

Stations of the Cross

IN LIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC AND OTHER HUMAN SUFFERINGS

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

*photos are of the Outdoor Way at Holy Hill in Wisconsin unless otherwise noted

Compiled by the Department of Campus Ministry,
Division of Mission and Identity



The First Station

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE



San Clemente Beach on April 2, 2020
Image: Julie Leopo, Voice of OC



It seems each day brings a new guideline, advisory, or order that can feel like a condemnation to isolation and distance. In hearing his own death sentence, Christ knew the path to the cross lay ahead, a road beset with pain, ridicule, and alienation. Though, to hear a forceful decree that your life will not be altered temporarily but extinguished must have struck deep at his heart. I think back to the times when authorities have chastised or punished me with good reason, and the shock was felt throughout my body and mind. But, Christ's condemnation was one of violence and injustice, surrounded by cheers and jeers from the crowd.

Lord, help us to comprehend the loneliness you felt that day - the panic, anxiety, and, somehow, your grace-filled acceptance. Deepen our empathy for the condemned around us, those restricted to hospital wings or in the custody of the state. And, strengthen our prayer that we show solidarity with those in pain, even from a distance.

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- Raymond Moylan, College of Arts & Sciences '20

The Second Station

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS



Jesus, the poor one, bears the burden of his people. Carrying the cross, he carried them; he carries us. The cross is the whole history of hate, violence, rejection, and war. In accepting the cross, Jesus takes up the misery of humanity. The cross becomes God's complaint—there is no justice, mercy, or peace when the children of earth are despised, despoiled, and made to endure indignity.

We each have a different cross to carry. We carry our crosses with us every day. Some people know the crosses we bear. Some have no idea what we carry. But the one person who knows every cross you carry, first took up the cross for you. Jesus took up his cross so that you could have salvation. Jesus is always going to be taking up your crosses as long as you give them to him. We must be willing to open our hearts. Be not afraid, Christ is with you, especially during this time of uncertainty. Jesus is with us through everything. It may be hard for us to see him, but he is there, ready and willing. God is with you always.

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The Third Station

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

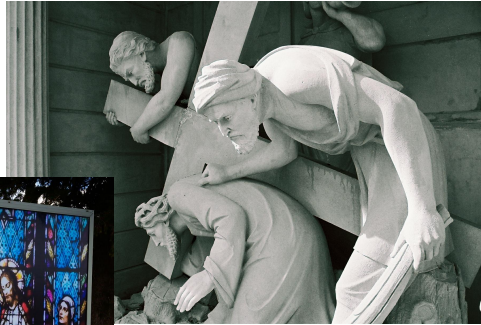


Image: CNS PHOTO
Sam Lucero, The Compass

To fall under a heavy load, and feel the impact of the dry ground in your knees, and the crushing load of the cross on your back. Why strain to get back up, when the only end ahead is agony?

In the cross, Christ carries our sins, our failures, and our falls. How quick am I to deflect responsibility when I inflict harm or fail to care for those around me? Especially now, it feels all too easy to restrict my sphere of concern to those immediately around me, but the needs of all fall to the cross. Under these weights, Jesus, you showed us the difficulty to be endured and the sacrificial love to be shared by following your example.

Lord, help us to confront our shortcomings with honesty. Show us the ways they weigh on ourselves, those around us, and your son, Christ. Extend our hearts, if not our hands, to those in most need of your love.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Raymond Moylan, College of Arts & Sciences '20

The Fourth Station

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



original artwork by Holly Whiting, used with permission

Mary stands with her Son. She feels powerless. She is in no position to step in and end this violence, as the wheels of Roman justice slowly turn toward the murder of her child, Jesus. She looks powerless. Yet, her gaze is piercing. Her heart is on fire. She looks at her Son with great love. In her compassion, she shares in His pain and sorrows.

I am in no position to stop the Coronavirus. I'm not a doctor. I'm not even allowed to visit my grandma in her nursing home. Yet, my prayers are meaningful. I can love those who are suffering; I can accept the quiet cross of 'shelter in place' and social distancing. I ask to stand with Mary as she witnesses the suffering Body of Christ, and unite my heart with the wounded Heart of Christ.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Fr. Joe Laramie, S.J.,
Regional Director of the Apostleship of Prayer

The Fifth Station

SIMON PETER HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS



With Simon we are pressed into service on behalf of others. We are recruited to help Jesus bestow our bread on the hungry, satisfy the afflicted, remove from our midst oppression, false accusations and malicious speech. These works of justice and mercy—actions we don't often choose for ourselves—teach us most about loving others unselfishly and accepting responsibility for them. We cannot pick and choose the people we love or help. Everyone is worthy of our care.

