



—A HYMN—  
WERE YOU THERE?



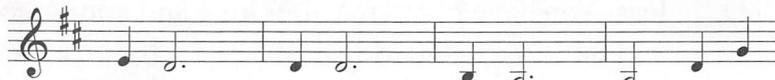
1. Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
4. Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?



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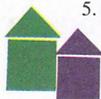
O \_\_\_\_\_ some-times it caus - es me to



trem - ble, trem - ble, trem - ble; \_\_\_\_\_ Were you



1. there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
2. there when they nailed him to the tree? \_\_\_\_\_
3. there when they pierced him in the side? \_\_\_\_\_
4. there when the sun re - fused to shine? \_\_\_\_\_
5. there when they laid him in the tomb? \_\_\_\_\_

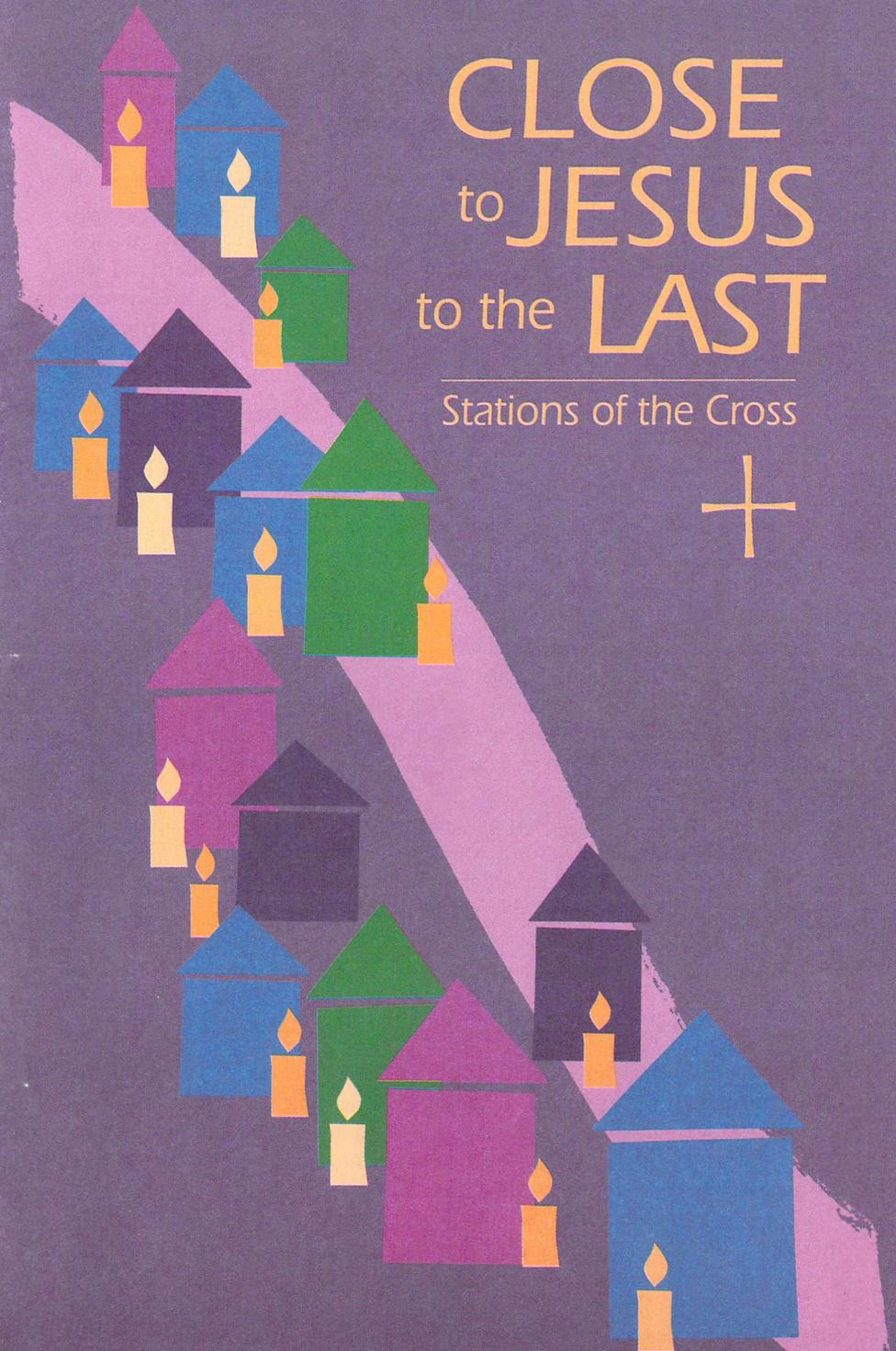


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# CLOSE to JESUS to the LAST

Stations of the Cross



## ✦ CLOSE TO JESUS TO THE LAST

### Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a devotional practice that originated in Jerusalem during the early history of the Church. Pilgrims wanted to retrace the steps of Jesus on his journey to Calvary, and so various points or “stations” were listed along the way to commemorate major incidents in the passion known from Scripture or added later from tradition. The devotion eventually was practiced virtually everywhere in the Church, using images or depictions of 14 Stations placed inside churches.

#### For Praying These Stations In A Church

Use 14 candles (one for each Station), symbolizing Jesus, the Light of the World. Place a candle by each Station, either on a table or have an individual holding a candle stand next to the Station. As you begin, all 14 candles are lit, a reminder that Jesus is with us here and now as we pray.

Designate those to recite the text for the Stations. A leader should briefly introduce the format so all are aware of the order of the prayer.

Begin with a brief moment of silence or an opening song, such as the *Stabat Mater* (“At the Cross her station keeping/Stood the mournful Mother weeping/Close to Jesus to the last”) or *Were You There?* (See back cover.)

