

REFLECTION ON THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



Stations are places where people wait when they are going from place to place. People wait at train or bus stations. Think of some of the stations where you have been and where you have waited. The stations that we are going to look at today are places where we stop to think about Jesus and the journey that he made to Calvary on Good Friday. These stations remind us how much Jesus loves us.

At each station we genuflect and repeat the traditional prayer:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have saved the world.

First Station *Jesus is condemned to death*

Jesus is standing before a crowd of people who are shouting mean and cruel things. Some of them are telling lies about him and saying that he is bad. Jesus stays quiet even though he knows that he will be hurt. He even asks God to forgive the people.

Has anyone ever said mean or hurtful things to you? Has anyone told a lie about you? How did this make you feel? Were you angry? Hurt? Upset? Ask Jesus to make you a more forgiving person. Remember that he is with you always.

Second Station *Jesus receives his cross*



When the soldiers put the heavy cross on his shoulders, Jesus doesn't fight with them. He knows that the road ahead of him will be very difficult. He asks God for help and asks him to be with him.

Sometimes things happen in life which we find hard to accept. Sometimes we get ill; somebody we know gets sick or even dies. Ask Jesus to help you when life gets tough. Ask him to stay with you and to help you always to see the good in life and in the people you meet.

Third Station *Jesus falls the first time*

Jesus is exhausted. The road is tearing his feet and the cross is digging into his shoulders. The crowd is shouting and jeering. Jesus falls and the pain is terrible. All through this, Jesus is praying in his heart and asking God to help him and to stay with him.

Have you ever fallen? It hurts doesn't it? Sometimes it is even embarrassing? Even when you fall Jesus loves you. Ask Jesus now to make your heart more like his. Ask him to give you courage always.

Fourth Station *Jesus meets his mother*

Mary comes up to Jesus. She sees his awful pain. She is so upset to see her beloved son in such pain and wishes that she could make it better. Jesus sees how worried she is and wishes that he could comfort her.



Sometimes the people we love are sad or sick and we wish that we could do something to make them better. Tell Jesus how you felt. Ask him to help you if this happens again.

Fifth Station **Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross**

The soldiers know that Jesus is too tired to carry his cross any further. They pull a man called Simon from the crowd to help. Jesus whispers his thanks to this stranger who is sharing his terrible journey.

Can you think of a time when you were asked to help and didn't? Why didn't you? Did you not have time? Did you have something else to do that you thought was more important? Ask Jesus to help you to be generous with your time and talents.

Sixth Station **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**



A woman pushes her way forward towards Jesus. She gently wipes his face with a cloth. Jesus is so grateful. When Veronica looks at the cloth she sees that the face of Jesus is imprinted on it.

Think of a time when you helped someone. Maybe you just smiled at them in friendship. Why did you help? How did it feel? Ask Jesus to help you to call on others when you need them and to appreciate them.

Seventh Station **Jesus falls the second time**

The noise from the crowd and the beatings of the soldiers is making the journey more difficult for Jesus. He cannot take another step and he falls again.

Have you ever had a hard time with something? How do you feel when this happens? Maybe you feel in your heart as Jesus did on the road to Calvary. Ask Jesus to give you strength when life gets tough and you feel that you cannot go on.

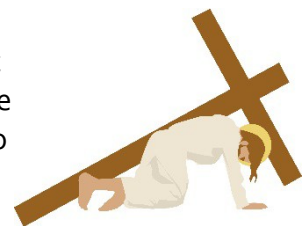
Eighth Station **Jesus meets the women**

Jesus gets up and continues his journey. He passes a group of women crying for him. Though he is exhausted and in terrible pain he stops to speak words of comfort to them. He tells them not to cry for him but to always care for each other.

Ask Jesus to help you to think of others before yourself and to put their needs first.

Ninth Station **Jesus falls the third time**

It is hard for Jesus to breathe now. He has no energy left and he just cannot go on. He falls in the street for the third time. As he lies there in pain, he asks God for help. He feels God's presence and gets up to finish his journey.



When you try your best and yet do not succeed perhaps you feel as Jesus did that day. Ask Jesus to be with you when things seem too hard and you are discouraged.

Tenth Station **Jesus is stripped of his garments**

Jesus finally reaches the top of the hill of Calvary. He knows that he will die here. He knows too, that the soldiers are not done with him yet. They pull off his clothes. He asks God to help him to remember that he is not alone.

Is it hard for you to share or to give something away that you like? Do you ever let something of yours be the reason for bad feelings or words between you and someone else? Ask Jesus to help you to be less selfish. Ask him to help you to be a sharing person.



Eleventh Station Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus is in agony now as he is nailed to the cross. He hurts all over and he is thirsty. Yet he is still thinking of other. He asks John and his mother to look after each other always.

Ask Jesus to help you to change your heart and to forgive others when they hurt you.

Twelfth Station Jesus dies on the cross

Finally, after all the pain and that long walk, Jesus bows his head and dies. Jesus has given his life for love of all of us.

Are there times when you do not show love? When you don't do your best? Ask Jesus for help when you are confused or when you have a difficult decision to make.

Thirteenth Station Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus' lifeless body is taken down from the cross. Mary, his mother holds him gently in her arms. Her sadness is great.



Is there someone in your life who has died? How do you feel when you remember that person? Tell Jesus now what you miss most about that person and ask him to look after both of you.

Fourteenth Station Jesus is laid in the tomb

The friends of Jesus get his body ready and lay it in a tomb given by a man called Joseph of Arimathea. They go away in sadness at the loss of a great friend and teacher.

Can you remember a time when you found it hard to say goodbye? Maybe you were only saying goodbye for a short time or maybe the person had died. Tell Jesus how you felt then and ask him to help you if you come across this difficulty again.

Concluding Prayer:

Dearest Jesus, you gave your life for us. Help us to be very grateful for this sacrifice. Help us to appreciate the sacrifices which others make for us out of love. **Amen**