Many of us are used to being “helpers.” We like it, we are good at it, and when we don't feel the buzz of helping others, we miss it. It may be hard to feel like we are not doing enough in these days when so many people are struggling, mourning, confused, even sick themselves. As important as it is to strive for justice, the lessons of this moment are worth learning. Moments like this can undercut our sense of self, or they can reaffirm our radical dependence on God beyond our ability to manage the world around us.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Patrick Cousins, Assistant Director of Campus Ministry

The Sixth Station

VERONICA WIPES JESUS' FACE



Image: AP PHOTO
Elaine Thompson

Veronica knew she could not end Jesus' suffering, but this did not stop a movement of great yet simple compassion in her heart. Veronica took her own veil and wiped Jesus' face of His blood and sweat and the spit of the crowd intent on seeing him killed. In this brief encounter, she revealed the love in her heart, and He revealed His presence in suffering by leaving His face on her veil.

Lord, where do you call us to wipe your face? We know your Passion is the very suffering we inflict on our most vulnerable kindred. Even in the midst of this crisis, our unhoused brothers and sisters in St. Louis are harassed and targeted by civil authorities, and are kicked out of shops and restaurants, even if they are paying customers, because of their race and poverty. Every blow like this - in word, thought, action, and policy - adds more weight to the Cross.

Jesus, lead us away from our pride, divisions, and materialism. Show us the way to compassion even unto the Cross, and leave your face on our vulnerable hearts.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Andrew Sweeso, College of Arts & Sciences '20

The Seventh Station

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



Carrying our crosses Jesus falls again. The weight of the world pushes Him down and He finds Himself on the ground looking up.

It is okay to not be okay. It is okay to fall. Jesus, the perfect image of humanity, stumbles. He feels the emotions of the world and He weeps. Sorrow is a natural thing. Where we are now, Jesus has been there first.

Reflecting inward, “What weighs me down in life?” So many in our society fall again and again under burdens they cannot control.

O God, we are not alone. We may be isolated in our homes but You are always with us. Where we are now, You have been first. Show us the light at the end of the tunnel, that we might be filled with hope in tomorrow and get back on our feet.

And we remember that the power of God’s Word is revealed in the work of our hands, in the call of the prophets and in the transformation of society. We commit ourselves to endure in this work.

*We adore you, Christ, and we bless you.
By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.*

- Jonathan Stodola,
Parks College of Engineering, Aviation, & Technology ‘22

The Eighth Station

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



Image: REUTERS
Dylan Martinez

*Nurses in line for lunch
in England

God our mother, God our sister, God our friend - cry out to us with the promises of change, and help us to become one as equals, rather than divided by the terms of our identity. Help us to recognize the importance of the work women do for you and your people, and guide our hearts so that we as a society may value this in the proper way.

These are confusing moments. With the women of Jerusalem, we weep and wonder what will be. Jesus says: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28). The women in our lives fulfill so many beautiful roles. Many women today are professionals: doctors, nurses, professors, ministers, counselors, mothers and so forth. Thank you Jesus for the women who accompanied you on the road to Calvary. We also thank you for the women and men who accompany us as we journey to see your face. We recall their faces now and see yours.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Christy Hicks, Campus Minister

The Ninth Station

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME



Image: REUTERS
Navesh Chitrakar

As Jesus neared the end of the way, he was tired, afraid and had little strength left. It is when we are vulnerable that we are most likely to fall. How difficult it is to struggle to our feet and begin again.

We pray for those whose lives were precarious before the outbreak of this virus. We particularly call to mind those living in abusive households, people who live in the United States without documentation, refugees in camps across the globe, those who suffer from addiction, and people who are incarcerated. We keep in mind that many entered into this pandemic feeling like Jesus as he fell for the third time--tired, afraid, and with little strength left. May we hold them in prayer and do all we can in support as they struggle to their feet and begin again.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Julia Nouse, Campus Ministry Intern 2019-2020
College of Arts & Sciences '20

The Tenth Station

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



Image: Episcopal Diocese of West Texas



Jesus came into a broken world so that He might show us how to fix it. Lord, bring our hearts closer to you through bringing us closer to your people.

Lord, Your physical hurt must have been excruciating, but that wasn't enough for Your tormentors. They had to make sure that You were humiliated too.

We wish that the other bits of the world that were broken before this virus would stop so that we can all band together against this common struggle. Yet, in this time of uncertainty we still continue to strip so many people of their dignity. We pray for migrants who are stripped of their clothing and abused on their journey and again in our detention centers. We pray for those stuck at home with abusive partners. We pray for all whom we are stripping of their dignity in the name of "policy".

