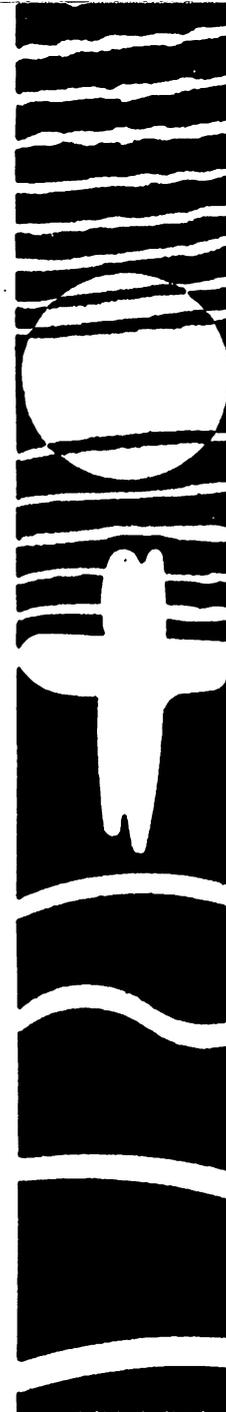


# Do-It Yourself Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross, known also as the Way of the Cross, is a series of 14 meditations on the Passion and Death of Christ. The devotion traces the path followed by Jesus from the palace of Pilate to Calvary and burial. Some modern Stations of the Cross include a fifteenth station on the Resurrection and Ascension out of an awareness of the relation of the Passion to these events.

In the season of Lent we identify with the suffering of Jesus and we recognize that the story of his Passion still happens in our world. These "Do-It-Yourself Stations" provide a way for you to get in touch with the suffering of Jesus as well as the suffering in our world. Here's how it works:

Spend 3 minutes a morning with a station card. A ritual prayer is included if you need a system. But you can make your own prayer. Just give yourself a chance to walk through each day on the road of the cross. Perhaps do one a day during the last two weeks of Lent or spread them out throughout Lent.



# Ritual for Prayer

## Sign of the Cross

As you make the gesture, reflect the basic questions: Where did I come from.... Where am I going.... Why am I here? Then quietly welcome God into your company.

## Prayer

*As I move today in your company, O God, and reflect on this station of the cross, help me pattern my life after your Son's way of the cross. Might we together bring your story to life. Amen.*

Then reflect on the station for the day for a few moments. Try to write out a specific action response to the question on the back of the card and carry the card with you as a reminder to join your story with Christ's these last days of Lent.

## 1 Jesus is Condemned to Die

Jesus is brought to Pilate on false charges of treason. It is classic injustice, and it does not end with the death of Jesus. All over the world people are being destroyed because of their religion, nationality or color of their skin, for the clothes they wear (or don't), the folks they hang around with (or don't), the things they do (and don't do). *Is there anyone dying because of my injustice? Because of what I am doing (or not doing)?*

## 2 Jesus Accepts His Cross

A cross is thrust into the arms of Jesus who is ordered to carry it to the place of execution. He accepts the cross for love of us and his Father. There are still crosses in our world: war, hunger, poverty, families struggling through divorce, a loved one who is dying, love given and not returned, fears and troubles. *What is my cross today? And how am I accepting it?*

## 3 Jesus Falls the First Time

The cross is heavy and the road to death is long and hard. Jesus slumps to the ground. The world is filled with people who have fallen, trying desperately to get up. Freedom so precious and a lifetime ahead: a good home, good education, open doors. *Am I heading towards life or closing my own doors? Is there one door I need to open today?*

## **4 Jesus Meets His Mother**

Mary, long afflicted by the troubles of the friends Jesus kept watching the final horror: her son's long walk to Calvary. Close relationships should be free from insensitivity, but all of us overlook the pain and discouragement of others often very close to us: panic and failure in the eyes of those we love most, those who love us. *Who, among those who most care for me, needs my care in return today?*

