



In The Footsteps of Christ

In Commemoration of World Social Justice Day – February 20, 2015.

“We have much work to do to create communities that value and promote the dignity of each human person; communities that respect life and that work to create conditions that will enable each person to realise his/her potential”.



FOREWORD

The United Nations' General Assembly proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice in 2007, inviting Member States to devote the day to promoting national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Observance of World Day of Social Justice should support efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

The reality of World Day of Social Justice within the context of Lent is commemorated through reflections on our individual reactions to human pain, suffering and indignity within the analogy of Jesus' Passion.

Can we by our interactions with our neighbours, class mates, teachers, loved ones, co-workers, mirror Christ, mirror a solution to the injustices among us?

Let us then, through these Stations, walk this road with Jesus and visualize the injustices through his lens and so reflect on our personal choices or reactions.

Let's have a **WWJD** moment – What will Jesus Do – and find ourselves as an extension of his love through these meditations.

Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

"Away with this man! Release Barabbas for us!" "Crucify, crucify him!"

What would have made the people in the crowd change their minds? He did so much good! he healed so many! He taught in their synagogue! He fed thousands, and proclaimed a message of peace. why would they now be calling for His death?

Whatever it was, their thoughts and feelings led them to give up the power they had to preserve the life of Jesus. Instead of using their voices to cry out for life the crowd chose to call for His death!

Sometimes we can be like the people in that crowd. We too can forget about the good in people and we give up on them sometimes. It's easy to focus on their negative qualities or situations and just shout out "crucify them, crucify them!" We may have never said these exact words to a person, but by the way we treat them they surely have been sentenced to death; we ignore their needs and write them off; we treat them as if we wished they didn't exist.

Let's take a moment and think of the person or persons in our lives that we ignore or we have written off. They may be friends, family members, people at work or school, groups in society; all of which we choose to abandon and ignore.

Moment of silence

Let us pray

Lord Jesus,

For the times I stood in the crowd

And condemned other people to death

I say sorry

For the times when I gave up on others and even myself

I say sorry.

Fill me with Your love and courage to always have hope in the goodness of others,

In Your name I pray.

Amen.

Jesus is Made to Carry His Cross

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“...and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.”

(John 19:17)

In this station Jesus enters into the experience of so many people. Life and people have failed Him; he has a lot of reasons to just give up on the world, but He carries His cross. He carries what will be the source of His pain and death; He doesn't try to pass it off or beg for it to be lighter.

Let us think of the many people in this world for whom life has “failed”, persons stricken with terminal diseases, those who unexpectedly lost a child or a spouse, persons who face major job loss, or going through a rough divorce. However, in spite of their difficulties, they carry their cross. They do not blame others, or necessarily expect others to have the solution to their problems; they understand that just as they found Jesus on the cross, that so too, they will find their faith on the cross and so they shoulder the cross in spite of their challenges.

What is your attitude to the difficulties in your life? Do you see it as a cross to resurrection victory or as a cross to victim sympathy.

Moment of silence

Let us pray

Brother Jesus,

Out of love and responsibility You shouldered the cross;

Making space for me in your father's house

Give me the grace to see beyond my cross

And find my victory in the eye of the storm

Walking in Your footsteps, sharing your crown.

Amen.

Jesus Falls for the First Time

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

They jeer at Him and kick Him as he lies on the ground. "Get up! Get up!" "He healed so many! Now he can't carry a cross!"

"I walked on water; I multiplied loaves! I calmed storms! And now I fall because I just can't go on"

Here, we encounter the frailty of the humanity of Christ. He did so many things that were amazing, wondrous, and inspiring and now He is flat on the ground, too tired to go on.

How many of us can relate to this experience? We do good things however bad things happen sometimes or we just trip and fall in life. The journey can't be perfect no matter how much we want it to be. Our Lord teaches us that there will be falls. We will fall and others will as well. When this happens do we respond like some in the crowd and mock and pass judgement on others? How do we react to mistakes in our lives and the lives of those around us?

Jesus falls but He gets back up. He accepts His limitations; he embraces it and finds the strength to move on. Can you follow His example?

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Lord,

You fell under the weight of the cross,

But You did not remain on the ground.

Help me to accept my limitations and the limitations of others.

