneself be caught up in the loving and true gaze of God, who reveals us to ourselves and sends us forth on mission. In authentic prayer, a personal encounter with Jesus makes each of us a mother and a beloved disciple, it begets life and transmits love. It expands our inner receptivity and weaves mystical bonds of communion, entrusting us to one another and opening the individual you to the common we of the Church.

All: Jesus most humble, when life's trials and injustices, its unmerited sufferings and brutal violence make us lash out against you, you ask us to stand, like your Mother, at the foot of the cross. When our plans and expectations fall apart or seem doomed to failure, and make us flee in desperation, you recall us to the strength found in waiting. We have indeed forgotten the power of standing still as an expression of prayer! Come, Spirit of Truth, be the "cry of our heart" which incessantly and inexpressibly stands with confidence in the presence of God!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

FIFTH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

And as they led Jesus away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

Leader: Simon of Cyrene is a man portrayed by the Evangelists with precise details regarding his name and background, his family and work. His is the photograph of a man caught at a certain time and place, in some way forced to carry a cross not his own. Yet Simon of Cyrene is really each of us. He accepts the burden of the cross of Jesus, just as we ourselves received the sign of the cross at Holy Baptism. The life of a disciple of Jesus consists in just such obedience to the sign of the cross, in a disposition ever more marked by the freedom of love and mirroring the obedience of the Master. It is a complete surrender to learning, like him, the geometry of love, according to the measure of the cross: the breadth of good works, the length of perseverance in trial, the height of the hope which trusts and fixes its gaze aloft, the depth of the grace that sinks its roots in gratuity”.

All: Jesus most humble, when life gives us a bitter cup to drink, our nature closes in upon itself, digs in, fearful of being caught up in the folly of that greater love which turns renunciation into joy, obedience into freedom and sacrifice into greatness of heart! Come, Spirit of Truth, make us obedient when the cross comes into our lives, and docile to its sign, which embraces our whole being: “body and soul, thoughts and will, senses and feelings, acting and suffering” and expands all things in accordance with love’s measure!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

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.

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (Corinthians 4:6)

Leader: Along the Way of the Cross popular devotion has depicted a woman's gesture, steeped in gentleness and veneration, a kind of lingering trace of the perfume of Bethany. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. In that face, marred by suffering, Veronica recognizes the face transfigured by glory; in the features of the suffering Servant, she sees the fairest of the sons of men. Seeing Jesus in this way leads to her generous gesture of kindness and in return she receives the imprint of the Holy Face! Veronica teaches us the secret of that feminine gaze that invites encounter and offers help: it sees persons with the heart!

All: Jesus most humble, our eyes are incapable of looking beyond: beyond poverty, to recognize your presence, beyond the shadow of sin, to glimpse the sun of your mercy, beyond the blemishes of the Church, to see the face of a Mother. Come, Spirit of Truth, pour into our eyes "the cleansing balm of faith" that they may not be distracted by outward appearances, but come to know the allure of things unseen.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (Peter 2:21b-24)

Leader: Jesus falls again beneath the weight of the cross. The wood of our salvation is burdened not only with the infirmities of our human nature but also the trials of our daily life. Jesus shouldered the burden of persecution against the Church, past and present, the persecution that murders Christians in the name of a heartless idol and offends her dignity “with lying lips and arrogant words.” Jesus bore the burden of persecution against Peter, against the untrammelled voice of “the truth that challenges and frees the heart.” By his cross, Jesus bore the burden of persecution against his servants and disciples, against those who respond to hatred with love, to violence with meekness. By his cross, Jesus bore the burden of that inordinate “love of self which leads to contempt of God” and injustice against our brothers and sisters. He bore it all freely, he endured it all “in patience, as a means of instructing our own patience”.

All: Jesus most humble, amid the injustices and trials of this life we fail to stand fast in patience. Often, we implore you to show your power by freeing us of the weighty wood of our personal cross. Come, Spirit of Truth, teach us to follow the example of Christ and “to practice his great precepts of patience by the tenor of our hearts!”

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Did you weep with the women on the way?*

EIGHTH STATION

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM, WHO WEEP FOR HIM

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

There followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” (Luke 23:27-31)

Leader: Jesus our Master, on the way to Calvary, continues to teach us what it is to be human. Meeting the women of Jerusalem and casting his gaze of truth and mercy upon them, he accepts every tear of compassion shed for him. The God who wept over Jerusalem now directs the tears of those women away from fruitless outward pity. He invites them to see in him the fate of the innocent man unjustly condemned and then seared, like green wood, by the “chastisement that makes us whole”. He helps them to look to the dry wood of their own hearts in order to experience the life-giving pain born of compunction. Our sorrow is authentic when we weep not only to confess our sin but also to express heartfelt anguish. Such tears are blessed, like the tears of Peter, a sign of repentance and a pledge of conversion, and they renew within us the grace of our Baptism.

All: Jesus most humble, in your body, afflicted and abused, disgraced and scorned, we are unable to see the wounds of our own infidelity and ambition, our betrayal and our rebellion. Your wounds cry out, pleading for the balm of our conversion, yet today we no longer know how to weep for our sins. Come, Spirit of Truth, pour out upon us the gift of Wisdom! In the light of your saving Love, make us aware of our own wretchedness, grant us “the tears that take away guilt, the weeping that merits forgiveness”!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“You are those who have continued with me in my trials; and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom ... Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren”. (Luke 22:28-30a, 31-32)

Leader: In his third fall, Jesus expresses the love with which, for our sake, he embraced the burden of suffering, and he renews his call to follow him faithfully to the end. But he also gives us a glimpse of what lies beyond the veil of the promise: If we endure, we shall also reign with him. Jesus’ falls are part of the mystery of his Incarnation. He sought us out in our weakness, descending into its very depths in order to raise us up to himself. In himself he showed us the path of humility, to open up for us the path of return. He taught us patience as the weapon that conquers the world. Now, falling to the ground for the third time, even as he “sympathizes with our weaknesses, he shows us how not to succumb to temptation: we are to persevere, to remain steadfast, in a word, to remain in him.

All: Jesus most humble, amid the trials that sift our faith we feel alone and forlorn: we do not yet believe that these, our trials were once yours and that you ask us simply to endure them with you. Come, Spirit of Truth, whenever we fall along the way! Teach us to cling to Jesus’ fidelity and to trust in his prayer for us, that we may receive that stream of power which he alone, God-with-us, is able to give!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

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 soldiers took Jesus' garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also, his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another: "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfil the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So, the soldiers did this. (John 19:23-24)

Leader: Jesus stands naked. The image of Christ stripped of his garments is richly biblical: it brings us back to the innocent nudity of our origins and to the shame of the Fall. In original innocence, nudity was the robe of man's glory: his transparent and beautiful friendship with God. With the Fall, the harmony of that relationship is broken, nudity becomes shameful and it contains the tragic memory of that loss. Nakedness is another word for the truth of being. Jesus, stripped of his garments, wove from the cross the new robe of our dignity as sons and daughters of God. His seamless tunic remains there, for us, in its integrity: the garment of his divine sonship was not torn, but was bestowed upon us from the height of the cross.

All: Jesus most humble, in the sight of your nakedness we come to see what is essential in our lives and in our joy: that in you we are sons and daughters of the Father. But we also see our own unwillingness to embrace poverty as dependence on the Father, and to accept nakedness as the garment of our sonship. Come, Spirit of Truth, help us to acknowledge and bless in every despoliation that we endure a confrontation with the truth of our being, an encounter with the

redemptive nakedness of the Savior, a springboard towards filial embrace with the Father!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

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.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." (John 19:18-22)

Leader: The crucified Jesus is at the center; the royal title, high above the cross, discloses the depths of the mystery: Jesus is the King and the cross is his throne. Jesus' kingship, recorded in three languages, is a message for all: for the simple and the wise, the poor and the powerful, those who trust in God's law and those who trust in political power. The image of the Crucified One, which no human decree will ever be able to remove from the walls of our heart, will remain forever the royal Word of Truth: The Crucified Light which enlightens the blind, the treasure which only prayer can unlock, the heart of the world. Jesus' does not reign with worldly might, he has "no legions". Jesus reigns by drawing to himself: his magnet is the love of the Father who gives himself for us, in the Son, "to the infinite end. Nothing is withdrawn from its burning heat!

All: Lord Jesus, crucified for our sake, you are the proof of the Father's great love for mankind, the image of that truth which alone is credible. Draw us to yourself, that we may learn to live by love of your love. Come, Spirit of Truth, help us always to choose "God and his will over the interests of the world and its powers, and to discover, in the outward powerlessness of the Crucified Lord, the ever-new power of truth.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

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.

Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfil the Scripture: "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:28-30)

Leader: "I thirst." "It is finished." With these two phrases Jesus, looking first to humanity and then to the Father, bequeaths to us the burning passion at the heart of his person and mission: love for man and obedience to the Father. His is a love both horizontal and vertical: in the shape of the cross! And at the intersection of this twofold love, at the place where Jesus bows his head, the Holy Spirit wells up, the first fruits of his return to the Father. This final breath which brings Jesus' life to completion evokes the work of creation, which now is redeemed. But it is also a summons to all of us who believe in him to "bring to completion in our own flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions". That all may be complete!

All: Lord Jesus, who died for our sake! You ask, that you may give, you die, that you may leave a legacy, and thus you make us see that the gift of self opens a

space for unity. Pardon the gall of our rejection and unbelief, pardon the deafness of our hearts to your cry of thirst which echoes in the suffering of our many brothers and sisters. Come, Holy Spirit, parting gift of the Son who dies for us: may you be the guide who leads us into all the truth and the root which sustains us in unity.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND GIVEN TO HIS MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe. After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. (John 19:32-35, 38)

Leader: Jesus' pierced side is not only a wound but a window; it is an open door to the heart of God. Here his infinite love for us can be drawn like life-giving water, a drink which, unseen, satisfies and revives. May we, too, draw near the body of Jesus, lowered from the cross and held in his Mother's arms. Let us approach not by walking but by believing, not with physical steps but with the free decision of our heart. In this lifeless body we see ourselves as members of Christ, his limbs, wounded and suffering, yet safe in the loving embrace of our Mother. But let us also see ourselves as held in these motherly arms; firm yet

gentle. The open arms of the Church, our Mother, are like the altar which offers us the Body of Christ. There we become Christ's mystical Body.

All: Lord Jesus, placed in the arms of your Mother, the image of our Mother the Church! As we contemplate the figure of the Pietà we learn devotion to the "yes" of love; we learn surrender and acceptance, trust and practical concern, a tender heart which restores life and awakens joy. Come, Holy Spirit, guide us, as you guided Mary, by the radiant gratuity of the love poured forth from God into our hearts by the gift of your presence!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden, there was a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:40-42)

Leader: A garden, whose colors are a symbol of life, receives the mystery of man, created and redeemed. It was in a garden that God set the man he had created, and thence banished him after the Fall. It was in a garden that the Passion of Jesus began, and now in a garden an empty tomb receives the new Adam as he returns to the earth, the maternal womb which holds the seed that dies to bear much fruit. This is the hour of faith, which waits silently, and of hope, which

already sees on the withered branch a tiny bud, the promise of salvation and joy. Now the voice of “God speaks in silent depths of the heart”.

All: Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others.

Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened, suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the

promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Dear Beloved brothers and sisters, with hearts filled with reverence and spirits ignited by faith, we gather in the sacred space of prayer to embark on a profound journey - the Stations of the Cross. As we stand at the threshold of this spiritual pilgrimage, let us come together as one, united in purpose and devotion.

The Stations of the Cross offer us a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to witness His sacrifice, and to reflect upon the profound love that led Him to Calvary. In this sacred endeavor, let us not only remember but actively participate, bringing our intentions to the forefront of this divine encounter. I invite each of you to take a moment to form your intentions. In this sacred space, let us lift up our desires, hopes, and supplications to the heavens. The Church, in its wisdom, grants us this beautiful opportunity for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin - a chance to draw closer to God and bring solace to those who have gone before us. Let us seek, with unwavering faith, the grace of a plenary indulgence for ourselves or for the souls of our departed loved ones.

Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence.

Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be

focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ **The Sign of the Cross**

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

□ Our Father

□ Hail Mary

□ Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: The greatest expression of my love for you is in my invitation to share my life, especially my last and most difficult hours. Will you walk the final steps with me? May I tell you what was in my heart? Come be with me in my time of need as I am with you. Then you and I will be of one heart and nothing can ever separate us. Will you walk the final steps with me? May I tell you what was in my heart?

