

## Stations of the Cross

*These Stations of the Cross were written by the Social Justice students in Ms. Mary Koss' classes at Catholic Central High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was a group effort of four Social Justice classes (about 110 students). To send notes or feedback to the students send e-mail to: [MaryKoss@grcss.org](mailto:MaryKoss@grcss.org)*

### Opening Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, Source of Love, Comforter of the Afflicted,

Be with us today as we journey in the footsteps of Jesus as he goes to his suffering and death.

As we reflect on the suffering of Jesus, help us to feel the pain and humiliation that Jesus felt, so that we may be moved by the great sacrifice he made for all humanity.

Send us your Spirit to enter into our hearts so that with compassion we may listen and respond to the plight of others who carry burdens, crosses, despair, and loss of dignity.

Send your Spirit to be with us as we travel this journey together.  
Send your Spirit to awaken our hearts so we may accept your challenge to create the world anew.

We ask this in Jesus' name,  
The Source of all Compassion,

Amen



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

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

All:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

After Jesus was arrested, he was taken before the Sanhedrin, where the chief priests testified against him. Finally, the high priest asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to what these men testify against you?" "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am..." Then they sentenced him to death.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus was condemned to death because of who he was. He was punished with the penalty of death not for what he did, but for who he was.

Everyday there are those who are quick to judge others in our society. Like Jesus, they are condemned today for who they are: the poor, the marginalized, and even those who just a little different. Racism, discrimination, homophobia, and exclusion condemn people to a social death because people are too comfortable to let go of current closed-minded conceptions.

When the Sanhedrin questioned Jesus about who he was, Jesus did not deny himself. Sometimes when others judge or mock us we quickly abandon our true selves to avoid condemnation.

Jesus died for our sins, not his own. Even in the face of the harshest inequities we need to be true to ourselves.

We need to realize that we must keep exclusion and prejudice from condemning innocent people. We need to begin to recognize that all people are valuable because we are all God's children.

(Moments of silence)

All:

Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps.

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Second Station: Jesus takes up His Cross

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

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

Jesus is brought to Pilate....who had Jesus scourged. They wrap him in a purple cloak and place a crown of thorns on his head. Pilate brings Jesus back out to the crowd, who scream, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" In the end, Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified. Jesus is led away, and carrying the cross by himself, goes out to what is called the Place of the Skull, or Golgotha.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone has burdens. Whether they are large or small, burdens are present in our lives. Some individuals carry a heavy load on their shoulders. For example, the poor suffer endlessly because of their lack of food, shelter, and medicine. People in developing countries suffer from disease and famine. Thousands of innocent people die each day as a result of poverty. Some countries, experiencing war, have to deal with corrupt governments, causing their citizens to suffer. These people have huge burdens that weigh down on them both physically and mentally.

Other people are afflicted with burdens that stem from everyday life. In the face of the global economic crisis, families everywhere are struggling to make ends meet. Children go to school and are bullied and tormented because of their clothes, their race, or their sexual orientation. Students worry about their grades and getting into college. Parents worry about their kids, and if they are hanging out with the wrong crowd. Some people have to deal with drug addiction. Although these burdens may seem insignificant compared to the huge burdens people around the world carry, they still affect each individual, constantly weighing them down.

As Catholics, we are called to help one another with the struggles we have and to help each other carry the crosses we all bear. It's important to remain steadfast in what we believe and to be concerned about the well-being of all people.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps.**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

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

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

Carrying the heavy wooden cross alone, Jesus stumbles and falls under its massive weight. Already bruised and wounded from the earlier scourging, the pain he experiences must be unbearable. Yet he gets to his feet again and continues his journey towards his death.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus knows there is death at the end of this journey. He is carrying our crosses and offering his life so that we might have new life and be raised up in the end.

Under the massive weight of the cross Jesus fell. Many people today are crushed by natural or financial hardships, unequal distribution of resources and medicine. These inequities stifle the development of individuals and nations. Poverty, disease, human suffering all take their toll on people of the world.

In the United States, we have been called to refocus our priorities.

Jesus started his journey alone, but he won't finish it alone. We are called to help those who have stumbled and fallen. This is our duty as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our job is to help others with our resources, our compassion, and our prayers.

