

Stations of the Cross Lenten Prayer Service

St. Augustine of Canterbury School

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Introduction

We gather together to give glory and praise to God who loves us, even unto death. We have been journeying through these days of Lent, offering our sacrifices to God, uniting them to Christ's perfect sacrifice on the Cross. As we approach the sacred days of the Triduum, we especially focus on Jesus' perfect love for us and His total gift of Himself so that we might truly live in freedom and happiness as God wants.

These Stations of the Cross, thoughtfully and lovingly prepared by the Eighth Grade students, take us through Jesus' last hours. After every couple of Stations we are asked to join in singing a short refrain of a song that reflects the events of those Stations to allow us to participate in a small way in Jesus' Passion.

As we prepare to walk with Jesus on His road to Calvary, let us remember that He willingly did this for all of humanity – for each one of us. Let us remember that this is love in its most perfect form. Let us remember that this is the fulfillment of God's Plan of Salvation.

With this in mind, let us now prayerfully and reverently, pray together these words of Scripture that tell so eloquently of God's Plan of Salvation that set us free.

**Though He was in the form of God
Jesus did not deem equality with God
Something to be grasped at**

**Rather, He emptied Himself
And took the form of a slave,
Being born in the likeness of men.**

**He was known to be of human estate,
And it was thus that He humbled Himself,
Obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!**

**Because of this, God highly exalted Him
And bestowed on Him the name
Above every other name,**

**So that at Jesus' name every knee must bend
In the heavens, on the earth
And under the earth.**

**And every tongue proclaim
To the glory of God the Father:
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!**

(Philippians 2:6-11)

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

You stand there, jeered and ridiculed by Your fellow neighbors.
Pilate sides with You, but the momentum of the crowd sways his decision.
You have done numerous great deeds for all, but You have been betrayed.
Your fate has been decided. You have been condemned to die.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Do we turn our back on others?
Do we side with the majority of a crowd?
When we do these things, it is done to Jesus.
If you feel that if you speak out you will be alone,
remember that Jesus is always with you.
Sometimes, when we turn our back, it affects not only you, but others.
But especially during this Lenten season, we can repent and turn to Jesus.

Amen.

The Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus has now been unjustly condemned to death, and He waits silently for His cross. The soldiers drag the huge and heavy piece of wood over to Him. Without complaining or fighting, Jesus quietly takes the cross. As He hoists it on to His shoulder, His knees buckle momentarily under its crushing weight. Even so, His face barely shows the depth of the pain He is experiencing as the rough, splintery cross makes even more cuts on His skin. All He ever did was love, but now they have handed Him His own death. He sets His face ahead and begins the long and intense journey up the hill while a huge crowd of people and soldiers follow, jeering.

(Pause)

Reflection:

How could any human make You carry such a heavy burden with Your hurt and battered body? How did You keep all the resentment inside You and keep from becoming angry? You had the power to refuse the cross, but You instead willingly take up the cross. How often do I complain when I am given a simple challenge? I get so frustrated when things don't go my way, or are hard for me. Sometimes, I fail to see the dignity of the cross that You carried in love. Help me to be more willing to accept my own personal cross, and not attempt to shrug off my responsibilities to You, my family, myself and others. Help me to see that carrying a cross is not something to be ashamed of, but rather a blessing in disguise as Yours was. Help me to be more forbearing.

Amen.

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus is exhausted under the weight of the Cross. His body physically can't hold it up much longer. His knees buckle and hit the rocky ground. New wounds open and pain jolts up His legs and to His shoulders and back. Jesus is whipped, beaten, blood flowing from His skin. The Roman soldiers are yelling at Him to keep going, but His body refuses. I can't imagine the torture that Jesus had to go through. He doesn't have much energy left, but He looks up to His Heavenly Father for strength and courage to keep moving forward. Jesus knows it is God's plan for Him to die, in order to save us, so He pulls Himself to His feet to get to His destination.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Jesus may be physically dragging along a wooden cross. But really, He is carrying the weight of my sins. If I were there, would I be in the crowd mocking Him? Laughing and jeering? Or would I step out and reach to assist Jesus in standing up again? Sometimes, other people are in Jesus' position, on the ground, in pain. Being like the crowd and the Roman soldiers isn't what Jesus would want me to do; it's not something I'd be proud of. I should be the person to reach out and offer a helping hand. Sometimes, I feel as though I'm under the same pressure and pain that Jesus felt carrying that cross; to give up, to fall down. And I might. But showing real strength is looking up to Jesus and getting back on my feet. He knows every second of mortal pain that I feel. I know that I can always ask Jesus for courage to get back up again.

