



# The Stations of the Cross

## St. James' Episcopal Church

Wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here.

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

#### Opening Prayer

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

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

#### *Reflection*

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **1. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Let us pray. *(silence)*

**Lord Jesus, let us enter into your silence. You said everything you had to say.**

**Now you have no further words, as you hear the judge's verdict, and the cries of the crowd calling for your death. Your silence is our strength: as you left everything in your Father's hands, so now do we, knowing that an infinite love will find us wherever we are.**

**We pray for all who are unjustly condemned, for all who feel disgrace, for all who suffer from the merciless judgments of our world.**

**As we stand with you, stand also with us,  
a light against the surrounding darkness. Amen.**

## **2. JESUS ACCEPTS THE CROSS AND IS MADE TO CARRY IT**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, let us go with you on your journey.**

**In your strength, we accept all the sufferings, large and small, involved in following the path of justice, honesty and care for others.**

**We pray for all who are weakened in their struggle, who are near to breaking point, that their hope not fail and their hearts not grow hard.**

**As we go with you, be with us on our different ways,  
that we might meet in you, and find support in your love. Amen.**

## **3. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

The climb is long, the path is narrow, the load is heavy, the taunting crowd presses close, the guards hurry him on. He trips; and falls beneath the weight across his shoulders. The burden that crushes Jesus can be compared to the burdens of today—the burden of debt that crushes the poor economies of the world, the unequal distribution of resources which stifles development for many people and nations, and the violence that fragments the human community.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, you fall into our darkness to meet us there in the weakness of doubt and discouragement.**

**We pray for all who fall, for all who have found the burdens of life too heavy, the road too long, and help far away.**

**Be their courage now; and, by your fall, lift us all up in new strength. Amen.**

#### 4. JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

The sword pierces Mary's heart as she sees her Son bloodied and disfigured on his way to execution. He hears that beloved voice; and looks up through a haze of pain. Eye meets eye; heart meets heart: and out of that tide of shared suffering raises the question: is this where love leads? Where can it take us now? Jesus looks on his mother with love and sees all the pain and possibility of relationship, deep family love and fidelity, abuse and violence, mutual loving care, separation and divorce, loneliness and community.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, by the love you felt for Mary, your mother,  
by the love she felt for you, open our hearts  
to the suffering of the humble and the good of this world,  
all who feel so defenseless against violence and hatred.**

**May love keep on being love, no matter what the pain, and light our way.**

**Mary, by the sword that pierced your heart, awaken our hearts to that love  
that has been shown us in the passion of your Son. Amen.**

#### 5. SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, in opening our eyes to our suffering neighbor, and immigrants among us, you come to us yourself.**

**Help us to see the face of others, wherever they may live, who will be without help, unless we have time, unless we reach out,  
and make room for those we so easily overlook because of their distance from us. Amen.**

#### 6. 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.**

The dust and the blood running down his swollen face cloud his vision. A courageous woman defies the crowd and wipes his face with her veil. He sees her clearly now; and in the light of his gaze, the splendor of an infinite love shines upon her. This “small” act of charity is a most wonderful action of great compassion. It seems to be all that Veronica can do at the moment, yet the injustice remains. She cannot stop the suffering of Jesus. The compassion of Veronica calls out for social change, for an end to injustice, for a new way of living together.

Let us pray.

**Jesus, by the love that drew Veronica to you, make us each a healing presence in your world, to use our hands to wipe away the grime and the tears of life, to see ourselves and others as your mercy sees us all.**

**Inspire us to find the beauty that lies hidden in our world, to go beyond our prejudices, harsh judgments and disappointments, to detect your grace at work in every life, and to treasure every element of your creation. Amen.**

## **7. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, by the weakness you suffered for us, make us patient with ourselves and others. Teach us to have time, the way God has time, for the whole unfinished business of our lives and justice in our world.**

**Guide every step we take, and help us not to become bitter or intolerant in disappointment; so may we graciously accept, along with the joy, the pain that is the inevitable condition of growth and life and being together.**

**Give us the grace to work for, and be prophets, of justice in our community and to the world. Amen.**

## **8. JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Women bear the burdens of the world in a special way. They disproportionately struggle under the injustices of our systems. The experience of women throughout the ages calls us to end the injustices. Today we remember again the mothers of victims of crime, of injustice, of having to flee their homeland because of persecution.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, help us to answer the evils of our world with a great defiant hope, in a strong protest against all that is loveless, degrading and violent. May your compassion give us the energy to conquer hatred though the power of your love and in all the patient works of mercy and justice.**

