

# *The Way of the Cross and COVID-19*

*In the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## **Introduction**

We walk the Way of the Cross each year with our Lord Jesus and yet, with every step, we are taught something new, about us and about God.

We have suddenly realized the value of all that we took for granted, and never appreciated; including the joy of seeing one another when we come to worship as one family.

We are now spread far and wide, yet as faithful warriors of Christ, we walk together in spirit. We pray together in spirit.

Today, let us strengthen our spirit by fasting and penance to overcome the virus threatening our lives.

As we reflect on the Stations of the Cross, let us implore God's mercy on us to halt the spread of the corona virus and heal those who are suffering, and make us stronger in mind, body and faith.

*Sing: (to the tune of Stabat Mater)*

Jesus Lord, condemned, defiled,  
May we too be meek and mild  
As we tread your holy Way.

May we feel no bitter hatred,  
When we too are persecuted,  
Left alone to walk with You.

## The First Station

### *Jesus is condemned to death*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced profound solidarity with so many on this earth, by being beaten and tortured. Now he is wrongfully condemned to punishment by death. His commitment to entering our lives completely begins its final steps. He has said “yes” to God and placed his life in God’s hands. We follow him in this final surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, the one thing of which we are sure is that one day we shall die. If we will remember that we are going to die someday, then we will live every day as precious and unrepeatable, with the gifts and graces given us to day, and every day until we die. Help us to live well. Please grant all of us the grace of a holy death, especially those who are sick due to COVID-19, and are struggling to live. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Now the Cross as Jesus bore it  
Has become for us who share it,  
The jeweled Cross of Victory.

## The Second Station

### *Jesus carries the Cross*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences its crushing weight.

**Prayer:** **Lord, you take upon yourself the burden of the cross and all that weighs us down. Give us the strength to walk onward this collective Way of the Cross named COVID-19. May we help others to endure in the trials and suffering of their lives, with joy undefeated. We pray for those whom God has entrusted the task of ensuring the common good: the leaders of our Church and State who are struggling to find ways to provide for the needs of everyone in this time of crisis. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Weakened, prodded, cursed, and fallen,  
His whole Body bruised and swollen,  
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.

## The Third Station

### *Jesus falls the first time*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. How could he enter our lives completely without surrendering to the crushing weight of the life of so many on this earth! He lays on the ground and knows the experience of weakness beneath unfair burdens. He feels the powerlessness of wondering if he will ever be able to continue. He is pulled up and made to continue.

**Prayer:** **Jesus, when we fall and feel discouraged, may we know that you are especially close to us then, bearing our shame and giving us the strength to stand up on our feet and begin to walk again.**

**Make our hearts tender toward all those who fall under the weight of this cross, especially for those countries who are at a loss and are pained due to the increasing number of cases and deaths in their land due to COVID-19. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Jesus meets his grieving Mother,  
She who made the Lord our Brother;  
Now the sword her heart has pierced.

## The Fourth Station

### *Jesus meets His afflicted Mother*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Jesus' path takes him to a powerful source of his strength to continue. All his life, his mother had taught him the meaning of the words, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord." Now they look into each other's eyes. How pierced through her heart must be! How pained he must be to see her tears! Now, her grace-filled smile blesses his mission and stirs his heart to its depth. Love and trust in God bind them together.

**Prayer:** All suffering is embraced by God when Jesus and his mother meet on the way of the cross. Jesus is every child lost prematurely; Mary is every parent grieving for his or her child.

**Lord be close to all who lose or become distant from people they love. Be especially close to the families and loved one of those infected by this disease, who can not come close to each other due to the fear of transmission. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Simon stopped in hesitation,  
Not foreseeing his proud station,  
Called to bear the Cross of Christ.

## The Fifth Station

### *Simon helps Jesus carry the cross*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Jesus even experiences our struggle to receive help. He is made to experience the poverty of not being able to carry his burden alone. He enters into the experience of all who must depend upon others to survive. He is deprived of the satisfaction of carrying this burden on his own.

**Prayer:** **Lord Jesus, may I be unashamed to accept help when I need it, and may I be eager to offer it when others have needs. May our mutual dependence be a source of joy and an occasion of grace, knitting us together in the community of your love.**

**We pray for our government leaders, medical personnel, priests, armed services, first responders, who badly need extraordinary grace at this moment. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Brave but trembling came the woman,  
None but she would flaunt the Roman,  
Moved by love beyond her fear.

## The Sixth Station

### *Veronica wipes the face of Jesus*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Veronica sees through the pain and torture to recognize and love the true face of the Savior. She is rewarded with the icon of his suffering impressed upon the cloth of her charity.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, may I see with your compassion and smile with your radiance, so that your unfailing tenderness is made flesh and blood in me. May I always be alert to those who feel invisible and despised. May I help them to recognize that they are your brothers and sisters sharing in your dignity.

**We pray for others who continue to serve the people amidst the crisis; government and private employees, professionals, food and service personnel, members of the media, church personnel, and for all those who volunteer to give or take care of the sick, poor and the needy in this time of pandemic. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,

Flogged in Body He resembled

All our brothers poor and scorned

## The Seventh Station

### *Jesus falls the second time*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Even with help, Jesus stumbles and falls to the ground. In deep exhaustion he stares at the earth beneath him. "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." He has seen death before. Now he can feel the profound weakness of disability and disease and aging itself, there on his knees, under the weight of his cross.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, after so many falls, let me not lose hope for happiness and holiness. If you are with me, then I am not doomed to be stuck in the endless repetition of my failures. May your grace arise in the wilderness of my heart. Give us a new beginning even today. Help your people to arise beyond what is physical to see the spiritual dynamic at work in our midst. Grant timely help for those who are struggling to keep their faith in God in the midst of COVID-19. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,  
**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

May our sympathy for Jesus  
Turn to those who here now need us,  
May we see Christ bruised in them.