At the conclusion of prayer at each Station, that Station’s candle is extinguished. Light in the room will diminish gradually, symbolizing the darkness of Calvary.

End with a light focused on a cross prominently displayed, and invite participants to pray silently for a time in the darkened church. (In those places where it is the custom to include a 15th Station, the Resurrection, include a 15th candle, which will remain lit.)

To take full advantage of the symbolism of the candles, the service should be held in a darkened church, perhaps in the late afternoon or early evening.

#### For Praying These Stations Outside A Church

Use fourteen smaller (votive) candles placed on a table or in different areas throughout the room. As a reminder that the road Jesus walked to Calvary was neither smooth nor straight, your candles need not be placed in perfect lines. All candles are lit for the beginning of the service. (If using a 15th candle, select a different color, size, or shape.)

Designate those to recite the text for the Stations. A leader should briefly introduce the format so all are aware of the order of the prayer.

Begin with a moment of silence or a song, such as *Were You There?*

At the conclusion of prayer at each Station, that Station’s candle is extinguished. All participants (or one representative) may walk around the

## THE FOURTEENTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

*Reader 2:* Nicodemus came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there (*John 19:39-42*).

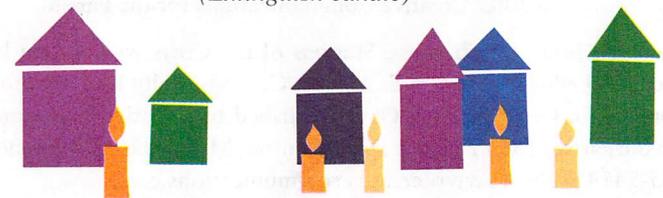
*Reader 3:* Nicodemus brought you his best. I want to do no less. You have given me your love and your grace, and have surrounded my table with friends. Help me always to live in faith, hope and love, so as to give glory to your holy name.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE FOURTEENTH STATION



Jesus Is Laid  
In The  
Tomb

room or table once before stopping at the next Station. Continue this pattern for all 14 Stations.