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

THE FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE

- V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

And Pilate said to them: "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more: "Crucify him". So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. (Mk 15,14-15)

Leader: It was early Friday morning when I saw my son. That was the first glimpse I had of him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks. Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted my son executed. All around me they shouted, "Crucify him!" I wanted to plead with them to stop, but I knew this had to be. So, I stood by and cried silently.

All: Lord Jesus, it is hard for me to imagine the anguish your mother felt at your condemnation. But what about today, when I hold a grudge? "Crucify him!" When I judge others? "Crucify him!" Doesn't this bring tears of anguish to both you and your mother? Forgive me, Jesus.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

THE SECOND STATION

JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. (Mk 15:20)

Leader: Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my son stumbled out, the guards laughing behind him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on his shoulders. Then they shoved him down the road. My pain for him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from him and carry it myself. But I knew this had to be, so I walked on silently.

All: Lord Jesus, I beg you to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to your cross by closing my eyes to the pain and loneliness of my neighbor. Forgive me for gossiping about others and for always trying to find excuses to avoid certain people who wish to talk with me. Help me to be like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus said to his disciples: "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in my footsteps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would a man show if he were to gain the whole world and destroy himself in

the process? What can a man offer in exchange for his very self?" (Matthew 16: 24-26)

Leader: I followed close behind my son as he stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into his shoulders. My heart dropped when I saw him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on his back. For a moment I thought my beloved son was dead. Now my whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped him. I wanted to protect him with my own body. But, I knew this had to be, so I walked on and wept silently.

All: Lord, how often have I seen you fall, and, unlike Mary, have left you there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and laughed at them? How often do I find myself getting angry when someone does things differently than I? Mary offered you her support through your entire passion. Help me to do the same for you by the support I give to others. Lord, have mercy on me.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

THE FOURTH STATION JESUS MEETS HIS GRIEVING MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed -- and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare." (Luke 2: 34-35)

Leader: I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my son. I called to him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, his full of pain and confusion. I felt helpless; then his eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As he stumbled on, I knew he was right. So I followed and prayed silently.

All: Lord Jesus, forgive me the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me the times I brooded over little inconveniences or became discouraged and did not heed your call to courage! Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times, but fruitlessly.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

THE FIFTH STATION

SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

They compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (Mk 15:21)

Leader: I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my son as he tried to carry his heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be his last. I felt his every pain in my heart and I wanted the whole thing to end. Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my son's load. He asked the guards why this had to be. I knew, and so followed silently.

All: Lord Jesus, I have many times refused to help you. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned your word. Don't let me remain like Simon, but help me to be like your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

THE 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.

Since for your sake I bear insult, and shame covers my face. I have become an outcast to my brothers, a stranger to my mother's sons. (Psalm 69: 8-9)

Leader: As I continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil and began to wipe my son's sweating, bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back. Her face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to him?" I knew, so I walked on in faith, silently.

All: Lord, this woman gave you the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to you by giving to others but I pass them by. My savior, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to you.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

THE SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

Leader: Again, my son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that he might die. I started to move toward him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my son fall, get up again, and continue on, was bitter anguish to me. But, since I knew this had to be, I walked on silently.

All: Lord, of all people Mary was your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for you. I have many times turned away from you by my sins and have caused others to turn away from you. I beg you to have mercy on me.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: ***Did you weep with the women on the way?***

THE EIGHTH STATION

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?". (Lk 23:27-28,31)

Leader: I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw him stop. Some women were there crying for him and pitying him. He told them not to shed tears for him. They had the opportunity to accept him as the messiah; like many others, they rejected him instead. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears that would bring their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and his walk to death. I did, and as he walked on, I followed silently.

All: My savior, many times have I acted like these women, always seeing the faults in others and pitying them. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked your pardon. Lord, you have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

THE NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

If you love me and obey the commands I give you, I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete -- to be with you always: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept since it neither sees him nor recognizes him; but you can recognize him because he remains with you and will be within you. I will not leave you orphaned; I will come back to you. (John 14:15-18)

Leader: This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had he fallen on the rocky ground again, but now he was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at him and abused him, almost dragging him the last few steps.

My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to him next. But I knew this had to be, so I climbed the hill silently behind him.

All: My loving Jesus, I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people but when it became inconvenient or painful to me, I left them, making excuses for myself. Help me, Lord, to be like your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

THE 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.

When they crucified him, they divided his clothes among them by casting lots.
(Matthew 27:35)

Leader: With my son finally relieved of the weight of the cross, I thought he would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip his clothes off his blood-clotted skin. The sight of my son in such pain was unbearable. Yet, since I knew this had to be, I stood by and cried silently.

All: Lord, in my own way I too have stripped you. I have taken away the good name of another by foolish talk, and have stripped people of human dignity by my prejudice. Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended you through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see you in all people.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

THE 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.

And they crucified him, and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. (Mk 15:24)

Leader: As they threw Jesus on the cross, he willingly allowed himself to be nailed. As they punctured his hands and his feet, I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There he was, my son, whom I love so much, being scorned as he struggled for the last few moments of earthly life. But I knew this had to be, so I stood by and prayed silently.

All: Lord, what pain you endured for me. And what pain your mother went through, seeing her only son die for love of me! Yet, both you and she are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me, Lord, to turn away from my sinfulness.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

THE 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.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice: Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' And one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to

drink, saying: "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down". And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. (Mk 15,34.36-37)

Leader: What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes! I, who had brought this savior into the world and watched him grow, stood helplessly beneath his cross as he lowered his head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever. Yet, this had to be and I had to accept it, so I stood by and I mourned silently.

All: My Jesus, have mercy on me for what my sins have done to you and to others. I thank you for your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down your life for your friends. Let me always be your friend. Teach me to live my life for others, and not fail you again.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

When evening fell, a wealthy man from Arimathea arrived, Joseph by name. He was another of Jesus' disciples, and had gone to Pilate to request the body of Jesus. There upon, Pilate issued an order for its release. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in fresh linen and laid it in his own new tomb which had been hewn from a formation of rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27:57-60)

Leader: The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our savior, my son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow

engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my son, but it had also brought life to all of us. I knew this had to be, and I prayed silently.