People will fall.

Help me to show compassion and mercy to those who have fallen.

May I use my voice to encourage them to get up and continue walking.

I ask this in Your holy Name.

Amen.



**FOLLOWING
JESUS ON THE WAY
TO THE
CROSS**

Matthew 16:13-26



Jesus Meets Mary, His Mother

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

His eyes try to peer through the blood and sweat that runs down His face to glance at the crowd. He sees some faces that feel pity for Him, others that are indifferent while some look as if they are enjoying this torture.

After a while of dragging onwards His eyes then meet with those of Mary, His mother. For a moment they are able to gaze at each other. In that simple moment He can feel all of her love, concern, and pain; she suffers with Him, and He with her.

At this point He feels a little hope. The journey is tough but He knows He has someone who is loving and supporting Him through it.

How many persons in this world long to know that they are not suffering alone? How many long to have a mother, or father, or a relative, or just a friend or a stranger just give them that look of love to help them to carry on?

Let us pause to thank God for the Mary's in our lives; the people who we meet while carrying our crosses that give us hope and support. Let us also pray that we too can be a Mary for another.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

O Jesus,

What it must have meant to You to see Your mother in that crowd.

So many emotions and thoughts may have bombarded You in that moment.

I thank You for the Marys in my life,

And ask for the grace to follow her example more and more each day.

In Your name I pray.

Amen.

Simon Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“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” (Luke 23:26)

Finally, Jesus gets some help. The soldiers make Simon carry the cross of Jesus. What a relief it would have been for Jesus to get some help to shoulder the weight of the cross. It isn't clear if Simon was willing to perform this task, but no matter what he felt inside we know that he did it. He helped Jesus to bare the load for a time.

We too are called to be Simons in this world. We are called to do more than stand on the side and watch others carry their crosses. Our standing with others in their pain means more than looking on; we are invited to show our solidarity in concrete actions as Simon did.

When last did you help someone carry their cross? When did you do something to lighten their load? Maybe you listened to them, prayed for and with them, fed them, or offered an embrace. Whatever you did for them you can thank God that you were being a *Simon* to them in that moment.

Let us pray that we will become more and more persons who willingly and joyfully carry the cross with others.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Brother Jesus,

You allowed Simon to carry the cross with You.

Help me to allow others to carry my crosses,

But more so today I pray that I will become a person

Who is always trying to lighten the crosses of persons around me.

Give me the grace to see their needs,

And the courage to respond in concrete ways.

I ask this in Your name.

Amen.

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

She sees Him coming. She can still see mud, spittle, and blood on His weary face. Her heart brims over with compassion and it runs down into her hands, and she is moved to offer Jesus her veil. He accepts, and he allows her to wipe His face.

She could not carry the cross with Him like Simon, but she could treat Him with the dignity that He deserved. Yes He was being labelled as a criminal and troublemaker, but she looked beyond all of that and saw a person; someone who deserved her love and attention, and so she reaches out.

Sometimes in life we cannot lighten people's loads, but we can help them to remember that they are more than their pain and suffering; they are persons made by a loving god.

Let us remember all those who serve the sick and dying, those in prison, refugees addicts, prostitutes, and victims of crime and war. They cannot change the reality that some people are facing, but they help them to live with dignity.

Let us remember as well, that just as tradition tells us that an image of the face of Jesus was left on Veronica's veil, we too are called to let those we serve leave a print on the veil of our hearts. Each moment of service is also a moment for us to let persons leave a mark on our lives for the better.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Lord Jesus,

You allowed Veronica to wipe away the blood, spittle and mud that covered Your face.

Help us to recognise You when You present Yourself to us in others.

May we have the compassion and courage of Veronica,

To joyfully and lovingly wipe their faces.

and see in their face a reflection of Your Face.

I ask this in Your precious name.

Amen.

*The Way Of The
Cross...*

*...The Way of
Commitment
and Service*

Mark 8:34; 15:21



Jesus Falls For the Second Time

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Once again the cross and Jesus crash to the ground. Simon's help and Veronica's act of love still couldn't give Him all of the support He needed. The cross still took a toll on His body. This can be a hard truth to accept. Sometimes no matter how much help and support is offered to us and to others we can still fall under the weight of the cross.

