



The Way of the Cross

St Nicholas,
Sutton

The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion at Passiontide for many centuries. They enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus and they originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually the pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used various forms of devotion.

The stations we are using today have their root in the biblical story of Jesus rather than in legend or popular stories (Common Worship, *The way of the Cross*).

These introductory notes are based on: Common Worship Times & Seasons, The way of the Cross, p.236.

**Good Friday Devotion
*The Way of the Cross***

**for 12.30pm on Friday 2 April 2021, or for any time of the day
You may wish to spend some time in prayer beforehand**

The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.' (*Matthew 16.24,25*)

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.
(*Ephesians 2.13,14*)

Welcome and introduction

The minister says:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience
and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

First Station: Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands".' But even on this point their testimony did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But he was silent and did not answer.

Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven".'

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death. (*Mark 14.55-64*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were the victim of religious bigotry: be with those who are persecuted by small-minded authority.

You faced the condemnation of fearful hearts: deepen the understanding of those who shut themselves off from the experience and wisdom of others.

To you, Jesus, unjustly judged victim, be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Second Station: Peter denies Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept. (*Mark 14.72*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as Peter betrayed you, you experienced the double agony of love rejected and friendship denied: be with those who know no friends and are rejected by society.

You understood the fear within Peter:
help us to understand the anxieties of those who fear
for their future.

To you, Jesus, who gazed with sadness at your lost
friend,

be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Third Station: Jesus judged by Pilate

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. (*Mark 15.14,15*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency:

be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful.

You were the victim of unbridled injustice:

change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters to your way of peace.

To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Fourth Station: Jesus scourged and crowned with thorns

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

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. (*Mark 15.17-19*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you faced the torment of barbaric punishment and mocking tongue:
be with those who cry out in physical agony and emotional distress.

You endured unbearable abuse:
be with those who face torture and mockery in our world today.

To you, Jesus, the King crowned with thorns,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Fifth Station: Jesus takes up his cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. (*Mark 15.20*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough streets of Jerusalem:

be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength.

You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross:

help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love for us.

To you, Jesus, bearing a cross not your own, be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

***Sixth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry
the cross***

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from
the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene,
the father of Alexander and Rufus. (*Mark 15.2*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue:
be with those from whom life drains all energy.
You needed the help of a passing stranger:
give us the humility to receive aid from others.
To you, Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and
in need of help,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Seventh Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

A great number of the 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 the days are surely coming when they will say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed." 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*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you: move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.

You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the 'city of peace': bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound peace.

To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept for the city of peace, be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Eighth Station: Jesus is crucified

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among
them, casting lots to decide what each should take.
(*Mark 15.24*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you bled in pain as the nails were driven
into your flesh:
transform through the mystery of your love the pain of
those who suffer.
To you, Jesus, our crucified Lord,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Ninth Station: Jesus promises Paradise to the penitent thief

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

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (*Luke 23.39-43*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, even in your deepest agony you listened to the crucified thief:
hear us as we unburden to you our deepest fears.
You spoke words of love in your hour of death:
help us to speak words of life to a dying world.
To you, Jesus, who offer hope to the hopeless,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Tenth Station: Jesus cares for his mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to John.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (*John 19.26,27*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed with you to the bitter end,
yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them:

be with all broken families today

and care for those who long for companionship.

You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes:

give us a love for one another

that is stronger even than the fear of death.

To you, Jesus, loving in the face of death,

be honour and glory with the Father and

the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Eleventh Station: Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (*Mark 15.34-37*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree
of shame,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

Twelfth Station: Jesus laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed
the world.**

Reading

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. (*Mark 15.46*)

Reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us:
be with those who feel worthless and as nothing in
the world's eyes.

You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from
sight:

be with all who suffer and die in secret,
hidden from the eyes of the world.

To you, Jesus, your rigid body imprisoned in a tomb,
be honour and glory with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal, have mercy upon us.**

The Conclusion

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom
in the words our Saviour taught us.

**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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son
Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.