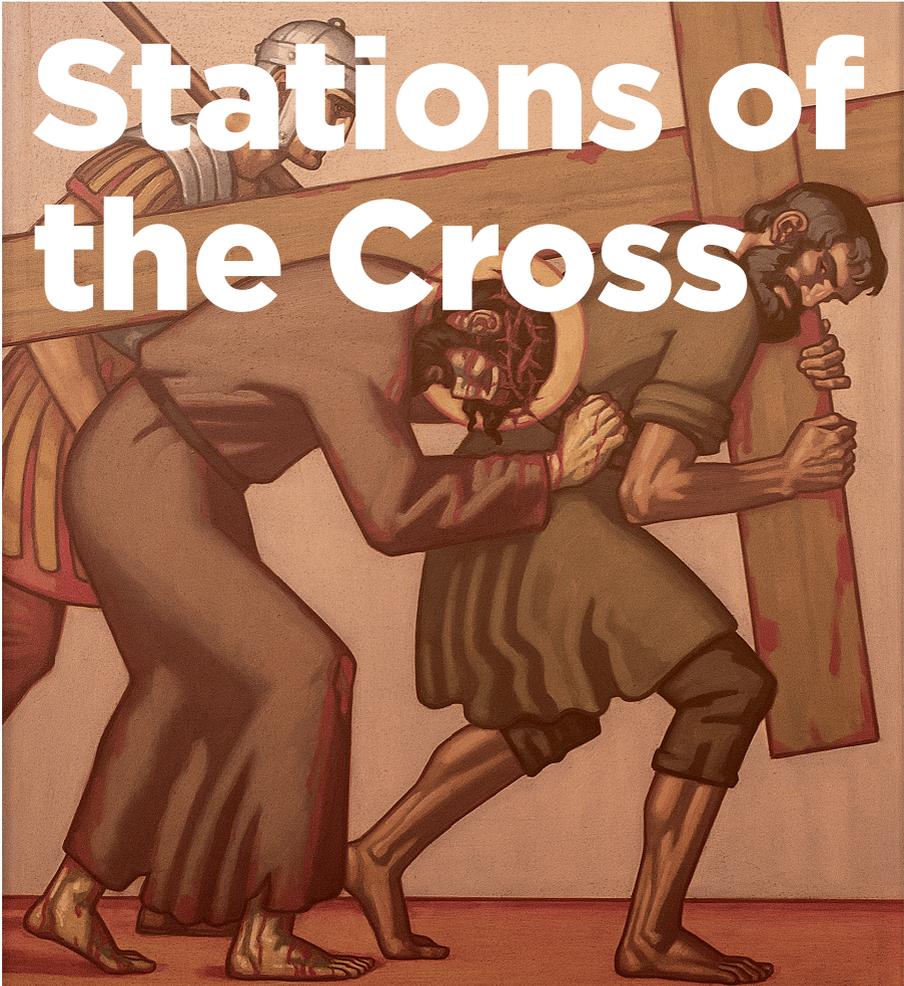




Pfarrei Gut Hirt
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Stations of the Cross

GUT
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Good
Shepherd's

Bible verses are taken from the New American Bible

Text: Based on an adaption from Anne Catherine Emmerich's visions in the book "The Lovely Life and Bitter Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother together with the Mysteries of the Old Testament from the Vision of The Venerable Anne Catherine Emmerich as recorded in the Journal of Clement Brentano" (published by. v. C. Schmöger CSsR, Band III, Lille-Paris-Bruges 1914)

Pictures are found in the Good Shepherd's Church, Zug, Switzerland.

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are a beautiful expression of our faith. During his ministry, Jesus embraced the dramas of every human life. He shared in the triumphs and failures, joys and sorrows of the people he walked with. In the Stations of the Cross we remember how Jesus is with us especially when we seem to be stuck and have lost our way. He walks with us, trips with us when we stumble, and helps us to get up on our feet again.