End at a location where a larger Easter candle or cross has been placed in a visible and prominent space.

When these Stations are being prayed where there are no images of the Stations, consider using the poster set of 14 Stations offered by Creative Communications for the Parish [*KS-P*] or some other representation.

### Neighborhood And Youth Groups

For a neighborhood or youth group, conduct these Stations as an extended procession from house to house. Decide which household will host each Station (within easy walking distance). Designate 14 people to carry candles. After praying in each house, extinguish a candle. When finished with all the Stations, the procession will be walking in darkness. End the service with a brief discussion or reflection and fellowship.

In some schools or with formal youth programs, it may be appropriate to help young adults stage a living tableau for each of the 14 Stations. A note of caution: Such visual aids and the use of several different voices for the readings should not be taken as an invitation to turn this prayer into a theatrical performance. Para-liturgical prayer, such as this, is intended to accentuate the proclamation of the Word but not to dramatize or re-enact Jesus' passion. These Stations are a traditional communal prayer form; they are not a script calling for "dramatic interpretation."

### For Family Or Individual Use

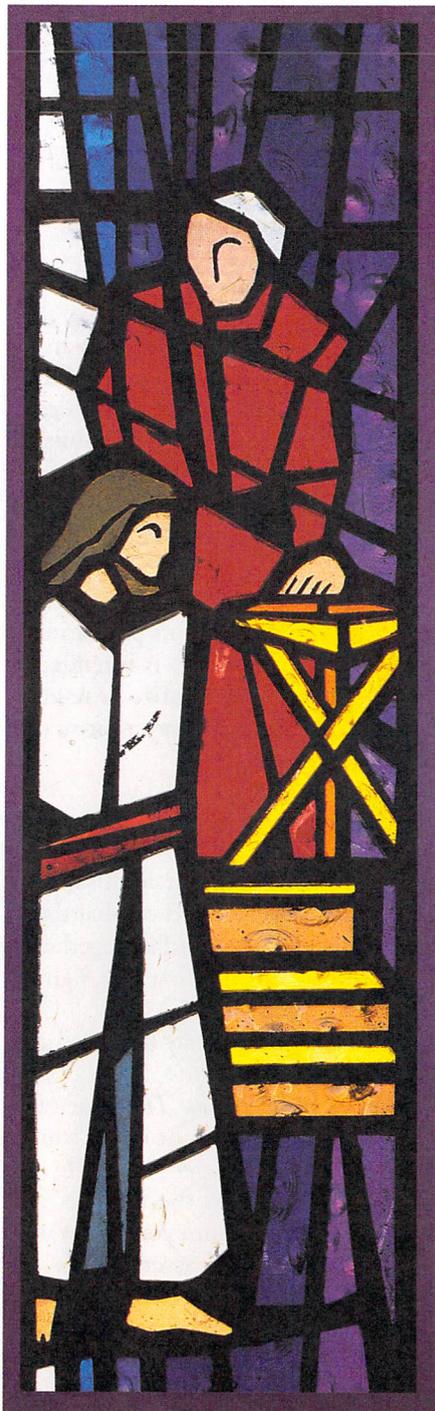
These Stations may be prayed at home individually or with families, one each day. Begin 14 days before Good Friday so you end on that day.

Prepare the space by placing fourteen (or fifteen) candles together to provide a focal point from one day to the next. On the first day, light all candles. The second day, light only thirteen, and so on.

Additional vocal prayer, meditation or sharing time may be added after the Scripture reading and/or after the reflection.

Music is optional. You could sing verses of *Were You There?* or other hymns at an appropriate time during the Stations, or sing the entire song at the beginning or end. You may want to use the *Stabat Mater* or other hymns whose lyrics may not be well-known at the start when the room is fully lighted so the lyrics can be easily read. (In a darkened room, you might want to choose music with lyrics that are well-known to those assembled.)

