



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

April 2023

STATION I

Jesus is condemned to die.
Carnarvon Street – Law Courts

Leader

Pilate said, "I find no fault with this man," but when the crowd grew loud, he grew silent "I wash my hands. You deal with him." Pilate had the knowledge and the power to stand and say 'no' to the world as it sought to crush the Lord of Life. He did not use either.

How many times do I have the knowledge and the power to say 'no', and stay silent? How many times do I participate, by my silence, in the Passion of Jesus? Who will die because I do not say 'no'?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, you hear my silence and you still love me. Because you say 'no' to the world, the world says 'no' to you. By the power of your Holy Spirit, give me the courage to stand and say 'no' with you. Help me to take up my cross and follow you.

Chant

**Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?**

STATION II

Jesus takes up his cross.

Begbie Court

Leader

This cross has been thousands of years in the making. Its weight grows greater each time I look for someone to blame for the pain in my world. Each time I insist that sin must be punished, I add an ounce to the burden Jesus carries for me. This is the cross he carries, the cross of blame, of vengeance.

When have I said, "Well, he certainly deserved that!" or "It's only fair. Look at what she did!"? When have I failed to forgive as I have been forgiven? When have I laid more weight on your blessed shoulders?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, each step you take today is made harder by my hardness of heart. You carry this weight so that no one else ever will, not even me. By the power of your Holy Spirit, please give me the desire and the strength to forgive, to lighten your cross.

Chant

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

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to tremble, tremble, tremble.

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STATION III

Jesus falls the first time.
8th Street at Begbie

Leader

The laughter at your first fall is transformative, Jesus. The gathered 'I's' surrounding you laugh together, becoming a 'we' for the first time. We laugh together; we reduce you to a joke, a something less than human. Your first fall is the fall of Larry or Moe or Curly, but it is also the fall of my 'I'. I am lost now, in the collective 'I' of the mob.

How many times, Lord, have I sacrificed my 'I' as I took satisfaction or pleasure in the fall of another? How many lynchings have I started with my laughter?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, lying there on the ground, you feel my laughter, our laughter, as a slap to the face, a pulling of the beard. In your innocence, you cause me to question my desire to laugh at anyone else. By the power of your Holy Spirit, Lord, open our ears to our laughter and close our mouths. Help us to see the human beneath the clown.

Chant

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STATION IV

Jesus meets his mother.

8th Street at the light

Leader

We want to make you a clown. We want to isolate you completely, but your mother will not permit it. She withstands the blows of taunt and sorrow to be present for you along the way. She alone remains to give you courage, to remind us that you are someone's child, just like we all are.

How many times, Lord, have we watched another suffer but from a safe distance? How many times have you looked out through the eyes of another for comfort but were unable to find it?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, your mother stood with you to give you strength and to hold up your humanity in the face of our indifference. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to see the humanity of those whom the world wants to erase, and give us the courage to stand with them, to strengthen them and to claim them as our kin.

Chant

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Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

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STATION V

Simon helps Jesus carry the Cross.
Columbia Street & 8th by Piva Restaurant

Leader

We need you to die, Jesus, but our rage has gone too far. You are too weak to continue on to the head of the mountain because we have beaten you so severely. When you cannot go on by yourself, we look for a solution that will not involve us too closely. We must not touch the cross ourselves, but the process must go on. Then we find our answer. A stranger, someone who obviously has no idea who you are, will carry the cross. He knows nothing of your innocence.

How many others have we called on to do our violence for us? How many soldiers pulled triggers because we could not? How many executioners pushed buttons for us?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, Simon stood in for us when you could not go forward. He helped us carry forward your execution in ignorance. Witnessing your courage and love, he became your friend and ours. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to see our reluctance for what it is, a sign that something very wrong is happening. Give us courage to step forward when you cannot go on and say, 'Enough!'

Chant

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STATION VI

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
Columbia Plaza by the statue

Leader

You have been beaten so badly that you are 'marred beyond human semblance'. As you walk along, you are almost unrecognizable. It is so much easier for us to hate you, to jeer you, to wish you dead when we cannot see your face. Veronica will not permit us that luxury. She steps forward and wipes away the blood and sweat, showing your human face to all of us.

How many times have we missed your humanity, Jesus? How many times has it been easier to deal with your suffering because we left your face marred beyond recognition? Do we have it in us to see your face?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, your suffering is the suffering of a truly human being, suffering we want to avoid seeing. We want to make your suffering something divine or something less than human. We do not want to connect too closely to you. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to see what Veronica reveals. Help us to see your humanity in all the suffering around us.

Chant

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STATION VII

Jesus falls the second time.
Front & Begbie before the light

Leader

The first time you fell, we laughed. This fall elicits our hatred. Even though we have forced Simon to help you, you will not play your part. 'Get up! Get up, you!' We are desperate to find an outlet for our rage. Life is not the way we want it to be, and someone has to pay. 'Get up! Get up, Jesus! Hurry up!'

How many times have we added our voices to the mob's, kicked someone when she was down? It is not that it is easier for us to attack someone who is weakened; it is not easier; it is necessary. We need you to fall, so that we can see you as different, as disappointing, as worthy of our hatred.

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, what wondrous love is this? You fall to the earth so that we might rise. You endure our hatred so that we might escape it. By the power of your Holy Spirit, Lord, open our eyes to our need for someone to hate, and to your willingness to be hated for our sake.

Chant

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STATION VIII

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
Columbia & Begbie before the light

Leader

“Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children.” The women of Jerusalem want to weep for you as though your fate were unrelated to theirs, as though the violence you suffer did not own them as well. You turn their sympathy back on them, reminding them that your fate is their fate, too.

