

A prayerful, spiritual pilgrimage of  
**THE VIA DOLOROSA**  
The Fourteen Stations of the cross!

As we reflect on the  
Via Dolorosa  
The Way of Grief  
may we remember what Jesus did for us,  
and as we pray  
humbly desire a closer walk with the Lord  
and  
resolve to love Jesus more!



**Jesus on the Mount of Olives**

*First Station of the cross*

On the Mount of Olives Jesus prayed alone, on his knees, with humility and obedience:  
**"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." (Lk 22:42)**

After struggling with God in prayer, Jesus was ready to enter upon the road to the cross and to follow it to the bitter end. Why would he have done this?

It is for us! Jesus willingly drank the cup of God's wrath for us. It should have been us. Instead, it was Jesus who drained it to the dregs. See how much he loves you and me! What a blessing, never to have to fear the anger and judgement of a holy God!

*Prayer: "Lord Jesus, we can face life, knowing that when we humbly seek your will, your strength will be our strength, because you drank the cup of judgement to make us righteous in your Father's sight. Your loving, merciful will be done, your glorious kingdom come – also in my life!" Amen*



**Jesus betrayed and arrested**

*The second station of the cross...*

Luke 22:47-48: *While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?"*

It was the custom that a student would greet his teacher with a kiss in Biblical times – to show respect and to show submission. It would be similar to the kiss of a son given to a father today! Judas chose to use

this sign of respect, to betray the Lord

How many times did we reverently confess Jesus as Lord, yet we are continuously reinforcing ourselves as the real lord of our lives? How many times have we worshiped Jesus, saying and singing that we are in awe of his sacrifice - with our mouths - not with a kiss but with words, only to again abandon him in our souls and in our works?

*"O Lord, as much as I hate to confess it, there is a bit of Judas in me. Forgive me for the times when I pledged allegiance to you, made promises to you, (even in church with the congregation as witnesses) only to discard you in the way that I live. Help me to see where my message to you is a mixed one, where worship and praise and betrayal and deceit live in the very same heart. Deliver me oh Lord, for what I do, is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing! Through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen."*



### Jesus Condemned by the Sanhedrin

*The Third Station of the cross:*

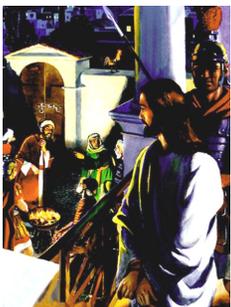
**Luke 22: 66-69:** *When day came, the assembly of the elders (the Jewish Sanhedrin), both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought Jesus to their council. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the*

*Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."*

Jesus was condemned by the Sanhedrin because he claimed to be the Messiah who would share in the glory and the power of God! Jesus claimed that he would be "seated at the right hand of the power of God". This was perceived by the council, beginning with the high priest, as clear evidence of Jesus' blasphemy.

We are blessed, when we as followers of Jesus who acknowledge him as personal Saviour, seek to do the works of his kingdom, looking forward to the day when it will be completed.

*Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to understand what it means when I confess you as the Christ, the Anointed of God and glorious King of everything. May this confession lead me to a life of complete faithful discipleship in everything I do. Let your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. And let this happen in my life today! Amen*



### Peter denied Jesus.

*Fourth Station of the Cross*

**Luke 22: 56 - 57** *Then a servant-girl, seeing Peter in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him."*

Why did Peter deny Jesus? Because he was afraid. Fear startles us in the middle of the night and keeps us awake for hours. It prevents us from reaching for our dreams or from reaching out to others in love. Fear cripples our souls and binds our hearts. It locks us in prison and throws away the key.

What is the remedy for such fear? It is in trusting God, believing the Word of Christ. It is in knowing what divine love is, because of what Jesus did for me on the *Via Dolorosa*, the way of grief., that fear is conquered.

Not through rationalization or mind-control, but by leaning more fully into the loving care of God and knowing that he will never let us go.

**Prayer:** *Forgive me, dear Lord, when I let fear get in the way of my relationship with you. Forgive me for all the times I have fallen short in my discipleship, because I've been afraid. Forgive me for failing to trust you when you've proven yourself to be completely worthy of my trust. Amen.*



### Jesus sentenced by Pontius Pilate.

*Fifth Station of the cross*

Pontius Pilate is a paradigm of the person who fails to take responsibility for his actions. Pilate issued the verdict that sent Jesus to the cross. Yet he did so in a way to appear innocent of the blood of Jesus. He did not take responsibility for what he had done. He washed his hands of what he was doing wrong

**Matthew 27:23-24** *"What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" When*

*Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"*

When blaming others when I do wrong, I won't confess what I have done as sin. This will keep me from experiencing the grace of God, enjoying the fullness of God's forgiveness. We will be blessed when we tell God the truth about our sins, and experience his forgiveness through Christ Jesus.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, help me to acknowledge my sins, both to myself and to you, rather than justifying myself through immature and pointless excuses and defences. My hands will only be clean, Lord, when I am washed in the blood of the Lamb! Amen.*



### Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

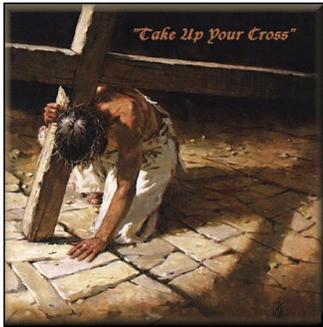
*The Sixth Station of the cross*

*And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face - John 19:2 & 3*

What cruel irony! Jesus finally received the words he deserved: "Hail, King of the Jews!" What incomprehensible irony! Jesus, the true king of Israel, endured the pain and mockery of the crown of thorns as part of his humiliation for us and our salvation.

**Prayer**

*Gracious, merciful Lord, how hard it is to read of the abuse you suffered even prior to your crucifixion. What can I say in response, but "Thank You" for walking the path of grief, suffering and shame for my sake. You took the abuse that I deserved, and gave me your glory in return. Help me, dear Lord, to always honour you as my King in all that I do. Amen.*



### **Jesus takes up the cross** *Seventh Station of the cross*

Even though the Roman soldiers led Jesus out to crucify him, they were only doing what he had said they would do.

So, though "they led him out to crucify him," (Mark 15:20) Jesus was no passive victim. Jesus took up his cross and walked to Golgotha, because he had chosen the way of suffering. He believed this was the will of God, the way by which he would realize his messianic destiny. Jesus chose to suffer and die

so that he might fulfil Isaiah's vision of the Suffering Servant of God, the one who was "despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity." As this Servant, Jesus "has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases."

You will be blessed when you accept in faith that Jesus was "wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed". (Isaiah 53:3-5).

#### **Prayer:**

Dear Lord, you chose the cross. Those who led you to Golgotha were simply working out what God had willed and you, Lord Jesus, had freely and painfully chosen. How can I thank you for this costly choice? Because you took up the cross, I can take up life in all of its fullness. Because you were led to die, I can be led into the eternal life. Because you carried my sin, I can enjoy forgiveness. How good you are to me, dear Lord, my Saviour!  
Amen.



### **Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross**

*The Eighth Station of the cross*

**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.*

Jesus beckons to us, calling us to take up our cross, offering abundant life in return. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

#### **Prayer**

Dear Lord, I am also to take up the cross and follow you. I sometimes resist this call, even though I know that in dying to myself, I find true life in you. So help me, Lord, to carry my cross, to give my life away so that I might receive the abundant life of your kingdom. Amen.



### **Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem** *The Ninth Station of the cross*

**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."*

Jesus did not die as a helpless victim of Roman or Jewish injustice. He chose to die on the cross in faithfulness to the Father's will and to bear the sin of the world. If anyone is to

blame for the death of Jesus, we are, because we have sinned. Thus in looking upon Jesus' death, we join the women of Jerusalem in weeping, not for Jesus, but for ourselves. In the death of Jesus we see what we deserve, and we rightly feel appalled.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, may my weeping over the suffering of Jesus be the result of my sorrow over my own sin that caused your pain. Turn it to joy when I recognize the majesty of your mercy. Amen.

### **Jesus is Crucified**

*The Tenth Station of the cross*



**Luke 23: 33 :** *When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.*

Jesus was crucified at "the place that is called The Skull". The other Gospels mention that it was called Golgotha, the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word that means "skull." We get

the English word "Calvary" by way of the Latin "calvariae locum", which also means place of the skull.

Jesus died for my sins. The death of Jesus really happened, in a real place at a real time. There the Lord of Glory suffered and died for the sins of the world - and for my own sins. I yearn to experience the truth of Jesus' death more profoundly. The images of the Via Dolorosa invite me to follow Jesus to the cross, that I may experience deeper gratitude for the blessings I can so easily take for granted.

#### **Prayer**

Gracious Lord, how can I ever thank You for dying on the cross for me? Your death has given me life. Your sacrifice has led to my blessing. Yet I confess that I can sometimes take your death for granted, forgetting what you did for me and neglecting its significance. Forgive me, Lord. And even though I can't go to the actual place of your crucifixion today, may the reality of your sacrifice press itself upon my mind and flood my heart. All praise to You, merciful Lord, for Your cross! Amen.



### Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

*The Eleventh Station of the cross*

**Luke 23:39-43:** *One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man*

*has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

If this crucified criminal could have hope, then you and I can as well. We hope, not in our goodness, not in our good intentions, but in the matchless mercy of God.

#### Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for your mercy. You give us, not what we deserve, but infinitely better. Thank you for hearing my cries and responding, remembering even me. Thank you for the promise I have of Paradise beyond this life. In your presence there will be fullness of joy. Amen.



### Jesus on the Cross, His Mother, and His Disciple

*The Twelfth Station of the cross*

**John 19:25-27:** *Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 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."*

*And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.*

Jesus was making sure that his mother would be loved and cared for after his death - and in due course after his ascension. As we reflect upon the meaning of Christ's death, Mary's presence at the cross reminds us of the deeply human drama that is occurring, while it also points to the certainty of God's plan for salvation for those he loves.

#### Prayer

When I think of your mother, Lord, I remember that you weren't just the Son of God bearing the sins of the world, but also the son of Mary, the son whom she loved. It gives me a touching reminder of your humanity. Because you were truly human, you truly suffered. You did indeed bear the sins of the world, and mine as will. All praise be to my Lord, Jesus Christ! Amen.



### Jesus Dies on the Cross

*The Thirteenth Station of the cross*

**Luke 23:44-47:** *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. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."*

Because Jesus was righteous, because he was innocent, not just of crimes that deserved crucifixion, but of all wrongdoing, he was able to make many righteous by bearing the sin of others. He became the spotless, atoning sacrifice for all – yes for me.

#### Prayer

Merciful Lord, thank you for your perfect life and sacrificial death. Thank You for taking my sin upon yourself, and giving me your righteousness in return. I look upon Your cross today with wonder. I'm astonished by your willingness to suffer and die for me, the Righteous One for the unrighteous. Amen.



### Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

*The Fourteenth Station of the cross*

**Luke 23:50-54:** *Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it*

*in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.*

The burial explains the place from which Jesus was raised. It also makes it absolutely clear that Jesus really died on the cross.

The main purpose of The Stations of the Cross is to draw us more deeply into the mystery and mercy, and also the reality of the cross, so that we might truly and powerfully experience the love of God.

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus, we remember that you really died. You experienced the ultimate penalty for our sin, for my sin. Your real death opened up the door for me to experience real life. Faced with such a merciful mystery, I cry: "Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" Amen!