All: Lord, your passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over you. I have done my part in your crucifixion and now, my savior, I beg your forgiveness with all my heart. Help me to live a life worthy of you and your mother.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

The next day, the one following the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees called at Pilate's residence. "Sir," they said "we have recalled that the imposter while he was still alive made the claim 'After three days I will rise.' You should issue an order having the tomb kept under surveillance until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead!' This final imposture would be worse than the first." Pilate told them, "You have a guard. Go and secure the tomb as best you can." So, they went and kept it under surveillance of the guard after fixing a seat to the stone. (Matthew 27:62-66)

Leader: We brought Jesus' body to a tomb and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before I left, I thought, I knew this had to be it had to be for you! I would wait in faith silently.

All: Yes, my Lord, this had to be because you love me, and for no other reason. All you ask is that I live a good life. You never said such a life would be easy. I am willing to leave sin behind and live for you alone, in my brothers and sisters.

CLOSING PRAYER

All: My Jesus, I have traveled Your Way of the cross. It seems so real and I feel so ashamed. I complain of my sufferings and find obedience to the Father's Will difficult. My Mind bogged down by the poverty, sickness, starvation, greed and hatred in the world. There are many innocent people who suffer so unjustly. There are those born with physical and mental defects. Do we understand that You continue to carry Your cross in the minds and bodies of each human being?

Help me to see the Father's Will in every incident of my daily life. This is what You did - you saw the Father's Will in Your persecutors, Your enemies and your pain. You saw a beauty in the Cross and embraced it as a desired treasure. My worldly mind is dulled by injustice and suffering and I lose sight of the glory that is to come. Help me to trust the Father and to realize that there is something great behind the most insignificant suffering. There is Someone lifting my cross to fit my shoulders - there is Divine Wisdom in all the petty annoyances that irk my soul every day.

Teach me the lessons contained in my Cross, the wisdom of its necessity, the beauty of its variety and the fortitude that accompanies even the smallest cross. Mary, My Mother, obtain for me the grace to be Jesus to my neighbor and to see my neighbor in Jesus. Amen

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your

sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others.

Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened, suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Dear Beloved brothers and sisters, with hearts filled with reverence and spirits ignited by faith, we gather in the sacred space of prayer to embark on a profound journey - the Stations of the Cross. As we stand at the threshold of this spiritual pilgrimage, let us come together as one, united in purpose and devotion.

The Stations of the Cross offer us a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to witness His sacrifice, and to reflect upon the profound love that led Him to Calvary. In this sacred endeavor, let us not only remember but actively participate, bringing our intentions to the forefront of this divine encounter. I invite each of you to take a moment to form your intentions. In this sacred space, let us lift up our desires, hopes, and supplications to the heavens. The Church, in

its wisdom, grants us this beautiful opportunity for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin - a chance to draw closer to God and bring solace to those who have gone before us. Let us seek, with unwavering faith, the grace of a plenary indulgence for ourselves or for the souls of our departed loved ones.

Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence.

Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ **The Sign of the Cross**

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

□ Our Father

□ Hail Mary

□ Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this

journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

Leader: We gather on this day as Christians united in prayer. In the midst of our busy lives we pause to pray as we reflect on the suffering journey of Christ. As we accompany Jesus on his journey to Calvary, let us take a moment to remember how difficult that journey was. He carried his cross through the narrow-crowded streets of Jerusalem. It was Passover time and so the city was full of people, many of whom mocked, jostled and took pleasure in watching as Jesus struggled with his heavy burden. The way was often steep. The journey that Jesus made on that day remains a symbol of Christianity in the world, as it struggles with its own crosses and failures, and the challenges of modern life. The streets of our towns are filled with people who carry their personal crosses, who are bruised, battered and broken. Through these Stations of the Cross, Jesus is inviting us to journey with him and to reflect on his suffering as it continues in the lives of his people. In solidarity with all who suffer, let us pray that we will be open to whatever he wants us to see, hear and understand.

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

THE FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: We Remember Jesus was captured at night, the Cross of Jesus taken away by soldiers, stripped of his garments, interrogated, tortured, crowned with sharp thorns and now handed over to be condemned to death by Pontius Pilate – death on a cross. Jesus is condemned unjustly by those who did not understand him and by those who were frightened of what he did and said. Perhaps they sensed that this man could make a difference, that he could turn their world upside down. We continue to condemn people unjustly today. People are

condemned because of the color of their skin, their gender, their beliefs, because they are born with a disability, because they don't conform to our way of thinking, the list is endless. There are also the people who have been justly condemned, who have been found guilty, served their sentence and asked for forgiveness. Does our society really forgive; really believe that people can change or do we continue to condemn them over and over again?

All: We Pray Jesus, what a terrible injustice to see you condemned to death. Your own people, the Roman judges and the soldiers didn't recognize that you were the Son of God. Give us the grace to see, respect and love you in all people, both innocent and guilty. Change our hearts that we may see with new eyes those we might otherwise condemn.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

THE 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.

Leader: We Remember Jesus was led away carrying the cross by himself. A cross is not just a piece of wood, it is everything that makes life difficult. Jesus carried the crosses of his life without complaint, as a poor person and as an itinerant prophet. In the calm and courageous way, he put up with the threats of the Pharisees and the lack of understanding of his own disciples. In the way that he carried all the burdens of his life but, in particular, the way in which he carries this awful, final burden, he transforms the cross from a symbol of condemnation into one of liberation. There are burdens that we all carry, some are very obvious and others we take great care to hide. There are the burdens of illness, pain and disability, of old age, dependence, and caring for someone who no longer knows

who we are. There are the burdens of constant fear, of loneliness and of isolation. The invitation of Jesus on the cross is to hand over these burdens to him.

All: May we see your presence Lord in all the burdens we carry today. Help us to share our burdens more freely, not to be afraid to acknowledge our fears and our pain. May we be more aware of the crosses that others bear and make time to alleviate their burden. May your face shine on each one of us through the crosses we bear.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: We Remember Jesus falls. Here Jesus shows us that being heroic does not mean staying on one's feet at all costs. Being heroic means getting up again after falling and starting off on the road chosen. Human beings will never resign themselves to stay flat on the ground. Like Jesus, they will get up again, pick up their crosses and keep on searching for a promised land of total liberation. Look at Jesus fall under his cross. He might have fallen into the gutter or be slouched into a doorway on skid row. He doesn't look much like God there, but he didn't look like God when he fell into the dirt on the way to Calvary either. The crowds look on with disdain at this man whom they see as a sinner, who has been condemned to death by the authorities. Like the crowd, we often have only condemnation and rejection for those we see as sinners. We judge them without

knowing about their trials, scourging and crowning with thorns. Do we even suspect the part we might have played in knocking them down? What do we do to help them?