How many times have we contemplated your Passion, Lord, and wanted to cry for you? How many times have we wanted to weep because of your pain and not because we caused it? How often have we blinded ourselves to our complicity in violence by feeling sorry for the victims?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, we want to be converted not just to feel sorry. We know that you love us too much to leave us wallowing in pity. By the power of your Holy Spirit, open our eyes to the ways that we benefit from the suffering of others, so that we might weep for ourselves and for our children.

Chant

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STATION IX

Jesus falls the third time.
Columbia by Lea's Bridal Salon

Leader

Jesus, you have done all that you can do. When you fall this last time, you entrust the remainder of what must be done to us. There is no more strength. You are utterly beaten, defeated, but we are not finished. Like the potter's clay, we will now make you into what we need you to be.

How many times have we seen another's weakness as an opportunity to shape them, to change them into what we want them to be? How many times do we take advantage of the fact that you are too weak to resist, Jesus, and fasten you to the cross?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, there is a good reason that we cannot leave well enough alone, that we must continue on, no matter how thoroughly crushed our victim seems to be. It is not enough that you are defeated; you must allow us to put you into the shape of the guilty one, the one who deserves what I have done. By the power of your Holy Spirit, teach me the real meaning of mercy. Deliver me from the need for a guilty victim, lest I make one.

Chant

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STATION X

Jesus is stripped before the crowd.
Columbia & McKenzie before the lights

Leader

Physical humiliation is not enough. Spitting is not enough. Whipping is not enough. Crucifixion is not enough. We need to shame you. We need to strip away from you any shred of human dignity. We are blind to the dignity in which your Father clothes you. Unable to see your deeper dignity, we revel in the shame we pour out on you.

How many times have we braded someone with a scarlet letter? Drunk, convict, weakling? How many times have we labelled another human being, so as to set them apart, reducing them to nothing by using shame?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, as you stand there, stripped before the crowd, you are more dignified than any of us present. In our blindness, we still believe that shame reduces you. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to see the dignity that you have, that every child of God has, a dignity that neither we nor anyone else can ever take away.

Chant

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STATION XI

Jesus is nailed to the cross.
Columbia & 6th before the lights

Leader

Hanging for hours on a cross is not cruel enough, Jesus. Watching you suffocate will not mollify our rage. Life has been so unfair to us, we have such rage that we have to use nails, instead of the traditional ropes. Rage bleeds away as nails, meant for wood, cut easily through human flesh.

How many times have we allowed our rage to drive us to cruelty? Cruel acts? Cruel speech? How many times has another person borne the scars of our rage?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, we cannot free ourselves of this frustration, this fury, by means of our own strength, but we know that you are able. By the power of your Holy Spirit, free us. Take from us this rage, lest someone else suffer to assuage our pain.

Chant

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STATION XII

Jesus dies on the Cross.
Just before Royal City Jewellers

Leader

We stand in stunned silence as we survey the result of our sin. The Lord of Life hangs dead from the tree. The peace we pursued as we chased you up the hill refuses to come. As we gaze upon you, Jesus, our victim, the realization dawns. Violence will never again bring peace, and we are terrified.

Mute with horror, we stumble to our homes, as though the earth were moving under our feet. The ground itself seems unsteady as we contemplate a world without violence. On what will we stand?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, keep our eyes fastened on you, hanging lifeless on the Cross. Not only today, but every day, remind us of the cost, the bankruptcy of our old ways, and drive us into this silence so that you might speak a new world into being in us.

Chant

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STATION XIII

Jesus is taken down from the Cross.
Columbia & Church Streets

Leader

We have all departed by the time the guards permit those who love you to bring you down from the Cross. Once the spectacle ended, we are compelled to leave. There is something horrible and fascinating about you as you hang there, and it frightens us. We leave the task of dealing with your body to those who are already unclean.

How often, O Lord, have we fled our own horror, left the care of the dead and the dying to others? How many times have we let our fear of the power of death drive us into hiding?

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, as your mother and your friends cared for your dead body, we are nowhere to be found. We refuse to touch the dead, as though their holiness would make us unclean. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to see beyond this falseness, to see how, by your death, you have stripped all death of its holiness.

Chant

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STATION XIV

Jesus is laid in the tomb.
Holy Trinity Cathedral Tower Doors

Leader

In a tomb that you could never have afforded, those who did not abandon you, those who refused to join the mob, lay your body to rest with great tenderness. There is nothing divine in the torn flesh, nothing holy in the bloodied brow. There is only sorrow, deeper than the greatest trenched in the ocean. Sorrow.

You will breathe life once again into our deadened spirits, Jesus, but not on this day. Today we walk as those robbed of hope, shuffling from one place to another as though we belonged in the tomb with you. Perhaps, without the breath of your new life, that is precisely where we belong.

Silence

All

Dearest Jesus, we have seen ourselves as we truly are, reflected in your loving eyes as we laughed and kicked and rained down blows. We wait now for your redemption. We are hungry now for a life that does not need the blood of victims to sustain itself. Our hunger threatens to consume us. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep this hunger alive. Help us never again to be satisfied with the bread of this world.

Chant

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EPILOGUE
A Closing Prayer
Holy Trinity Cathedral Main Door

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look graciously, we pray, on this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Silence

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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Send down your abundant blessing, Lord, upon your people who have devoutly recalled the death of your Son in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. Grant them pardon; bring them comfort. May their faith grow stronger and their eternal salvation be assured. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Refreshments will be served in the Parish Hall.