We will reflect on 14 Stations. Each station recalls a moment when Jesus stopped. A “station” is a place of stopping, just as train or a bus makes a stop. During his final journey, Jesus stops to talk to people and he does it with compassion. He stops when he is exhausted and unable to go on. He stops at Golgotha because it was the end of the road. Jesus is close to us when we are too exhausted and worn out. He is close to us when we don't know how we can carry on. Jesus continues to make his way to the cross and we walk with him. In his resurrection he brings us new hope. Let's now make our way, with Jesus.

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

Amen.

Let us pray

Dear Lord, as we set out with Jesus, as he begins his passion, open our ears to hear his invitation to take up our own crosses every day and follow him. Give us the courage to face the challenges we encounter on the way, free from the paralysis of fear.

Strengthened by your grace, may we help each other rise up to our feet. May we be confident that, walking with the Lord, we shall arrive together at the fullness of life and joy, which is our hope and your gift. We ask you this through Christ, your Son and our brother. Amen.

1. 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.



It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!” They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:14-16)

The executioners were cruel. They led our Lord to Pilate’s palace. A scarlet robe was thrown over his shoulders and a crown of thorns was placed on his head. His eyes, mouth and beard were covered with blood - he was not recognizable. He was bent over like an old man and his body trembled when he walked. The hard-hearted Pilate saw Jesus standing at the entrance of his tribunal. He was overcome with emotion at the sight of our Lord. He shuddered with horror and compassion. The priests and the mob were far from being compassionate and they continued with their insults and mockery. As Jesus came down the stairs, Pilate came forward and the trumpet sounded to announce that the governor was about to speak. Pilate addressed the Chief Priests and bystanders, “Behold, I bring him forth to you so that you may know that I find no cause in him.”

The soldiers then led Jesus up to Pilate so that the people could once again feast their eyes on Him, in all his humility. A scream of horror burst out from the crowd as Jesus could barely raise his wounded head. Pilate presented Jesus to them and called out, “Ecce homo! Behold the man!” Filled with hatred just at the sight of him, the High Priests and their followers cried out: “Put him to death; crucify him.”

Pilate asked them: "Are you not satisfied?"

They answered: "The punishment he has received is, without a doubt, enough to deprive him of all desire of making himself king." But they still cried out and then the crowd joined and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate sounded the trumpet to demand silence and said: "Take him and crucify him, for I find no cause in him." "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die," replied the priests, "because he made himself the Son of God." These words scared Pilate; he took Jesus into another room, and asked him; "Who are you?" But Jesus didn't answer. "Won't you speak to me?" said Pilate. "Don't you know that I have the power to crucify you or to set you free?" "You have no power against me!" replied Jesus, "unless it was given to you from above; for this reason, the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

Pilate was in such a state of uncertainty - he didn't know what to do next. Again he addressed the enemies of Jesus, declaring that he found no crime against him. But they demanded his death. Pilate returned to the Praetorium, went alone into a room, and sent for our Savior. He looked at Jesus' mangled and bleeding body and asked himself, 'Is it possible that he can be God?' Then he turned to Jesus, and demand that he tell him if he was God, if he was the king who had been promised to the Jews, where his kingdom was, and to what class of gods he belonged. Jesus said 'my kingdom is not of this world.' Pilate saw that his efforts were of no use. The yelling from the mob outside was no longer bearable. Pilate then took water and washed his hands before the people, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it."

Let us pray

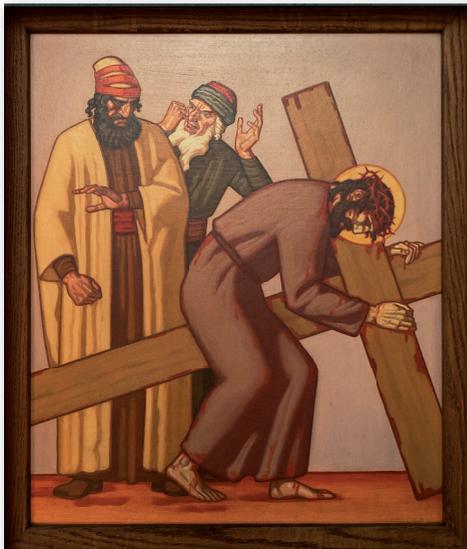
Jesus, at this moment you stand before us, judged condemned and rejected. You take the sins of the world on yourself; on to the cross that you will carry. And you are alone. Lord, give us the courage to stand by others who are judged, condemned and rejected by the world. Amen.

