



# THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



In Isaiah, we hear the prophecy that *“the virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he shall be named Emmanuel, which means ‘God with us’.”* The fact that our God would take on human flesh and thus experience what we experience on Earth is one of the great and comforting mysteries of Christianity. The Stations of the Cross offer us an opportunity to walk with Jesus during His Passion, and appreciate that His path of suffering mirrors our own experience. Through the lens of Jesus’ Passion, our own sufferings then become redemptive.

Particularly, we will focus on our interior suffering that comes from doubt, fear, and shame, which unite us to Christ in a most intimate way. Our goal then is to seek out Jesus in those moments of suffering, knowing that He bore them during His Passion for us. We begin our reflection where Jesus began, with absolute filial trust in God the Father. Pray first that we may grow to trust the Father, and to know that He loves us simply because we are His children. Only from there will any meditation on our suffering and the sufferings of Christ bear peace in our souls and offer the hope and freedom of redemption.

## 1ST STATION: Jesus Is Condemned to Death



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

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

Jesus was condemned for our sins. His condemnation was unjust and undeserved. We have more in common with Him here than we might think. We are sometimes unjustly condemned, too—not necessarily by others, but by ourselves. Our self-condemnation can create an obstacle in our spiritual lives when we begin to feel totally unworthy of the Father's mercy. We must reach out to Jesus and seek reconciliation. Remember that when Jesus was condemned, He was condemned for all of us. It is not our job to continue condemning ourselves, but to seek His mercy.

*Why am I particularly hard on myself about  
certain sins?*

*How can I open my heart to the Father's  
mercy?*

## 2ND STATION: Jesus Accepts His Cross



Jesus accepts the Cross not because of His own sin, but because He chooses to accept what His Father has given Him. Often our own sin can be the cause of hardships we experience. We also experience adversity or suffering from events that are outside of our control. Jesus accepts His undeserved suffering out of obedience and trust. We, too, can accept suffering in the same way, with charity and trust if we look to the Cross of Jesus. We can bind our suffering to Christ's by first accepting suffering and then asking the Lord to help us bear the burden.

*How do I handle suffering in my life? Do I avoid it? Do I look to blame others? Do I waste my energy asking "why me"?*

*How can I better unite my suffering to the suffering of Christ?*

*How can I move toward acceptance?*



### 3RD STATION: Jesus Falls the First Time



Living the Christian life is not easy, and the Father knows we will not follow Jesus perfectly. Falling underneath the weight of our own sin can cause us a great deal of shame. We must not be discouraged. Jesus has already won our salvation. We must let Jesus walk with us, show us how to get up, and continue down the path as He did. Trusting in the Father's mercy will heal our shame and be a consolation to Jesus on the road to Calvary.

*Where have I let my own failures discourage me?*

*How can I see my weakness as an opportunity to approach the Father? To seek His help?*



## 4TH STATION: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother



Although Jesus stood alone in His mission, He allowed His mother to love Him throughout His ministry and Passion. He remained close to the one person on Earth who loved Him unconditionally. We must trust in Our Lady's love for us, especially in the midst of our own suffering. Let her hold us, comfort us, wipe away our tears, and intercede on our behalf. The reprieve of being held by our mother, will give us the strength to move forward, as Jesus did after seeing her on the way to Calvary.

*When I am suffering, do I close myself off from others in order to not be a burden?*

*When have I closed myself off from the love of others?*

*Have I asked Our Lady of Sorrows for her aid?*



## 5TH STATION: Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross



Jesus does not fight off Simon's assistance, but accepts that He needs help. Simon is the reminder that there is always someone to help us, if only we allow it. Jesus does not reject His own weakness. Jesus allows another to see His vulnerability and to walk with Him. When we are feeling vulnerable we may hide ourselves, not allowing others to love us as we are.

*Who do I call on in my most difficult moments?*

*How do I accept help? How does my pride keep me from the acceptance of others?*

## 6TH STATION:

### Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



Beaten and bloody, Jesus' face needs more than a simple cloth. Therefore, Veronica wiping the face of Jesus is an act of pure kindness. As simple as this action may be, by Jesus receiving it, her kindness is elevated to a part of Jesus' story. When we receive or give kindness, especially in small ways amidst suffering, we are helping to transform that time into something redemptive. Here, charity flourishes and overcomes suffering.

