

13th Station

Jesus is taken down from the cross

Focus: The helplessness we feel when there's nothing we can do to relieve the suffering of someone we love

Action: Be present to those who suffer, especially when our presence is all we have to offer



Leader

We adore you O Christ
and we praise you.

People

Because by your
holy cross, you have
redeemed the world.

Reflection

In Saint John's account of the Crucifixion, we are told that Our Blessed Mother, her sister and Saint Mary Magdalen were present, standing by the cross of Jesus (John 19: 25). Further on Saint John declares: *"An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may [come to] believe"* (John 19:35).

Anyone who has had first-hand experience witnessing the suffering of a loved one, can relate to what those who stood by the cross of Jesus throughout his crucifixion must have felt. Being unable to help someone in agony is truly a most exasperating experience on many levels; emotional, physical and even spiritual. It's a time when people most often feel, as Jesus did during his crucifixion, that God has abandoned them. We wonder how God could let this happen. We do not know precisely what the people standing by the cross said or felt, but, it's likely their empathy for Jesus caused them the same kinds of anguish any of us feel in similar circumstances. It would have been easier to avoid this scene altogether, but their love for Jesus won out, and they stood by him to the end. True love cares not so much for oneself, but willingly sacrifices for the good of others.

Prayer

Almighty Father, we recognize that suffering is part of the human condition. Help us, therefore, to be vigilant about and sensitive to the suffering of others. Grant us in turn, the grace and desire to stand by them, to offer whatever we can to ease their suffering, and thus validate in their minds and hearts, that their lives matter. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.