2. Station

Jesus Receives the Cross

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

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



And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20)

When Pilate left the tribunal, many of the soldiers followed him. Armed Pharisees arrived on horseback to accompany Jesus to the place where he would be executed. They led Jesus into the middle of the court and slaves threw the cross down at his feet. Jesus knelt down by its side, put his arms around and kissed it three times, whispering a most touching prayer of thanksgiving to his Heavenly Father for the work of redemption that had

begun. It was the custom among pagans for the priest to embrace a new altar, and Jesus in a similar way embraced his cross - the altar on which the bloody sacrifice was about to be offered. The trumpet sounded to announce the departure of Pilate's horsemen. They pulled Jesus up in a very rough way because he was unable to get up on his own. The weight of the cross was heavy on his shoulder. And so began the triumphant march of the King of Kings, a march so shameful on earth yet so glorious in heaven.

Let us pray

Dear Jesus, and now you take the cross of our burdens onto your shoulders. It is heavy. Give us the strength to carry our own burdens, and when they become too heavy for us, help us to carry it. Lord, forgive us for the times when we didn't help our brothers and sisters carry their cross of burdens.

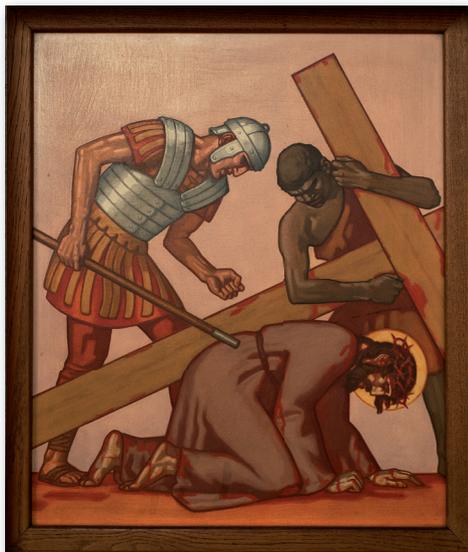
Amen.

3. Station

Jesus Falls for the First Time

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

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



But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep all following our own way; But the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all. Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth; Like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:5-7)

The street became very steep and it was muddy from the rain in many places. There was a large stone in the road which filled a hole making it easier for people to pass. Jesus was completely exhausted when he reached this spot. He was not able to maneuver the large stone so they dragged and pushed him until he fell down, the cross falling by his side. The cruel executioners had to stop and they took this opportunity to abuse and beat Jesus some more. Our Savior did not hold out his hand for help. Instead he exclaimed, "Ah! All will soon be over!" And he prayed for his enemies. The Pharisees ordered him to be lift up, "otherwise he will die in our hands" they said. There were many women and children following the procession; they were frightened and they cried.

Let us pray

Jesus, the heaviness of your cross makes you fall. Pain splits through your head. Lord, when we fall and feel discouraged, help us know that you are close to us. You give us strength to stand up and walk again. Help us to encourage others to do the same. Amen.

4. Station

Jesus is met by His Blessed Mother

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

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



Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

Immediately after the sentencing of Jesus was announced, the suffering Mother had left the forum, accompanied by John and some other women. She spent her hours walking to the places visited by our Lord and watering them with her tears. When the trumpet sounded that the procession to Calvary was about to begin, she could not resist her longing desire to see her beloved Son once more. She begged John to take her to some place where he might pass. The Mother of God was pale and her eyes were red from weeping. After praying fervently, she turned to John and said, "Should I stay? Should I go away? Will I have the strength to see such a sight?"

