

thee, and now endurest the irreverence of those who discern thee not, rather than withhold thy sacred presence from our altars; grant us grace to bewail the indignities committed against thee; and to repair, as far as lies in our power, and with devout love, the many dishonours thou still continuest to receive in this adorable mystery. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

From the earliest times Christians flocked to the Holy Land to visit the places sanctified by the events in our Lord's earthly life. Especially popular was the pilgrimage along the path our Lord took on the first Good Friday. This pilgrimage was made with great devotion, the procession stopping (or making "stations") for prayer and meditation at the various traditional points where special events took place. For those who were unable to visit the Holy Land, the custom arose throughout Europe of setting up replicas of the different incidents along the Way of Sorrow, so that the faithful could make spiritual pilgrimages. After a long development, these little shrines became restricted to fourteen and it is now customary to set them up along the walls of Christian churches.

This devotion is primarily a private one for the use of individuals, but it is customary in Lent, and at other times, for the people to make the Stations in common. No official prayers have ever been prescribed for this devotion, whether in private or in public. It is only necessary that there be a movement from one Station to another and that the people meditate, however briefly, on each particular incident. Many unofficial devotions have been written, however.

The following are those arranged by Saint Alphonsus and translated by the late Father Stanton of Saint Alban's, Holborn.

BEFORE THE STATIONS

O MERCIFUL Saviour, grant that while we follow Thy blessed footsteps along this Way of Sorrow, our hearts may be so touched with true contrition that Thou mayest turn our weeping into gladness by giving us remission of all our sins. Amen.

or

O JESUS, our adorable Saviour, behold *us* prostrate at thy feet, imploring thy mercy for *ourselves* and for the souls of all the faithful departed. Vouchsafe to apply to *us* the infinite merits of thy passion, upon which *we* are now about to meditate. Grant that, while *we* trace this path of sighs and tears, *our* heart(s) may be so touched with contrition and repentance, that *we* may be ready to embrace with joy all the crosses and sufferings and humiliations of this *our* life and pilgrimage. Amen.

And the following may be added:

O MOST sorrowful Mother Mary, who first followed in the way of the cross, may the Most Adorable Trinity, through thy most powerful intercession, receive and

accept, in reparation for *our* sins, and the sins of the whole world, the affections of sorrow and love, with which *we* intend, with God's help, to perform this holy exercise. Amen.

Before each Station say:

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee.

R. Because by thy Holy Cross thou hast redeemed the world.

After each Station say:

Act of Contrition

O GOD, we love thee with our whole hearts and above all things and are heartily sorry that we have offended thee. May we never offend thee any more. O, may we love thee without ceasing, and make it our delight to do in all things thy most holy will.

OUR Father.

HAIL, Mary.

GLORY be.

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy upon us.

✠ May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

FIRST STATION



Jesus is Condemned to Death

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

LEAVING the house of Caiaphas where he had been blasphemed, and the house of Herod where he had been mocked, Jesus is dragged before Pilate, his back torn with scourges, his head crowned with thorns; and he who on the last day will judge the living and the dead, is himself condemned to a shameful death.

It was for us that thou didst suffer, O blessed Jesus; it was for our sins thou wast condemned to die. Oh, grant that we may detest them from the bottom of our hearts, and by this repentance obtain Thy mercy and pardon.

Act of Contrition, &c.

By the Cross sad vigil keeping,
Stood the Mother, doleful weeping,
Where her Son extended hung.

SECOND STATION



Jesus Receives the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

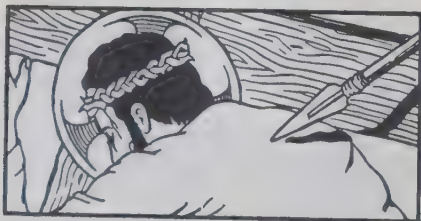
A HEAVY cross is laid upon the bruised shoulders of Jesus. He receives it with meekness, nay with a secret joy, for it is the instrument with which he is to redeem the world. What efforts do we make, on the other hand, to escape all suffering as far as we can?