Let us think of all of the children, young persons, and adults who are still falling even though some are trying to help them. It is easy to give in to the temptation that they don't want the help, or they should just be left on the ground to suffer and die, but we are called to help them up and encourage them to keep trying. For some the journey to wholeness isn't easy, that doesn't mean we should look down on them.

Let us ask the Lord to help us today not to give up on ourselves or on others when we fall. We also pray that we will be able to see our face and the face of Christ in the struggles of others. Finally, let us ask for the grace not to give up on persons because they are struggling.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Jesus,

As You fell for another time,

Persons may have felt disappointed or upset that You couldn't just keep pressing on.

For the times I have thought and felt like that

I say sorry,

And I ask for the grace to always have hope in persons and most of all in Your power to save.

I ask this in Your holy name.

Amen.

Jesus meets the Weeping Women

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“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’” (Luke 23:27-28).

“don’t cry for me! Cry for yourselves and your children!” some harsh words coming from Jesus. Was He rejecting their sympathy? Most likely not! Jesus was calling them to see what His suffering meant for their lives and the loss that it would lead to later on. He wanted them to realise that what they were preparing to face would be worse than what He was going through at the time.

Sometimes we can be like these weeping women when we cry and feel for others but don’t let that pain come home to us. We can just see their pain but not fit their situation into our lives.

We may read the papers, or look at things online or on television and feel for the people, who are suffering, but how do our choices impact on their pain, and how does their pain cause us to live differently. This is the challenge of this station. How does Jesus’ suffering impact on your life? Does it move you to live differently?

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Lord for the times I didn’t let the pain and plight of others affect my own choices;

I say sorry!

For the times when I wept for others,

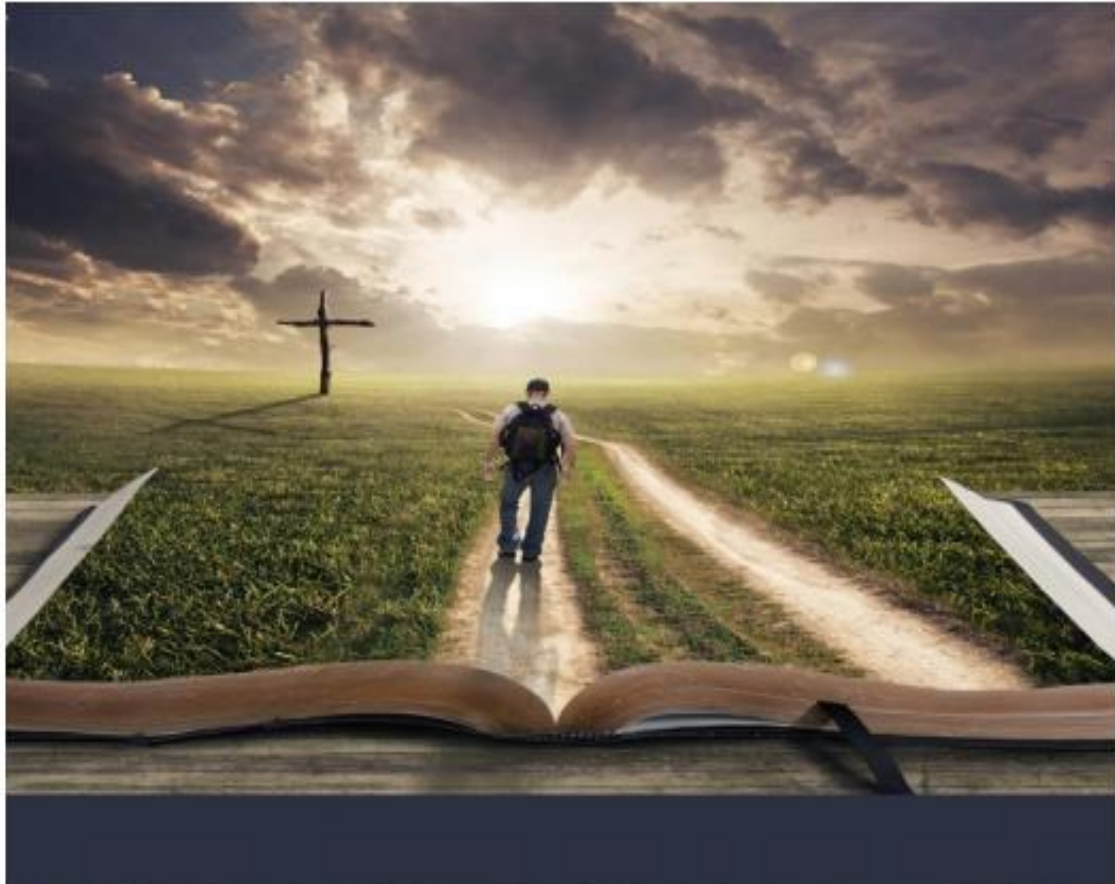
But I didn’t let their suffering connect with my own;

