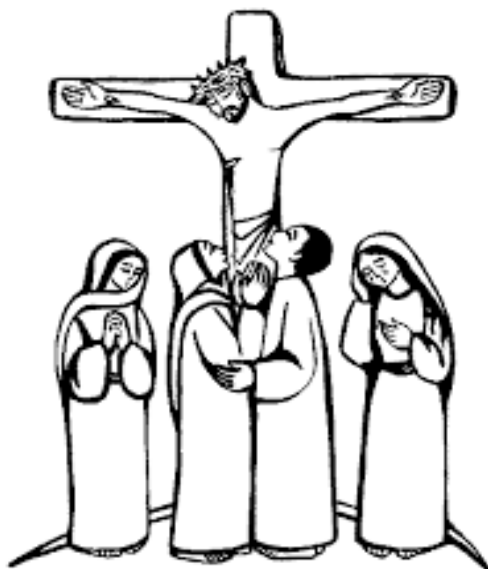


# GOOD FRIDAY 2020 STATIONS OF THE CROSS



We pray that you have a prayerful and wonderful time of spiritual enrichment.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

*“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24).*

For twenty centuries  
the Church has gathered  
to remember and to re-live  
the events of the final stage  
of the earthly journey of the Son of God.

Once again this year,  
the Church meets at in many places in the world from their homes,  
to follow the footsteps of Jesus,  
who “went out, carrying his cross,  
to the place called the place of the skull,  
which is called in Hebrew Golgotha” (Jn 19:17).

We are here  
because we are convinced that the *Way of the Cross* of the Son of God  
was not simply a journey  
to the place of execution.

We believe that every step of the Condemned Christ,  
every action and every word,  
as well as everything felt and done  
by those who took part in this tragic drama,  
continues to speak to us.

In his suffering and death too,  
Christ reveals to us the truth about God and man.  
(Adapted from meditations of Pope John Paul II)

**First Station**  
**Jesus is condemned to death**

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

When the chief priests and other Jewish leaders made their many accusations against him, Jesus remained silent.

“Don’t you hear what they are saying?” Pilate demanded. But Jesus said nothing.  
Silent.

You were silent.  
Why didn’t you speak up then?  
After all, you had enough to say  
in synagogues  
up mountains  
in the desert,  
by the lakeside –  
oh, and clearing the temple.  
Listen to your voice bouncing off the walls.  
I know your hands are bound,  
but why your tongue?  
God knows you’d have made a great lawyer,  
with your eloquence,  
your gift for dramatization.  
But there you stand,  
infuriatingly,  
frustratingly,  
heartbreakingly,  
silent.

Maybe the sound of those other voices  
clamouring for vengeance  
called you to say nothing.

For bigotry shouts but never listens.  
And any of us who has been oppressed  
knows the feeling of not being heard.

Perhaps that’s why,  
in the face of prejudice,  
dole queues,  
prisoners,  
refugees,  
abused children,  
the starving,  
most women  
and a beat-up, tied up Christ  
are largely  
silent.  
So,  
silence

is not always compromise  
Teach us to know when words are superfluous,  
a sheer waste of time.  
And help us to hold in our hearts  
the dignity,  
the courage,  
the creative energy,  
the wisdom,  
of the silence falling across the world  
at the first station of the cross.

## **Second Station** **Jesus takes up his Cross**

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

Pilate gave Jesus to them to be crucified, and he was taken out of the city carrying his cross to the place known as Golgotha.  
I can't help remembering  
that you were a carpenter,  
and that you have lived by wood and nails.  
now you were to die by them.  
I live  
where words, like nails, fly about.  
"You cannot avoid"  
so they say.  
Well, this was your cross,  
soon to have your name on it,  
hammered as firmly as your hands and feet.  
you stooped and took it up willingly,  
that familiar piece of wood,  
and swinging it on to your carpenter's back  
you began to climb that hill.

In Nazareth  
perhaps you had made doors,  
yokes for oxen,  
farmers' ploughs,  
bowls, beams, pegs,  
legendary little toys  
that flew out of just such a piece of wood.  
But nothing you made then  
could equal what you have fashioned  
out of wood and nails on Golgotha,  
our artisan, our working man,  
our brother, our carpenter,  
our Christ.