John answered her, "If you do not stay to see him pass, you will grieve later." They remained with their eyes closely watching the procession. When the soldiers who were carrying the tools for the execution approached, the Mother of Jesus saw their arrogant and triumphant looks and she could not control her feelings. She joined her hands as if to plead for the help of heaven. One of the soldiers asked his companions: "who is that woman uttering such lamentations?" He answered, "She is the Mother of the Galilean." What happened next was so cruel. They began to make

fun of the grief of this most afflicted Mother. They pointed at her and one of them took the nails that would be used for fastening Jesus to the cross. They presented them to her in an insulting manner. The Holy Mother turned away and fixed her eyes upon Jesus, who was approaching. He was almost sinking under the heavy weight of his cross and his head, still crowned with thorns, was drooping in agony on his shoulder. His face filled with a look of compassion and sorrow upon his Mother. Mary was completely agonized at this sight. She forgot all else and saw neither soldiers nor executioners; she saw nothing but her dearly-loved Son. A few of the soldiers looked touched. Although they obliged the Blessed Virgin to retire to the doorway, not one laid hands upon her. The two disciples who were with the Mother of Jesus carried her into the house and shut the door. In the meantime, the soldiers raised Jesus and forced him to carry the cross in a different way. They untied his hands so that he could support the cross with his arms and let it drag more on the ground. There were many people standing around and found joy by insulting our Lord in different ways.

Let us pray

Jesus, and now you meet your mother. She enabled you into this world. A mother's love is precious and needs no words. Lord, comfort us when words fail us and show us how to share a mother's love with others. Amen.

5. Station

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross

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

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



As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

The procession had reached an arch that was formed in an old wall. Jesus stumbled against a large stone that was placed in the middle of the archway. This caused the cross to slip from his shoulder. Many stopped and looked upon him with compassion, saying “Look at that poor man, he is certainly dying!” But his enemies showed no compassion. This stumble caused a delay in their plans so one of the Pharisees said to the soldiers:

“We will never get him to the place of execution alive! Find someone to help carry his cross.” At that moment Simon of Cyrene, a pagan, happened to pass by. He was accompanied by his three children. The soldiers grabbed him and ordered him to help Jesus carry his cross. At first Simon refused, but he was forced to obey. His children were frightened; they cried and made a lot of noise. Simon was very annoyed that he was being forced to walk with a man in such a condition of dirt and misery; but Jesus wept and cast a mild and heavenly look upon him. Simon was touched. Simon then helped him get up, while the executioners fastened one arm of the cross on his shoulders and he walked with our Lord, relieving him from the weight of the cross. After he carried the cross a short distance he felt his heart deeply touched by grace.

Let us pray

Jesus, Simon helps you carry your cross.

Sometimes we too have a heavy burden to carry. I am sorry for the times I didn't let someone help me. I am sorry for the times when I didn't help others. Amen.

6. Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

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

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



Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.” (Mark 14:6.9)

While the procession was passing through a long street, many respectable people were hurrying toward the Temple. When they saw Jesus, they would get out of the way for fear of becoming unclean. Others, however, stopped and expressed pity for his suffering. When the procession reached the door of a beautiful house a woman of majestic appearance came out. She walked to the head of the procession. The brave woman who dared to confront this enraged crowd was named Seraphia. She was the wife of Sirach, one of the councilors who belonged to the Temple. She was later to become known by the name of Veronica. Seraphia had prepared some excellent aromatic wine, which she intended to present to our Lord in order to refresh him on his way to Calvary. She wore a long veil and was holding a little girl by the hand; a large cloth was hanging on her arm and the little girl tried to hide the jar of wine as the procession approached. She reached Jesus, fell on her knees before him, and presented the cloth, saying, “Permit me to wipe the face of my Lord.” Jesus took it and wiped his bleeding face. He returned it to her and Seraphia kissed it and put it under her cloak. The girl then timidly offered the wine, but the brutal soldiers would not allow Jesus to drink it. The Pharisees and the guards were

greatly disturbed, not so much by the sudden stop, but more by the public expression of veneration that was paid to Jesus. They took their anger out on Jesus and began striking and abusing him. Seraphia returned quickly to her house. When she reached her room, she placed the cloth on a table and then fell almost senseless on her knees. A friend, who entered the room a short time after, found her kneeling with the child weeping by her side. They saw how the bloody features of our Lord had left an imprint on the cloth, a perfect likeness, although heartrending and painful to look upon. Through her tears she exclaimed, "Now I shall indeed leave all with a happy heart, for my Lord has given me a remembrance of himself." Veronica kept this cloth until her death, and hung it at the head of her bed; it was then given to the Blessed Virgin, who left it to the Apostles, and they afterwards passed it on to the Church.