## The Eighth Station

### *Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** The women of Jerusalem, and their children, come out to comfort and thank him. They had seen his compassion and welcomed his words of healing and freedom. He had broken all kinds of social and religious conventions to connect with them. Now they are here to support him. He feels their grief. He suffers, knowing he can't remain to help them more in this life. He knows the mystery of facing the separation of death.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, be close to all of us who are in pain because we are unable to encounter You by receiving the Sacraments of the Church. Make us feel your presence in this time of need, and grant us the gift of true contrition that takes away even the hardest sins.

May we weep not only because of the disease that is spreading throughout our land, but also because of the gravity of our sins that separate us from You and from one another. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Jesus falls again in weakness,  
Stumbling as we do, to lead us  
Through our sorrow and our pain.

## The Ninth Station

### *Jesus Falls the Third Time*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** This last fall is devastating. Jesus can barely proceed to the end. Summoning all his remaining strength supported by his inner trust in God, Jesus collapses under the weight of the cross. His executioners look at him as a broken man, pathetic yet paying a price he deserves. They help him up so he can make it up the hill of crucifixion.

**Prayer:** **Lord Jesus, you tenderly care for all of us who have fallen. We recognize that we have failed greatly in our love for You and for our neighbor. Forgive our sins, especially when we have become greedy and indifferent to the needs of others in this time of pandemic.**

**Forgive us, when we are tempted to disobey the decisions made by our government and church leaders for the common good. Grant forgiveness of our sins, and deliver us from the scourge of this disease. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Stripped and jeered by his own nation,  
Jesus stood in desolation,  
Giving all He had to give.

## The Tenth Station

### *Jesus is stripped of His garments*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Part of the indignity is to be crucified naked. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. The wounds on his back are torn open again. He experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenseless. No shield or security protects him. As they stare at him, his eyes turn to heaven.

**Prayer:** **O Lord Jesus, we pray for those who are stripped of their rights and dignity. We repent for our shameful deeds. We are sorry for what has come upon man.**

**We pray for all those whose lives are disrupted by this epidemic. We pray for families who have been separated and for those whose livelihoods have been jeopardized. Amen.**

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,  
**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Pierced the hand that blessed and cured us,  
Pierced the feet that walked to free us,  
Walked the hill of Calvary.

## The Eleventh Station

### *Jesus is nailed to the cross*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Huge nails are hammered through his hands and feet to fix him on the cross. He is bleeding much more seriously now. As the cross is lifted up, the weight of his life hangs on those nails. Every time he struggles to pull himself up to breathe, his ability to cling to life slips away.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, your life had seemed so full of promise, and yet it ended in the disgrace of the cross. Embrace all those who seem to be utter failures. And as you are close to us in these dark moments, so may we share with you in the radiance of your resurrection.

Be close to those who are being monitored or under investigation for COVID-19, and for those who are severely worried for their health, such as the aged, infirm, and immunocompromised. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Life eternal, death defiant,  
Bowed his head - the world was silent,  
Through his death came life anew

## The Twelfth Station

### *Jesus dies on the cross*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary and John and Mary Magdalene to support him, Jesus surrenders his last breath: "Into your hands I commend my spirit."

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, be with us today and in the hour of our death. Help us to live holy and worthy lives as our preparation for death. Before our death, inspire us to offer reparation for our sins that we may be well prepared for our particular judgment.

Be close to those who are dying, and grant eternal rest to those who have died due to COVID-19, especially in our own nation. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother  
In your arms was placed our Brother  
Full of grace - now filled with grief.

## The Thirteenth Station

### *Jesus is taken down from the cross*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** Jesus' body was taken off the cross and placed in the arms of Mary his Mother. Imagine how she must have felt! He has truly died...A profound sacrifice, complete.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, now you are lowered from the cross into the hands of those who loved you and who stayed by your side to the end. Be with those who are grieving the loss of a loved one due to COVID-19. Help us to realize that our lives do not end with death, but that eternal life is waiting for all of us, where You will wipe away every tear from our eyes remove every sorrow and pain for us. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted,

In three days, You resurrected.

You did first what we shall do.

## The Fourteenth Station

### *Jesus is laid in the tomb*

**Priest:** We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

**People:** Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Story:** They take the body of Jesus to its resting place. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. In this final act of surrender, who would have imagined this tomb would soon be empty or that Jesus would show himself alive to his disciples, or that they would recognize him in the breaking of bread? Oh, that our hearts might burn within us, as we realize how he had to suffer and die so as to enter into his glory, for us.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, now you are laid to rest in the tomb. May we rest in your love, confident that even when the future is obscure, we nestle in your Father's care.

Amidst the fear, worry, and despair that this crisis brings, may each one of us be able to find hope and consolation from You. Grant that we may rise above this crisis, just as You have defeated death by your own Resurrection. Amen.

**Priest.** From the pandemic, and from other diseases of body and spirit,

**People.** Deliver us, O good and merciful Jesus!

Jesus Risen be our lover

In your Food and in our brother,

Lead us home to heaven with You.

## **Concluding prayer:**

O Lord, we thank you for you are the Great Physician who not only heals us but present in our time of need as the Bible tells us that you “Took up all our infirmities and carried our diseases.”

Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the corona virus, that we may experience your healing love.

As the world erupts in panic, we turn to you in our special needs. Calm our fears; increase our trust. Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. Give us your peace in place of our anxiety. Amen

*For the intentions of the Holy Father;  
One Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*