## **Third Station**

## Jesus falls for the first time

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

On the road to Calvary, sometimes called the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows, tradition tells us that Jesus fell three times.  
Eat dirt.  
We all like to see the mighty fallen.  
Here's God in the dust....  
Except...  
crumpled and tumbled beneath the cross  
he resembles nothing so much as  
a child.  
Grown-ups don't fall down, do they?  
Well, not often.  
Not unless they're  
drunk, crippled, down and out,  
mugged, starved,  
frail, raped, stoned,  
or plain suicidal.  
He's there in all those of course.  
Dear Jesus of the gutters,  
Friend to all humankind,  
I cannot forget it was Roman feet you saw,  
ready to kick you onwards....  
Just as later,  
your sisters and brothers  
would see....  
So it is hard to watch you squirm,  
debased, degraded, filthy,  
beneath your cross.  
But where and how else could we understand  
Your solidarity with the dispossessed?

## Fourth Station Jesus meets his mother

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

One of the most poignant features of the story of Calvary is the presence of Mary the mother of Jesus, following her son to the very end.

Did he ever say,  
"Oh mother, don't fuss!"?  
I have two sons,  
one of them into music  
the other an idealist,  
into universal sister and brotherhood,  
like this young man.

When one of them goes for burnout,  
and the other sleeps under bridges,  
I'd rather not know until afterwards,  
thank you.

I lose my breath looking at this mother,  
walking in blue  
to meet her son in crimson.  
Mary of the Magnificat,  
strong, political,  
autonomous, independent  
woman:  
I'm glad that later,  
at the dying,  
you were still there  
still there....  
so that all the world,  
all the world  
could hear your son saying,  
She  
is your mother.

### **Fifth Station**

#### **Simon helps to carry the cross**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

***Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

“They led Jesus away to crucify him, and they enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross.”

This will sound like poetic licence,  
but it's happened.

The boy – sixteen-ish – greeted me at the church door.

His limbs flailed and his head jerked;  
on his face he wore the beatific smile  
of someone sure of being loved.

“Hallo!” he said,

as if I were a familiar friend

instead of a stranger in the parish.

“Multiply handicapped”

I noted professionally,

but unprofessionally smiled and chatted.

It's hard to resist innocent love  
in the roads.

Later in the church, empty but for me,  
he came in noisily joyful with his father,  
who showed him, helped him, painstakingly,  
to light a candle.

They passed,

brushed by me

as I meditated on the fifth station of the cross,

The boy, smiling yet, said,

“Still here?  
Don’t get tired, now; don’t get tired.”  
His father, grey haired, ashen – faced,  
met my eyes solemnly, with a kind of gratitude,  
and followed the boy, three paces behind,  
with a terrible weariness,  
out of the church into the world.

**Sixth Station**  
**Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

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

Tradition has it that as Jesus climbed towards Golgotha, he was met by a women named Veronica, who broke through the crowd to wipe his ravaged face with a linen cloth. Forever after, it is said, the face of Jesus remained imprinted on her square of linen.

Who was she then, this Veronica?  
People get uptight about her,  
cynical, superior, or plain sentimental.  
But they would, wouldn’t they?  
Standard feelings for a women doing a dirty job:  
I love her.  
God knows,  
in his time Jesus had wiped away  
tears, sweat, blood, and mucus enough.  
Running along the Via Dolorosa  
she saw it was his turn now.  
Breaking through the embarrassment, the hostility,  
the convention, the violence,  
she held up everything in the universe  
for one small moment,  
and wiped the face of God.  
It left an impression  
It left an impression lasting a lifetime.  
This is what he looks like, she would say,  
holding up her precious cloth.  
Only if we reach out and touch  
the tears, sweat, blood, and mucus of the fallen Jesus  
on a twisting, latter – day Via Dolorosa,  
only then can we say with Veronica,  
This, this is what he looks like.

