

Stations of the Cross with photos of outdoor stations at the National Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux, Juneau, AK





THE FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Leader: Again, the high priest began to ask him, and said to him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” And Jesus said to him, “I am. And you shall see the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” But the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” And they all condemned him as liable to death.

Group: There you stand before the crowd after being beaten. You never deny yourself, yet humbly accept the punishment given to you by those who had witnessed your miracles. It’s easy to look at this scene now and think, ‘How could they have accused you and condemned you to death? All you did was love every person you met.’ Yet they are not alone in their condemnation of you.

PAUSE

How often do I ignore you at school in the person no one wants to talk to? How often do my words condemn you in the way that I speak about others? It was not only the Jews and Pontius Pilate who condemned you, but I stand next to them shouting just as loud, ‘Crucify Him!’

PAUSE

Jesus, forgive me for the ways in which I condemn and pierce others with my words and actions. Help me to love like you and to learn from your example.



THE SECOND STATION: JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS

Leader: And Pilate said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!” But they cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away, bearing the cross for himself.

Group: By now you have endured a sleepless night, betrayal by your friends, and a beating that is too horrible to fully imagine. You’ve been whipped, stripped, and spit on by countless faces, some of whom last week treated you as royalty as you entered the city. And now, they hand you a cross to carry. The weight of it is far more than any number of pounds we can figure. For in carrying the cross, you carry the weight of our sins.

PAUSE

How often do I forget that you have carried the load for me? How often do I try to carry things on my own, not allowing you to help me? It was not only the sins of the world that you carried; it was my sin, my selfishness, my pride, my anger. Each added more weight to the load. And it was not only my sin you carried but also my burdens, my worries, my fears, my sadness, my insecurities. Each you carried step by step up towards Golgotha, the place of the Skull.

PAUSE

Jesus, help me not to forget the load that you carried for me. Give me the strength and the courage to let go of those things that separate me from you.



THE THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Leader: If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I have spoken to you: No servant is greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

Group: As you walk through the narrow streets, every movement, every jolt burns and reopens your wounds. The pain along with the weight of the cross becomes too much and you fall. In boxing, when a fighter falls and is too beaten to continue, the fight is stopped by the referee. Yet, there is no one there to stop the battle that you fight for us. Even though you know what still lies ahead, you do not stop and somehow find the strength to continue.

PAUSE

How many times have I fallen in my walk? Too many to count, I'm sure. So many times when I fall I don't feel like getting back up and trying again. There are too many temptations that I am faced with that feel too fun and easy to do because so many around me are doing them.

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to remember your courage and perseverance when you fell. Give me the courage to get back up when I fall. Help me remember that it is worth it to live as you lived.

THE FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Leader: Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother. And from that hour the disciple to her into his home.

Group: Amid all the shouts and jeers from the crowd that move like a wave in your mind as you struggle to remain conscious, one voice stands out. At first it is so faint that you wonder if it is real, but then as your eyes meet and you see her face you are not surprised that she is there for you. She has always been there for you. Her 'Yes' to the Father has been a light in the darkness. And now, here in your darkest hour, she is there.

PAUSE

There are so many times when I feel alone in my struggles. It seems that no one understands what I am going through, especially my parents; but I realize they must. How many times have I hidden things from my parents out of fear of what they would say, or what trouble I would be in when all they want is to love me?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to remember that I am never alone in my struggles. Help me to see my parents as you saw yours. Help me know their love for me and when things are hard between us, help me to remember the light of your Mother in my life.



THE FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Leader: And when they had mocked Jesus, they took they purple cloak off and put his own clothes on him, and they led him out to be crucified. Then they forced a certain passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, to take up his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, a name meaning ‘the place of the skull.’

Group: The soldiers who had beaten you all day had what appears to be a moment of compassion. Yet instead, their selfish motives override their opportunity for charity. They only want to follow their orders to get you up to the place where you will be crucified. How beaten you look that they decide to grab Simon a Cyrenian out of the crowd to help you carry the cross. He follows behind you, walking in your steps, helping you move forward. You press on, knowing that the worst is yet to come.

PAUSE

How often do I pass up an opportunity to help someone in need? Do I let what others may think of me stop me from reaching out?

PAUSE

Jesus, open my ears to hear the ways that you call me to serve. Help me follow Simon’s example of helping others. Help me to know what it means to be a true and faithful servant.





THE SIXTH STATION: **VERONICA WIPES THE FACE** **OF JESUS**

Leader: Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison, and come to you?” And answering the king will say to them, “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.”

Group: By now the thorns cut so deeply into your head that even seeing where you should step next is almost impossible. Up to this point all who approach you, other than your mother, either shout at you or spit in your face. As Veronica approaches, she walks differently than the others. As she reaches out her hands and wipes your face with her cloth, suddenly her face of compassion becomes clear. No words are necessary, both your eyes say it all. For in that moment, your dignity as a man is restored.