No one should suffer alone.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Fourth Station: Jesus meets His Mother

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

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

While slowly trudging up the path to Golgotha, Jesus meets his mother, Mary. Mary's heart is filled with grief as she watches her only child suffering as he is being led to be crucified, yet there is little she could do for him. She can only be near him in his last hours.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it like to see a member of our family in pain? What must it be like for a mother to see her son in so much pain and not be able to do anything to help?

There are millions of parents around the world who must face the hardship of losing a child. They must watch their kids lose vitality from AIDS, malaria, TB, hunger, malnourishment, lack of clean water, and cancer. Many ultimately watch their children die because simple medicines or programs were not offered to them. This basic human right to life has been violated over and over again in our world.

Mary's love for Jesus was unfailing and unwavering much like our parents' love for us. How much do we take our parents' love and gifts to us for granted? Do we realize all the sacrifices that they make for us? Driving us to practice, the meals they prepare, the love and constant support. They are there for us in the happy times, the depressing times, the boring times and the joyous times.

Our parents chose life for us. Let us, like Mary, be supportive to all people, especially vulnerable children who can't help themselves.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry His Cross

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

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

The massive cross that Jesus is forced to carry soon wears him out. Simon, a field hand passing by, is enlisted to help Jesus. With his aid, Jesus is able to continue on his path towards Golgotha.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

This is where Simon's life story becomes part of Jesus' story. Simon was simply walking by when he was called on to carry the cross. He certainly didn't plan to do and perhaps didn't want to do it, but he *did* help Jesus carry the cross.

Today, we are called to help others carry their crosses as well. We are called to be a symbol of Jesus' love. From acts of charity to works of justice, we are the "Simons" of the world. In a society marred by the deepening division between the rich and the poor, we need to keep Jesus' words concerning the final judgment in the forefront of our hearts. . . "When I was hungry did you feed me? When I was thirsty did you give me something to drink?"

We need to keep in mind that 'loving our neighbor' has a global dimension to it in our interdependent world.

Compassion can lead the way to social change. Social change can create a whole new way of living for our world.

We must be bearers of the good news to a world in need. By being the presence of Christ in the world, our life story becomes part of Jesus' story.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

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

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

While traveling along the path to Golgotha, Jesus meets Veronica. Seeing how hot and tired Jesus is, she reaches out to wipe his face with her veil. As soon as she takes the cloth away from his face, she notices that an image of him has remained on her veil.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

This is the scene where people are mocking, jeering, and yelling at Jesus as he makes his way towards his death. Veronica gives Jesus the dignity he deserves by coming forward and wiping his dirty, bloody face. Veronica gives Jesus simple respect because she feels he deserves some dignity.

She reaches out to a condemned man and wipes his face. He was an outcast and yet she still reaches out to touch him and comfort him. She doesn't care what other people think of her or she doesn't care that she could get in trouble.

This small act of compassion should speak to us. Veronica did all she could at the moment to enhance the dignity of Jesus. She sought tenderness. She spoke, through her actions, of the injustice and cruelty of Jesus' punishment.

How many times have we walked passed someone knowing that a smile or hello would have been easy to offer? How many times have we listened to someone being mocked or being treated cruelly and turned away, saying nothing?

Our smallest actions do matter. Taking time out of our busy schedule to show compassion does make a difference to someone in need.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Seventh Station: Jesus falls the 2nd time

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

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

Exhausted from the long journey towards the Place of the Skull, each step Jesus takes causes him great pain. Jesus falters again and falls to the ground.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

There are many ways we fall as a people on the path of life today. When the poorest people in Uganda die because they don't have the money for medical care, we all fall. When orphaned children around the world are left destitute with the responsibility of fending for themselves, we all fall. When people can't afford health insurance and get sick, we all fall. When companies pay men or white people more than women or minorities, we all fall. When society places no value on the lives of the unborn and states support abortion, we all fall. When children in suburban schools are better educated than children in urban or rural schools because of more funding and better resources, we all fall.

When people's rights, especially the rights to human dignity to respect and to life are violated, we all fall. When society does nothing to correct these violations, we all fall.