Amen.

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother Mary

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

After Jesus fell for the first time, He finally regained the strength to get up and keep going – not only for His dignity, but for our sins. As Jesus continues dragging along His broken body, He looks for a friendly face in the crowd. Through His sweat and blood, He sees the broken face of His mother, Mary, in the crowd. Mary rushes over to her Son, to provide comforting words and motherly love. Mary reminds Jesus of His Salvation. She reminds Jesus of what He is suffering and dying for. As she gives Jesus the confidence to keep going, Mary realizes this will probably be the last time she will talk to her Son before He dies.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Sometimes, we feel as if we are carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders. We never know what's going to happen, and which actions will bring which effect. Jesus knew exactly what He was doing, and He knew exactly the outcome of His actions. When we were younger, it seemed like our mother would always be there for us when we fall – just like Mary was there for Jesus. We can always rely on our mothers to be there for us – in sickness and in health. One day we will need to learn to live without our moms, but for now, we have our mom to lean on.

Amen.

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

In this station, Jesus just recovered from His first fall. The Roman soldiers want His crucifixion to be done with, so they pull a man from the crowd to help Jesus. The man's name was Simon the Cyrenian. They tell Simon to help Jesus carry His cross. With the help of Simon, Jesus treads on to Golgotha, the "Place of the Skull".

(Pause)

Reflection:

In this station, Simon may have been confused. Did he know he was helping the Son of Man? Did he know he would be part of the Messiah's Passion? Sometimes we have to help others carry their "cross" when they are in need. We still need to do this even if it is to our inconvenience. Remembering this should lead me to reach out to other people in need.

Amen.

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

After being beaten and bruised, a brave, beautiful woman rushes out of the crowd to wipe Your blood and sweat stained face. Even though she can't protect You from Your Crucifixion, or tell the soldiers to stop, she does the little she can to show her love for You. After she tries to wipe Your face, the guards immediately push her back into the crowd. She feels Your pain, and she wishes she could do more for You. You can see how much she loves You, Jesus. She could have been persecuted for the small action she took to show her Passion for You. You appreciate her action, no matter how small it was, and reward her with a treasure, the Image of your face on her veil.

(Pause)

Reflection:

As children, teenagers, and even adults, we sometimes see people getting hurt or abused. We wish we could help the boy sitting by himself at recess. We wish we could help the girl we see being bullied on social media. We wish we could save that woman from the small amount of money she is being given for the amount of work she does. Sometimes, we just have thoughts about how we wish we could help somebody, but thoughts eventually go away. Actions and words are remembered. Comment something nice on somebody's post. Go play with the girl who is alone at recess. Give encouraging words, or even just a smile, to the woman being unfairly paid. Even though it might seem like nothing to you, it may change their day. It can even change their lives. Jesus, give us the love and courage to take actions – no matter how big or how small – just like Veronica did for You in Your time of need.

Amen.

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus falls for the second time. On the road to Calvary Hill, Jesus falls yet another time beneath the immense weight of our human sins on His back. The soldiers beat Him while He is on the ground telling Jesus to “Get up!” The people who follow Him can do nothing but watch as their Lord falls before them. His muscles can barely endure any more torture, yet He keeps going.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Jesus, You have nothing but mercy, love, and forgiveness for us, yet we condemn You to death and torture You. Jesus, You have the power to make all of this stop. You can end the pain of the whipping of the soldiers, the heavy cross, and the disrespect of the crowds, yet You do not. You go through an immense amount of pain out of nothing but love for us, the sinners. It is not the heavy wooden cross or the painful whips that the soldiers strike You with that made You fall twice, but the immense amount of sins that we commit against You. Jesus, please give us Your strength so that we may resist temptation and the darkness of sin.