PAUSE

How many times have I forgotten that each person is made in your image and likeness and therefore deserves my respect? Do I make others objects of my pleasure and ignore their humanity? Veronica courageously stepped forward and dared to treat you differently than everyone else. Could I do the same?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to see your presence in others. Give me the courage to follow Veronica’s example of treating others with love even when no one else does.



THE SEVENTH STATION: **JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

Leader: It was our weaknesses that he carried, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the punishment that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.

Group: The soldiers are enraged at you for falling this time. They can't understand how Simon's help is not enough. In their anger they hit you again and again before they remember that you have to be alive to be crucified. The beating stops, but the shouts and taunts become louder and harsher. At this moment you can stop this! You are the Messiah and have the power to reveal yourself to everyone there. But you know that it would not fulfill all that is written about you. You know that you must be faithful to all of the Father's promises to His people. Remembering your love and your faithfulness you get up, and now with your wounds full of dirt and each step embedding it deeper, you keep going.

PAUSE

How many times have I failed to follow through on my promises?
Or worse yet, how often have I lied even to people I care about? Do I remember your faithfulness even when I fail?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to believe in your faithfulness and love for me. Give me the grace to follow through on my word to others. Help me to be a person of integrity.



THE EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader: There was following Jesus a great crowd of people, and among them were some women who were bewailing and lamenting him. Jesus turning to them said “Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Group: Their wailing sounds like a funeral. They cry and weep as if you are already dead. While air still passes through your lungs and your heart still beats, to them, you are dead. They know you are on your way to be crucified and because of the beating you have endured you already look like you should not be breathing at all. Yet in this moment consumed by death, you speak words of life and say, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me.’

PAUSE

Do I listen to your words in my life? How often have the things I’ve watched or listened led me away from you? Have I allowed the gospel of Life to reign in my heart?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to listen to your words of life. Show me ways that I can put you first.



THE NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Leader: I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life according to your Word. I declared my ways, and you answered me; teach me your commands. Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds. My soul weeps for sorrow; strengthen me with your words.

Group: Again, you fall, this time from sheer exhaustion. Only your will presses you forward while your body refuses. How difficult it must be to be you, fully God and fully man. God knows that this has to be finished and that it is not yet complete. Man feels the excruciating pain and every bone in your body wants to stop right here and move no further. Somehow both join together and you muster the strength to get up. You vow to not fall again because now you can see the place they are leading you to. You know the end is close and so you press on.

PAUSE

How many times have I let my flesh win over my spirit? How often have I chosen to sin rather than to follow your way? Was it my sin that became too heavy that you fell this third time?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to follow your ways. Help me remember your victory over my sin. Give me the grace to recognize when I sin and the desire to sin no more.



THE TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Leader: They gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall; but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. Then after they had crucified him, they divided his clothes, casting lots, to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, "They divided my clothes among them and upon my garments they cast lots."

Joseph: In some ways to get to this point is a relief because you know this is almost over. In other ways it is terrifying because you know the worst pain possible for man to endure is still waiting for you. By now your bloodied cuts have dried into your garments, because of this they act as a layer of skin for you since so little of your own remains. As the soldiers strip you bear it is not the nakedness that is painful but rather the vicious tearing of your skin. The cuts that had closed, now reopen and once again a river of blood runs all over your body. You are stripped of your dignity as a man, for even animals are given a swifter, less painful death.

PAUSE

How often have I judged others by the way they look or what they are wearing? Do I find my own self-worth and self-identity by the clothes I wear or the way I look?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to look past the outside of others. Help me not to judge them by how they look or what they wear. Help me to find myself worth and identity in you.



THE ELEVENTH STATION: **JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

PAUSE FOR NAILING

Leader: When they came to Golgotha, the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus and the robbers, one on his right and the other on his left. And Jesus said, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

Group: Lying down on wood is not foreign to you. The first place you were laid when you came into this world was a wooden manger. There you were laid in love and now it is out of love that you lay here on this wooden cross. The soldiers pull your right arm out beside you and then horrific pain flows through your entire body. The nail pierces not only your hand but also your whole body. The soldier pounds it in, only stopping to wipe your blood off his own face. Again the nail is driven into your other hand and the pain jolts your entire body. Pain shoots up your legs as they nail your feet.

PAUSE

In reflection, I am angered by the soldiers. I can't understand why they are doing this to you and yet what is hardest to realize is that not only am I in the crowd watching all of this, but I'm also one of them nailing you to the cross. How many times has my sin become a strike of the nail into your body? How often do I turn away from your mercy?

PAUSE

Jesus, I'm sorry for nailing you to the cross with my own sin. Help me to seek your forgiveness and mercy for the times that I sin.