Remember that different circumstances might require changes in these suggested formats. Indeed, in some cases none of the formats suggested here may be appropriate. These Stations may well be prayed alone using only the images and words of this booklet. ✚



## THE FIRST STATION



Jesus Is  
Condemned  
To Death

## THE THIRTEENTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross

*Reader 2:* Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And when he learned that Jesus had already died, he gave the body to Joseph (*Mark 15:43,45*).

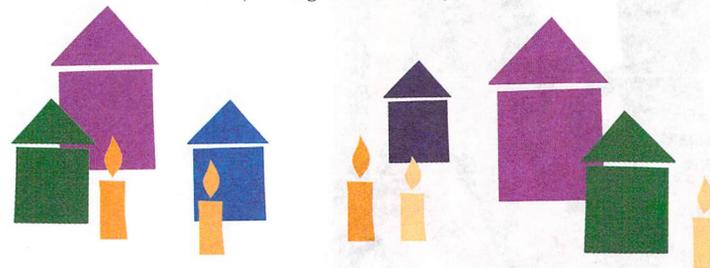
*Reader 3:* I want to be like Joseph. I want to live for you, Jesus, and not count the cost. Help me to trust the divine promise that "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what wonders await those who love you."

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE THIRTEENTH STATION



Jesus Is Taken  
Down From  
The Cross

## THE FIRST STATION

*Presider begins but all join:* † In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our  
Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again  
for us.

*Reader 1:* The First Station: Jesus Is Condemned To Death

*Reader 2:* Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with  
Jesus called Messiah?”

*Narrator:* They all said,

*All:* “Let him be crucified!”

*Reader 2:* Pilate said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood.  
Look to it yourselves.”

*Narrator:* After he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over  
to be crucified (*Matthew 27:22,24,26*).

*Reader 3:* How like Pilate I can—and often do—respond.  
Pilate had the authority, power and opportunity to  
free you but he did not. There are times when I,  
too, take the easy way out. I see injustice but do  
not stand up and speak out. Lord, help me to stand  
and speak on behalf of those in need, even when it  
is difficult to do so.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with  
me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who  
sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE SECOND STATION



Jesus Takes  
Up His  
Cross

## THE TWELFTH STATION

Presider: Who do you say that I am?

All: **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

Reader 1: The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies On The Cross

Reader 2: It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle.

Narrator: Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

Presider: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”;

Narrator: and when he had said this he breathed his last.

*(Luke 23:44-46)*

*ALL KNEEL*

Reader 3: I don't like the dark. I can't see where I am, have been, or am going. I would much rather have a bright light and a road map with directions to keep me on the right path. The darkness, like the unknown, can be scary. Help me trust in you, Lord, so I, too, may say every day, “Into your hands I commend my spirit.”

*(Brief silent reflection)*

Presider: Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*ALL RISE*

All: **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE TWELFTH STATION



Jesus Dies  
On The  
Cross

## THE SECOND STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Second Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

*Narrator:* So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha (*John 19:17*).

*Reader 2:* I am here, Lord. I don't know if you see me, but I am here. I feel so helpless. The crowds are so loud. The road is so long. The cross is so heavy. But I am here and I shall walk with you. Even when it seems that I can do nothing for someone who is suffering, help me remember that I can always walk beside them.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE THIRD STATION



Jesus Falls  
The First  
Time

## THE ELEVENTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.

*Reader 1:* The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

*Reader 2:* 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.

*Narrator:* Then Jesus said,

*Presider:* "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (*Luke 23:33-34*).