All: Jesus, it's easy to see your image in saints. Help us to see you in the sinners too. You had a place in your heart for the divorced Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, the good thief, and for those who crucified you. Give us this same compassionate heart.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

THE FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: When Jesus and his mother meet, they just look at each other – words cannot express how they feel. What he saw in his mother's eyes must have hurt him more than the raw pain of his wounds. This for Jesus is the most painful time of all. This is his bereavement. Jesus carries the heaviest burden of the loss of his family; the sundering of the earthly, loving relationship between mother and child. This was not of his making. The violence inflicted upon him etched into the very heart of his mother, as she watched the agony of her son. We see Mary's pain in the mothers and fathers who watch their children giving up their life to drugs, addictions and suicide, in the women and men who suffer violence and the ongoing threat of violence in their home from spouse or child. We see Mary's

pain in the child coping with the breakdown of a parent's marriage, in the couple trying desperately to rebuild their relationship and family anew.

All: Jesus, we remember the gaze that rested between you and your mother. In that moment of pain there was also a moment of deep and enduring love. Jesus, give us the courage to bring that love into the deepest recesses of our homes, to our children and to our spouses, to those places of fracture and disharmony in our circle of relationships.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

THE FIFTH STATION

SIMON HELPS JESUS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Simon the Cyrene, a stranger in the city, did not know Jesus. But that did not matter. What matters here is that in this moment of need Simon was capable of lending his shoulders to one whose own had given out, of offering his strength to one who had nothing left, of taking on himself the cross, which Jesus could no longer carry. Look at Jesus who lies hidden and unknown beneath every person in need. Across our world we see human suffering in the faces of strangers, in the faces of those struggling for democracy in the Middle East and beyond, in the faces of those dealing with the loss of life and destruction of property. People we know of, but do not know, must live with the aftermath of the ravages and destructive forces of nature – coping with floods and drought, with the devastating effects of climate change.

All: Lord, help us to grasp our opportunities to be a Simon in our world. In those times when we can help, let us have the generosity to do so. May we continue the spirit of Simon through our support of agencies who work to alleviate suffering in our world. Lord, may we have the humility to accept all the Simons along our road who reach out to help us in our moments of need.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

THE 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.

Leader: Veronica was so moved by the sight of Jesus suffering that she courageously moved out from the crowd to wipe the blood and sweat from his face with a towel. She was rewarded when the image of his face was transferred to the towel. It is a suffering face, disfigured with wounds. Yet this is the only image of himself that Jesus chose to leave with us. Today the visible face of Christ, the Church, stands before us still wounded and disfigured; disfigured by its own sins of abuse of children and power, and creased with the wounds of hurt and betrayal. The face of Christ calls us to look upon and heal the sin of our Church.

All: Jesus, give your wounded Church the courage of Veronica so that we may wash the face of Christ clean from the disfigurements of our sin. Help us to bring healing to the scars that hide the beauty of your face to our world. Give us the faith to continue to build your Church as a visible sign of your love and compassion.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

THE SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Stretched to breaking point by his awful scourging, bowed under the weight of the cross, worn out by the abandonment of all his friends, Jesus stumbles again. All around us people are overburdened by the crosses they carry; they struggle and sometimes fall. There are those who have lost their jobs and feel that they have little hope of finding another, those who live with the prospect of unemployment, and those who struggle to keep others in work. There are those who suffer because of failures in our financial, health and political systems. Jesus is with each one of us however we fall and there he chooses to love and save us.

All: Jesus, from deep within yourself, you found the courage and strength to get up once again and continue the journey. Give us your strength to keep going even when hope is dim.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Did you weep with the women on the way?*

THE 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.

Leader: The women of Jerusalem wept when they saw how Jesus suffered. Jesus recognized their distress, he broke his silence for the first time, spoke to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children’. Look at Jesus and listen to his message for us today. Weep for the children who are abused. Weep for the women who are victimized. Weep for men and women who suffer from the tyranny of today’s body image that controls their lives and prevents them from feeling lovable. Weep for the young who cannot find a job or a way in life. Weep for the old who are forgotten. Weep for people who starve in the shadow of abundance. Weep for people who are homeless, in exile or seeking refuge. Weep for them.

All: Lord, open our hearts to the suffering of all people in our world. Give us the generosity of spirit to help us recognize their pain, the courage to challenge the systems that place intolerable burdens on them and the compassion to support them.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

THE NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR A THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus falls for a third time, broken and exhausted physically and emotionally. Lying on the ground, Jesus must decide – does he get up once more or does he just stop and give up? We see him rise again, and with all his power he continues on his journey. Jesus shows us that we can go on, even if nobody else thinks that it is possible. Many in our world today feel that they are at that moment of final falling, that their burden is too much to carry. They cannot bear any more. Crushed by the weight of their cross they feel unable to get up, unable

to go on. Some may look for relief in addiction. Some may look to escape through suicide. In Jesus we find our hope and our encouragement. The third fall of Jesus reminds us that even in our moment of complete helplessness, or our experiences of depression, in our own Calvary, we can stand up again. Jesus is with us and Jesus is our strength.

All: Lord, we pray that when our strength fails, when our hope fades and when our spirit grows weary that we will put our unbounded trust in you. In turn may we bring your love, in a word or action of comfort to another, in their moment of meaningless, depression or despair.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

THE TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHING

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: As the clothes were ripped from Jesus, he was stripped of his dignity in front of an irreverent mob. Jesus sacrifices everything. He holds nothing of himself back. Here, on the threshold of death, even more intensely than during his lifetime, he is a being-for-others. He surrenders everything in order to ransom all. Look at Jesus and the absolute indignity inflicted upon him by society. Jesus continues to be stripped of his dignity in those who have their good name taken from them and the intimate details of their lives exposed through the media.

Society takes on the role of judge and jury as we curiously devour the details. Jesus is stripped again when men, women and children are portrayed as objects in a pornographic manner in magazines, on television and the internet.

All: Forgive us Lord for being an irreverent mob prying into people's lives. Forgive us for being consumers of gossip under the name of 'news'. Let us never expose anyone. May we respect the dignity of others and leave judgement to God. Let us see the good in those around us and so enable them to reach their full potential.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

THE 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.