THE TWELFTH STATION: **JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

Leader: It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the curtain of the temple was torn in the middle. Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, “It is finished. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Then, bowing his head he died.

Group: Above your head is the inscription, ‘King of the Jews’. As you use every last ounce of life left in you to lift your body so that you can speak, you do not look the part. Yet, every word out of your mouth is one of love, truly from another kingdom. The faces of all humanity must flash before your eyes as one by one you recount whom you are doing this for. And finally you say, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...it is finished.’ You breathe your last and it looks as though this is the end.

LONG PAUSE

Jesus, help me never forget your love for me. Help me to know that you died for me. Fill me with comfort in knowing that I never suffer anything you don’t understand.



THE THIRTEENTH STATION: **JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

Leader: When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead so that they did not break his legs, but one of them opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water. Joseph of Arimathea, because he was a disciple of Jesus (although a secret one for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave permission.

Group: The first arms that held you in this world are also the last. Your mother was told a sword would pierce her heart the day she presented you as an infant to the Father. Now as she holds your body that is mangled beyond recognition she sees not only the man she now holds, but also the child she held and her heart is pierced. Your comfort to her will come but in this moment she has only the Father to be with her in her sorrow and pain. All hope seems gone.

PAUSE

How many times have I lost hope in you? How often have I doubted your ability to be God in my life over all things?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me to trust in you. Help me to place all of my hope in you and give me peace in knowing that you are Lord over all things.



THE FOURTEENTH STATION: **JESUS IS PLACED IN THE** **TOMB**

Leader: Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, and wrapping it in a clean linen cloth he laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn out of rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and departed.

Group: You are laid to rest by Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary your mother and a few other women. As your body is anointed, Mary Magdalene remembers your eyes penetrating her heart. Tears stream down her face along with the others there as they too remember your love. They wrap your body in clean linens and lay it in a new tomb. The stone is rolled over the entrance and now it surely is the end. Up to this point, death is final. While those you have lived with, laughed with and cried with are in their heightened sorrow believing all is over, you are conquering sin and death.

PAUSE

How many times has death felt like the end? When I've lost a loved one it can be so hard to remember your victory. How often do I miss the opportunities to say, "I love you" to those special people in my life? Do my family and friends know how I feel about them?

PAUSE

Jesus, help me always remember that death is not the end. Give me the strength to say the words, "I love you" to those people in my life that I do love. Help me to love every person not just in words but also with my actions.

Jesus, I love you, I need you, and I trust you.
Amen.



THE FIFTEENTH STATION: **THE RESURRECTION**

Leader: When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought spices that they might go and anoint Jesus. Very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had just risen, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, “Who will roll the stone back from the entrance of the tomb for us?” for it was very large. But looking up they saw that the stone had been rolled back, and upon entering the tomb they were amazed to see a young man sitting at the right side and clothed in a white robe. He said to them “Do not be terrified. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.”



National Shrine of St. Thérèse

Thérèse of Lisieux

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (French: Sainte-Thérèse de Lisieux), born Marie Françoise-Thérèse Martin (2 January 1873 – 30 September 1897), also known as Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, O.C.D., was a Roman Catholic French Discalced Carmelite nun who is widely venerated in modern times. She is popularly known as "The Little Flower of Jesus" or simply "The Little Flower".

Thérèse has been a highly influential model of sanctity for Catholics and for others because of the "simplicity and practicality of her approach to the spiritual life". Together with Saint Francis of Assisi, she is one of the most popular saints in the history of the church. Pope Pius X called her "the greatest saint of modern times".

Thérèse felt an early call to religious life, and overcoming various obstacles, in 1888 at the early age of 15, she became a nun and joined two of her elder sisters in the cloistered Carmelite community of Lisieux, Normandy. After nine years as a Carmelite religious, having fulfilled various offices such as sacristan and assistant to the novice mistress, and having spent her last eighteen months in Carmel in a night of faith, she died at aged 24, following a slow and painful fight against tuberculosis.

Her feast day is 1 October.



*"Without love, deeds,
even the most brilliant,
count as nothing."*
— Thérèse de Lisieux

Marie Françoise-Thérèse Martin
Virgin, Nun, Ecstatic
Doctor of the Church

Born:
2 January 1873
Alençon, Orne, France

Died:
30 September 1897 (aged 24)
Lisieux, Calvados, France

Venerated in Roman Catholic
Church

Beatified:
29 April 1923 by Pope Pius XI

Canonized:
17 May 1925 by Pope Pius XI

Major shrine:
Basilica of St. Thérèse in Lisieux,
France

Feast:
1 October

Attributes:
Discalced Carmelite habit, crucifix,
roses

Patronage:
Gardens of Vatican City
Missionaries; France; Russia;
HIV/AIDS sufferers; florists and
gardeners; loss of parents;
tuberculosis; the Russicum; Alaska