**Seventh Station**  
**Jesus falls for the second time**

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

On the Via Dolorosa Jesus falls for the second time.  
So much for Veronica wiping his face,  
so much for Simon of Cyrene giving him a hand,  
so much for his mother's courage.  
Not enough.  
We've all been there,  
at one time or another.  
Aspirin for migraine,  
patience Strong at funerals,  
pethidine in childbirth,  
tranquillizers in the locked ward,  
redundancy pay.  
"Come back tomorrow,"  
morphine in the bone.  
Not enough.  
Two agonies then.  
His,  
grit between the teeth,  
ground down into the muck again.  
Theirs  
watching,  
knowing nothing,  
nothing is enough.  
Sometimes –  
God knows –  
that is what it is to be human.

### **Eighth Station**

#### **Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

***Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

"Large numbers of women followed him, who mourned and lamented. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me but for yourselves.'"

You have been so silent,

And now you speak – to women.

Women who are crying over a man.

I'm tempted to say, What's new?

This particular man, that's what.

This particular man who in one short lifetime  
carved out a tradition of taking women seriously,  
listening to them, learning from them, emulating them.

Who taught his to wash feet if not Mary his mother?

And a passionate, flame filled Magdalene?

On the Via Dolorosa he stops,

expends energy he needs for dying on women in tears.

Don't cry for me, but for yourselves.

Sometimes, sisters,

when you look at his concern, respect, empathy,

friendship, time, deep love, tenderness,  
calling for women,  
and you realize  
what the patriarchs of the churches ask of us –  
tea, flowers and brass polishing –  
sometimes, in all honesty,  
it is enough to make you weep.

**Ninth Station**  
**Jesus falls for the third time**

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

For the third time Jesus falls beneath the weight of the cross.  
We would have interviewed you about this.  
Our cameras would have zoomed in  
on the terrible detail of your exhaustion.  
Some bright reporter would have asked,  
But what does it feel like to keep falling?  
Safe in our places...  
From somewhere within the kaleidoscope of  
red blood  
black road  
blinding agony,  
you found a place for your feet,  
a new position for the cross on your back,  
and an old familiar wilderness strength  
to get up  
and keep on climbing.

Follow me,  
you said,  
along the lonely road.

**Tenth Station**  
**Jesus is stripped of his clothes**

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

Before Jesus was crucified he was stripped of his clothes.  
“And the soldiers gambled for his clothing, throwing dice for each piece.”  
Women in childbirth,  
the terminally ill,  
little children



the naked are vulnerable.  
Still,  
I do not think you were ashamed  
of your nakedness.  
Only in the jaundiced eyes of  
the scribes, the lawyers,  
the Pharisees, the fickle crowd,  
and the latter day Festival of Lighters,  
were you rendered objectionable.  
As those hardened soldiers  
tore off your clothes  
for just another execution,  
perhaps you remembered Mary,  
the sunlight of childhood  
etching your prophets feet,  
sawdust between your toes,  
while she, laughing gently,  
peeled off your tunic for bath time.  
No shame there either,  
just the last occasion  
someone helped you undress.  
That's all.  
For the last battle on our behalf,  
stripped of everything that might hinder,  
you prepare to fight, our splendid, naked warrior,  
CHRIST

### **Eleventh Station**

#### **Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

***Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

“They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, and there they crucified him.”

Someone, somewhere,  
thought it up, this method of execution.

Was it one man? Or the chairman?

The chairman of some efficient Roman Board?

Oak or ash, sycamore or pine,

beech or elm or lime,

what wood was it, his cross?

Those naturalist's eyes

would have remembered the leaves,

those carpenter's hands felt

the warp and woof of the bark.

He knew the tree –

and the seed from which it grew.

Maybe the very worst thing

at this screaming moment

was not the shuddering physical agony,  
but the chilling winter knowledge  
that somewhere, at some time,  
one of his brothers,  
running amok down the dark corridors of imagination  
with brilliant, twisted ingenuity,  
had thought up this idea of slaughter,  
leaving him pinned like a broken butterfly  
to a piece of wood, which once,  
wind sighing through the filigree of its branches,  
had been a living tree.

**Twelfth Station**  
**Jesus dies on the Cross**

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

“Jesus cried with a loud voice, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ “

Three hours of darkness,  
and oh, I recognize it,  
dwelling deeply, dwelling deeply, in me.  
I say, along with millions,  
I am his follower.

But sometimes I’d rather kill the Christ  
dwelling deeply, dwelling deeply, within me.  
Love that wills to this length,  
and breadth, and height, and depth  
of twisted agony,  
still forgiving,  
is what I claim to follow.  
So don’t blame me  
if sometimes I’d rather be Barabbas.

Thank God  
eyes can become accustomed to the darkness  
and catch glimpses of colour.  
Blue of his mother’s robe,  
John, like a slim white sword,  
scarlet Magdalene  
clinging on to her adoration:  
three at the foot of his Cross,  
colours in the darkness.  
Colours in the darkness saying,  
Stand,  
at least try and stand  
for solidarity with such reckless love...

**Thirteenth Station**  
**Jesus is handed to his mother**

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

Joseph of Arimathea, an honoured member of the Jewish supreme court, gathered his courage  
and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea begged for his body.

I think he was caught up  
in the 'if only' of bereavement.

If only I had spoken this word,  
performed that act of kindness,  
listened more seriously to those words,  
whistled up more courage while he lived,  
walked that extra mile.

Joseph of Arimathea had been a most discreet disciple,  
saying not No or Yes to Jesus, but Maybe.

And now he turns up trumps:  
after all, someone has to be practical in violent death.

Someone has to climb the ladder of that cross,  
and prise Christ down for us.

Anyway, she needed to hold him, his mother.

She had said Yes in spring time,  
and given birth to God.

She had said Yes in high summer,  
and let him go about his Father's business.

She had said Yes in autumnal festive Cana  
and given birth to joyous sparkling miracles.

Now, as she cradles that gallant head again,  
gathers up those limbs

that brought swift peace on the mountains,  
now, as Joseph of Arimathea

hands her this Body, this Blood,

I think, just once,  
with all of us who have knelt ice cold

before our beloved dead,

she says, Oh, dear God, oh, dear God,

No.

#### **Fourteenth Station Jesus is laid in the Tomb**

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.*

***Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

Joseph brought a long sheet of linen cloth and, taking Jesus's body down from the cross, wound  
it in the cloth, and laid it in a rock hewn tomb.

Creation takes him to her heart  
and wraps rock-green darkness  
around his tortured limbs.

The hidden walls  
sweat with anticipation,  
while little animals

that live beneath the earth  
wait.  
Animals had watched  
his lonely cattle-shed birth.  
now they keep vigil at his wake,  
knowing,  
with the rocks and ferns,  
with underground streams,  
with lichens and tree roots,  
knowing,  
these animals,  
more than  
Peter, James, and John,  
knowing  
waiting,  
these little listening animals,  
for the first tremors  
heralding the earthquake  
of his resurrection....

### **Concluding Prayer**

Let us pray: (*Silence*)

O God, who for the redemption of the world  
was pleased to be born; to be circumcised;  
to be rejected; to be betrayed; to be bound  
with rope; to be led to the slaughter; to be  
shamefully gazed at; to be falsely accused;  
to be scourged and torn; to be spit upon and  
crowned with thorns; to be mocked and  
reviled; to be beaten and stripped; to be  
nailed to the Cross and to die a shameful  
death; to be reckoned among thieves and to  
be pierced with a spear: Through your most  
holy Passion, which we, your sinful  
servants, call to mind, and by your holy  
Cross and gracious death, deliver us from  
the bondage of sin and the desolation of hell  
and lead us to where you have gone before  
us that we might be with you, who with the  
Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns,  
one God in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

*(The concluding prayer was adapted from John Henry Newman.)*

### **Depart in Silence**

*Compiled by Fr Jerome Prins from Sylvia Sands, The Stations of the Cross in Darkness Yielding, pages 164-178 with adaptations and prayers. Authorised thereto for Holy Week 2020 by Bishop Brian Marajh, Bishop of George, 06 April 2020.*