Many of us, like Jesus, have unfair crosses placed upon our shoulders, resulting in our fall. However, we must look at Jesus' example and, like him, find the strength in ourselves and in one another to get up again -- no matter how many times we fall.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

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

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

Along the way, large groups of people follow Jesus. Many women mourn and weep for him. Jesus turns to them and says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children."

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus calls us not to look out only for the well-being of those close to us, but the well-being of all God's children.

Jesus is selfless in his words to the women of Jerusalem. For a moment or two, he doesn't think about his suffering, but their suffering. He stops to comfort them! He is more concerned about their struggles than his own life.

Women throughout the ages have always faced many struggles. Many women today still weep because of the inequities they face. They have watched their children die of diseases that were treatable and preventable. Women have watched their sons and daughters fight and lose their lives in war. Women have been treated as second class citizens without a voice in their cultures, their careers, or even in their marriages.

Jesus knew that in his day, women were not treated as equal to men, yet he took the time to acknowledge them and comfort them. Jesus always looked out for the common good of all. We must see the world as Jesus does, that all are created as equal in God's eyes and must live in harmony in an interdependent world.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the 3rd time

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

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

For a third time, the weight of the cross overcomes Jesus. He falls to the ground in tremendous pain, but somehow manages to get to his feet.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

At a young age we begin to find the strength to stand up on our own. The weight slowly builds, and like Jesus we fall to the ground. The weight of material possessions slowly builds on us until we fall into the deep, dark hole of "want and pleasure."

Jesus bore the weight of our sins on his shoulders. We must not stop trying to "give up" our dependency on things. Jesus will help us, but we have to recognize our faults first.

How many times have we complained about sharing a room with a sibling while here in our own community, people share a room with 50 to 100 others at a homeless shelter? How many pairs of shoes do we have in our closets while people wait in line for hours for the possibility of putting shoes on their children's feet?

Most times we don't even realize how the weight of materialism weighs us down. As children we become concerned with the right clothes, or the right new gadget – we forget about the love of Jesus and the love of others and we fall.

God doesn't care what we own or possess. God cares about who we are becoming and how we treat one another.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of his Garments

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

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

When Jesus reaches Golgotha, the soldiers take his clothing and divide it four ways—one for each soldier. But they do not want to tear his seamless garment, which was woven in one piece from neck to hem. Instead they cast lots for it.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

When Jesus is stripped of his garments, the soldiers wouldn't tear the seamless one. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin first used this image to explain how human life issues cannot be "torn" apart from one another. All life is precious because it comes from God.

Jesus lost everything he had, even the clothes off his back. Too often in the world people have their very survival rights stripped away. Today in Britain, as in the Netherlands, people are trying to say that life is not precious at every stage. Or, that if someone is born with a physical or mental handicap, their life may not be worth the same as yours or mine.

Each one of us is called to protect the poor and the vulnerable. Innocent children, born and unborn, the disabled, the prisoner, and the elderly are counting on our support and encouragement.

It is our time to be Christ for the least among us.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

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

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

After reaching Golgotha, the heavy burden of the cross is finally removed, but Jesus' suffering is far from over. As the nails are driven through his hands and feet, the pain he feel is excruciating.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

There are many people in our world who are "nailed" to a cross just as Jesus was. The priest imprisoned in China for practicing his faith, the labor reformers executed by oppressive regimes in South America are nailed to a cross. There are the children in Darfur, orphaned by genocide, who now fight as 11 year old soldiers in a war using assault weapons. There are children here in the United States that have only one or two meals a day, because that is all their family can afford.

These people are all "nailed" to the cross by society.

Jesus refused to resort to violence yet was subject to the brutal violence of those around him. Many people turn to violence when trying to seek revenge or solve a problem.

War is a failure for humanity and yet it is often used to attempt to solve problems. Instead of negotiation with one another, leaders try to use power to get their way with another country. People on the streets sometimes think violence will solve their problems, yet it only creates more problems.

Jesus showed us the way not to add to the violence of society. He showed us another way, a nonviolent way, a sometimes a more difficult way: love.

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

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

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

At noon, darkness falls over the countryside and lasts until mid-afternoon. Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? ...Then Jesus utters a loud cry and gives up his spirit.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

When Jesus cries out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" he is reciting Psalm 22. This is not a prayer of isolation and forsakenness, but read in its entirety, tells of a person who places their trust in God and who knows even in the darkest hours, God is with them.

This is the promise that Jesus gives to us. Even in our darkest times, he will be with us.

We have the privilege to receive Jesus' body and blood every day. With this nourishment we are called beyond ourselves to take Jesus' promise with us as we strive to make a better world for all people.

Sometimes people ask, "Where is God in all of these terrible things that are happening in the world today?" The answer is: God IS here, in our hearts, encouraging us to be the presence of Christ for one another so that no one should ever have to cry out in isolation or desperation,

"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Thirteen Station: Jesus is taken off the Cross

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

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

The Soldiers come to break the legs of the other men. When they see that Jesus is already dead they decide not to break his legs. Instead a soldier thrusts a lance into Jesus' side and water and blood flow out. Then Joseph of Arimathea comes to remove Jesus' body.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

How often do we add insult to injury like the soldier did? How often do we get asked by someone for some spare change and not give it to them for fear of what they will do with it? How often do we hear about an epidemic or natural disaster happening but fail to do anything because it takes time and money? We not only have the responsibility to be aware of the problem, we have the responsibility to act on the problem.

Even if we can't prevent the injustice from happening, we can ease the burden in little ways. We can't solve world hunger by ourselves, but we can donate food to local food drives. We can't stop oppression in far off countries, but we can pray for people. We can give people hope.

Jesus' body is bloodied, dirty, and damaged. Things seem hopeless for his followers. But some, like Joseph of Arimathea, do not lose hope. Joseph courageously asked Pilate for Jesus' body. He stood up for Jesus.

What about people today who are being denied their rights? Will there be someone to support them and give them hope, or will their legs be broken by the soldiers of injustice and dehumanization?

Do we encourage and stand up for hope in the world or do we hide away in fear?

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**



Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Fourteen Station: Jesus is Laid in a Tomb

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

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

Joseph of Arimathea takes the body, wraps it in a clean shroud, and places it in the tomb. Then rolls a huge stone in front of the new tomb and goes away.

Reflection: Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

It is so easy to be discouraged. The disciples, who all believed in Jesus, have gone away.

It is easy for us too to be discouraged and fall into despair over the injustices of the world.

It is hard to believe that a few ordinary people can do anything to change the world. It is much easier to believe that there is nothing we can realistically do, and bury the issue or the problem.

Sometimes it does seem easier to 'roll a stone' over the problems of the world and not make them our problems as well. It is so easy to forget our responsibilities as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Yet, we are called to faith, hope and trust. We are called to believe that anyone can make a difference in the world. It may not be easy. But only through the faith, hope and trust in Jesus can we change the world.

God calls us to take the difficult path sometimes. God calls us to embrace a difficult situation and struggle through it. With God's help, anyone can make a difference. One person can start an organization that will end world hunger. One person can start an organization that will help people with AIDS. One person can give a hug to a lonely elderly person. One person can smile and acknowledge someone else.

Jesus gave his life for all of us. Are we willing to return the favor?

(Moments of Silence)

**All:**  
**Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps**

## Closing Prayer:

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus died so that we might live.  
Through the pain and suffering of the Cross,  
Jesus bore the weight of our sins.  
His Resurrection is the Great Triumph over suffering  
and death.  
We are not alone, we do not lose hope.  
God is victorious.

Let us pray:  
All Loving God –  
In our hearts we hold the key to create your Kingdom  
– Love.

Help us to use the love and compassion of our hearts  
to create your Kingdom together.  
Help us to open our eyes and our hearts to the needs  
of those around us.  
With love and compassion, guide us on our journey to  
You.

Through the sacrifice of the Cross may we realize that  
our sacrifices build your Kingdom too.  
Please help us realize that every selfless act we  
perform is a reflection of your love.  
With the strength of the Spirit and the hope of Salva-  
tion,  
Allow us to continue your work on earth.  
We ask this in the Name of our Resurrected Lord and  
Savior, **Amen.**