I say sorry.

Fill me with the grace to weep for others and myself because we all are parts of Your body.

In Your name I pray.

Amen.



THE WAY TO THE
CROSS LEADS HOME

Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Again the journey seems to be too much for Jesus. He tumbles to the ground for a third time. There is a hush in the crowd. Will He get up? Is He dead? He lies still for a moment. He is in pain and severely tired from all of the beating, mocking, being spat upon, and from carrying the cross.

Even the soldiers pause until they realised that he isn't dead before they continue to beat Him to get back up once again. They know the toll all of this is taking on Him but they are not interested in seeing Him rest. They also want this over with.

Sometimes in our lives we can become impatient. We can think that certain things in our lives should just hurry up and end. Worse yet when things start happening in ways that we didn't plan. Feelings of anger, frustration and resentment can creep into our hearts at this stage. We can be like the soldiers and the people in the crowd; we just want it to be over! We shout and beat up on ourselves and others until things get moving again. We are invited to grow in patience, gentleness and generosity in these moments. Do we grow, or do we get stuck in negativity?

Let us reflect on our attitude towards ourselves and others when mistakes keep repeating and even when things take longer than expected. Let us ask God to help us grow in gentleness and patience.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Lord Jesus,

Some persons may have felt very upset and angry when they saw You fall for another time;

Others may have felt pity for You and desired to help You.

Today, I pray that when I see myself and others fall repeatedly

That I may be able to show mercy, patience and gentleness to the one who has fallen.

I ask this in Your Holy name.

Amen.

Jesus is stripped of His Garments

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

He can finally put down the cross; he has reached Calvary. He is tired and covered in blood, mud and sweat; at least He can rest for a moment now. The guards grab Him and strip Him of all of His clothing. He is naked before the crowd.

Here our brother Jesus shares in the feeling of embarrassment and humiliation that we all may have felt at some time in our lives. He has united Himself to our shame, our fears, and in this moment our insecurities about our bodies.

His stripping is also a sharing in the experience of every person who has been stripped of their dignity and treated as an object instead of as a human.

Let us pause to bring our shame, fears, insecurities and all of the moments when others stripped us of our dignity by the things they said or did to us. Let us also remember persons everywhere who experience being stripped every day of layers of their lives due to injustice and abuse in any form.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

I thank you Jesus

That you can understand what it means to be exposed and vulnerable.

I thank you that You have shared in my fears, shame and insecurities.

Help me to unite all my shame to Yours so that I may be healed and renewed.

Help me to love my body,

And to restore dignity to those who have had it stripped away.

I ask this in Your Holy Name.

Amen.

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

His arms and legs are pulled and forced into place. The soldiers hammer in the nails through his flesh and bones as if they are just doing another days work. He screams out in pain, but no one comes to His aid. Everywhere is hurting he wishes He could just be numb to the pain that is roaring through His body, but He feels and endures it. He is sharing in the pain and plight of those who are in situations where they are being hurt, abused, wrongfully treated, and tortured and they don't know how they will get out. For those trapped in cycles of domination, abuse and victimization. He knows what it feels like; he has been there Himself!

Let us remember all who are stuck in situations where they are caused pain on a regular basis. They feel nailed down, and do not know how to be set free. Let us ask God to give them the strength to be liberated from unjust persecution and pain. It is not God's will for us to be harmed!

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Jesus,

Love helped You to endure the pain of the nails,

But so many suffer without a reason in this world, and feel like giving up.

Help us to always be aware of the pain that surrounds us,

And give us the grace to help those who are in bondage to find freedom.