**Help us never to be so absorbed in ourselves as to forget the sufferings of the weak and defenseless.**

**Teach us your own compassion and the compassion you saw in the eyes of the women of Jerusalem. Amen.**

## **9. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

In staggering those final uphill steps, all strength leaves Jesus, and he falls once more. Each step felt like the end of the journey. He can go no further. And yet, one final effort. He staggers forward, and is dragged to the place of execution. The burden that crushes Jesus is like the burden of materialism. Every time the world worships things before people, power before justice, and consumption before the spirit, we lose what it means to be human and alive.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, may the Spirit of your love urge us onward. Do not allow us to give up, whatever our weakness, however often we fall. Help us to see our world through the eyes of the crushed and the broken, that we might all grow more closely together and support one another along the way in the love you have shown us. Amen.**

## **10. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing."

Love has stripped him of everything: "For our sake, he became poor." This radical loss of everything continues to be felt in the lives of all the poor—those without enough food, clothing, shelter, education, respect, dignity, human rights, and community.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, when we are stripped of everything, and left with nothing but what only God can give, clothe us with your very self. When in the midst of life we feel lonely and at a loss, defenseless before the evils of the world,**

**clothe us with your sense of God's unfailing presence and thirst for justice.  
Clothe us the perfect peace of trust in you and of doing justice in your cause. Amen.**

## **11. 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.**

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

Jesus has been betrayed, abandoned by his followers, condemned, mocked and tortured. Now the cross, the most hideous form of execution known to the Roman world, the ultimate punishment reserved for rebellious slaves! The nails pierce flesh and nerve, and he is lifted up in the sight of all: Behold the Man. Jesus is a person of active nonviolence, yet here he comes to know violence against his person—the same violence that is seen in our wars and preparation for war, in the violence on our streets and in our homes, in our weapons of mass destruction, in ethnic cleansing, in genocide, in all these countless examples of violence.

Let us pray.

**Could this be how God appears in our world?**

**Open our hearts, Lord Jesus, to true wisdom, the wisdom of that love revealed in you, the love that alone gives life: the love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things—the love that never ends.**

**In place of the misery of selfishness, free us to choose the way of an ever greater love.**

**Amen.**

## **12. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished!" And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And he bowed his head, and handed over his spirit.

Power and control are dominant values in our world, yet Jesus loses all of these things that the world considers important. But at the same time, in Jesus nailed to a cross, we see a person of great freedom and compassionate love and a special awesome power—the power of the suffering God crying out for justice.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.**

**In doing your Father's will, you poured out your life as one great act of love.**

**Join us to yourself in life and in death. Be our life, our food, our resurrection.**

**We commend to your mercy all who are suffering and crying out for justice.  
that you will be for them, and for us, the fountain of endless life and undying love. Amen.**

### **13. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

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

It is a poor tortured body that Jesus' faithful ones now unfasten from the cross and place in the arms of Mary. The blows, the thorns, the lash, the nails, the spear have all left their mark. As his friends embraced him for the last time, they must have thought of the ancient prophecy: "Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases ... he was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities." Jesus is radically stripped of everything. He is a human person whose rights and dignity have been taken away.

Let us pray.

**Crucified Lord, draw us more deeply into unity  
as members of your Body throughout the world.  
Unite us in the sympathy of love and justice and in a communion of faith,  
so that your Church will be purified in holiness  
and be a prophetic sign to the nations.  
Though we are earthen vessels, make us witnesses  
to the peace, the healing and the hope you offer to all creation. Amen.**

### **14. JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB**

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

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

Let us pray.

**Lord Jesus, by your descent into the world of the dead, fill all life, all death, all time with your presence.  
Be the deepest center of our lives, so that nothing in all creation will separate us from you and that we will live in harmony with your creation: may your love grow within us to cast out all fear, and become a hope that knows no bounds. Amen.**

We conclude with the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**People            Our Father, who art in heaven,  
                         hallowed be thy Name,  
                         thy kingdom come,  
                         thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:  
**Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.**

Let us pray.

**We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**