



Scriptural Stations of the Cross

*St. Catherine Catholic Church
Orange Park, Florida*

THE FIRST STATION: THE CONDEMNATION

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

Pilate said to the crowds, “Then what should I do with Jesus called Messiah?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” When Pilate saw that a riot was breaking out, he washed his hands and after he had Jesus scourged, he ordered him to be crucified. (Matt. 27:22-24)

Consider how Jesus Christ, after being scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross. Jesus faced those who judged and condemned him, but he did not hate. How many times have we acted from prejudice and judged others? Jesus struggled with fear, but continued his mission. He cherished his humanity and divinity. Do we accept who and what we are in our relationship with God? Do we accept our responsibility to grow?

All:

Loving Jesus, it was not Pilate, but it was for my sins that you were condemned to die. Grant that I may always recognize what you have done for me and that I may love you always and follow your will.

THE SECOND STATION: THE CROSS

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. (Matt. 27:27-31)

Consider Jesus as he walked this road with the cross on his shoulders, thinking of us, and offering to his father in our behalf, the death he was about to suffer. He accepted his cross willingly. We value power, but Jesus chose to become powerless. How often do we carry our crosses willingly? How often do we choose to give up our control and follow God's will?

All:

Jesus, through your Holy Spirit, help us so that we may carry our daily crosses without complaining or losing heart. When we feel ready to give up, teach us to turn to you for encouragement and understanding. Teach me to surrender myself, to be generous with my time, talents, and treasures.

THE THIRD STATION: THE FIRST FALL

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

Carrying the cross himself, Jesus went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17)

Jesus prayed saying, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

Consider the first fall of Jesus. Loss of blood from the scourging and crowning with thorns had so weakened him that he could hardly walk; and yet He had to carry that great load upon his shoulders. As the soldiers struck him cruelly, he fell several times under the heavy cross. Exhausted and suffering, he shouldered his cross, while we sometimes try to give our crosses to others. He continued to struggle forward, while we too often invent excuses to give up.

All:

Lord, teach us to stand back up when we fall, when we get off the right track, when we fail to follow your footsteps. When we land in the dust, guide us back to you. Show us how to forgive ourselves and to cling to our faith and hope in you.

THE FOURTH STATION: MARY

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there 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 took her into his home. (John 19:26-27)

Consider how Jesus met his mother on the way to Calvary. Two people who could not love each other more than they did suffering together. Think about how Mary felt when she looked at Jesus dying. Jesus could not shield his mother, whom he loved, from the pain that he was experiencing. He experienced his mother's pain as she looked at him suffering. He understood that there is no greater suffering than the pain of a parent losing a child. How often do we take our loved ones for granted? How often do we not realize that the people who love us share in our pain and suffering? How often are we not as thankful for our family as we should be?

All:

Lord Jesus, teach me to be thankful for my family and friends and for the opportunity to share in their lives. Teach me to be considerate and loving, as you and your mother were toward each other. Instill in me the strength to share my feelings with others and to be able to listen to others' feelings with compassion.

THE FIFTH STATION: SIMON

Deacon/Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

They pressed into service a passerby, Simon, a Cyrenain, who was coming in from the country to carry his cross. (Mark 15:21)

Consider how weak and weary Jesus was. At each step, he was at the point of death. Fearing that he would die on the way when they wished him to die the infamous death of the cross, they forced Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross of our Lord. Jesus shared his burden with Simon, showing that we all need help at times. When Simon accepted the cross, he gave us an example of how we should help others with their crosses. How often do we help others who are suffering and in need? Are we like Simon who helped Jesus, or do we turn away from those when they need us most?

All:

Dear Jesus, I will accept and embrace your cross and the crosses of others to do your will. Inspire me, Lord, to come forward, to step out of the crowd, and to acknowledge you. Often I am asked to help others, but I turn away. Sometimes I am offered help, but I choose not to accept it and share my burden. Help me to appreciate that all who touch my life are members of your one Body.

THE SIXTH STATION: VERONICA

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

A woman suffering from excessive bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the tassel on his cloak. She said to herself, "If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured." Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage daughter! Your faith has saved you." And from that hour the woman was cured. (Matt. 9:20-22)

Consider the compassion of the holy woman Veronica. A legend says that a woman came forward from the jeering crowds to wipe the sweat, dirt, blood, and tears from Jesus' face. In gratitude, Jesus made the image of his face appear on the veil she used. Veronica had great courage to defy the soldiers and offer Jesus comfort. Do we understand that what we do for others, we do for Jesus? Do we act with courage, despite fear and loss? Do we reward others who show courage and love for us like the way Jesus responded to Veronica?

All:

Jesus, at times my faith is weak, and I am reluctant to manifest you before others. Help me to act in spite of fear and embarrassment. Give me the grace to be proud of being a Christian. Teach me to bring your face to others.

THE SEVENTH STATION: THE SECOND FALL

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

If God is for us, who can be against us? God who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who has loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

Consider how the second fall of Jesus under the cross renews the pain in all the wounds on his head and body. Jesus' body gives out once more climbing the hill to Calvary with the heavy cross. He showed us that it is alright to fail sometimes. He showed us how to accept our limitations and the limitations of others. He showed us that he shares in our struggles. How often do we fail in realizing we have limitations? Do we ever take on too much? Do we ridicule others who give up?