Let us pray

Jesus, as you carry your cross Veronica becomes filled with compassion. She wants to help you but all she has to offer is a cloth to wipe your face. You leave her with an imprint of your beautiful face. Lord, imprint us with your face, with your love and with compassion. Amen.

7. Station

Jesus Falls for the Second Time

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

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

Therefore, he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. (Hebrews 2:17-18)



We are half way through Jesus' long and sorrowful journey to Calvary. As we walk with Jesus let us pause for a moment to reflect on where he has been. What does Jesus' heavy cross mean for me? How does his suffering and death affect my living? What cross do I carry? Simone of Cyrene helped Jesus along the way to Calvary. Do I help others carry their cross?

Let us pray

Jesus, you're getting tired. You fall under the weight of your cross,
but you go on. Lord, pick me up when I can go no further. Amen.

8. Station

The Women of Jerusalem

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

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



A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.'"

(Lukas 23:27-29)

The streets that lead to the southwest gate were rough and steep. As the procession approached the gate, the brutal soldiers shoved Jesus into the dirty mud. Simon, who was still helping Jesus, had difficulty lifting his cross. The Pharisees became angry, throwing their insults and blows to force him to get up out of the mud. Their cruelty to Jesus upset Simon to the point that he exclaimed, "If you continue this brutal conduct, I will throw down the cross and carry it no farther." A group of women had gathered together nearby and they were weeping; many of them carried young children in their arms. They were mostly young maidens and women from Jerusalem who had preceded the procession but a few came from Bethlehem, from Hebron, and from other neighboring places, in order to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was at the point of falling again but Simon, who was behind him, quickly moved to support him; Jesus leaned on Simon, which saved him from falling again. When the women and children saw the unbearable condition of our Lord they let out loud cries and wept.

According to the Jewish custom, they presented him with cloths to wipe his face. Jesus turned towards them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for your selves and for your children." The procession then made a brief halt. The executioners, who set off first, had reached Calvary with the instruments for the execution and were followed by a hundred of the Roman soldiers who had started with Pilate.

Let us pray

Jesus, how often do we feel sorry for ourselves? How often do we cry for ourselves? What about others? Lord, I am sorry for the times when I was blind to the sorrows of others. Amen.

9. Station

Jesus Falls for the Third Time

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

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



Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

The procession moved on. The road was very steep and rough between the walls of the town and Calvary. Jesus had great difficulty walking with such a heavy burden on his shoulders. His enemies continued to be so very cruel. Without the slightest compassion, or giving the least assistance, they continued hitting him and cursing him. Finally they reached a place where the path turned south. Here he stumbled and fell once again. This fall was dreadful. The guards struck him even harder, forcing him to get up. When they reached Calvary Jesus sank down again. Simon was filled with pity and wished to remain with Jesus, hoping to assist him. He was forced away and later joined the disciples. The executioners then ordered the workmen and the boys who had carried the instruments for the execution to leave. There was a nice view of the whole town of Jerusalem from the top of Calvary. About a hundred soldiers were stationed on different parts of the mountain and the Pharisees soon arrived.

It was about a quarter to twelve when Jesus, loaded with his cross, sank down at the spot where he was to be crucified. The sight of our Blessed Lord at this moment was, indeed, enough to move the hardest heart to compassion. He stood or rather bent over the cross, barely able to support himself. He was pale and looked like he was on the verge of death. The cruel men threw him down on the ground and yelled out, "Most powerful king, we are about to prepare your throne!" Jesus immediately placed himself onto the cross. They measured him and marked the places for his feet and hands, all the while the Pharisees continued to insult him. The executioners dug the holes for the three crosses and placed the ones for the thieves on either side of the place reserved for Our Lord.

They fastened the two arms strongly onto the body of the cross, nailed the board at the bottom which was to support the feet. They bored the holes for the nails and cut different hollows in the wood in the parts that would receive the head and back of our Lord. In this way, his body would rest against the cross instead of being suspended from it. Their aim was to prolong his tortures, for if the whole weight of his body was allowed to fall upon the hands, the holes might be quite torn open and death would come more quickly than they desired. The executioners then drove the pieces of wood into the ground so that the cross would remain upright.

