

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



*ST. DAMIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
OAK FOREST, IL*

(Stand)

PRESIDER: Jesus came with His disciples to a country place called Gethsemani, and He said to them, "Sit down here, while I go over yonder and pray. Then He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be saddened and exceedingly troubled. He said to them, "My soul is sad, even unto death. Wait here and watch with me." He went forward a little, and falling prostrate, He prayed, saying, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; yet not as I will but as You will."
(Matthew 26:36-39)

(Kneel)

ALL: Almighty and eternal Father, accept our prayer of thanksgiving for your Beloved Son, our Savior and Lord. As we recall His Sacred Passion send the Spirit of Christ into our hearts, we beg You, so that whether we pray or work we might do all in union with Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

(Stand)

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.*

First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Die

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: It was early Friday morning when Mary saw her son. This was the first glimpse she had of Him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into her heart and tears fell down her cheeks.

Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted Jesus executed. All shouted, "Crucify him!" Mary wanted to plead with them to stop, but she knew this had to be. So she and the other women stood by and cried silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord Jesus, it is hard for me to imagine the anguish your mother felt at your condemnation. But what about today, when I hold a grudge . . . ? "Crucify him!"
When I judge others . . . ? "Crucify him!"
Doesn't this bring tears of anguish to You? Forgive me, Jesus.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. All-powerful and eternal God, for proclaiming the truth your Son, Jesus Christ, is condemned to death by crucifixion. Stir up your love in our hearts so that we may be faithful to all that You have told us. Let us fear only the loss of your friendship through sin.

ALL: Amen.

(Stand)

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

Second Station

Jesus Carries His Cross

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Regaining a little strength, Mary walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and Jesus stumbled out, the guards laughing behind him. He stood before Pilate who asked the crowds, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So Pilate ordered him to be crucified. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on His shoulders. Then they shoved Him down the road.

Mary's pain for Him was unbearable. She wanted to take the cross and carry it for him. But she knew this had to be, so she walked on silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, Jesus, I beg you to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to your cross by closing my eyes to the pain and loneliness of my neighbor. Forgive me for gossiping about others and for always trying to find excuses to avoid certain people who wish to walk with me. Help me to be like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Father in heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ, still carries His Cross in our persecuted brothers and sisters throughout the world. Make us feel the needs of all persons so that we might as readily help them as we would help Jesus Himself.

ALL: Amen.

(Stand)

SING: *Weakened, prodded, cursed and fallen,
His whole body bruised and swollen,
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.*

Third Station

Jesus Falls the First Time

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Mary followed close behind her son as He stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt her more than to see Him in such pain. She saw the cross digging into His shoulders. Her heart dropped when she saw Him fall face to the ground, the heavy cross landing squarely on His back.

For a moment she thought her beloved Son was dead. Her whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked Him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped Him. Mary wanted to protect Him with her own body. But, she knew this had to be, so she walked on and wept silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, how often have I seen you fall, and unlike Mary, have left You there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and laughed at them? How often do I find myself getting angry when someone does things differently than me? Mary offered You her support through your entire passion. Help me to do the same for You by the support I give to others. Lord, have mercy on me.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. O God, to free us from sin your Son, Jesus Christ, embraced His fearful passion and crucifixion. Strengthen us in our baptismal resolutions by which we renounced sin and Satan, so that through the passion of this life's sufferings we might rise to a new life of joyful service free of all selfishness.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

SING: *Jesus met His grieving Mother,
She who made the Lord our Brother;
Now the sword her heart has pierced.*

Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Grieving Mother

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Mary had managed to break through the crowd and was walking as close as she could to her Son. She called to Him through the shouting voices. He stopped. Their eyes met, hers full of tears of anguish, His full of pain and confusion. Mary felt helpless; then in His eyes she saw His message: "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As He stumbled on, she knew He was right. So she followed and prayed silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord Jesus, forgive me the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me the times I brooded over little inconveniences or became discouraged and did not heed your call to courage! Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times, but fruitlessly.

