

## Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death

### Matthew 27:22-26

Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

*The eve of the passion: Jesus' hour of darkness had come when '...all are scattered, leaving me alone.' (John 16:32)*

**The colours suggest a glow of fire somewhere...**

**in the high priest's courtyard**

**where Peter sits warming himself.**

**The cock is crowing,**

**large, red, fierce and raucous.**

**All Jesus' friends have deserted him.**

**Threatening fists, accusing fingers are his only reward  
for his life of healing and teaching.**

*Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. (John 16:32)*

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed.

It was a good question.

Jesus had annoyed the religious leaders, of that there was no doubt.

He had been critical of the social and religious structures,

he had healed the villagers;

he had told stories to the crowds;

he was probably a threat to law and order.

But he would not defend himself:

the storyteller was silent now

and the crowd was noisy.

And Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

We pray for all who administer justice and all who face trial this day; all those incarcerated, and all who have been falsely imprisoned.

As we remember the innocent ones condemned today,  
victims of war and violence, of pandemic, famine and fire,  
we remember also those we condemn by word or deed, and even by our silence –  
our own brothers and sisters of every race and creed.

Lord, we pray for all who are treated unjustly.

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

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

## Station 2: Jesus takes up his cross

### Mark 15:16-22

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Soldiers  
taking the chance for a bit of fun.  
They had a heavy day ahead.  
Soon they would have to put on their public face –  
disciplined, controlled, efficient.  
But for now, a bit of a lark with the lads,  
with no risk of recrimination.  
Dead men tell no stories,  
and Jesus was going to his death.

**He seems to welcome it, yet all the horrors of the Passion come swooping down on him at this moment. He stands straight and ready.**

*It was for this reason that I came to this hour: Father, glorify your name. (John 12:27-28)*

**Jesus lays down his life for the glory of that name,  
So that we might live and give glory to God.  
In the stream of suffering engulfing him  
is also the strength and love of God.  
Jesus embraces the Cross – God embraces him.**

*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.  
(Mark 8:34)*

How do we accept the Cross in our lives – ill health, loneliness, failure or fear? Do we embrace them, as Jesus did?

And how do we respond to the suffering in our world? Do we unite with the victims in our prayer placing them in the presence of God?

We pray that we might give our lives to the service of God, accepting the trials and difficulties of the pilgrimage of this earthly life.

Lord, we pray for strength to bear our cross, knowing that it is your cross we are carrying.

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

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

### **Station 3: Jesus falls for the first time**

#### **John 12:23-25**

Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

*Ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. (Isaiah 53:4; 1 Peter 2:22-24)*

**He was not carrying that one and only Cross.**

**He was weighed down, crushed by the crosses of all the world.**

**Whatever we suffer, Jesus is carrying the weight of it. He suffers with us.**

**There is no human suffering in which he is not present to redeem it  
and turn it into a seed of resurrection.**

Jesus was exhausted.

He was in pain.

He was going to his death.

The cross was heavy and he fell.

He was flesh and blood like us,

he was struggling.

*Your sins are forgiven. Get up... and walk' (Mark 2:5, 11)*

Thus says Jesus when we fall, over and over again,  
through the frailty of our human condition.

Are we aware of our weaknesses?

Do we pray regularly for strength to overcome them?

We pray for all who feel weighed down by anxiety, stress, or concern for those whom they love.

Lord, when we fall help us to rise and walk once more with you.

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

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

## Station 4: Jesus meets his mother

### Luke 2:22, 25, 34-35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

**This station shows an obvious relief from the previous one.**

**Mary's nearness breaks through the nightmare with light and love; the colours reflect this.**

**Mary was the one most able to help and strengthen him, while...**

*...the sword pierced her own soul. (Luke 2:35)*

What are Mary's thoughts as she is reunited with her suffering Son?

Does she not experience and share the pain of all mothers

whose children suffer through illness

whose children are missing

whose children are parted from them through national disasters?

Does she not share also the pain of children, who perhaps, through a misunderstanding or a desire to be free of parental control are cut off from their loved ones?

Lord, we pray for all parents who look after loved ones who are sick and suffering as we pray for children who suffer at the hands of others.

And as on the way of the cross you brought Mary and her Son together, may all families be united once again in a bond of love.

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

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

## **Station 5: Simon of Cyrene**

### **Luke 23:26**

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

**Just as the good thief was given to understand the secret of the kingdom of Jesus, why should Simon of Cyrene not have been given a glimpse of the Kingdom, piercing through his annoyance at having to carry a criminal's cross by the very act of doing so?**

**Jesus' head is inclined towards Simon's;  
Simon seems to be listening; there is communication.  
Jesus is revealing to him the secret of the Kingdom,  
the universal call of the human race to...**

*...carry each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*

**The background figures illustrate this.**

*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (Matthew 25:40)*

Simon helps Jesus unwillingly (Luke 23:26) to carry the cross; nevertheless, he does help.