Amen.

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, You are tired, bleeding and weak. People in the crowds yell and spit at You, making the pain worse. You are trembling at the pain of the cross, crushing You with the weight of sin. In the crowd You finally see people who don't want You to go through pain. Many women cry and mourn for You, wishing Your suffering would end. You stand up tall to ease the crying women, even though You are holding the cross filled with every sin ever made and to be made.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Throughout my life I have sinned over and over again, adding more weight to Your cross. I truly believe I have followed You and cried for You, but I have only been another one of the angry people spitting and screaming at You. Lord, help me be one of the people who mourn for You instead of shout at You. Assist me in spreading Your word and helping others in need rather than ignoring their call for help. Lord, help me to get up in my worst pain and come to the aid of another. Help me overcome sin like You have at Calvary. Show me how to pick up my cross like You and reject all sin and temptation. We try to give back to You, but we can never give back enough like You have through Your crucifixion. You have saved us all.

Amen.

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls The Third Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Shots of pain rush through Jesus' body. Every part aches severely. He struggles to carry His cross. Jesus can't stand it any longer, so He falls for the third time. Slowly, using all His will and what little strength remains, He gets back up, even though Jesus knows what is coming! The crowds rudely yell insults at Him. Even with all the discouragement, He uses all of His strength to carry our huge burden. He is ready to sacrifice His life, because of His great love for us.

(Pause)

Reflection:

I fail time and time again. Often, I find it hard to get along with others. Sometimes I'm not honest, sometimes I'm lazy. In difficult situations I feel like giving up because it is just too hard for me. Give me the strength to get back up when I have fallen and I have no hope. Grant me the determination to do things that are difficult. Help me to be courageous, face my fears, and never feel discouraged, knowing that Jesus is by my side through it all.

Amen.

The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Garments

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, You had previously been stripped of Your dignity, respect, and human rights. Now, You have been stripped of Your last earthly possession, Your clothes. Exposed for all to see, the mockery continues. Though the cross has finally been lifted, You know that the pain and suffering is not over yet.

(Pause)

Reflection:

As Jesus walked to His death He must have thought about turning away. There must have been a second when He considered giving in, to save Himself. Instead, He kept walking, humiliated, aching, exasperated and tormented. Even when He was stripped of His clothes and shoved around like an animal, Jesus still kept walking towards His fate, never turning on us.

How many times have we stripped people of their rights by using our words to humiliate others? How many times have we turned on others when we knew how badly they needed our help? Jesus, forgive us when we mistreat others by stripping them of their rights and turning on them when they need us the most. Help us to recognize when we treat others unjustly and rudely. Guide us to become better people that spread positivity throughout the world by protecting and helping others.

Amen.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Now You are almost there. You have finished Your long and dreadfully painful walk and You have made it to where You will be crucified. As You lay down Your cross, a slight sense of relief comes over You. You are no longer carrying the cross and every sin that has been made from every generation and time period is now off Your shoulders and back. However, Your sense of relief fades away knowing that the worst pain is yet to come. O Jesus, how betrayed You must feel at this moment. As You lay down on the cross to be crucified You look out and see all of the bystanders in the crowd watching You. They are the same faces You saw a week ago who were once welcoming You into their land, flooding You with praise and cheer. They are all here again, however, now they are mocking You, torturing You, beating You, spitting on You, and worst of all – driving nails into You and putting You to death. Even after all of this hurting and suffering, You still love all of them deeply. You don't defend Yourself from anything they say or do even after all of this. You will still die for them to save them from their sins.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Jesus, even after Your torment, suffering, and eventual death, You still forgave anyone involved in Your crucifixion and anyone who stood by and did nothing to help You. You still loved each of us and died for us so that we may be free and live. In life there will be times where we will be hurt, even if we don't deserve it. Help us to peacefully handle those situations as Jesus did and forgive as He does to us. Let us be able to forgive one another so that we may get away from more conflict and learn to be friends with everyone around us.

Amen.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies On The Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus' numb, bloody body hung limply on the cross like a rag doll. Time seemed to slow and grief lingered in the air. Hours have passed and at last, Jesus cries out, "My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Some of those standing there rushed to give Him a sponge soaked in wine vinegar. Then finally, Jesus bows His head and says, "It is finished," and His breath was no more. Into His Father's hands He commends His spirit.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Just as Jesus sacrificed His life for us, we too can give up certain things for Jesus. Think of all the times we struck Him down like the Roman soldiers, hurting others with our words. He saved us, and we show Him our gratitude by judging others. Lord, have mercy on us, for we are sinners. Help us remember that no matter what, You love us, even when we turn our back to You. You know what it is like to feel abandoned. Guide us when we feel lonely, when we have abandoned our hope. Help us know and trust You.

Amen.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, how brutally You were killed. A sword pierced Your side, causing blood and water to pour out of Your wound. Yet, You were lowered so gently. As You lay in Mary's arms she slowly began to wipe the blood and dirt off of Your face. The crowd had dispersed and only Your Mother, Mary Magdalene, and Your disciple John remain. As Mary quietly mourns Your death, Joseph of Arimethea approaches, giving up His grave for You. They take away Your body to be lain in the tomb.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Lord, Your lifeless body was taken down from the cross. You couldn't see those faithful to You weeping over Your death. You knew death awaited You and of the terrible pain it would cause for those around You. Even knowing so, You allowed death to befall You and take You away from the ones You love. You died to save us. You died because of Your love for us.

Help me to live in Your likeness and image. Help me to find the good in all people like You did. Help me live this day as if there is no tomorrow. Help me to become a gentler and more loving person by showing kindness to those who hurt me as You did to the soldiers who crucified You.

Amen.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, You have done something that we must always keep deep in our hearts. You died for us. Your body is prepared for Your burial. Joseph gave You his tomb. He laid Your body gently and reverently in the tomb. Your Mother is there weeping by Your tomb, knowing that it is not over, but she cannot stop crying as any mother would not be able to witness her own son's death. But the deed is finished. The world hungers for Your Resurrection so we can join You and our Holy Father. What a sad day for so many people, but it will all be worth it. You shall rest in Your grave until it is time.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Sometimes we like to keep things for ourselves. Sometimes we do things that do not benefit anyone but ourselves. I sometimes try to make sure that I have what I need before what others need. God, help me use Joseph's guide of compassion, who risked His own life by setting Jesus' body for burial in the tomb he thought would be his own. Jesus did the most selfless deed ever. Jesus died for our sins so that we can have eternal happiness. Jesus did not need to die for Himself, as He was God. Instantly He could have revealed and saved Himself, but Jesus knew His mission and He knew that He had to go through with it. Sometimes we are in need, but others don't care about anyone but themselves. God, please guide all of us to realize that people are in need. Help us realize that not everyone is perfectly fine. As humans, all of us are in need in some way, at some point in our lives. Help us all realize that and guide us to help others as Joseph and Jesus did.

Amen.

Meditating upon the five wounds of Christ we pray for God to heal us from what wounds our souls and to protect us from what pulls us away from His saving grace.

For the wound in Jesus' right hand.

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the wound in Jesus' left hand.

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the wound in Jesus' right foot.

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the wound in Jesus' left foot.

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the wound in Jesus' side.

Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

For the Catholic Church, established by Jesus to continue His work of salvation, we offer these prayers that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, will guide it in the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Glory Be, ...

The Fifteenth Station: The Resurrection of Jesus

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, our Savior, has died on the cross and is now placed in a tomb. But, this is not the end. Three days after Jesus had died, three women walk to His tomb bearing spices. They are Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleopas, and Mary Salome. But as they approach their sorrow is turned into confusion. The large, heavy stone blocking the entry to the tomb has been rolled back. The three women are troubled, wondering who could have moved the stone, when a man in a white garment appears. He comforts them telling them that Jesus is risen. It seems impossible, but the women rush back into town declaring the good news to the Apostles.

(Pause)

Reflection:

Jesus can teach us that death is never the end. He will stand beside us and guide us through the struggles we have or will endure. He gives us the strength we need and courage to believe in ourselves. As we come to know God the Father, Jesus His Son, and God the Holy Spirit, who reign forever in heaven, we remember the Death of Christ was never the end.

Amen.