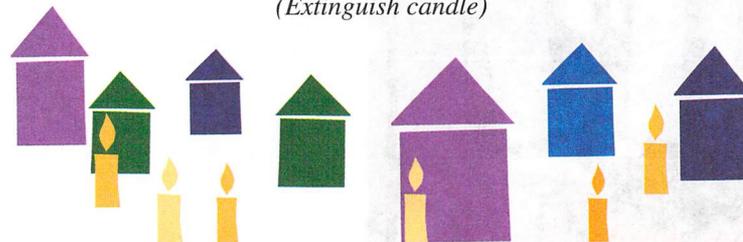
*Reader 3:* I have difficulty forgiving people who hurt me, even when done unintentionally. You show me another way. You forgive even with nails extending from your hands. Lord, help me forgive others as you forgive me.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE ELEVENTH STATION



Jesus Is  
Nailed  
To The  
Cross

## THE THIRD STATION

Presider: Who do you say that I am?

All: **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

Reader 1: The Third Station: Jesus Falls The First Time

Narrator: Perfume and incense gladden the heart, but by grief the soul is torn asunder (*Proverbs 27:9*).

Reader 2: When I watched you fall, I collapsed too. I remembered my burdens and responsibilities. Sometimes they seem so overwhelming that I wonder whether I'll be able to make it through the day. Lord, I saw you fall, but I also saw you rise and go on. Help me to do the same each time I fall.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

Presider: Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

All: **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE FOURTH STATION



Jesus Meets  
His Mother

## THE TENTH STATION

Presider: Who do you say that I am?

All: **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

Reader 1: The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Garments

Reader 2: And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out . . . (*Mark 15:20*).

Reader 3: I put so much time and effort into my outer appearance, yet appearances are fleeting. We are here today and gone tomorrow. How much wiser for me to spend my time fashioning my interior garment! Lord, help me clothe myself with your grace.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

Presider: Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

All: **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE TENTH STATION



Jesus Is  
Stripped  
Of His  
Garments

## THE FOURTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

*Narrator:* Jesus' father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

*Reader 2:* "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."  
*(Luke 2:33-35)*

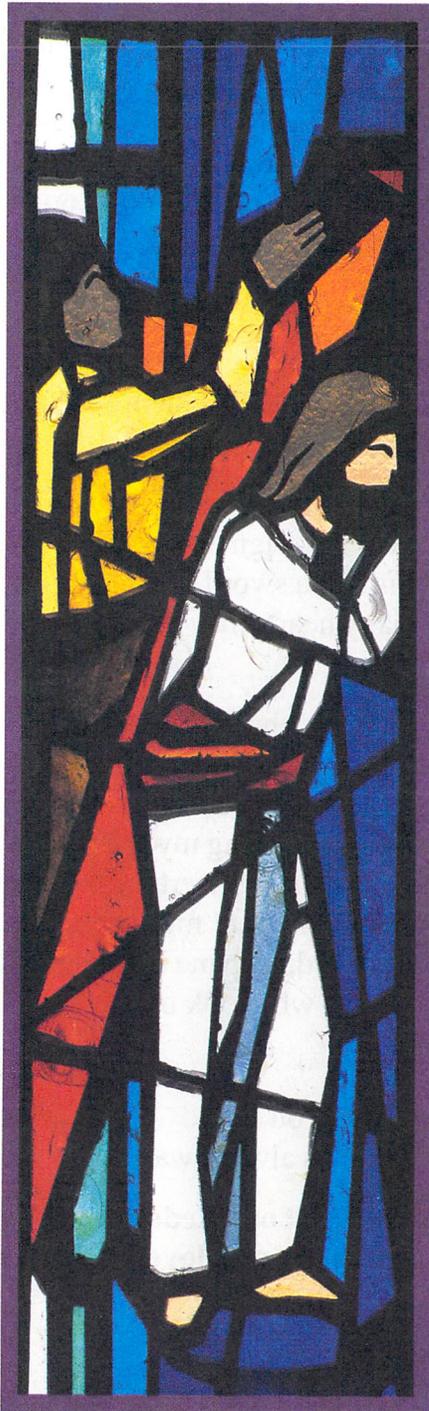
*Reader 3:* I wonder what Mary felt as she watched her precious son slowly drag his body along the stony road. I wonder how my mother felt as she watched me make my way, stumbling, along my path. I suspect she had anxious moments, uncertain that she had done all she could to prepare me for the detours and curves of life. Lord, help me impart guidance and strength to those who look up to me.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE FIFTH STATION



Simon Of Cyrene  
Helps Jesus  
Carry His Cross

## THE NINTH STATION

Presider: Who do you say that I am?

All: **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

Reader 1: The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls The Third Time

Reader 2: As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and spoke to them as they walked along.

Narrator: And Jesus told them,

Presider: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day” (*Matthew 20:18-19*).

Reader 3: I don't know how you keep going, Lord. Some days all it takes is a clogged drain, a sick parent or a failed test to make me scream and give up. It never occurs to me to think of the people who have no drain or fresh water, have no health care or family, have no teacher or books. Lord, help me keep my difficulties in perspective, and wait in joyful hope for the coming of your kingdom.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

Presider: Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

All: **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE NINTH STATION



Jesus Falls  
The Third  
Time

## THE FIFTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.

*Reader 1:* The Fifth Station: Simon Of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

*Reader 2:* They pressed into service a passerby, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.  
*(Mark 15:21)*

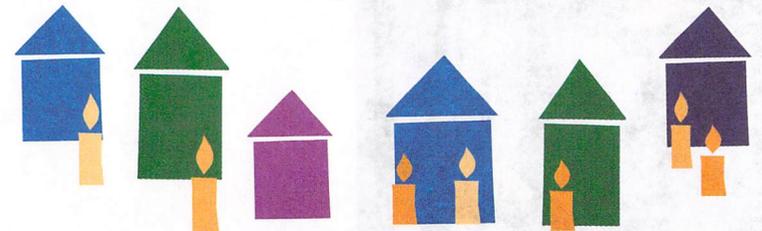
*Reader 3:* I am often like Simon, needing to be pushed into service. I get too comfortable in my daily routines, thinking only of my own personal needs and wants. How many people do not have someone who offers a warm smile, a friendly word, or a momentary visit? Lord, help me live my faith by offering loving, unselfish service to others.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.

*(Extinguish candle)*





## THE SIXTH STATION



Veronica  
Wipes The Face  
Of Jesus

## THE EIGHTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks To The Women Of Jerusalem

*Reader 2:* A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him.

*Narrator:* Jesus turned to them and said,

*Presider:* “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.”

*(Luke 23:27-28)*

*Reader 3:* Wherever I look I see children. What a gift they are, and what promise of a brighter tomorrow. Who protects them from the world’s adult-sized tragedies? I worry about their future, and about mine. Lord, help me embrace the children in my life and to shower them with love, patience and laughter.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE EIGHTH STATION



Jesus Speaks To  
The Women Of  
Jerusalem

## THE SIXTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus

*Reader 2:* “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”

*Narrator:* Jesus said to him,

*Presider:* “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*Matthew 22:36-39*).

*Reader 3:* I can feel the distance between us, Jesus; I’m not like Veronica. I call you Brother, but you are not an ordinary brother. I cannot imagine you eating at my table, playing with my games or staying for the night. Lord, help me come nearer to you, indeed, even touch you.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*



## THE SEVENTH STATION



Jesus Falls  
The Second  
Time

## THE SEVENTH STATION

*Presider:* Who do you say that I am?

*All:* **You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Brother and Savior, who lived, died and rose again for us.**

*Reader 1:* The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls The Second Time

*Narrator:* Then Jesus said to his disciples,

*Presider:* “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*).

*Reader 2:* I try to follow you, but then I fail and despair. I begin anew with fresh resolve, and again I stumble. It is difficult for me to see how this losing becomes winning. When I stumble, Lord, help me to fall in the direction of your loving arms.

*(Brief silent reflection)*

*Presider:* Sisters and brothers, I call you friends. Come with me on my journey and let us always walk together.

*All:* **Glory and honor to Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who sets us free to live in faith, hope and love.**

*(Extinguish candle)*