I ask this in Your holy name.

Amen.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?!” “Father into Your Hands I commend my Spirit” two very opposing statements. On one hand He feels completely abandoned by the Father, and on the other He puts His everything into the Father’s hands. This is a true witness to love. Even when He cannot feel the Father’s presence, or be sure of His love; Christ still gives of Himself completely. This is what it means to be redeemed. To bridge the gap created by sin and to still experience the fullness of God’s love; a love that compels us to give of ourselves down to our last breath.

This is the love that we are invited to experience at the foot of the cross. The pain and sacrifice of the cross is transformed into the expression of God’s love for humanity. Let us pray for the grace to know the true meaning of the cross of Christ. Let us pray that we will come to know the love that caused Jesus to empty Himself out for us and let us pray that we can become imitators of that love each day.

Moment of Silence

O, Jesus,

Love caused You to tear down the veil of sin and the feeling of abandonment

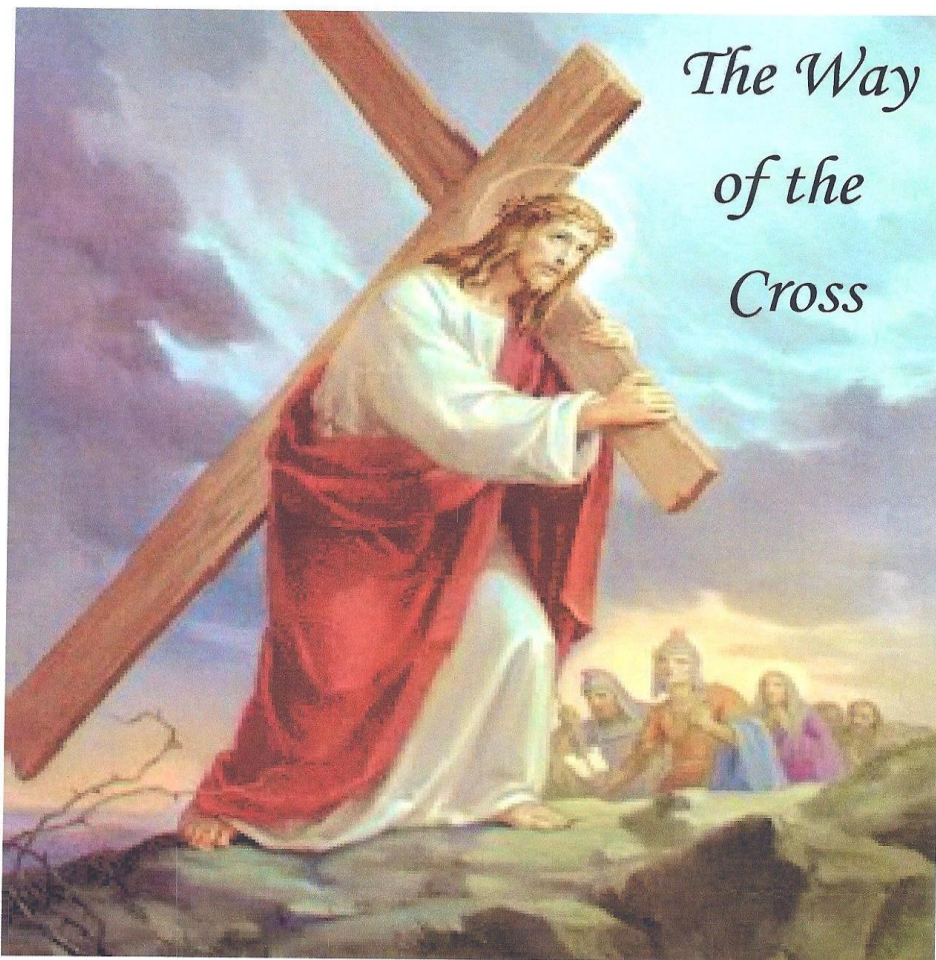
To give of Yourself fully back to the Father.

May that same love be poured into my heart,

And may I love as You loved me.

I ask this in Your holy name.

Amen.



