



THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

The Stations of the Cross

Introduction

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Together

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Introduction

Christ speaks

These fourteen steps
that you are now about to walk
you do not take alone.

I walk with you.

Though you are you,
and I am I,
yet we are truly one -
one Christ.

And therefore
My way of the cross
two thousand years ago
and your "way" now
are also one.

But note this difference.
My life was incomplete until I
crowned it
by My death.
Your fourteen steps
will only be complete
when you have crowned them
by your life.

Station 1: Jesus is Condemned

Christ speaks

In Pilate's hands
My other self,
I see my Father's will.
Though Pilate is unjust,
he is the lawful governor,
and he has authority over me.

And so the Son of God submits to a son of
man.

If I can bow to Pilate's rule
because this is my Father's will,
can you refuse to follow
those whom I place over you?

Response (All)

My Jesus, Lord,
submission cost You your life.
For me,
it costs an act of will -
no more -
and yet how hard it is for me to bend.

Remove the blinders from my eyes
that I may see that it is You whom I follow
in all who govern me.

Lord, it is You.

Station 2: Jesus Takes His Cross

Christ

This cross, this chunk of tree,
is what my Father chose for Me.
The crosses you must bear
are largely products of your daily life.
And yet my Father chose them, too,
for you.

Receive them from His hands.

Take heart, My other self,
I will not let your burdens grow
one ounce too heavy for your strength.

Response (All)

My Jesus, Lord,
I take my daily cross.
I welcome the monotony
that often marks my day,
discomforts of all kinds,
the summer's heat, the winter's cold,
my disappointment, tensions, setbacks,
cares.

Remind me often that
in carrying my cross,
I carry yours with You.
And though I bear a sliver only of Your
cross, You carry all of mine, except a sliver,
in return.

Station 3: Jesus Falls

Christ

The God who made the universe,
and holds it in existence by His will alone,
becomes, as man, too weak to bear
a piece of timber's weight.

How human in His weakness
is the Son of Man.

My Father willed it thus.
I could not be your model otherwise.

If you would be My other self,
you must also accept without complaint
your human frailties.

Response (All)

Jesus, how can I refuse?

I willingly accept my weaknesses,
my irritations and my moods,
my headaches and fatigue,
all my defects of body, mind and soul.

Because they are your will for me,
these "handicaps" of my humanity,
I gladly suffer them.

Make me content with all my discontents,
but give me strength to struggle after you.

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Mother

Christ

My mother sees Me whipped.
She sees me kicked and driven like a beast.
She counts my every wound,
But though her soul cries out in agony,
no protest or complaint
escapes her lips
or even enters her thoughts.

She shares my martyrdom,
and I share hers.
We hide no pain,
no sorrow,
from each other's eyes.
This is My Father's will.

Response (All)

My Jesus, Lord,
I know what You are telling me.
To watch the pain of those we love
is harder than to bear our own.

To carry my cross after You,
I, too, must stand and watch
the sufferings of my dear ones...
the heartaches, sicknesses and grief
of those I love.

And I must let them watch mine, too.

I do believe
that for those who love You

all things work together for good.
They must!!

Station 5: Simon Helps Jesus

Christ

My strength is gone.
I can no longer bear the cross alone.
And so the legionnaires
make Simon give me aid.

This Simon is like you,
My other self.

Give me your strength.

Each time you lift some burden from
another's back,
you lift as with your very hand
the cross' awful weight
that crushes Me.

Response (All)

Lord, make me realize
that every time I wipe a dish,
pick up an object off the floor,
assist a child in some small task,
or let someone go ahead
in traffic or the store;
each time I feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,
teach the ignorant,
or lend my hand in any way -
it matters not to whom -

my name is Simon.
And the kindness I extend to them
I really give to You.

no more your bloody but your glorious
face on earth.

Station 6: Veronica Helps Jesus

Christ

Can you be brave enough, My other self,
to wipe My bloody face?