Let us pray

Jesus, how could you go on? In our brokenness, how many times

have we given up hope? How many times have we given up? Lord,
give us the strength to endure, especially when we feel we can no
longer go on. Amen.

10. Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

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

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



When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled [that says]: "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." (John 19:23-24)

The executioners pulled off our Lord's cloak plus the belt that was fastened to the ropes. Because of the crown of thorns, they had an impossible time pulling the wool garment over his head.

So they tore it off which in turn reopened every wound. The wool had stuck to his wounds and there was the agony of pain he suffered when they roughly pulled it off. Our dear Lord and Savior then stood before his cruel enemies, stripped of everything except for the linen that supported his loins. He was so weak from suffering and loss of blood that he could not support himself for more than a few moments. He was covered with open wounds; his shoulders and back were torn to the bone by the dreadful beating he had endured. Our Lord was about to fall and the executioners were afraid he might die, which would have denied them the pleasure of crucifying him. They led him to a large rock and roughly forced him down upon it and then they put the crown of thorns on his head again. Then they offered him some vinegar and gall which he turned away from.

Let us pray

Jesus, they mock you. They make a fool of you and they laugh at you. And now, they rip the last piece of clothing from your tired body. Lord, we stand here before you humiliated. Forgive us for the times when we have insulted, laughed at or made fun of others. Amen

11. Station

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

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

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



When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They divided his garments by casting lots. (Luke 23:33-34)

The executioners did not allow Jesus to rest for long. They made him rise and place himself on the cross so that they might nail him to it. They grabbed his right arm and dragged it to the hole which was prepared for the nail. Then they tied his arm down with a cord. One of them knelt on his sacred chest while a second one held his hand flat and a third took a long thick nail and pressed it on the open palm of that adorable hand. A hand that was always open to giving blessings and favors. With a great iron hammer, they drove the nail through the flesh, far into the wood of the cross. As his blood gushed forth and sprinkled the arms of one of the soldiers, Our Lord uttered a deep groan. The nails were very large, the heads about the size of a crown piece and the thickness of a man's thumb - the points came through at the back of the cross. The Blessed Virgin stood motionless; she appeared as if almost fainting from grief. Mary Magdalen was quite beside herself. When the executioners had nailed the right hand of our Lord, they realized that his left hand did not reach the hole which they had bored. They then tied ropes to his left hand and, after steadying his feet, pulled the left hand violently until it reached the prepared place. This dreadful process caused our Lord indescribable agony, his breast heaved and his legs contracted. They again knelt upon him, tied his arms

down and drove the second nail into his left hand; his blood gushed and his groans were heard between the blows of the hammer. The arms of Jesus were stretched in an unnatural way and caused him to slope down. The executioners had fastened a piece of wood at the lower part of the cross under where the feet of Jesus would be nailed, so that the weight of his body could rest. This would prevent the bones of his feet from being broken. A hole had been pierced in this wood to receive the nail when driven through his feet. These precautions were taken so that his wounds would not be torn open from the weight of his body. In this way they could ensure he had suffered all the tortures before death. They soon realized that his feet would not reach the wood and they became infuriated. Some of them suggested making new holes but they realized this would be difficult to do. They said, "He will not stretch himself out, but we will help." They fastened a rope to his right leg and dragged it violently until it reached the wood and then tied it down as tightly as possible. The agony which Jesus suffered was indescribable. Next they took a very long nail and drove it completely through both feet into the cross below. During the entire time of the crucifixion, Our Lord never stopped praying and repeating the passages from the psalms and all of the prophecies. When the crucifixion of Jesus was finished, the commander of the Roman soldiers ordered Pilate's inscription to be nailed on the top of the cross. This angered the Pharisees, which in turn increased the jeers of the Roman soldiers. It was about a quarter past twelve when Jesus was crucified. At the moment the cross was lifted up, the Temple resounded with the blast of trumpets, which were always blown to announce the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb.