Leader: Huge iron nails are hammered through his wrists and through his ankles. Iron through human flesh, the flesh must yield, there is no defense. Jesus, nailed to the cross, cannot move. The hand that has wiped blindness from the eyes; the hand that opened the seal of deafness, the hand that touched a heart and cured a leper, the hand that blessed children and those with a disability; the carpenter's hand is joined to the wood again. As the cross is put in place, he hangs there between us and God, a blood-stained victim for love. Jesus continues to be crucified in the ten children who die every minute of hunger in our world. He is crucified in all who are maimed, damaged and displaced because of war. He is crucified in all who are marginalized in our society because of their race, sexuality or gender. He is crucified in those who are abused physically, sexually or emotionally. He is crucified in those who are trafficked across the world. He is crucified in the exploitation of the earth and its resources.

All: Jesus, we pray on behalf of those who cannot reach out to you at this moment. We pray for all victims of violence; those who suffer it and those who inflict it. We pray especially for children, for the elderly and those too vulnerable to defend themselves. May victims of cruelty and oppression know that you are always with them.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

THE 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.

Leader: As the life of Jesus ebbs away his Cross of Jesus words are not of condemnation or of pity for himself, but of forgiveness; ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do’. In the midst of his anguish and suffering Jesus calls upon his Father to forgive those who are putting him to death. This is the real challenge of the cross, forgiveness even of those who hurt us most. There is much to seek forgiveness for in our world today, hunger, poverty, violence, abuse, war, neglect, corruption, the list seems endless. Each one of us praying these stations could continue the list on our own behalf and indeed on behalf of those who have hurt us. As Jesus dies on Calvary, he challenges us to love our enemies, to let go of hurt, to ask for forgiveness and when we cannot find it in our hearts to forgive, to ask God to do it for us. Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

All: Let us stand with those who watched and prayed in silence while Jesus breathed his last. As we cannot measure love, so we cannot dilute this ultimate act of love and forgiveness with words. Let our love span the silence. Lord! Let our love and forgiveness speak your praise.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Now Mary takes the broken body Cross of Jesus: of her Son in her arms. In her grief, she remembers the words of her son, over the bread, ‘this is my body, broken, for you,’ and over the wine, ‘this is my blood poured out for you.’ She remembers that little baby in Bethlehem worshipped by shepherds and kings. She remembers the days when the crowds followed him and she is full of sorrow. Mary’s grief is our grief too. As Mary cradles the lifeless body of her son and offers him back to the Father, she stands with all parents who have held their children close to them in death: those lost through accidents or acts of violence, those who have died by suicide, those who died suddenly or after illness. Mary grieves with all who sorrow for loved ones: parents, siblings, family members, friends.

All: Help us Lord to accept the partings that must come. Help us to offer our loved ones back to you as Mary offered her son. Faced with the silence of death, let us not despair but find hope. May the finality of death not oppress us. Help us to trust in you, the Lord of the living and the dead.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

THE 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.

Leader: That night his body lay in the dark Cross of Jesus: earth of the world, a seed dying, in the winter of all spirits. All those who had loved him felt emptied and exhausted. There seemed no longer any sense or purpose in anything. But at least no more harm could come to him. They closed the tomb and left. There are times when we are overcome by the darkness of the tomb, by the countless deaths that we experience each day, but the answer to all our grieving and despair lies in this place. The world is now the tabernacle of God. The grain of wheat sown in darkness and in death has indeed yielded a rich harvest. Our presence here gives witness to that. Jesus' death was not in vain.

All: Jesus, each day you put before us life or death. Help us always to choose life. We pray for all those we have known who have died, and for those who have no one to pray for them. We ask for the gift of faith when we are faced with the darkness of the tomb and our own death approaches. May we have eyes to see the promise of new life that the darkness can hold.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Behold, O kind and most sweet Jesus, I cast myself on my knees in Thy sight, and with the most fervent desire of my soul, I pray and beg Thee to impress upon my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, with true repentance for my sins, and a firm desire of amendment, while with deep affection and grief of soul I contemplate Thy five most precious Wounds, having before my eyes that which David spoke in prophecy: "They pierced My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones." God has loved us from all eternity. So He says: "Remember I first loved you. You had not come to be, nor did the world yet exist, but I loved you already. From all eternity I have loved you."

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the

path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others.

Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened, suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

SIXTH WEEK OF LENT

Dear Beloved brothers and sisters, with hearts filled with reverence and spirits ignited by faith, we gather in the sacred space of prayer to embark on a profound journey - the Stations of the Cross. As we stand at the threshold of this spiritual pilgrimage, let us come together as one, united in purpose and devotion.

The Stations of the Cross offer us a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to witness His sacrifice, and to reflect upon the profound love that led Him to Calvary. In this sacred endeavor, let us not only remember but actively participate, bringing our intentions to the forefront of this divine encounter. I invite each of you to take a moment to form your intentions. In this sacred space, let us lift up our desires, hopes, and supplications to the heavens. The Church, in its wisdom, grants us this beautiful opportunity for the remission of temporal punishment due to sin - a chance to draw closer to God and bring solace to those who have gone before us. Let us seek, with unwavering faith, the grace of a plenary indulgence for ourselves or for the souls of our departed loved ones.

Now form your intention of gaining indulgences, either for yourself or to a deceased person.

As we embark on this sacred journey, let us be mindful of the transformative power of prayer and the immense love that surrounds us. May our intentions be fervent, our spirits be lifted, and our hearts be touched by the grace of a plenary indulgence. Each station marks a pivotal moment in the Passion of our Lord, a moment pregnant with meaning and grace. As we traverse this path, let our minds be focused, our hearts be open, and our souls be receptive to the profound lessons embedded in each step.