Do we allow others to help us in times of great difficulty? By such an action we evoke the Christian virtues of mercy and compassion.

Do we go out of our way to help others in time of need?

Lord, enable us to extend help willingly to our brothers and sisters when their burdens have become too heavy to bear.

And we give thanks for all who have helped us on our journey of faith.

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

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

## Station 6: Veronica

### Matthew 25:35-36

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

Veronica means ‘true image’.

**This incident is not recorded in the Gospels, but it seems likely that the women who followed Jesus did what they could to ease his suffering.**

**Veronica has provided us with the ancient representations of the face of Christ ‘not made by human hands’, venerated in the East. She has given us the face of the *fairest of the children of man* (Psalm 45:2) in whose likeness we must grow, the image that must be impressed on our souls so that we may reflect his glory.**

**A longing to see the face of Christ, to know what he really looked like, has inspired countless artists through the ages. It is a frightening challenge too: seeing him face to face may be for us the crucial test of whether we really love him – in our neighbour.**

*We shall see him because we shall see him as he really is. (1 John 3:2)*

Veronica wiped the face of Jesus because she saw before her a suffering person, not knowing that he was the Son of God.

When do we have the opportunity to see the suffering Jesus and offer comfort to him? When? It happens every day.

Wiping faces,  
faces full of sweat and tears.  
Wiping faces is something we try to do gently and lovingly;  
something that cleanses and soothes.  
For those in pain or trouble,  
wanting them to know that they are loved and cherished.  
And when we wipe the face of God’s little ones  
we are wiping the face of God.

We pray for those who bring comfort and care to others. For all who work in the medical profession and for aid agencies.

Lord, help us to love others as you have loved us.

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

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

## **Station 7: Jesus falls the second time**

### **Isaiah 53:7**

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

**The crosses of the world (cf. Station 3)  
which burden him, take on a more tragic dimension;  
they seem to batter him down,  
concentrating on his faltering figure to crush him totally.  
The crosses above, the thorns below.**

*He was a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. (Isaiah 53:3)*

I am finding it hard to watch you, Jesus,  
to see you struggling,  
to see you on the ground.  
Into your silence I want to shout:  
'Why do we keep on hurting you?  
What have you done wrong?'

What do we do when someone stumbles and falls again and again?  
Do we look around us for someone to blame?  
If we do then we are stumbling too.

We remember the homeless throughout the world,  
those who sleep rough in our cities,  
many of whom have lost the will to rise up and carry on.

We pray for those caught up in warfare, for victims of terrorism, and those who live in poverty because of the greed and injustice of others.

Lord, be with all of us who stumble and fall as you did on the road to Calvary, and prompt us to help others to rise and serve you.

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

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

## **Station 8: The women of Jerusalem**

### **Luke 23:27-28**

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

*If men use the green wood like this, what will happen when it is dry? (Luke 23:31)*

**Jesus is the green wood, his cross the Tree of Life, from which we draw all fruitfulness.**

**The cross is represented here as bursting with life.**

**The women too are life-bearers, through suffering.**

Weep for the mothers and children of Jerusalem,  
for Israeli and Palestinian,  
for Jew, Muslim, and Christian,  
for strangers in their midst.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Pray that her people may live together in justice.

Pray that all people may live together in peace.

*Jesus wept. (John 11:35)*

We recall how Jesus shed tears at the death of his friend Lazarus.

Most people at some point in their lives are reduced to tears.

Lord, we pray that when darkness engulfs us  
your light will guide us to extend a helping hand to another in distress.

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

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



## Station 9: Jesus falls the third time

### John 15:18-20

‘If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, “Servants are not greater than their master.” If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

**The crosses are larger and heavier still, to the point of overwhelming Jesus. He is crushed to the ground.**

*How the Lord in his anger  
has humiliated daughter Zion!  
He has thrown down from heaven to earth  
the splendour of Israel.  
All who pass along the way  
clap their hands at you;  
they hiss and wag their heads  
at daughter Jerusalem;  
‘Is this the city that was called  
the perfection of beauty,  
the joy of all the earth?’  
I am one who has seen affliction  
under the rod of God’s wrath.  
so I say, ‘Gone is my glory,  
and all that I had hoped for from the LORD.’ (Lamentations 2:1, 15; 3:1, 18)*

I am not sure I can watch you any longer.  
In his pain I see my pain,  
in his falling,  
in his cross... in his cross  
I am included.  
He carried it for me – for me, and for my friends, and for my enemies.

*‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.’ (Luke 22:42)*

We can link this fall of Jesus to his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus, weighed down by the evil of the world falls to the ground and cries out to his heavenly Father for strength to carry on.

What a lesson for us. We remember so many people in our world searching for help in their distress.

We pray for those whom we love, those whom we struggle to like, and those who find us difficult.