Let us pray

Jesus, your journey comes to an end. It is here on this cross that you will die. As they pull your legs and stretch your arms, you accept your destiny. Lord, forgive us for the times when we did not accept our own destiny. Help us to embrace the will of God. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Amen.

12. Station

Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

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

And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)



Jesus' body became much whiter from the amount of blood he lost. "I am pressed as the grape which is placed in the winepress." Jesus was almost fainting, his tongue was parched as he said "I thirst." The disciples who were standing around the Cross looked at him with the deepest expression of sorrow. They offered money to the soldiers to give him a little water but they refused to give it. Instead they dipped a sponge in vinegar and gall, and were about to offer it to Jesus, when the centurion Abenadar, whose heart was touched with compassion, took it from them, squeezed out the gall and poured some fresh vinegar upon it. He fastened it to a reed and presented it for Jesus to drink. The hour of our Lord had finally come as his struggle with death began. A cold sweat broke out all across his body. John stood at the foot of the Cross, and wiped the feet of Jesus with his clothes. Mary Magdalen was crouched on the ground behind the Cross, overcome with grief. The Blessed Virgin stood between Jesus and the good thief, supported by two other women, her eyes engaged this image of her dying Son. Jesus then said, "It is finished". Raising his head, he cried out in a loud voice, "Father, in your hands I place my spirit!" These words echoed all through heaven and earth and a moment later he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

All kneel for a short time.

His soul, which appeared like a bright meteor, penetrated the earth at the foot of the Cross. John and the holy women fell prostrate on the ground. The centurion Abenadar had kept his eyes fixed on the disfigured body of our Lord. He was completely overwhelmed by everything that had taken place. The earth trembled and the rock of Calvary burst, forming a deep hole between the Cross of our Lord and that of Gesmas, the thief who mocked Christ. The voice of God had broken the silence. All was fulfilled. The soul of our Lord had left his body: his last cry had filled every breast with terror. The earth convulsed as it paid homage to its Creator. The sword of grief had pierced the hearts of those who loved him. This moment was the moment of grace for Abenadar. His horse trembled under him and his heart was touched. He threw his spear to a distance, struck his breast and cried out: "Blessed be the Most High God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob! Indeed this Man was the Son of God!" His words convinced many of the other soldiers, who then followed his example and were later converted. Many struck their breasts, wept and then returned home. John stood up and along with the holy women, led the Blessed Virgin away from the foot of the Cross. What words can express the deep grief of the Blessed Virgin? Her eyes closed, a death-like color spread across her body. Unable to stand, she fell to the ground.

It was about three o'clock when Jesus died. The Pharisees were shocked by the sudden earthquake, however they soon recovered. They began throwing rocks into the deep hole and tried to measure its depth with ropes. They quickly realized it could not be measured, it was too deep. After hearing the cries of those who were present, they left Calvary. Many of the spectators had converted and others had left quickly, for fear of the Roman soldiers. Soldiers were placed at the gates and in other parts of the city. The friends of Jesus stood round the Cross, contemplated our Lord, and wept. All were silent and overcome with grief.

Let us pray

Jesus, I can't help but love you more now than I ever had. Where are your friends? Where are your followers? Lord, forgive me for all the times I have felt abandoned by God. Amen.

13. Station

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

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

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



After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. (Johannes 19:38)

Five guards remained around the Cross. Two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus went to the tomb to make some preparations. When they returned, they waited for a suitable time to take down the body of Our Lord. They carried with them the necessary items for embalming the body, and their servants had some tools so they could detach the Blessed Body from the Cross. The women brought their spices plus some bundles of herbs. Joseph brought the ointment. As they walked through the town they passed by the house where the Blessed Virgin, John, and the holy women had gone. They walked in the direction of the gate leading to Mount Calvary. The streets were deserted and quiet, fear and terror kept everyone at home. It was still dark when they reached Mount Calvary. The servants had already arrived and the holy women were sitting weeping in front of the Cross. Several soldiers who were converted remained at a certain distance, and their demeanor was respectful and reserved. Joseph and Nicodemus told the Blessed Virgin and John everything they had done to save Jesus from a shameful death, explaining how they had succeeded in preventing the bones of our Lord from being broken and how the prophecy had been fulfilled. They spoke of the wound that had been made in his side. The Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalen were seated at the