Where is my face, you ask?

At home whenever eyes fill up with tears,
at work when tensions rise,
on playgrounds, in the slums,
the courts, the hospitals, the jails -
wherever suffering exists -
My face is there.
And there I look for you
to wipe away My blood and tears.

Response (All)

Lord, what you ask is hard.
It calls for courage and self-sacrifice,
and I am weak.
Please, give me strength.
Don't let me run away because of fear.

Lord, live in me,
and act in me,
and love in me.
And not in me alone,
but in all of us together,
so that we may reveal

Station 7: Jesus Falls Again

Christ

This seventh step, My other self,
is one that tests your will.
From this fall learn to persevere
in doing good.

The time will come
when all your efforts seem to fail
and you will think,
"I can't go on."

Then turn to Me,
My heavy-laden one,
and I will give you rest.

Trust Me
and carry on.

Response (All)

Give me your courage, Lord,
When failure presses heavily on me
and I am desolate,
stretch out your hand
to lift me up.

I know I must not cease,
but persevere,
in doing good.

But help me, Lord,
Alone there's nothing I can do.
With you, I can do anything you ask.
I will.

Station 8: Jesus Consoles Women

Christ

How often had I longed to take
the children of Jerusalem
and gather them to Me.
But they refused.

But now these women weep for Me
and my heart mourns for them -
mourns for their sorrows that will come.

I comfort those who seek to solace Me.

How gentle can you be, My other self,
How kind?

Response (All)

My Jesus,
your compassion
in your passion
is beyond understanding.

Lord, teach me,
help me to learn,
when I would snap at those
who hurt me with their ridicule,
those who misunderstand,
or hinder me with some misguided
helpfulness,
those who intrude upon my privacy.
Help me curb my tongue.

May gentleness become my cloak.
Lord, make me kind like You.

Station 9: The Third Fall

Christ

Completely drained of strength
I lie, collapsed, upon the cobblestones.
My body cannot move
No blows, no kicks,
can rouse it up.

And yet my will is mine.

And so is yours.

Know this, my other self,
your body may be broken,
but no force on earth
and none in hell
can take away your will.

Your will is yours.

Response (All)

My Lord,
I see you take a moment's rest,
then rise and stagger on.
So I can do,
because my will is mine.

When all my strength is gone
and guilt and self-reproach
press me to earth and seem to hold me fast,
protect me from the sin of Judas –
save me from despair!

Lord, never let me feel that any sin of mine
is greater than your love.
No matter what my past has been
I can begin anew.

Station 10: Jesus is Stripped

Christ

Behold, my other self,
the poorest king who ever lived.
Before my creatures I stand stripped.
The cross - my deathbed -
even this is not my own.

Yet who has ever been so rich?

Possessing nothing, I own all -
My Father's love.

If you, too, would own everything,
be not concerned
about your food, your clothes,
about your life.

Response (All)

My Lord,
I offer you my all,
whatever I possess,
and more, my self.

Detach me from the craving for
prestige,
position,
wealth.

Root out of me
all trace of envy of my neighbor
who has more than I.
Release me from the vice of pride,
my longing to exalt myself,
and lead me to the lowest place.

May I be poor in spirit, Lord,
so that I can be rich in you.

Station 11: Jesus is Crucified

Christ

Can you imagine what a crucifixion is?
My executioners stretch My arms;
they hold my hand and my wrist against the
wood, and press the nail until it stabs My
flesh.

Then with one heavy hammer smash
they drive it through,
and pain bursts like a bomb of fire in my
brain.

They seize the other arm;
and agony again explodes.

Then raising up my knees
so that my feet are flat against the wood,
they hammer them fast, too.

Response (All)

My God,
I look at you and think:
Is my soul worth this much?

What can I give you in return?

I here and now accept
for all my life
whatever sickness, torment,
agony may come.
To every cross I touch my lips.

O blessed cross that lets me be with you
a co-redeemer of my fellowman.

Station 12: Jesus Dies

Christ

The cross becomes a pulpit now.
"Forgive them, Father...
"You will be with me in paradise...
"There is your mother...
"There...your son...
"I thirst...
"It is complete."

To speak, I have to raise myself
by pressing on my wrists and feet,
and every move engulfs me in
new waves of agony.

And then, when I have borne enough,
have emptied my humanity,
I let my mortal life depart.

Response (All)

My Jesus, God,
what can I say or do?

I offer you my death
with all its pains,
accepting now
the time and kind of death in store for me.
I offer you my death
for my own sins
and those of all my fellowman.

My God! My God! Forsake us not.
We know not what we do.

Station 13: Jesus is Taken Down

Christ

The sacrifice is done.

Yes, my mass is complete;
But not my mother's,
and not yours, my other self.

My mother must still cradle in her arms
the lifeless body of the son she bore.

You, too, must part from those you love,
and grief will come to you.

In your bereavements, think of this:
A multitude of souls were saved,
by Mary's sharing in my Calvary,
the price of souls.

Response (All)

I beg you, Lord,
Help me to accept the partings that must
come - from friends who go away,
my children leaving home,
and most of all,
my dear ones
when you shall call them home.

Then, give me grace to say:
"As it has pleased you, Lord,
to take them home,
I bow to your most holy will.

Grant them eternal joy.

Station 14: Jesus is Buried

Christ

So ends my mortal life.

But now another life begins
for Mary,
and for Magdalene,
for Peter and for John,
and for you.

My work as man is done.
My work within and through my
Church must now commence.

I look to you, my other self.

Day in, day out, from this time forth,
be my apostle,
victim,
saint.

Response (All)

My Jesus, Lord,
you know my spirit is as willing
as my flesh is weak.

The teaching you could not impart,
the sufferings you could not bear,
the works of love you could not do
in your short life on earth,
let me impart,
and bear,
and do
through you.

But I am nothing, Lord.

Help me!

Conclusion

Christ

I told you at the start, my other self,
my life was not complete
until I crowned it by my death.
Your "way" is not complete
unless you crown it by your life.

Accept each moment as it comes to you,
with faith and trust
that all that happens has my mark on it.

A simple faith, this is all it takes;
a breathing in your heart,
"I will it, Lord."

So seek me not in far-off places.
I am close at hand.
Your workbench, office, kitchen,
these are altars
where you offer love,
and I am with you there.

Go now! Take up your cross
and with your life
complete your way.

*The congregation remains in silence for a period of
time and may depart if there is no communion.*

The Stations of the Cross, also called the "Via Dolorosa" or "Way of Sorrows," refers to the depiction of the final hours, the Passion of Jesus, and the devotion commemorating the Passion.

Where did the Stations of the Cross come from?

After Jesus died and rose from the dead, many people reflected upon his passion and death. They began to make visits to Jerusalem and walk in Jesus' footsteps. The street Jesus walked is still called Via Dolorosa, the way of pain. People would stop along the way and remember what had happened to Jesus. It is likely that they marked the places for those who came after them to follow as well. These people became known as "pilgrims."

As Christianity spread throughout the known world, distance made it nearly impossible for people to make the trip to Jerusalem. However, that didn't stop their need to know and remember. By the twelfth century, the fervor of the Crusades and a heightened devotion to the Passion of Jesus created a demand in Europe for representations of the last events in Jesus' life.

Today, we walk together the stations of the cross, creating for our own Via Dolorosa, allowing us to recall and reflect on Christ's passion and what that means to us.

You are encouraged to take a copy of this pamphlet if you feel called to do so.

This version of The Stations of the Cross was authored by Clarence Enzler. We thank him for its use and are thankful for his gifts.

After each response to Christ we will sing:

“Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom
Jesus remember me,
when you come into your kingdom”