All:

Loving Jesus, teach me to be honest with myself and to focus on my own goals instead of telling others what to do. Help me to stretch out my hand to those who fail and help them as we journey together in faith, hope, and love.

THE EIGHTH STATION: THE WOMEN

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:27-28)

Consider how the women wept with compassion seeing Jesus so distressed and dripping with blood as he walked along. It is the women, the ones who had little status or power in that society, that were deeply saddened by his suffering. Jesus embraced these people. He embraced the powerless and healed the brokenhearted. How often have we rejected and not listened to those who do not have power? Have we manipulated those who are suffering? Do we recognize the special gifts of all human beings?

All:

Loving God, teach me to focus on equality and to act justly. Never let me discriminate against people because they are different from me. Help me to appreciate all who touch my life. Help me to become aware of those who are suffering oppression and brokenness.

THE NINTH STATION: THE THIRD FALL

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

I am overwhelmed by a burden beyond my strength. I am stooped and deeply bowed; all day I go about mourning. My heart shudders, my strength forsakes me; the very light of my eyes has failed. Friends and companions shun my pain; my neighbors stand far off. Those who seek my life lay snares for me; they seek my misfortune, they speak of ruin; they plot treachery all the day. I am very near to falling; my pain is with me always. Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my salvation. (Psalm 38)

Consider how Jesus Christ fell for the third time. He is extremely weak and the cruelty shown to him has been excessive. Those who are executing him are trying to hasten his steps though he hardly has strength to move. Jesus is overpowered once more by his burden and his body crumples. Yet with the last ounce of his strength, he pulls himself up. Do we use our courage to get up again and again when we fall? How many times have we blamed God for sending tragedy into our lives?

All:

Jesus, in your weakness, you showed me strength. Teach me that it does not matter how often I fall in my journey. What counts is that I get up and start again. Help me to trust in you and to strive to become the person I was meant to be.

THE TENTH STATION: THE STRIPPING

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled that says: "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture, they cast lots." (John 19:23-24)

Consider how Jesus was violently stripped of his clothes by his executioners. The inner garments adhered to him and the soldiers tore them off so roughly that the skin was torn with them. His whole body was a mess of blood and sores. They taunt and tease him, but he still wishes to save them from sin and death. He gave himself completely without reservation. When have we given of ourselves as Jesus did? Do we ever allow ourselves to become vulnerable, open, and willing to love in order to help others? Do we forgive those who taunt and tease us?

All:

Loving Christ, teach me to be more open and honest in my relationships. Help me to understand that real humility comes from self-esteem and an appreciation of other people. Show me how to become more vulnerable because only then will I be able to truly love. Teach me not to lash at or seek to get even with those who hurt me. Give me the courage and the wisdom to forgive again and again.

THE ELEVENTH STATION: THE NAILING

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

There they crucified him, and with him, two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus the Nazarean, the King of the Jews." (John 19:18-19)

Consider Jesus, thrown down upon the cross, He stretched out his arms and offered to his eternal Father the sacrifice of his life for our salvation. They nailed his hands and feet, and then, raising the cross, left him to die in anguish. He showed us that he will suffer for our sakes. He endured the agony for us out of love. How often do we hesitate to show love if it demands effort? How often do we stretch out our hands for others?

All:

Jesus, help me not to crucify others by my words or deeds. Teach me to let go of negative behavior and transform me. Teach me to act and react positively, to build up the Body of Christ, rather than tearing it apart.

THE TWELVTH STATION: THE CRUCIFIXION

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

It was now about noon, and darkness had come over the entire land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn into two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46)

Consider how Jesus, after three hours of agony on the cross, is finally overcome with suffering and gives up his spirit. He bows his head and dies. Jesus showed us how to give life and love through ultimate sacrifice. He gave his life for us so that we might have life. Do we love others like Jesus did? Do we give of ourselves to other people when they are in need?

All:

Loving Christ, you gave everything to me, and I withhold so much. Show me how to live more fully the demands of love so that I might become a true disciple. Help me to understand that by your death you show me how to die and rise each day.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION: THE DESCENT

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

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

Priest:

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate permitted it. So Joseph came and took his body. Nicodemus also came. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. (John 20:38-42)

Consider how, after Our Lord had died, He was taken down from the cross by two of His disciples and placed in the arms of his mother. They acted courageously and did not run away from you. When have we acted with courage and integrity? Do we stand up for our convictions? Do we find meaning in struggle, pain, and loss? Where is our faith in times of crisis?

All:

Loving Jesus, often I am weak in my faith as I see suffering and death in the world. Teach me that loss and grief can lead to redemption and growth. Help me to transcend the darkness and show me how to bring the light of peace and love to the world.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION: THE BURIAL

Priest:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Priest:

Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there facing the tomb.

(Matt. 27:59-61)

Consider how the disciples carried the body of Jesus to its burial, while Mary went with them and arranged it in the sepulcher with her own hands. They cared for Jesus' body. How do we treat our bodies and the bodies of others? Do we respect the gift of our bodies that God has given to us?

All:

Lord, those who loved you cared for you, even after death. Teach us to remember that death cannot destroy true love, faith, or hope. Help us to remember the sanctity of life and care for the gifts we have been given.