

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

*This is an abbreviated version of the traditional 14 stations that is also the script of the videoed version
For use in the home or with friends. You can walk as you say these stations,
or do so seated in your home.*

STATION 1---- Jesus is condemned to death.

Then Pilate said to Jesus, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" But Jesus gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

MEDITATION

Condemned? To Death? But Pilate said he could find no fault in Him! What a senseless miscarriage of justice! Why should He die?...Why? And He hasn't opened His mouth...he just stands there, looking at the crowd. Oh God, He is looking at me...He's looking through me---seeing me as I really am. What deep sorrow is in His eyes! Oh, yes, meek and silent Man of Sorrows, how far I am from You? I who take delight over every chance to get even for the slightest reasons...I who have a heart burning with envy and malice... I who boil with resentment on the least provocation...I cannot face your deep and silent look of love and forgiveness... I understand now... I am the reason You must die. Have mercy on me, Lord...and by your love...heal me of my sin.

STATION 2---Jesus receives the Cross

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus in to the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

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MEDITATION

Yes, Jesus, in your love for sinners like me, you grasp the Cross so passionately. All through your life on earth...you took the hard way---out of love for others. In Your public life you walked the roads... sweating through the desert summer...shivering in the winter...with no place to lay Your head.

And now you go so willingly to meet this hard death for love of me...

And I?...Oh, God, for love of self...I treat myself to the best that money can buy...always concerned with my own comfort...filling my belly with the finest food. And all the while around the world you...my Christ are starving in my brothers and sisters in Syria...in Haiti...and even here in my own land of freedom.

And when something threatens my safe little world...I can merely push a small button...silencing my television... silencing the pain and the ugliness.

I'd like to help Lord, but I really don't think that I should get involved. I don't want to end up on a cross. I don't like life to be unpleasant. I just want to love everyone and be happy.

But why doesn't that sound right, Lord? Why do my words sound so hollow?

I watch you struggle to pick up that terrible cross. Why Lord? Why a cross?

STATION III--- The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

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MEDITATION

Simon was just passing by on the road—got too close. I guess. He looked too curious...or maybe he felt sorry for you...or something. So they grabbed him and made him carry that awful thing. Simon wasn't bleeding---and almost dead---like you are, Lord. And it was still almost too much for him.

Lord, where are your friends? Why did you have to find a stranger?

Where were Peter and James and John?

You had so many followers; you helped so many people. The blind were made to see; lepers were made clean; crippled people were given strength to walk; where have they all walked to?

Why weren't they here to help? Are all friends like that, Lord? Are they only friends when you're passing out miracles?

Is friendship so shallow? What kind of friend am I? Am I that way too? Where was I when you needed help, Lord?

Simon didn't love you; they forced him! Simon didn't volunteer; he was drafted!

Where was I Lord? Where were all your friends who loved you so much?
Busy, I guess; just busy.

Oh, Christ... how often I have betrayed You,... and my neighbors!

I didn't know... I couldn't see you in them,...

Give me the look You're giving Simon...help me by your look...to see You everywhere.

STATION IV --- The women mourn for Jesus

MEDITATION

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?

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We have almost reached the Place of the Skull and the finish. Along the way is a little group of women. They weep, and they sob. Some people are like that. They just cry. Is it because some people are more compassionate, because they feel things more intensely---or because they love more?

Why do some people weep so easily, Lord? Of course, the sight of you is enough to make anyone cry—you are one wretched spectacle!

Why can't I weep, Lord? Don't I love you enough, or have I been taught so well that the strong don't cry? These women cry so easily, so unashamedly. But you don't seem to want their pity—"Weep for yourselves and for your children," you say to them. What do you mean, Lord?

Lord, why do you love this world full of people so much? Is it worth it? Are any of these people worth it? Is the whole lot of them worth what's happening to you? "Weep for yourselves and for your children;" are you talking to the women or to me?

Am I one of those sinful people? It's easier just to watch the TV, Lord. It's easier to lament the sins of the faceless, countless sinners whose crimes take up the first story, and then the second--and the third--and the last--and then are heard of no more.

I don't like to look at my own sins like that Lord. They won't go away like they do on TV.

It hurts so much to look at them, Lord. Don't make me do that; just let me pity you, Lord, like the women are doing. I'll even produce some tears, but don't make me look at myself. "Oh who shall deliver me from this way of death?" Lord, what are you going to do about my sins? Don't leave me to handle them all by myself. I can't do that, Lord.

STATION V --- Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus" there with the criminals; one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

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MEDITATION

Now the dreadful moment; you stretch out full length on the cross. It fits, Lord. Without a doubt, it was made for you...made by some nameless carpenter. Two rough timbers, fitted together to support the weight of a man's body.

Lord, you were a carpenter, you and Joseph. Did you ever make crosses, Lord? They were a popular item in the trade, what with the Romans' heavy demand for them. Is that how you learned about crosses, Lord? Is that why this cross has haunted you so much, for so long? Well, now it's yours. For as long as you live, it's yours. To make it fit perfectly, they nail you down, or is that to keep you from changing your mind?