❖ **The Sign of the Cross**

❖ For the intentions of the Holy Father

- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be

ACT OF CONTRITION

All: My Lord Jesus Christ, you have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned you; but now I love you with my whole heart, and because I love you, I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany you on this journey. You died for love of me; I wish also, my beloved redeemer, to die for love of you. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to you.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Spirit of God, be with us now, prepare our hearts, and give us the courage to walk with Jesus on a journey we would rather not take. Open our eyes and enlighten us to see the profound love of God given freely for all humanity. Open our minds and stir within us the knowledge of the mind of God in order to understand what is asked of all of us. Open our hearts and provoke in us the compassion and mercy of God lavishly given to those who live in darkness. Open our hands to reach out and act in the name of God to serve your people, in the shadow of this cross that gathers us all together. Come now, bless us all with your grace. Let us now walk the way of the cross. Let us now listen well and pray the stories of life and death, of love's victory over hate and violence, of the everlasting destiny of peace. For there is no other boast than in the cross of Jesus, through whom the world has been crucified for the glory of God. For when we are weak, we are strong. Let us now make our journey with Christ.

Song: *Were you there when they sentenced him to die?*

THE FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced profound solidarity with so many on this earth, by being beaten and tortured. Now he is wrongfully condemned to punishment by death. His commitment to entering our lives completely begins its final steps. He has said "yes" to God and

placed his life in God's hands. We follow him in this final surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us.

All: As I view the scene, I become moved by both outrage and gratitude. I look at Jesus. His face. The crown of thorns. The blood. His clothes stuck to the wounds on his back. Pilate washes his hands of the whole affair. Jesus' hands are tied behind his back. This is for me. That I might be free. That I might have eternal life. As the journey begins, I ask to be with Jesus. To follow his journey. I express my love and thanks.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when his shoulder bore the cross?*

THE SECOND STATION

JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences its crushing weight.

All: I contemplate the wood of that cross. I imagine how heavy it is. I reflect upon all it means that Jesus is carrying it. I look into his eyes. It's all there. This is for me. So I place myself with him in this journey. In its anguish. In his freedom and surrender. In the love that must fill his heart. With sorrow and gratitude, I continue the journey. Moved by the power of his love, I am drawn to him and express my love in the words that come to me.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell beneath the cross?*

THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. How could he enter our lives completely without surrendering to the crushing weight of the life of so many on this earth! He lays on the ground and knows the experience of weakness beneath unfair burdens. He feels the powerlessness of wondering if he will ever be able to continue. He is pulled up and made to continue.

All: I stare at the weakness in his eyes. I can look at his whole body and see the exhaustion. As I behold him there on the ground, being roughly pulled up, I know forever how profoundly he understands my fatigue and my defeats. This is for me. In grief and gratitude, I want to let him remain there. As I watch him stand again and gain an inner strength, I accept his love and express my thanks.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Mother Mary met her Son?*

THE FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus' path takes him to a powerful source of his strength to continue. All his life, his mother had taught him the meaning of the words, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord." Now they look into each other's eyes. How

pierced-through her heart must be! How pained he must be to see her tears!
Now, her grace-filled smile blesses his mission and stirs his heart to its depth.
Love and trust in God bind them together.

All: As I watch them in this place along the way, I contemplate the mystery of love's power to give strength. She knows the sorrow in every mother's heart, who has lost a child to tragedy or violence. I look at the two of them very carefully, and long for such love and such peace. This is for me. Such incredible freedom. The availability of a servant. I find the words to express what is in my heart.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when Simon held the cross?*

THE FIFTH STATION

SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus even experiences our struggle to receive help. He is made to experience the poverty of not being able to carry his burden alone. He enters into the experience of all who must depend upon others to survive. He is deprived of the satisfaction of carrying this burden on his own.

All: I look into his face and contemplate his struggle. His weariness and fragility. His impotence. I see how he looks at Simon, with utmost humility and gratitude. This is for me. So I feel anguish and gratitude. I express my thanks that he can continue this journey. That he has help. That he knows my inability to carry my burden alone. I say what is in my heart, with deep feeling.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when the woman wiped His face?*

THE 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.

Leader: Jesus' journey is at times brutal. He has entered into the terrible experiences of rejection and injustice. He has been whipped and beaten. His face shows the signs of his solidarity with all who have ever suffered injustice and vile, abusive treatment. He encounters a compassionate, loving disciple who wipes the vulgar spit and mocking blood from his face. On her veil, she discovers the image of his face - his gift to her. And, for us to contemplate forever.

All: What does the face of Jesus hold for me? What do I see, as I look deeply into his face? Can I try to comfort the agony and pain? Can I embrace him, with his face so covered with his passion? The veil I behold is a true icon of his gift of himself. This is for me. In wonder and awe, I behold his face now wiped clean, and see the depth of his suffering in solidarity with all flesh.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell unto the ground?*

THE SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Even with help, Jesus stumbles and falls to the ground. In deep exhaustion he stares at the earth beneath him. "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." He has seen death before. Now he can feel the profound

weakness of disability and disease and aging itself, there on his knees, under the weight of his cross.

All: I contemplate Jesus brought very low. As I behold him there on the ground, with all the agony taking its toll on him, I let my heart go out to him. I store up this image in my heart, knowing that I will never feel alone in my suffering or in any diminishment, with this image of Jesus on the ground before me. This is for me, so I express the feelings in my heart.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Did you weep with the women on the way?*

THE 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.

Leader: The women of Jerusalem, and their children, come out to comfort and thank him. They had seen his compassion and welcomed his words of healing and freedom. He had broken all kinds of social and religious conventions to connect with them. Now they are here to support him. He feels their grief. He suffers, knowing he can't remain to help them more in this life. He knows the mystery of facing the separation of death.

All: I look at their faces. So full of love and gratitude, loss and fear. I contemplate what words might have passed between them. I remember all his tender, compassionate, merciful love for me. I place myself with these women and children to support him. This is for me. So, I let this scene stir up deep gratitude.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when he fell one final time?*

THE NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: This last fall is devastating. Jesus can barely proceed to the end. Summoning all this remaining strength, supported by his inner trust in God, Jesus collapses under the weight of the cross. His executioners look at him as a broken man, pathetic yet paying a price he deserves. They help him up so he can make it up the hill of crucifixion.

All: I pause to contemplate him there on the ground. The brokenness that makes me whole. The surrender that gives me life. I pause to experience and receive how completely he loves me. He is indeed completely poured out for me. As I treasure this gifted experience, I express what is in my heart.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they stripped him of his clothes?*

THE TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHING

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. The wounds on his back are torn open again. He

experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenseless. No shield or security protects him. As they stare at him, his eyes turn to heaven.

All: I pause to watch the stripping. I contemplate all that is taken from him. And, how he faces his death with such nakedness. I reflect upon how much of himself he has revealed to me. Holding nothing back. As I look at him in his humility, I know that this is for me, and I share my feelings of gratitude.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?*

THE 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.

Leader: Huge nails are hammered through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. He is bleeding much more seriously now. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away.

All: I make myself watch the nails being driven through his flesh. And I watch his face. I contemplate the completeness of his entry into our lives. Can there be any pain or agony he would not understand? This is for me. Nailed to a cross to forever proclaim liberty to captives. What sorrow and gratitude fill my heart!

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

THE 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.

Leader: Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary and John and Mary Magdalene to support him, Jesus surrenders his last breath: "Into your hands I commend my spirit."

All: I stand there, at the foot of the cross, side by side with all of humanity, and behold our salvation. I carefully watch and listen to all that is said. And then, I experience the one who gives life pass from life to death, for me. I console Mary and John and Mary. And let them console me. This is the hour to express the deepest feelings within me.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they took him from the cross?*

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: What tender mourning! Jesus' lifeless body lays in his mother's arms. He has truly died. A profound sacrifice, complete.

All: I behold this scene at the foot of the cross. I contemplate touching, caressing his body. I remember all his hands have touched, all who have been blessed by his warm embrace. I pause to let it soak in. He knows the mystery of death. He has fallen into God's hands. For me. That I might love as I have been loved. I pour out my heart to the God of all mercies.

Lord Jesus Crucified, *have mercy on us*

Song: *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

THE 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.

Leader: They take the body of Jesus to its resting place. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. In this final act of surrender, who would have imagined this tomb would soon be empty or that Jesus would show himself alive to his disciples, or that they would recognize him in the breaking of bread? Oh, that our hearts might burn within us, as we realize how he had to suffer and die so as to enter into his glory, for us.

All: I pause to contemplate this act of closure on his life. In solidarity with all humanity, his body is taken to its grave. I stand for a moment outside this tomb. This final journey of his life has shown me the meaning of his gift of himself for me. This tomb represents every tomb I stand before with fear, in defeat, struggling to believe it could ever be empty. In the fullness of faith in the Risen One, given by his own Holy Spirit, I express my gratitude for this way of the cross. I ask Jesus, whose hands, feet and side still bear the signs of this journey, to grant me the graces I need to take up my cross to be a servant of his own mission.

CLOSING PRAYER

All: Christ Jesus, you call us all to look beyond sadness; to not look for the living among the dead, but to recognize all that is vibrant and alive in us, your Body of Christ. You call us to rejoice in the presence of your Spirit as it moves around and within us. You call us to always move forward, to not look back. Be with us now,

and help us as we strive daily to take up our cross, to become your resurrection, and proclaim your new life to the world. For we believe that by your cross and resurrection

you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world. Amen!

Leader: As we conclude this sacred journey along the Stations of the Cross, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude and reverence. We have walked the path of your Son's sacrifice, witnessing His love and mercy at each station. In this contemplative pilgrimage, may the reflections on Christ's passion deepen our understanding of His boundless love for us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for guiding us through the Via Crucis, for allowing us to walk in your footsteps, and for reminding us of the significance of your sacrifice. May the lessons learned from this spiritual journey inspire us to live lives of greater love, compassion, and service to others.

Holy Spirit, descend upon us with your peace, wisdom, and consolation. As we conclude these Stations of the Cross, bless us with the grace to carry the message of Christ's love into the world. May the seeds of faith, sown in our hearts during this pilgrimage, blossom into acts of kindness, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

We lift up our intentions, offered along this sacred path, asking for your divine favor and grace. May the prayers whispered in the silence of our hearts find resonance in your mercy. We entrust to you, O God, all those who are burdened, suffering, or seeking solace. May the redemptive power of the Cross bring healing and hope to those in need. With hearts united in faith, we conclude these Stations of the Cross, knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we find redemption and the promise of eternal life. May the blessings we've received during this journey be a source of strength, inspiration, and courage in our daily lives.

And may God bless us all in the shadow of the cross, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

INDULGENCES ATTACHED IN PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

What is an indulgence? *An indulgence is the remission in the eyes of God of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. The graces granted through an indulgence come from all the graces won for us by the saving works of Jesus Christ and the Communion of Saints.*

Why gain an indulgence? *Gaining a plenary (full) indulgence on behalf of a deceased person is a great act of mercy because it makes atonement for the punishment they are experiencing in purgatory; the person's soul is then able to proceed to heaven. Remember, this is only possible*

because of the merits Christ won for us on the Cross; we are asking that those merits be applied to a loved one in need of them. If the indulgence is for yourself, you are working toward the remission of the temporal punishment for sins that, if left unremitted in this life, you will have to work toward in purgatory.

❖ *A plenary indulgence is gained every time the devotion is completed.*

❖ *Such a gift of this plenary indulgence from the Church can be gained once a day.*

For whom is an indulgence for? *It can be applied either to oneself or to a deceased person, but not to other living persons.*

A plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful for making the Stations of the Cross under these necessary conditions:

- 1. Sacramentally confess your sins*
- 2. Receive Holy Communion.*
- 3. Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father. One Our Father and one Hail Mary fully satisfies this.*
- 4. You must “have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin.”*

Of course, it should go without saying that you must be baptized and in the state of grace at the time. And have that “interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin.” Otherwise, the indulgence becomes partial, not plenary. And have at least a general intention to gain the indulgence. You can’t receive an indulgence unintentionally or by accident.

If any part of the requirements is missing, the indulgence becomes partial. How partial? Heaven makes the determination of the degree of the partial indulgence. We try for the best.

Do I have to go to confession every time I want to obtain the indulgence? *One sacramental confession suffices for gaining several plenary indulgences, but a separate Holy Communion and separate prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required for each plenary indulgence.*

What is the time frame for me to meet the requirements of the indulgence? *According to the most recent Church guidelines on the subject, “it is sufficient that these sacred rites and prayers be carried out within several days (about 20) before or after the indulgenced act.” Yet “it is, however, fitting that Communion be received and the prayer for the intention of the Holy Father be said on the same day the work is performed.”*

REFERENCES ON INDULGENCES

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1471-1479
 - 2 Maccabees 12:39-45
 - Matthew 16:13-19
 - Philippians 2:12
 - 1 Peter 1:9
- Matthew 5:25-26
1 Cor. 3:12-15
Colossians 1:24
Revelation 21:27