## **5 Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross**

The cross is heavy and Jesus is weak from abuse. Soldiers grab a bystander named Simon and order him to help. Simon is not eager to help Jesus, perhaps he has seen too many problems and has enough of his own. He isn't much different from us: we all need to get out of ourselves and enter the lives of others stumbling under the weight of their crosses. *Who has a cross to bear that I could lift briefly?*

## **6 Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

A woman of compassion reaches out to wipe the face of Jesus. The image of his face is imprinted on the cloth. People of compassion still touch the needs of those who are hurting with kind words, compassionate actions. It only takes a moment to stop and listen, to care, to reach out. You can make a difference in someone's life. *From whose face can I lift a little sadness today?*

## **7 Jesus Falls a Second Time**

Jesus' weakness is not relieved by the respite Simon provided. He falls again until he is roughly pulled to his feet. Oppression and greed force many to their knees. Farmworkers, women and other working minorities are often terribly underpaid. Those who are well-fed, well-housed and well-educated can easily overlook the plight of strangers who are not in our family or community. *Who needs my help to stand taller this day?*

## **8 Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women**

Jesus pauses on his road to death to console women who are weeping at his condition. His words are a reminder that tears are not enough, that the starving need bread. We can live with them by fasting and cutting down on the food we eat ourselves. We can get involved in actions of justice and service to respond to the needs of those who are hungry. *What can I do today to feed someone who is hungry?*

## **9 Jesus Falls a Third Time**

A lack of sleep, the scourging, the pain of the thorns on his head, the long road pushes Jesus once more to the ground. Many people live with failure. Alcoholics and drug addicts whose hate for themselves is destroying them. Smaller failures in our daily lives at home or school take their toll on us. *What current sin/sadness do I need to rise from?*

## **10 Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**

The road ends at the top of a hill. Jesus' clothes are stripped from him, leaving him naked in front of the crowd. Naked, too, are the poor in the company of wealthy nations who scoop up larger and larger amounts of the world's goods. Many of us have fine clothes, stereos, impressive goods that keep us distanced from those who have less. *Is it possible for me to strip myself of some of my possessions so that I can share myself, my "wealth," my time and talents with the less fortunate?*

## **11 Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

The soldiers roughly throw Jesus onto the cross he has been carrying. They nail his hands and feet to the wood. Torture and brutality are still a common in many parts of our world. A cruel word, a clever put-down still destroy human lives. *Is there someone in my life that I have nailed to the wood of sadness by my sharp tongue or my actions?*

## **12 Jesus Dies on the Cross**

The nightmare of pain and suffering finally has come to an end. After three hours on the cross, Jesus dies. Death by violence is still around. In many of our communities, young people are killing other young people. *Am I living peacefully and resolving conflicts nonviolently or am I dangerously close to unwanted violence?*

## **13 Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

The body of Jesus hangs limp. Cut down from the cross, bleeding and broken, he is placed in the arms of his mother. How often does a mother still receive the body of a son or daughter destroyed by violence or illness. We often feel helpless, but we have the power to help. *Is there a friend or neighbor who has recently lost someone who could really use a sign of care and concern from you?*

## **14 Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

Relatives and friends carry the body of Jesus to the grave, roll a boulder in front of the entrance and silently withdraw. The suffering continues in the eyes of those who love him. And in the faces of the poor, homeless, and broken people of our world. We can bring goodness into our world. Remember the source of all goodness -- God. *Can I bury my forgetfulness and rise to praise of God and actions of goodness and service toward others?*

## **15 Women Return to the Tomb of Jesus**

Filled with sadness, the women in the life of Jesus come to the tomb to anoint the body with oils. But a great surprise greets them. Their lives and faith in Jesus have made him a man of history whose importance and memory history cannot erase. We are called to bring him to life as well. *Lord, I pray that the evidence of my life will convince others of your life. Amen.*