O Jesus, grant us, by virtue of thy cross, to embrace with meekness and cheerful submission the difficulties of our state and to be ever ready to take up our cross and follow thee.

Act of Contrition, &c.

For her soul of joy bereaved,
Smit with anguish, deeply grieved,
Lo, the piercing sword hath wrung.

THIRD STATION



Jesus Falls the First Time under the
Weight of the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

BOWED down under the weight of the Cross Jesus slowly sets forth on the way to Calvary, amidst the mockeries and insults of the crowd. His agony in the garden has exhausted his body; he is sore with blows and wounds; his strength fails him, he falls to the ground under the Cross.

O Jesus! who for our sins didst bear the heavy burden of the cross and fall under its weight, may the thought of thy sufferings make us watchful over ourselves, and save us from any grievous fall into sin.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
Now was she that Mother blessed
Of the sole-begotten One!

FOURTH STATION



Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

STILL burdened with his cross, and wounded yet more by his fall, Jesus proceeds on his way. He is met by his Mother. What a meeting must that have been! What a sword of anguish must have pierced that Mother's bosom! What must have been the compassion of that Son for his holy Mother!

O Jesus! by the compassion which thou didst feel for thy Mother, have compassion on us and give us a share in her intercession. O Mary, most afflicted Mother! intercede for us, that through the sufferings of thy Son we may be delivered from the wrath to come.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Woe-begone with heart's prostration,
Mother, meek, the bitter Passion
Saw she of her glorious Son.

FIFTH STATION



The Cross is Laid on Simon of Cyrene

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

AS the strength of Jesus fails, and he is unable to proceed, the executioners seize and compel Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross. The virtue of that cross changed his heart, and from being a compulsory task it became a privilege and joy.

O Lord Jesus! may it be our privilege also to bear thy cross; may we glory in nothing else; by it may the world be crucified unto us and we unto the world; may we never shrink from suffering, but rather rejoice if we be counted worthy to suffer for thy Name's sake.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Who on Christ's fond Mother looking,
Such extreme affliction brooking,
Born of woman, would not weep?

SIXTH STATION



St. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

AS Jesus proceeds on the way, covered with the sweat of death, a woman moved with compassion makes her way through the crowd and wipes his face with her veil. As a reward of her piety, the impression of his sacred countenance is miraculously imprinted upon the veil.

O Jesus! may the contemplation of thy suffering move us with the deepest compassion, make us to hate our sins, and kindle in our hearts more fervent love to thee. May thy image be graven on our minds, until we are transformed into thy likeness.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Who on Christ's fond Mother thinking,
With her Son in sorrow sinking,
Would not share her sorrows deep?

SEVENTH STATION



Jesus Falls the Second Time

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

THE pain of his wounds and the loss of blood increasing at every step of his way, again his strength fails him and Jesus falls to the ground a second time. Our pride has caused his fall, it is our insolent haughtiness which crushes him to the earth.

O Jesus! falling again under the burden of our sins, and of thy sufferings for our sins, how often have we grieved thee by our repeated falls into sin! Oh, may we rather die than offend thee again!

Act of Contrition, &c.

For His People's sins rejected,
She her Jesus unprotected

Saw with thorns, with scourges rent.

EIGHTH STATION



The Women of Jerusalem Mourn for Our Lord

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

AT the sight of the sufferings of Jesus, some holy women in the crowd were so touched with sympathy that they openly bewailed and lamented him. Jesus, knowing the things that were to come to pass, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

O Lord Jesus, we mourn and will mourn both for thee and for ourselves, for thy sufferings and for our sins which caused them. Oh, teach us so to mourn that we may be comforted, and escape those judgments prepared for all who reject thee.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Saw her Son from judgment taken,
Her beloved in death forsaken,
Till His Spirit forth He sent.

NINTH STATION



Jesus Falls the Third Time under the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

JESUS had now arrived almost at the summit of Calvary, but before he reached the spot where he was to be crucified, his strength again fails him and he falls the third time, to be again dragged up and goaded onward by the brutal soldiery.