PRESIDER: Let us pray, O blessed Lord, at Your passion a sword of sorrow pierced the loving heart of your mother as Simeon had foretold. Grant that we who look back on her sorrows with compassion might receive the healing fruits of Your sufferings.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

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

Fifth Station

Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Mary could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of her Son as He tried to carry His heavy load. Each step looked as if it would be His last. She felt His every pain in her heart and she wanted it to end. Then there was commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten Jesus' load. He asked the guards why this had to be. Mary knew, and so followed silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord Jesus, I have many times refused to help you. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned your word. Don't let me protest like Simon, but help me to be like your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, help us to see in the sufferings and shortcomings of our lives a share in Your Cross; strengthen and console us in the belief that we bear all things in union with You, who have taken upon Yourself even our guilt.

ALL: Amen.

(Stand)

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

Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: As Mary continued close by Jesus, a woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil and began to wipe Jesus's bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back. The woman's face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to him?" Mary knew, so she walked on in faith, silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, this woman gave you the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to You by giving to others - but I pass them by. My Savior, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to you.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-loving God, We feel your love and understanding in the consolation and support we receive from one another: Give us, we beg You, the courage and dedication to sacrifice and suffer with those who are in need, the least of Your people.

ALL: Amen.

(Stand)

SING: *Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,
Flogged in Body He resembled
All our brothers poor and scorned.*

Seventh Station

Jesus Falls the Second Time

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Again Jesus fell, and again Mary's grief was overwhelming at the thought that He might die. Mary started to move toward Him, but the soldiers prevented her. Jesus rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing her Son fall, get up again, and continue on, was bitter anguish to her. But, since Mary knew this had to be, she walked on silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, of all people, Mary was Your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for You. I have many times turned away from You by my sins and have caused others to turn away from You. I beg You to have mercy on me.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, You shared in our weaknesses and accepted our guilt. Grant us the favor of rejoicing in spite of our human weaknesses, so that in all we do, Your strength, swelling in us, may be shown to all others.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

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

Eighth Station

Jesus Speaks to the Women

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: Mary was walking a few steps behind Jesus when she saw Him stop. Some women were there crying for Him and pitying Him. He told them not to shed tears for Him. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears for those who would suffer in the future. They did not see the connection between that and His walk to death. Mary did, and as He walked on, she followed silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: My Savior, many times have I acted like these women, not realizing how sin brings about pain and suffering. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked Your pardon. Lord, You have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Beloved Jesus, with tears of pity these women of Jerusalem responded to You, broken, bruised, and beaten, on the road to Calvary. Deepen our faith, we beg you, so that we may see You in our brothers and sisters, bruised by our envy, beaten down by injustice, and broken by our greed and our indifference.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

SING: *Jesus fell again in weakness,
Stumbling as we do, to lead us
Through our sorrow and our pain.*

Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: This fall of Jesus was agony to His Mother. Not only had He fallen on the hard ground again, but now He was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion. The soldiers screamed at Him and abused Him, almost dragging Him the last few steps. Mary's heart pounded as she imagined what they would do to Him next. But, she knew this had to be, so she climbed the hill silently behind Him.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: My loving Jesus, I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people but when it became inconvenient or painful to me, I left them, making excuses for myself. Help me, Lord, to be like your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, You permitted your Son to be weakened, crushed, and profaned so that He might rise from the dead freed from the ravages of sin. Help us to accept our weaknesses and failing as forerunners of our glorious resurrection in union with Your Son.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

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

Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: With Jesus finally relieved of the weight of the cross, Mary thought He would have a chance to rest. But the guards immediately started to rip off His clothes stuck to His blood-clotted skin. The sight of her Son in such pain was unbearable. Yet, since she knew this had to be, she stood by and cried silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, in my own way I, too, have stripped You. I have taken away the good name of another by foolish talk, and have stripped people of human dignity by my prejudice and lack of love. Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended You through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see You in all people.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, stripped of everything, You stood exposed to the jeers and contempt of the people whom You loved. Clothe us with genuine love of others, so that nothing we suffer may ever fill our hearts with hatred or bitterness.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