Lord, hear our pleading, our cries of agony and give us the strength to overcome all evil.

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

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

## **Station 10: Jesus is stripped**

### **Mark 15:22-24**

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

**Grabbing hands, stripping him of everything.  
Jesus let them: he emptied himself.**

**Hands grab even the radiance round his head:  
they could not strip him of his divinity.**

Stripped now –  
of clothing  
of disciples  
of friends.  
Alone,  
naked and vulnerable,  
with nothing to protect you from the pain to come.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is prepared for sacrifice.  
His clothing is torn away from his body. Love is revealed in its starkest form.

May we strip ourselves of all attachment to the things of the world  
in order that our crucified and risen Lord may dwell fully with us.

Lord, we pray for the downtrodden and rejected: for the refugee, the victim of prejudice, for all who  
are deprived of their rights of freedom.

And we pray that having emptied ourselves of all that separates us from you, your love may be  
revealed in us, as it was in our brother Jesus.

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

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

## **Station 11: Jesus is nailed to the cross**

### **John 19:19-21**

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

**The background shows the temple, which also stands for a city on the point of being bombed, as Jesus' body is on the point of being destroyed by the nails.**

We look on from a distance:  
a distance of time and space and culture,  
and yet even for us it hurts to watch Jesus dying.  
It hurts to know that we are rescued.  
It hurts to know that we are cherished and loved.

The body of Jesus, the Son of God, is now secured to the instrument of torture and people's inhumanity to another is revealed.

Are things different today?

We reflect on the destruction and persecution of one race by another, and on the violence of crime today.

And never let us forget our own failure to love our neighbour as Jesus taught us.

Lord, we pray for all those in our world today whose intention is the destruction of another. We also remember all in the medical profession who face death daily. And we hold before you anyone who is awaiting execution.

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

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

## **Station 12: Jesus speaks to his mother**

### **John 19:26-27**

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'

**Like Station 4, this is an intermezzo of love and peace, a moment of warmth and communication. Though full of pain and distress, the focus here is not on the pierced hands and feet, nor the bombed city and temple, but on the loving concern of three people. Mary, carrying a sword in her heart, knows that God is love, and so does John.**

**A lasting relationship is established between Mary and John, soon to be filled with the presence of the risen Jesus. John took her into his home.**

These words are the words of a dying man. No thought for himself but for the two broken-hearted people stood by the cross: his mother Mary and the disciple John who were very dear to him. By these words he commends his mother not only to John but to us all.

We think of those who are spending their lives alone and in hospitals and homes for the elderly.

Lord, we pray for a greater concern for the well-being of the elderly in our society, especially those with no one to care for them.

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

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

## **Station 13: Jesus dies on the cross**

### **Matthew 27:45-46**

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

### **Luke 23:44-46**

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

**Darkness is closing in,  
confusion,  
chaos  
despair.**

**The background shows the bombed-out city,  
the temple of Jesus' body throughout the ages.**

**The figures of the women standing by him,  
the soldiers and the people having watched the execution,  
turn and walk away,  
satisfied?  
indifferent?**

Before the mystery of the death of our Lord Jesus on the cross we fall silent.  
Only adoration remains.

[silence]

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

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

## **Station 14: Jesus is taken down from the cross**

### **Mark 15:42-45**

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth.

**It is over.**

**Silence and darkness envelop Calvary.**

**Joseph of Arimathea did a courageous thing, asking for the body of Jesus.  
He risked being identified as one of his friends,  
an accusation which had caused Peter's fall.**

**He did not know about the resurrection,  
but unwittingly provided the scene for the events of Easter.**

*'Truly this man was God's Son!' (Matthew 27:54)*

Thus said one of his executioners. Thus said his disciples on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus calmed the waters. It was a profession of faith.

We should all have these words on our lips.

Jesus is taken down from the cross. Mary must have been there, and the women who followed Jesus. Mary shares the thoughts of all those who hold close to them a loved one who has died.

Lord, take all who you have called from this world into your eternal light, your light and your peace. And we remember before you all bereaved families, especially those who have experienced the death of a child. We pray for all who mourn with no hope in the resurrection.

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

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

## Station 15: Jesus is buried

### Mark 15:46-47

Then Joseph laid the body in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

**Deeper darkness still.**

**But in the deepest shadow of death there is a glimmer of the hope of new life,  
symbolised by the seedling.**

**Jesus had said,**

*Very truly, I tell you,  
unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,  
it remains just a single grain;  
but if it dies,  
it bears much fruit. (John 12:24)*

The door is shut now,  
And the world sighs and waits.  
And we wait in night's darkness,  
longing for the morning,  
longing for the light.

The torment and agony of the crucifixion is over. Jesus is laid to rest.

Lord, we pray that we may face death with the certain knowledge that we will live for ever with you in Christ.

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

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

Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

The Footsteps of Christ – Journey to the Cross and beyond (The Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey)  
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