foot of the Cross. Mary Magdalen gave in to her sorrow, while Nicodemus and Joseph placed the ladders behind the Cross. They mounted them and tied large sheets to the body of Jesus, below the arms and knees, to the tree of the Cross and secured the arms with pieces of linen placed underneath the hands. Then they pulled out the nails by pushing them from behind with strong pins pressed upon the points. The sacred hands of Jesus were not much shaken and the nails easily fell out of the wounds. The lower part of the body, which had sunk down on the knees, now rested in a natural position and was supported by a sheet fastened above to the arms of the Cross. While Joseph was taking out the nail from the left hand, Nicodemus was fastening the right arm of Jesus to the Cross. Then he took out the right nail, and having surrounded the arm with its supporting sheet, let it fall gently on to the body. At the same time, the centurion Abenadar, with great difficulty, pulled out the large nail from the feet. Cassius, the Roman soldier who had pierced the side of Jesus with a spear, carefully received the nails and laid them at the feet of the Blessed Virgin.

After placing the ladders against the front of the Cross, Joseph and Nicodemus untied the upper straps and fastened hooks to the ladder. They gently lowered the sacred Body toward the centurion who received it in his arms. It was a most touching sight. Everyone took the same precaution and care as if they were afraid to cause more suffering to Jesus. They seemed to be concentrated on the sacred body, showing all the love and veneration which they had felt for their Savior during his life. Their eyes were fixed upon the adorable body and followed all its movements and at the same time uplifting their hands towards Heaven, shedding tears and expressing in every way possible their grief and anguish. During the time that the nails were being forcibly removed, the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalen and all those who had been present at the Crucifixion, felt each blow rivet their hearts. The sound recalled all the sufferings of Jesus and they could not control their trembling fear. When the body was taken down, it was then wrapped in linen from the knees to the waist and placed in the arms of the Blessed Virgin.

Let us pray

Jesus, your life on this earth is over. We are sad. We know that you defeat death, but others don't know. Lord, help us to realize as we struggle with our cross, that through Jesus, we too will rise to new life. Amen.

14. Station

Jesus is placed in the Tomb

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

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



Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. (Matthew 27:59-60)

The men placed the sacred body on a gurney which they covered with a brown-colored cloth and fastened with two long stakes. Nicodemus and Joseph rested it on their shoulders and Abenadar and John supported the ones behind. After them came the Blessed Virgin, her older sister, Mary Magdalen and Mary of Cleophas, and then the group of women who had been sitting at some distance. Cassius and the soldiers closed the procession. They stopped at the entrance of Joseph's garden where they placed the Sacred Body on a long board covered with a sheet. The grotto, which had been newly excavated, had been recently cleaned by Nicodemus' servants. The holy women sat down in front of the grotto while the four men carried in the body of our Lord. After giving more expression to their love by tears and fond embraces, they left the grotto. Then the Blessed Virgin entered, sat down close to the head of her dear Son and bent over his body with many tears. When she left the grotto, Mary Magdalen quickly rushed forward and put flowers and branches which she had gathered in the garden onto the sacred Body. Then she clasped her hands together and with sobs, kissed the feet of Jesus. Then she returned to the other women. They covered the sacred body with the sheet that it was lying on. The large stone that was meant to close the tomb was so heavy that

it could only be closed by using levers. The entrance of the grotto was closed by a gate made of branches twined together. Everything that was done within the grotto had to be done by torchlight because daylight never penetrated there.

Let us pray

Dear Jesus, our journey comes to an end as you are laid to rest. Lord, let your love and mercy rest in us. And remain with us as we rise in hope of new life. Amen.

Gracious God, now we have arrived at the end of our journey to the resting place of Jesus. We have been with him as he endured opposition, mockery, failure, suffering, and death. He has thus embraced every upset and defeat that we may face in our pilgrimage through life. Grant us, most generous God, that walking in the way of Jesus, we may attain that joy and freedom to which you call us. We ask you this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

The Lord grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.
Amen.



You may take this booklet home with you for your own personal and private meditation on the Stations of the Cross.

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