

Stations of the Cross



Meditations by Fr. Martin Flatman

THE FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to Death

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

He is questioned, mocked and tortured. The crowds shout for his death, and Pilate agrees. What judgement for the Judge of the world?

St Paul writes:-

*His state was divine,
yet he did not cling to his equality with God,
but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as all men are;
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
(Philippians 2:5-7)*

**Lord, faced with the mockery,
contempt and outright opposition of the world to you,
give us the courage to face it whatever the consequences.**

Our Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful mother weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.

THE SECOND STATION

Jesus accepts His Cross

℣. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟. **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

He takes his heavy cross, and begins the final task of dragging it through the streets. He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life walks the way of death.

Once he said:

*If anyone wants to be a follower of mine,
let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.
For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it:
but anyone who loses his life for my sake,
and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.
(Mark 8:34-5)*

**Lord, each day offer us new opportunities to serve you,
help us to accept each new challenge to proclaim your kingdom
however hard it may be.**

Hail Mary.

℣. Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟. **Have mercy on us.**

Through her heart his sorrow sharing
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at last the sword has passed.

THE THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

His strength is already spent, and in his weakness, he collapses under the weight of the cross.

But once he said:

*Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you solemnly,
unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain.
(John 12:23-24)*

**Lord, we face difficulties and disappointments all the time,
help us to carry on trusting you
even when things go wrong for us.**

Glory Be.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
was that mother highly blest
of the sole-begotten One!

THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his Mother

℣. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟. **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Suddenly, there is his Mother. Where is the promise of the angel now? Yet her love for her Son never falters. So she will become Mother of all who follow him.

*Let us love one another
since love comes from God
and everyone who loves
is begotten by God and knows God.
Anyone who fails to love can never have known God,
because God is love.
God's love was revealed
when God sent into the world his only Son
so that we might have life through him.
(1 John 4:7-9)*

**Lord, we often fail to appreciate those closest to us –
our family or friends –
may we recognise all that they mean to us,
and respond with love.**

Our Father.

℣. Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟. **Have mercy on us.**

Christ above in torment hangs;
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.

THE FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross

℣. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟. **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

A stranger is called to help carry the cross. In suffering and death all barriers are broken. The stranger becomes another disciple.

So it is written:

*Jesus too suffered outside the gate
to sanctify the people with his own blood.
Let us go to him, then, outside the camp,
and share his degradation ...
Through him, let us offer God an unending sacrifice of praise ...
Keep doing good works and sharing your resources,
for these are the sacrifices that please God.
(Hebrews 13:12-16 passim)*

**Lord, we are often suspicious of those who are different from us,
break down our fear,
that we many learn to play our part
in the one human family you have created.**

Hail Mary.

℣. Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟. **Have mercy on us.**

Is there one who would not weep,
'whelm'd in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear mother to behold?

THE SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

What good can such action do? But five loaves fed the five thousand. He takes the little thing, and it becomes another moment of glory.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
a gentle Father and the Lord of all consolation,
who comforts us in all our sorrows,
so that we can offer others,
in their sorrows,
the consolation we have received from God ourselves.
(2 Corinthians 1:3-4).*

**Lord, we often ignore the little gestures
that can make such a difference to those in trouble or sorrow.
May we never neglect the small things
that can show others your love.**

Glory be to the Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

Can the human heart refrain,
from partaking in her pain,
in that mother's pain untold?

THE SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls a second time

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Even with help from others his weakness overwhelms him. Can the power and the glory of God really be present amidst such failure?

St Paul writes:

*Here we are preaching a crucified Christ;
to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over,
to the pagans madness,
but to those who have been called ...
a Christ who is the power and wisdom of God.
For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom,
and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.
(1 Corinthians 1:23-25)*

**Lord, we are often weak and sometimes sad.
Help us to know that you can still work
in the midst of all our failures
and show your glory even when we feel lost or afraid.**

Our Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
she beheld her tender child,
all with bloody scourges rent.

THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

- ℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

He tells them not to weep for him but for themselves, and so for all the human tragedy symbolised by Jerusalem, the holy city. We are reminded of an earlier visit when it is written that:

*As Jesus drew near and came in sight of the city
he shed tears over it and said,
“If you in your turn had only understood on this day
the message of peace!
But alas, it is hidden from your eyes!
(Luke 19:41-42)*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you!
How often have I longed to gather your children,
as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused!
(Matthew 23:37-38)*

**Lord, you wept over Jerusalem,
and the pain and wickedness of our world is your great sorrow.
May our tears be transformed into action for you, whatever the cost.**

Hail Mary.

- ℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

For the sins of his own nation,
saw him hang in desolation,
till his spirit forth he sent.

THE NINTH STATION

Jesus falls a third time

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Outside the city wall the place of execution comes in sight. Jesus collapses a third time, but once again is dragged up and forced on. The final cruelty is about to take place, but Jesus will only say, "Father, forgive them."

*He had not done anything wrong,
and there had been no perjury in his mouth.
He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults;
when he was tortured he made no threats
but he put his trust in the righteous judge.
(1 Peter 2:22-3)*

**Lord, there are some people, some situations,
where we can only see hatred and despair.
Help us, as you have commanded,
to love our enemies,
and never give up praying for them.**

Glory be to the Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

O thou mother! Fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord.

THE TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his clothes

℣. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟. **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

His last possessions, his clothes, are taken off him. Rejected and despised, with no dignity left, God gives himself to his people.

And so it is written:

*God's grace has been revealed,
and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race,
and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything
that does not lead to God, and all our human ambitions ...
He sacrificed himself for us, in order to set us free ...
and to purify a people
so that it could be his very own
and would have no ambition except to do good.
(Titus 2:11-14 passim)*

**Lord, may we recognise how easily we cling to our possessions
and forget the really important things of life.
Teach us to let go of our desire for things,
and to do your will by serving others.**

Our Father.

℣. Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟. **Have mercy on us.**

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt,
with the love of Christ my Lord.

THE ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

℣. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟. **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

No other sacrifice appears, no other victim to replace him. Jesus has always known that it would come to this. But it does not make the pain any less harsh as the nails are hammered in.

St. John writes

*God's love for us was revealed
when God sent his only Son into the world
so that we could have life through him:
this is the love I mean,
not our love for God, but God's love for us
when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.
(1 John 4:9-10)*

**Lord, pain and sin in us, and in others,
seems impossible to overcome.
Give us your forgiveness and love,
and help us to see its power to transform
the cruellest moments in our world.**

Hail Mary.

℣. Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟. **Have mercy on us.**

Holy Mother, pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew,
of my Saviour crucified.

THE TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Three hours of suffering follow, his final offering to humanity, a great cry to God his Father, and then “It is finished”.

We remember how Jesus once said:

*A man can have no greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you...
I call you friends because I have made known to you
everything I have learned from my Father ...
What I command you is to love one another.
(John 15:13, 14, 17)*

**Lord, may we know the power of your saving love
shown for us in your cross.**

**Help us to experience the forgiveness you offer us
however many times we fail you.**

Glory be to the Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

Let me share with thee his pain
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

*Jesus is taken down from the Cross,
and laid in the arms of Mary his Mother*

℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

He is dead. His mother and his friends can only bury him with dignity, and weep that all their hopes seem to have come to nothing.

But:

*Jesus said: Truly, truly I say to you, you will weep and lament,
but the world will rejoice,
you will be sorrowful but your sorrow will turn into joy ...
You will have sorrow now
but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice,
and no one will take your joy from you.
(John 16:20, 22)*

**Lord, we place our trust in you.
May we stand by those who in sadness and death feel lonely and lost.
And show them that you are with them
even in their most desolate moments.**

Our Father.

℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

Let me mingle tears with thee,
mourning him who mourn'd for me,
all the days that I may live.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

- ℣ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
℟ **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

God has entered into death. Jesus lies in the darkness of the closed tomb. The silence of the sabbath will follow. All the activity, all the teaching, all the love is silenced. A day when nothing seems to happen, and yet ...

*If God is for us, who can be against us?
He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all,
will he not give us all things with him?
He not only died for us – he rose from the dead,
and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.
Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ ...
For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince,
nothing that exists, nothing still to come,
not any power or height or depth, or any created thing,
can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8: 31-39 passim)*

**Help us Lord to know and proclaim your living presence.
May we find your life and love in our darkest moments,
and finally when we die,
discover what it means to be one with you –
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –
in an eternal unity.**

Hail Mary.

- ℣ Have mercy on us, O Lord.
℟ **Have mercy on us.**

By the cross with thee to stay,
there with thee to weep and pray,
is all I ask of thee to give.