SING: *Pierced the hands that blessed and cured us,
Pierced the feet that walked to free us,
Walked the hill of Calvary.*

Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: As they threw Jesus onto the cross, He willingly allowed Himself to be nailed. As they punctured His hands and His feet Mary felt the pain in her heart. Then they lifted up the cross. There He was, her son, whom she loved so much, being scorned as He struggled for the last few moments of earthly life. But she knew this had to be, so she stood by and prayed silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, what pain You endured for me. And what pain Your mother went through, seeing Her only Son die for love of me! Yet, You are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me, Lord, to turn away from my sinfulness.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Lord and Savior, You have told us that we, too, must accept crucifixion if we are to accept resurrection with You. Help us, to rejoice in the sufferings that come with the fulfillment of our daily duties, seeing in them the royal road of the cross to the resurrection.

ALL: Amen.

(Stand)

SING: *Life eternal, death defiant,
Bowed His head – the world was silent,
Through His death came life anew.*

Twelfth Station

Jesus Dies on the Cross

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes! Mary, who had brought this Savior into the world and watched Him grow, stood helplessly beneath His cross as He lowered His head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but Mary's was greater than ever. Yet, this had to be and she had to accept it, so she stood by and mourned silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: My Jesus, have mercy on me for what my sins have done to You and to others. I thank You for Your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down one's life for one's friends. Let me always be Your friend. Teach me to live my life for others, and not fail You again.

PRESIDER: My people, what have I done to you? Or in what have I offended you? Answer me. What more should I have done, and did not do? I led you out of the land of Egypt, and you prepared a cross for me. I opened the Red Sea before you, and you opened my side with a lance. I gave you a royal scepter, and you have given me a crown of thorns. With great power I lifted you up, and you have hung Me upon a cross. My people, what have I done to you, or in what have I offended you? Answer me.

(from the Reproaches of Good Friday)

ALL: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . .

(Stand)

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

Thirteenth Station

Jesus is Taken From the Cross

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. Mary stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our Savior, her Son. Then two men took the body from the cross and placed Jesus in her arms. A deep sorrow engulfed her being. Yet, Mary also felt deep hope. Life had ended cruelly for her Son, but His rising would bring life to all of us. She knew this had to be, and she prayed silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Lord, Your passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over You. I have done my part in Your crucifixion and now, my Savior, I beg your forgiveness with all my heart. Help me to live a life worthy of You and Your mother.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Beloved Savior, You returned to the Father all that He has given You, so that He might restore all to You a hundred-fold in the glorious resurrection. Help us, we beg You, to give generously of ourselves in all that we do for You, so that like You we might be made perfect in a new resurrection.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

SING: *Jesus, Lord, Your gift accepted,
In three days You resurrected,
You did first what we shall do.*

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

PRESIDER: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.
(Genuflect)

ALL: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

PRESIDER: They brought Jesus's body to a tomb and Mary arranged it there herself, silently weeping, silently rejoicing. She took one more look at her loving Son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before she left she knew this had to be . . . it had to be for her Son . . . and she would wait in faith silently.

(Kneel and Pause)

ALL: Yes, my Lord, this had to be because You love me, and for no other reason. All You ask is that I live a good life. You never said such a life would be easy. I am willing to leave sin behind and live for You alone, in my brothers and sisters.

PRESIDER: Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, on the edge of sadness when all seemed lost, You restored to us the Savior we thought defeated and conquered. Help us, we beg You, so to empty ourselves of self-concern that we might see Your hand in every failure and Your victory in every defeat. These things we ask in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.
(Stand)

SING: *Jesus, Risen be our lover,
In your food and in our brother,
Lead us home to heaven with You.*

(Remain Standing)

ALL: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen

PRESIDER: Lord Jesus, we have walked with You to Calvary. May your forgiveness of our sins that You bore upon the Cross help us to pick up our cross and follow You. As St. Paul wrote, "If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

ALL: Amen

PRESIDER: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And with your spirit.

PRESIDER: May almighty God bless you, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Go in Peace.

Praying the Stations with Mary the Mother of Jesus
Richard Furey

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