The Lord of Heaven and Earth stretches his pain-racked body along the razor roughness of the cross---his bed of agony. Rest well upon your chosen bed my Lord...I've made my choice too...and it isn't yours.

My bed is king-size, and deep with comfort. I clothe my body in pure cotton and the softest wool, and house it in luxury. I put in my earphones, turn up the volume, and turn out the world.

Don't talk to me of charity, of those who waste away in malnutrition...

Don't speak to me about those who limp along on half-limbs through endless leprous days... they are nightmares best forgotten.

Don't mention to me of the crisis of sickly orphaned children in wrecked homes... cries multiplied a thousand times around the world.

Above all, don't... Oh, God!...don't make me look at You upon the bloody tree,

You... King of all... Don't make me listen to You, dying for love and saying,
"You must love these My little ones as I have loved you."

STATION VI--- Jesus is stripped of his garments.

And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at Jesus, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." *Pause*

V. **We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.**

R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

MEDITATION

Yes, Lord---there You are---stripped of everything for my sake.

Your friends have run away---Your honor and Your reputation have been made a laughing stock...and now even Your clothes are torn off Your body.

Exposed to agony and shame-----You have nothing-----You are nothing. Do you accept all this, my Lord and God, to make up for my greed?

Each time that I've hungered after the golden god of wealth and sworn to have him no matter the cost---each and every time---is that when I raised my hand to tear the blood-soaked linen from Your back?

Does it hurt bad, Lord? ---I hate to even look. Just to lay your back on that wood, with your skin ripped to shreds.....O God, what have you done? How can you stand it!!!

Curse them, Lord!---Curse them!---It will help---Scream at them, Lord---Scream with all your might. It'll help; it'll help a little. All I hear is a low groan, and not much of one at that.

You seem to be trying to speak. I didn't catch it all, but unless my ears deceive me, I thought I heard the word "forgive."

Forgive? Really now, forgive? At a time like this, *forgive?* Lord, you've got to be kidding.

There it goes; your cross is stood upright and dropped into a hole, I can't look any more.

Lord, this is too much.....My God,... My God,... forgive me

STATION VII ---Jesus dies upon the Cross.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the Roman soldier saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

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MEDITATION

A few minutes more----a few hours more-----for thirty-three years now it has been going on. For 33 years you have lived fully----abundantly you called it. Day by day----minute after minute.

You cannot escape any longer---now you are here, at the end of your life---at the end of your road....but now you must take this last step---the last step of love---the last step of life that ends in your own death.

I come before you----crucified Lover of the world---I can feel it----I am bound and burdened under the weight of my sin.

I have so often nailed You to the cross and left You there to die.

I have driven the nails of my hatred and prejudice through Your hands and feet... I have spit into Your face with the lies and foul language which poison my lips... I have made a mockery of Your selfless love with my apathetic ways.

Oh Christ...my Christ....what will become of me?

Where can I hide my shame from your sorrowful gaze? I cannot bear it!

Oh God--- my God---do not forsake me!

I am caught in the jaws of eternal death and only You can save me.

Reach out Your nail-pierced, twisted hand and touch me... heal me from my sins!

Christ has died..... Christ has died.... for us. Christ ha died.....for me.

STATION VIII --- Jesus is taken down from the Cross.

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth.

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

As Jesus gave his all...as Jesus gave his very life in total love for me, I actually heard the broken words, "Father, forgive them..."

I heard him cry out "It is finished." Yes...at last your work is done, Lord....it is finished.

You can leave your cross now; you can come down and rest. You have earned that much.

Gently, as though it still might hurt, they loosen and pull the spikes.

Dead weight slumps against the rope tied to lower you to the earth...the very earth you fashioned...the very earth that absorbed those drops of bloody sweat last night, the very earth which drank your blood so willingly poured out, the very earth that quaked in horror at your death.

Your mother is here; they lay your head in her lap. "And a sword shall pierce your own heart also," the prophet had warned her while you were only a child.

Now you can rest in peace, in your mother's arms. It is finished.

Is it finished Lord? Oh God---please do not let all this blood and pain and sorrow be for nothing!

STATION IX --- Jesus is laid in the Sepulcher

And Joseph laid the body in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. *Pause*

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MEDITATION

Empty and silent now....this place of the Skull...this place of terrible pain. And empty and silent is my heart...refusing to open to the quiet knocking of the love of Christ.

You have taken me far, Lord---I trusted you---I followed you and walked by your side.

And now....you have left me. I call upon you.....and you do not answer me.

I search and do not find you. I have left everything, and now I am left alone.

Your absence is my suffering. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It is so dark and so cold. Are you here in my darkness? Where are you, Lord? Do you love me still, or have I wearied you too much? Lord, answer me! Answer me!

O God, it is so dark. Dear God, let Easter come soon! O God, please let Easter be true!

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Let us pray.

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen