



A WAY OF THE CROSS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC



OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as we walk with you on your Way of the Cross, help us to see how your sacrifice gives meaning to our own difficult times as we suffer in so many ways from this worldwide pandemic. Your cross stands in the center of history, a towering sign that the God who created our world out of love understands our pain and shares it with us. Amen.



FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY PILATE

Leader: We adore you O
Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your
holy cross and resurrection
you have redeemed the
world.

For a while, it looked as though Pilate might save Jesus. He sent signals that he would. But, ultimately we see what Jesus already knew: There is no salvation on earth. That adoring crowd from a week ago now shouts "Crucify him!" His friends abandon him. Worldly power, in the person of Pontius Pilate, will choose the crowd over what is right.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, the pandemic has taught us the entire lesson you already knew: The world may be beautiful and exciting, but it is fallen and dangerous, too. May we learn from you that there is only one who does not disappoint; the ground of being, God himself. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

SECOND STATION: JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

Jesus Christ submitted entirely to the will of the Father, and so when he was given a rough cross to carry to his own execution, he embraced it. In some depictions he even kisses the cross. He knew that the cross meant suffering, torture, and death, but he trusted his Father and knew that God brings good from every evil, even an evil as terrible as the cross.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, the pandemic is a hard cross to accept. Who will get sick? Who will die? Who will lose their job? How will this reshape the future? The only way to accept it is to trust, as you did, that the Father's care will never end. Give us this trust! Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

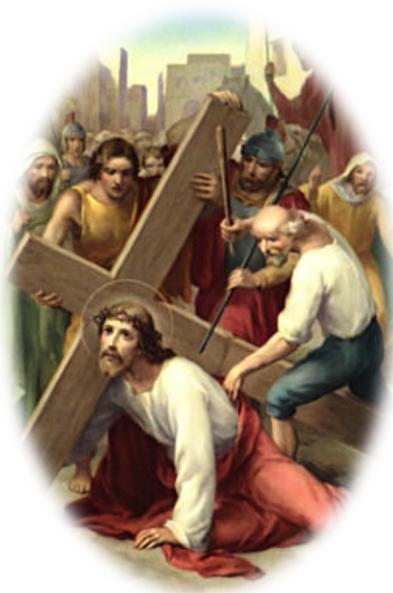


THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Leader: We adore you O Christ
and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy
cross and resurrection you have
redeemed the world.

Jesus fell under the weight of
the cross — under the weight of
our sins — and we are horrified
to see it. We repent what we
did that led to this. First, we re-
pent the way we sinned with
our pride and greed. We lived a
complacent life filled with
selfishness. We ran up debts to
please ourselves and impress
the world instead of saving for an uncertain future. We put other
gods in the center of our lives instead of the one God.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, you do not directly cause suffering, but you allow it because in your power and mercy, you can bring good out of it. Help us remember in this pandemic, that we are not the center of the universe. You are. We repent of our pride and greed. May we put our time, effort and resources where our heart truly is, with you. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your
holy cross and resurrection
you have redeemed the
world.

Here is Jesus, face to face
with his mother. When he
was a baby, she was told that
a sword would pierce his
heart. From the cross, he will
make her *our* mother. In be-
tween, she has had to walk a
rough road with her son. But
as they gaze at each other,
the love the two have is so
deep and sweet all of that is
forgotten.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, if we did not know before, the pandemic reveals what your mother knew so well: this world is “a valley of tears.” Thank you for the gift of your mother. Thank you for your fidelity and the loving concern for us that she brings to you. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

A passerby, Simon of Cyrene, is compelled by the Romans to help Jesus carry his cross. He stands for the *corporal* works of mercy, serving the physical needs of others: Feeding the hungry, clothing the sick, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, burying the dead — and above all right now, visiting prisoners (and shut-ins!), and visiting the sick.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, give us a heart that cares and loves even in times of fear and sorrow. Show us opportunities where we can concretely help those who are suffering from the pandemic. Sometimes, like Simon, we have little choice but to help. Sometimes we must seek out those who need our assistance. Send us out, an army of Simons, to lighten the burdens around us.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.



SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Leader: We adore you O Christ
and we praise you,

Response: Because by your ho-
ly cross and resurrection you
have redeemed the world.

Ignoring the complaints of the Roman guards, Veronica reaches out to comfort Jesus, using her veil to wipe his face, and receiving his image there in return. She stands for the *spiritual* works of mercy: instructing the ignorant, admonishing sinners, forgiving offenses, counseling the doubtful, bearing wrongs patiently — and above all right now, comforting the afflicted and praying for the living and the dead.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, when we reach out to the suffering, our efforts restore your image in others, and imprint your face on our lives. Give us the words we need to give faith to the shaken and hope to the hurting. Remind us always that even though we could not pray together physically as a Church, we as Domestic Churches are ought to pray for one another, especially those for the front liners in this battle. It is in praying together that your image will continue to be imprinted in our hearts and bring victory over our fear and this pestilence. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

The weight of our sins forces Jesus to the ground again. This time, it's our sins of anger and envy that weigh him down. Like the crowd that was tantalized then scandalized by Jesus, we have allowed ourselves to become petty and superficial, feeding off the anger of the like-minded and rejecting the humanity of those with whom we disagree. We have walled ourselves off into halls of mirrors reflecting our own image, where your truth can no longer penetrate.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, it took a pandemic for us to see that we are all your creatures, struggling to find our way in the world. We repent of our habits of anger and envy. Teach us to see the dignity of everyone we meet, and to listen and respond to their lives with your love. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.



Jesus faces the crowd of women who are weeping in sadness for his plight. But he says, "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." The ultimate tragedy of Jesus' suffering is not the pain he endures, but the many people who will refuse to accept the offer of salvation that is the reason for his pain.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, help us see in this pandemic not just a tragedy of human suffering, but a tragedy of human souls. Help us to weep not just for the difficulties the world faces, but for the sins the world commits. We offer you the only consolation you want: Our lives offered back to you. Meet us in our pains and fears, and direct our lives once more to you. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

One last time — even as the end is in sight — Jesus falls once again into the dirt. This time he is knocked down by our sins of sloth and lust. He struggles up to Calvary for us, but we so often cannot be bothered to do even the minimum for him. He calls us to greatness; we want only comfort. He offers his body to the Father; we pamper our bodies. We realize in horror that he died for the very people whose bodies we have treated as objects for our pleasure.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, in this pandemic, we repent of our sloth and lust. As those around us suffer sickness, economic hardship, and death, give us the purity of heart to see the true worth of everyone we meet. Grant us the grace to repent of our past sins, and to honor and defend your image in others. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.



TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

Jesus goes to his Father as he came into the world. He has no fine clothes, no mighty airs — he is stripped bare before God and man, with nothing to hide his scars and pain, showing the whole world that that while, yes, Jesus Christ is fully God, he is also fully human. He is one of us.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, this pandemic has stripped us of our illusions. We were like the Emperor with no clothes, putting on airs and ignoring our real predicament, imagining we were invincible. May we learn from you to see ourselves humbly and honestly, stripped of preconceptions, and to see that our true worth is that we are loved by You. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Leader: We adore you O
Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your
holy cross and resurrection
you have redeemed the
world.

Here is the last torture of
the mighty King: He is
pinned, helpless, to a
cross. The hands that cre-
ated the universe clutch at
the heads of nails. The feet
that walked on water,
stream blood onto a wood-
en block.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, the pandemic has left us feeling helpless in front of the awful reality of suffering and pain. We are helpless to avoid the suffering that keeps coming, pinned to the cross of circumstance. We have no cure, no vaccine, and we lack resources to heal and protect ourselves. We do not know where to go anymore, guide us to you, who is our only assurance and hope. We know when we are most helpless, we find you, embracing us. Grant us cure, grant us medicine, and grant us your love. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Leader: We adore you O
Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by
your holy cross and resur-
rection you have re-
deemed the world.

And then it happens. The
unthinkable. The last
cries of anguish, the com-
missioning of his spirit to
God, and then the mighty
head that spoke such
beautiful words falls silent
and limp. The King has
died. This is a greater fear
than any we could have
imagined, and it is sud-
denly all too real: Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity,
is dead on a cross.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, none of us knows what we face in this pandemic. We fear the worst. We fear death. And for some of us, that fear will be realized. However, you have yourself suffered the thing that is our greatest fear to reassure us that even if you call us there, we will find you waiting, filled with love. Embrace us in our fear, strengthen us in our weakness, may your death be truly our salvation. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Leader: We adore you O Christ and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy cross and resurrection you have redeemed the world.

The pain stops at last when Jesus Christ has given the full measure of love. He has carried the burden, he has been pushed and prodded and driven to his death. There, at the end of the road, his body ends where it began, in the loving embrace of his mother.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, we have a long road ahead of us in this pandemic. We will walk it to the end and though we do not know what we will find, we will walk by it with faith and we will never give up, knowing that every road leads to you. Grant us the grace to be embraced by Your Mother, as you have entrusted to her. May Mary our Mother, the star of the stormy sea guide us safely to the shore of health and goodness. Amen.



Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS BURIED

Leader: We adore you O Christ
and we praise you,

Response: Because by your holy
cross and resurrection you have
redeemed the world.

In the end, Jesus is buried in a
cave, and a rock is pushed across
the mouth of the tomb. He is left
to rot. So often, the world has
done the same thing: Hidden
Jesus away, sealed him off from
polite society, and given up on his
love. But our Lord will not decompose in the tomb. He will rise
again and will make himself present in the sacraments of the
Church: baptism, confession, the Eucharist, confirmation, our
marriages, holy orders and the sacrament of the sick. He is there
in the simple gestures of love, of care and of solidarity.



PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, so often the world has counted you down and out. We hid you and took you for granted because we have so many things we want to achieve. However, you always rise again. In this time of pandemic, we pray for the physical cure our bodies need, but thank you with all our heart for the spiritual cure that you gave us on Easter. May Your victorious love protect and strengthen those in the frontlines of this battle against COVID-19. May our present suffering lead us to love you even more in your Church. Amen.

Our Father... We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. Amen.



CONCLUSION

History can verify that Jesus died but only faith recognizes the Resurrection. There are different responses to the Resurrection: the joyful women; the amazed Peter and John who run to the tomb; and the doubtful Thomas who needs proof of real physical contact. We still get sick and die but Jesus has conquered all of these. Through His suffering, He shows us the way, He teaches us the truth, and He offers us life eternal.

Jesus' message to the disciples was "Do not be afraid!" Seeing the risen Christ confirms the hope and the light after the darkness of the passion and death. The personal experience of the resurrection convinces the disciples that death has not triumphed or ended their real and still living relationship with the Lord. Evil and suffering will never triumph over good and love.



CLOSING PRAYER

At the conclusion of your way of the cross, we ask you, Lord, to teach us to keep watch, together with your Mother and the women who stood by you on Calvary, in expectation of your resurrection. Lord Jesus, these are such difficult and painful times. We have walked your Way of the Cross with you, remembering your sacrifice. Now we ask that you walk our Way of the Cross with us, filling our lives with your love. We know that whatever comes, the future is safe in your hands. In the victory of the resurrection you have given us hope and strength. Grant healing and speedy recovery for those who are sick, protection and strength for our frontliners, enlightenment for those who are searching for the cure, and the safety and peace of your people. We ask these prayers with trust and humility. Amen.