*Where in my daily life can I introduce more kindness to the world?*

*How can I be more grateful for the small, impractical kindnesses that are shown to me?*



## 7TH STATION: Jesus Falls the Second Time



Jesus falls again. How can the Son of God continue to fall? When we fall repeatedly, doubt begins to settle in. Doubt convinces us that we will never be able to overcome our weakness. However, our perfection comes when we trust in the Father's mercy. The Lord allows transformation to come through failure. Remember that the perceived failure of the Cross allowed for the Resurrection.

*How do I doubt myself?*

*What grace do I need from God?*



## 8TH STATION: Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem



The women are weeping. They do not know what joyful event will happen on Sunday. Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, because He knows that His suffering will end in victory. The hope of the Resurrection should dry our tears. When we experience suffering, Jesus walks alongside us with the wounds of His Passion present, yet fully glorified and alive—just as we will be one day.

*Do I ever think about the Resurrection? Why or why not?*

*How can I experience joy or hope in the midst of my suffering?*



## 9TH STATION: Jesus Falls the Third Time



Jesus falls a third time. If only we fell three times! Sin will be present to us until death. Our resolve to sin no more may strengthen our will, however we cannot rely on our own strength. It is often our unholy self-reliance that gets us into trouble in the first place. It is in the times that we think, “I’ve got this!” that we need to pause and ask for extra graces and mercy. When a child falls down, he has the humility to ask for the help of a parent. We must cry out to the Father like a child and ask to be lifted up.

*How often do I rely on my own strength when trying to get up again?*

*How can I remember to first ask for the Father’s help?*

## 10TH STATION: Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes



Jesus' humiliation did not end with taunts and physical abuse; He was also stripped. When we finally hand over our doubt, fear, and shame to God, it can feel a lot like being naked. We are familiar with our doubts and our fears, perhaps more familiar with these than we are with God, this is why we clothe ourselves in them. God will take our doubts, fears, and shame away if we allow Him. Freedom comes when we allow God to strip these things away.

*What doubts, fears, or shame am I clinging to?*

*How can I be more free?*



## 11TH STATION: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



Jesus, while experiencing unbearable pain on the Cross, remained focused on love. He remained present to His suffering out of love—He did not avoid His cross; He did not run away. The doubt, fear, and shame in our lives can sometimes feel unbearable and running away is all we want to do. In those moments, face Jesus and be present to Him. Suffer with Him.

*How can I take time out of my day to be in Jesus' presence?*

*What does living in the present moment look like?*



## 12TH STATION: Jesus Dies Upon the Cross



In Jesus' death, we are called to our own death—a death to self. When we face Jesus in our own moments of great suffering, we experience this death to self. By accepting suffering with love, courage, and trust, we die to ourselves. Our suffering can be offered to our Savior who died once and for all to conquer death. Dying to self is indeed painful and hard. It means allowing the Lord to carry our burdens, and give up our self-reliance and earthly comforts. This death is necessary if we want to experience freedom—the freedom of being who God calls us to be.

*When have I experienced this kind of freedom?*

*What am I ready to give up for the Lord?*



## 13TH STATION:

### Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross



Jesus commended His spirit to the Father, but to His mother, He commended the Flesh she had given Him. He commended His Mystical Body, the Church, to her care. When we die to ourselves, when we let go of control, Mary is there to care for us. Mary will lead us straight to the heart of her Son and to the mercy of the Father. She will always urge us, as a mother does, to act with greater faith, hope, and charity.

*When have I failed to seek Our Lady's intercession, especially in times of doubt, fear, and shame?*

*How can I seek her help today?*

## 14TH STATION: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb



At last, Jesus' body was laid in the tomb. His great sacrifice was gently wrapped in cloth and serenely placed in the darkness of the tomb. Imagine the silence. When we offer our own sufferings to the Father with trust and humility, a peace and silence follows. What we have offered up will be transformed by the same Light and Power that penetrated the tomb and raised Jesus from the dead.

*What do I hear in the silence?*

*How can I be transformed by the power of the Resurrection?*





*Join us for the Living Stations of the Cross  
every Good Friday at 2:00 PM, beginning in  
front of Our Lady of Wisdom Church.*

*Images featured are those from Our Lady of  
Wisdom's annual student-directed  
Living Stations of the Cross, established in 2003,  
and were taken by Amy Stout.*



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