O Lord Jesus, we entreat thee, by the merits of this thy third most painful fall, to pardon our frequent relapses and our long continuance in sin; and may the thought of these thy sufferings make us hate our sins more and more.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Fount of love and holy sorrow,
Mother, may my spirit borrow
Somewhat of thy woe profound.

TENTH STATION



Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

ARRIVED at last at the place of sacrifice they prepare to crucify him. His garments are torn from his bleeding Body, and he, the Holy of holies, stands exposed to the vulgar gaze of the rude and scoffing multitude.

O Lord Jesus, thou didst endure this shame for our most shameful deeds. Strip us, we beseech thee, of all false shame, conceit and pride, and make us so to humble ourselves voluntarily in this life, that we may escape everlasting shame in the world to come.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Unto Christ with pure emotion
May I raise my heart's devotion,
Love to read in every wound.

ELEVENTH STATION



Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

THE cross is laid upon the ground and Jesus is stretched upon his bed of death. At one and the same time he offers his bruised limbs to his heavenly Father in behalf of sinful men, and to his fierce executioners to be nailed by them to the shameful wood. The blows are struck! The Precious Blood streams forth!

O Jesus! nailed to the cross, fasten our hearts there also, that they may be united to thee until death shall strike us with its fatal blow, and with our last breath we shall have yielded up our souls to thee.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Those five wounds of Jesus smitten,
Mother! in my heart be written,
Deep as in thine own they be.

TWELFTH STATION



Jesus Dies upon the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

FOR three hours has Jesus hung upon his pierced hands; his blood has run down in streams; and in the midst of excruciating sufferings, he has pardoned his murderers, promised the bliss of Paradise to the good thief, and committed his blessed Mother and Beloved Disciple to each other's care. All is now finished; and meekly bowing down his head, he gives up the ghost.

O Jesus! we devoutly embrace that honored cross where thou didst love us even unto death. In that death we place all our confidence. Henceforth let us live only for thee; and in dying for thee let us die loving thee.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Thou, my Saviour's Cross who bearest,
Thou, thy Son's rebuke who sharest,
Let me share them both with thee.

THIRTEENTH STATION



Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

THE multitude have left the heights of Calvary and none remain save the Beloved Disciple and the holy women, who at the foot of the cross are striving to stem the grief of Christ's most loving Mother. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take the body of her divine Son from the cross, and deposit it in her arms.

O Mary, blessed Mother of my God, thou bearest in thine arms thine only Son, now dead, who often rested his head in sleep upon thy breast. Pray for us, that as thou holdest him lifeless in death, he may bear us up in the hour of our death in his everlasting arms.

Act of Contrition, &c.

Mine with thee be that sad station,
There to watch the great salvation
Wrought upon the atoning tree.

FOURTEENTH STATION



Jesus is Laid in the Sepulchre

We adore Thee, &c. Because, &c.

THE body of her dearly beloved Son is taken from his Mother, and laid by the disciples in the tomb. The tomb is closed, and there the lifeless body remains until the hour of its glorious resurrection.

We too, O God, will descend into the grave whenever it shall please thee, as it shall please thee, and wheresoever it shall please thee. Suffer our sinful bodies to return to their parent dust; but do thou, in thy great mercy, receive our immortal souls, and when our bodies have risen again place them likewise in thy kingdom, that we may love and bless thee for ever and ever. Amen.

Act of Contrition, &c.

To my parting soul be given
Entrance at the gate of Heaven,
And in Paradise a place.

Then the following Antiphon and prayer are said:

Antiphon. Christ became obedient unto death for us, even the death of the Cross.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross; Who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

At the end of each Station, in place of Stabat Mater may be sung:

From pain to pain, from woe to woe,
With loving hearts and footsteps slow
To Calvary with Christ we go.

See how his precious Blood
At every Station pours:
Was ever grief like His?
Was ever sin like ours?