Convict our hearts to do better.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Gabriela Keator, College of Arts & Sciences '21

The Eleventh Station

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



Image: Craig F. Walker,
BOSTON GLOBE STAFF

Jesus knew in his own body the force of violence, the power of fear and the domination of those intent on destroying him. All might, all evil, all hostility struck against him and he fell. But he stood again, faced the power of violence, and absorbed it within himself.

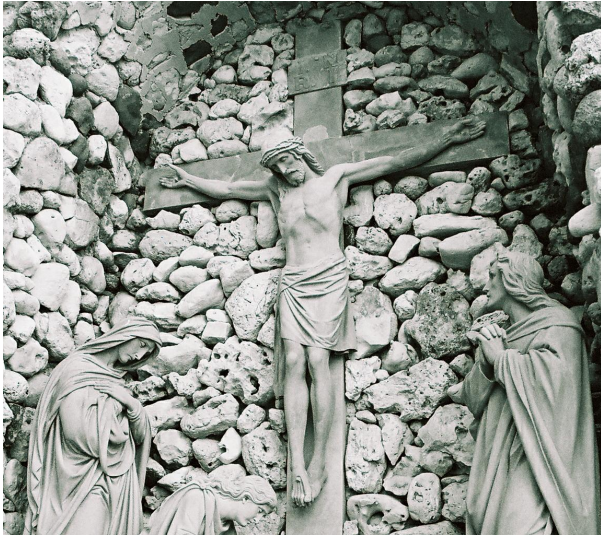
In our fear and our anxiety about the unknown, we too can turn to violence - in our words and in our actions - blaming others for the chaos that threatens us and those we love. May God's spirit fill us with truth and grace so that we may be transformed during these difficult days. So that our thoughts of blame and retribution are broken and reshaped into relationships of peace and love.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Erin Schmidt, Campus Minister

The Twelfth Station

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



It is done. It is finished. But what is over? Certainly not the life of Jesus, not his promise of the victory of justice and peace and freedom? No, the reign of God is just beginning. Let us be changed, not just in our hearts, but in our lives.

Christ's death fulfills what was first foretold in Genesis 3:15, and later promised by the Old Testament prophets -- a redeemer to take on our sin, and offer us righteousness. The Lord does not ask us to endure anything he's not willing to himself endure. With Christ's death, death itself becomes a middle chapter in our life story -- no longer the last pages. For anyone else, their death stops their revolution. For Jesus, putting him to death starts his revolution; it launches forth the Lord's work of redemption to evict sin as a trespasser from all creation, and to cleanse sin from our hearts.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you. By the power of your holy cross, you will heal the world.

- Jim Roach, Campus Minister

The Thirteenth Station

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



Image: KSAT.com

Look up. Can we bear to see our Saviour, our friend so lifeless, Can we even think about coming so close to him as we help lower him from the cross?

After the world had just turned dark, so few had the strength to remain close to the cross, close to each other, close to Christ. It was was a time of grieving, uncertainty, fear, shame, pain...and somehow still beauty in the presence that remained at the cross until the end.

Do we trust that if we stay close to Christ that he will put us exactly where he wants us to be, showing us how to love and serve the world as is needed now...even with our inadequacy? It's the same as what happened to John, the only apostle remaining at the foot of the cross after most others abandoned Christ to be alone in fear and brokenness. But John, staying close to Jesus in that moment, was led to be there for Our Lady, in part by helping place the dead body of her Son in her loving arms. In the intimate moments before his death, Jesus called John to "behold his mother" and so he did. Without the right words to say or much strength of his own, John lived this hardest day for Mary by her side, his presence supported the grief stricken mother crying over her Son's dead body. With accompaniment comes strength.

To love others, we must come close to them. With our brokenness, with their hurt. For it's in these most vulnerable of connections that the heart can truly love and serve, especially during this pandemic.

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The Fourteenth Station

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



The body of Jesus was returned to the earth. The earth took back its creator and maker.

These days, more often than not, we might picture ourselves lying in the tomb with Jesus, witnessing the death within the tomb and all around us. Perhaps the tomb is our house, or our room. We long for the open spaces. We long for our companions - but we are here with our Divine Companion, Jesus. That is all we need. As we lay within the tomb of the pandemic, we must accept where we are right now, as Jesus did. As we lay within the tomb of the pandemic, we must have hope – because in the glorious days ahead, this hope brings with us the Resurrection of the Christ. “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6:5)

O God, be merciful to us your children. Let us be signs of hope and peace in the world and give you glory by our lives. As stewards for God’s creation, let us pray now for the accomplishments we can achieve on God’s earth with the promise of eternal life in Heaven.

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- Sue Chawszczewski, Director of Campus Ministry