*The Way
of the
Cross*

Jesus' Body is taken Down From the Cross

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

The action is over, and the crowd begins to disappear. Standing there in tears are only a few of His closest followers. A mixture of pain and relief floods their hearts; his torment is ended, but now he is gone. As His body is taken down Mary is allowed to hold Him one last time. The grief and confusion that would have filled her soul no one can surely imagine. They have lost a friend, a son, a teacher, and a brother. Their hearts feel like His mangled body; torn and in pieces.

How many parents today know the pain of burying their children? How many today have buried persons that they never thought they would have to in their lifetime? The family and followers of Jesus now enter into a pain that many would wish they never had to feel. The cross has not spared them either.

Let us pause and remember those we have lost over the years. Friends, family members, or anyone who we held dear to us. Let us ask God for the grace to trust in the midst of our losses, and ask for the grace to be healed.

Let us imagine ourselves holding their bodies like Mary, and let us offer our tears and pain to the Lord, for he is the one who can understand and bind up our broken hearts.

Let us also pray for the grace to deal with death, especially the death of those who are near to us. May our hearts find strength and hope in the family and friends of Jesus who were able to endure their own cross and experience the resurrection.

Moment of Silence

Loving Jesus,

After Your passing Your family and friends were left to mourn Your death.

Help us to have the grace to let go of those who have died,

And to be ready to face death with You.

I ask this in Your holy name.

Amen.

The Body of Jesus is placed in the tomb

Leader: We adore Thee, O Christ, and bless Thee.

All: Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. They laid Jesus there (John 19:41-42).

Jesus' body is laid to rest in a garden. The earth welcomes and embraces His body, and permits Him to rest. Here creation has done what hearts could not; they received the body of the Lord. He has reconciled persons to each other, humanity with God, and now he rests with all of creation.

In this final station let us pray for the grace to recognise the great mystery of creation around us. Let us pray that we can learn from nature what we are called to do each day. Just as the garden received the body of the Lord and gave him a home, let us pray that we will do the same.

Jesus in this place of final rest accomplished his purpose, he persevered, prayed and positioned himself with his Father who is in heaven. Let us pray that we can learn from his example and that each day, even as we pray for his will to be done in our lives, that we move one step closer to our purpose in Christ.

Let us thank God that just as the garden received the body of the Lord and gave him a home, let us pray that we will do the same.

Moment of Silence

Let us pray

Jesus,

Through You, all of creation came into being.

You gave to all of creation the gift of existence,

And now creation gives You the gift of rest.

Help us to be good stewards of your treasures.

May we learn all that your cross teaches us,

And may we treat it with the dignity that it deserves.

I ask this in Your holy name.

Amen.



The First Station
Jesus is Condemned to Death



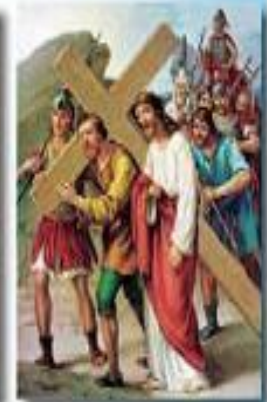
The Second Station
Jesus Carries His Cross



The Third Station
Jesus Falls the First Time



The Fourth Station
Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother



The Fifth Station
Simon Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross



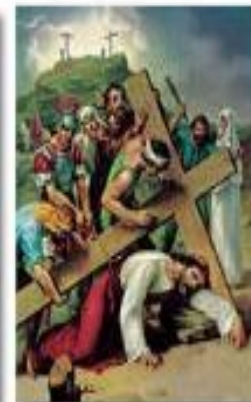
The Sixth Station
Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



The Seventh Station
Jesus Falls the Second Time



The Eighth Station
The Women of Jerusalem Weep over Jesus



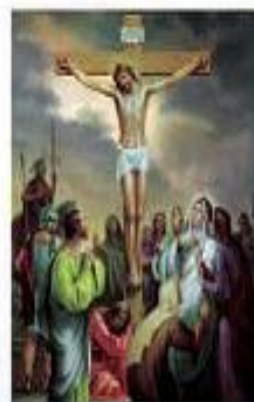
The Ninth Station
Jesus Falls the Third Time



The Tenth Station
Jesus is Stripped of His Garments



The Eleventh Station
Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



The Twelfth Station
Jesus is Raised upon the Cross, and Dies



The Thirteenth Station
Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross



The Fourteenth Station
Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher