

STATIONS *of the* CROSS

The Way of the Cross while in Quarantine:

Stations of the Cross for a Time of Uncertainty and Anxiety

By Jonathan Stodola

Introduction

Lent is the time of the year we are invited to sacrifice a little piece of ourselves in order to gain a piece of Christ, to grow closer to the one who sacrificed Himself for our eternal salvation. This Lent is very different from the normal 40 days before Easter. This year we are without mass, without our faith communities, loved ones, and everyday routines. Quarantined in our homes, forced to sacrifice more than we would like.

Away from the world it may seem hard to keep the faith. How can I grow closer to God in isolation? Without mass? Without those who point me towards Him? The Stations of the Cross invite us to walk alongside Christ in His suffering and remind us that He is ever present in our own suffering.

“The Cross of Christ bears the suffering and sin of mankind, including our own. Jesus accepts all this with open arms, bearing on His shoulders our crosses and saying to us: ‘Have courage! You do not carry your cross alone! I carry it with you. I have overcome death and I have come to give you hope, to give you life’ (cf. Jn 3:16).” – Pope Francis’s Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

I invite you to pray through the Passion of Our Lord with these stations and to bring your troubles before Him. Christ is with us. Now as we draw closer to Easter, let us become closer to Christ.

The First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Death



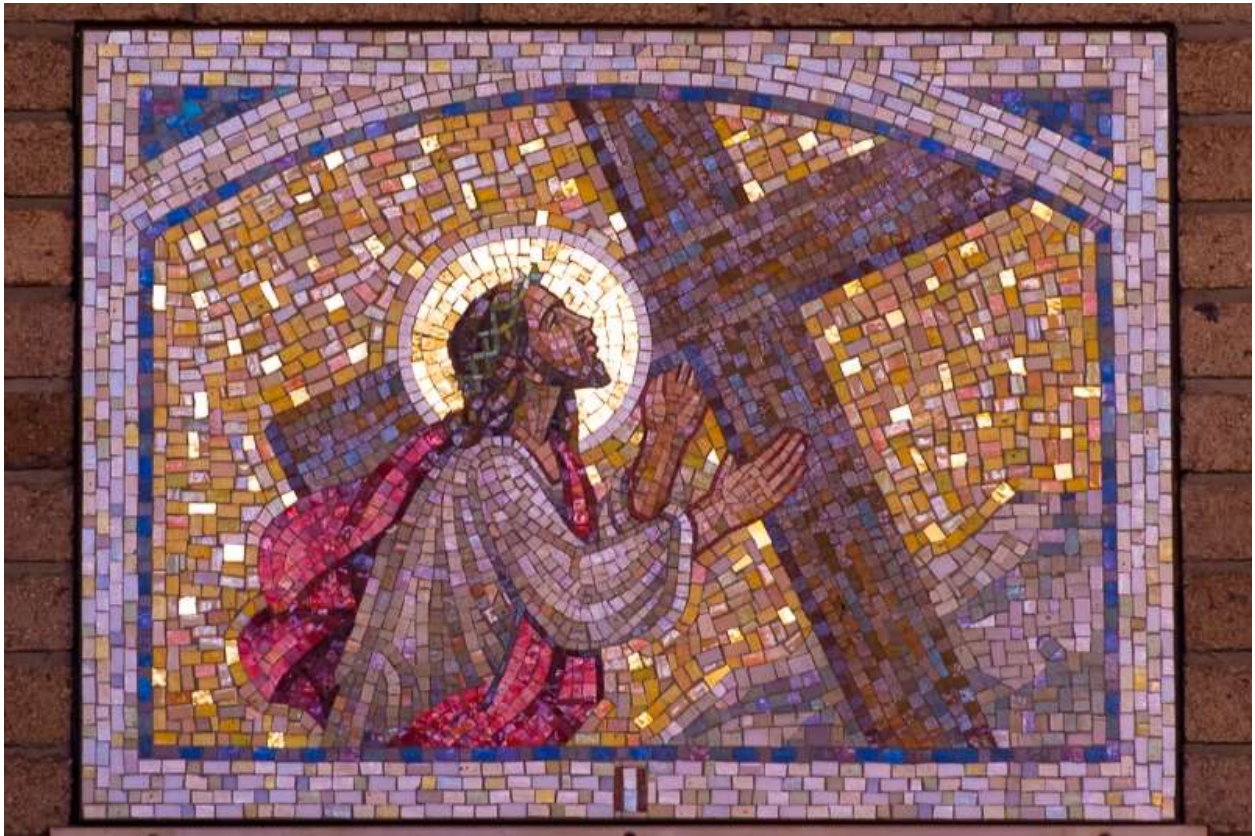
Jesus is now at the mercy of Pilate; of the people He came to save. He was sentenced to a death He did not want, yet like a sheep before the shearers, He opened not His mouth.

We are at the mercy of this virus. Much like Jesus we do not want this. Yet, we must follow in His footsteps and open not our mouths.

How do I accept changes in my life?

O My Jesus, be with us now as we accept these changes in our lives. Remind us that we are ever at Your Mercy and Grace. Grant us the strength needed to stay calm and the grace to rely on You. Amen.

The Second Station
Jesus Takes up His Cross



Jesus picks up the cross and with it, the weight of the world. He carries with Him sin from Adam and Eve to the sins we have yet to commit. Jesus takes this burden upon Himself for the sake of humanity.

We cannot carry the weight of the world; we have our own crosses we bear. Now, for the sake of society we carry another cross, the cross of social distancing. Just as Jesus took up His cross out of Love for humanity, we must do the same.

What crosses do I carry? How do I carry them?

O Lord, this cross is too heavy for us to carry alone. Fill us with Your divine Love, so that we might bear this burden with hope and joy, knowing that this too shall come to pass. For love is the only way. Amen.

The Third Station

Jesus Falls the First Time



Jesus is both fully God and fully human. Here He displays His humanity, stumbling as His journey toughens.

We stumble and fall. It is part of our journey as people. There are good times and not so good times. It is how we get back up and continue that matters.

When was the last time I fell? How did I get back up?

O My Jesus, help us to catch ourselves when we stumble, to stand when we fall, and to keep going when the journey toughens. We know You are always beside us. Thank you for showing us how to get back on our feet and keep going. Amen.

The Fourth Station
Jesus Meets His Mother



Jesus was bruised and tired when He comes across His mother. She sees His pain and feels His anguish. Their eyes meet and she smiles at Him, comforting Him in this moment of pain. Jesus smiles back.

Being stuck in our homes can drain us emotionally, leaving our normally joyful selves bruised and tired. Our Heavenly Mother shares in our pain and longs for us to be comforted. Let us smile back at her knowing she will bring our intentions before her Son, Our Lord.

How am I doing in this moment?

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

The Fifth Station

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross



The cross becomes too heavy for Jesus to bear. Simon of Cyrene reaches out in Our Lord's weakness, supporting Him in His time of need. Through this act of service and love, Jesus is able to carry on.

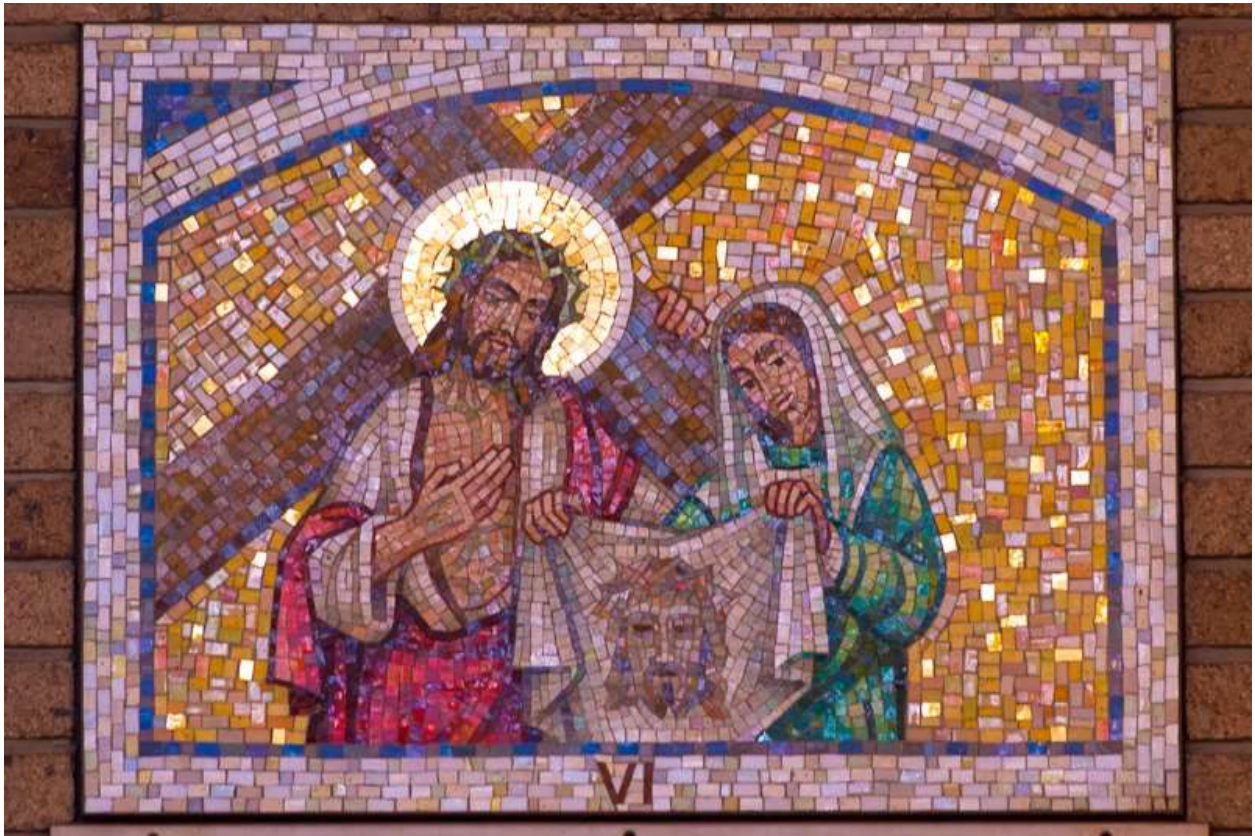
We have all carried a cross that seems too heavy for us to bear. It is these times we must rely on others and allow them to support us in our vulnerability. Together we can get through anything, all we need is a little love.

How can I best love and support those around me in this time?

O Lord, we have all had our personal crosses carried by someone who loves us. You support us always and place our own Simon of Cyrenes in our lives. Thank You for these people, fill them with joy and allow us to be there for them, just as they are for us. Amen.

The Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



As Jesus continues along His journey Veronica stops Him and cleans His face. She wipes away the sweat, blood, dirt, and tears. This small act of kindness, reminds Jesus why He loves us and keeps Him going.

We often feel unclean; dirty from our worries, fears, and failings. Yet we have people in our lives willing to look past our anxieties, who will wipe the frown from our face, cleaning our person. Jesus sees our dirt and cleanses our souls. He will always be present in our need.

Who are the Veronicas in my life? What act of kindness can I perform for others today?

O My Jesus, wipe our worries away. Keep us focused on the task at hand and on those whom we love. Stay with us in our uncertainty and strengthen us in times of doubt. Fill us with Your Grace and Love, for that is all we need. Amen.

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.

What weighs me down in life?

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. Amen.

The Eighth Station

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem



Walking along in His weakness Jesus meets some women along the way. They want to weep for Him but He tells them not to cry, but rather to prepare for the coming days. Jesus is not concerned with His own trials but for the salvation of all.

We can only see the immediate and, when the immediate situation is dark, it is hard to find the good. We need not get stuck in the current situation but focus on the coming light. God created us for the light, and it is this good light, we need to spread now more than ever.

How often do I get stuck in the now? Do I spread hope and joy to those around me?

O Jesus, grant us Your sight, that we might see the light breaking through the fog. Let us be candles, lights in the darkness for those around us, bringing them Your hope and joy. Amen.

The Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time



Jesus is nearing Golgotha. He can see it when He falls again. Perhaps He falls because He knows the end is near. Maybe He could not take another step, or could it be He simply wanted to pause to pray to His Father. Regardless of the reason, Jesus picks the cross back up and continues on.

Each day is one day closer to a return to normal. The longer this goes on the stronger we must be. Stronger in our faith and for each other.

How might I strengthen my faith in this moment?

O My Jesus, when we want a break and cannot take it anymore, You are there. When we falter and fall, You are there. Thank You for Your lifegiving presence. Keep us grateful and faithful. Amen.

The Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments



Upon reaching Golgotha the soldiers take what is left of Jesus's dignity and they cast lots upon His cloak. His material goods are taken. His friends are in hiding. Jesus is left only with His memory, His faith, and His will.

We have been stripped from our normal lives. The routines and daily interactions we took for granted have been taken away. We still have our friends and family. We have our memories, our faith, and our wills. Guided by God we can make it through.

Do I place my trust in Jesus? In what ways am I blessed?

O Lord, everything was taken from You, yet You continued to give Yourself fully for our salvation. It seems like everything has been taken from us, yet we know we are still blessed in countless ways. Guide us through the coming days as we place our trust in You. Amen.

The Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross



Naked and nailed to a cross Jesus has never been more vulnerable. Stuck to a tree, with the world He came to save looking on. Jesus endured unimaginable suffering, all out of His love for us.

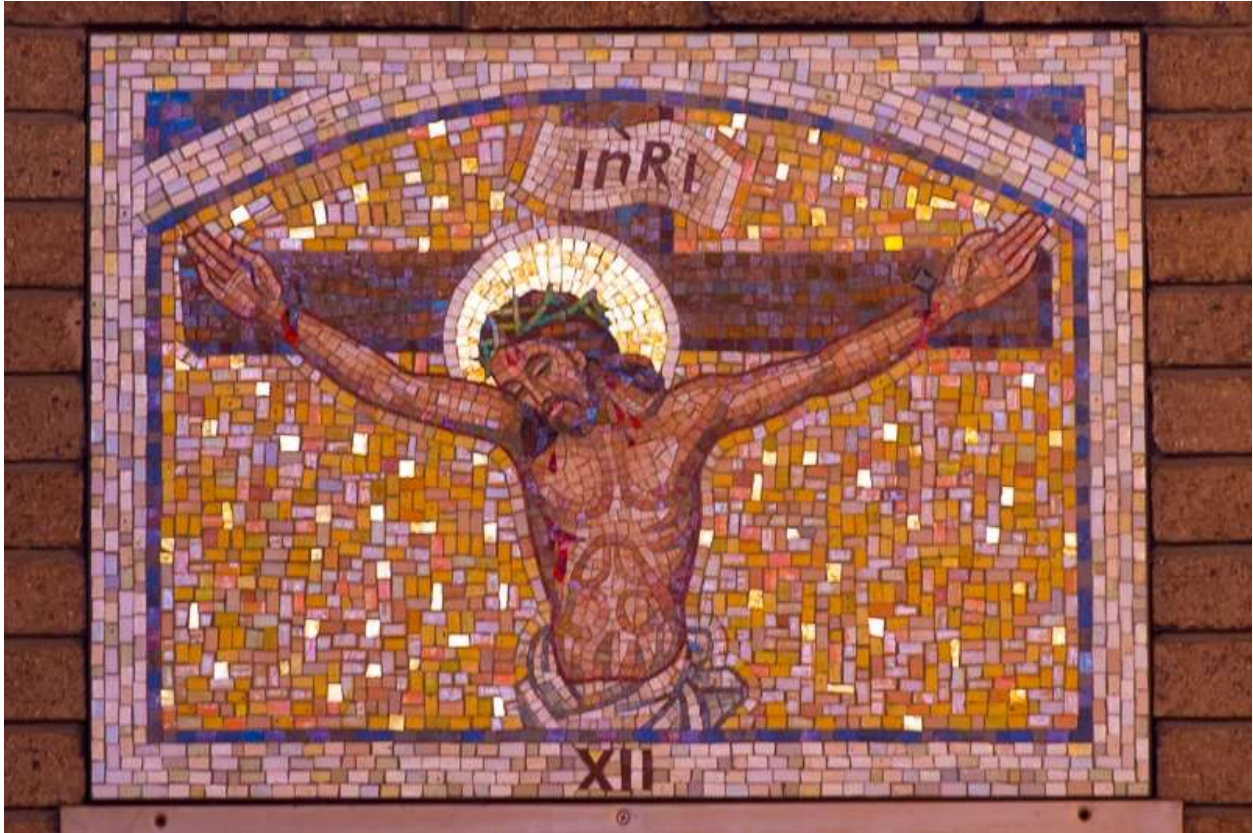
Separated from the comforts of companionship and social interaction, we are left vulnerable. Stuck in our homes, for the health and good of those we love. Love is the only way. With love we are strong enough to bear anything.

With what or whom am I in love with? How does that love shape my actions?

O My Jesus, You did not see death on the cross but rather eternal life with us in heaven. Inspired by Your Divine Love, help us to look past the quarantine, and bear these trials, so we might soon be reunited in good health with those we love. Amen.

The Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the Cross



Jesus endured the Passion for us. He sacrificed His whole being, allowing Himself to be humiliated for our sake. He dies praying for those who put Him to death and commits His spirit back into the hands of the Father.

We undergo social distancing for the whole of society. We must sacrifice certain pleasures for the safety of one another. Let us enter each day praying for our lives to be recommitted to God the Father and for all who join in our sacrifice.

What am I sacrificing for the greater good? Is my life oriented towards the Highest Good, Jesus?

O My Jesus, You died on the cross for us, giving us a perfect model for sacrifice. We are not asked to die for each other, but to physically distance ourselves. Help us to join in this sacrifice for the health and safety of all Your people. We give ourselves to You, from whom all good things come, asking You to keep us all the days of our lives. Amen.

The Thirteenth Station

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross



Out of hiding come Jesus's disciples and friends. His once grand body is now lifeless. At the foot of the cross He is laid in His mother's arms.

In trying times, we can seem lifeless. In these moments we want nothing more than to hide, to lay in the arms of one we hold dear, and be comforted. It is during these times we must turn to Jesus. Allow Him to take up our crosses, embrace us in His arms, and fill our hearts with peace.

Where do I find peace in my life?

O Lord, when we are struggling to get through the day, hold us tenderly. Let us fall lovingly into Your embrace. May Your comfort and peace wash over us. Amen.

The Fourteenth Station

Jesus is Laid in the Tomb



When Jesus died a darkness descended over the world. His body is laid in a tomb and His followers go into hiding. Yet Jesus is the light of the world, from this darkness He shines forth.

The Passion ends not in death but in victory. Jesus's suffering ends in victory over death, ours will end with a triumph over the coronavirus.

What do I need from God? How might I be a light that shines forth hope and victory?

O My Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us now. Fill us with Your Love and sustain us with Your Grace. Keep us happy, healthy, and safe. May we ever be grateful for the gifts we have been given and remain calm, knowing You are always beside us, ready to carry our crosses and comfort us in times of distress. In Your most holy name, we pray for the world, for healing, for ourselves, and all we hold dear. Amen.

Conclusion

We can all recall times in which we were overwhelmed, where it felt like the weight of the world was on our shoulders. It is these times we must pass this burden to God, allow Him to take up our crosses. Jesus came to the Earth, walked among us, suffered, and died so that we might live. Through Him we find our peace.

Distance may separate us physically but we are bound in spirit, in solidarity with the world. Knowing that God walks alongside us in our suffering, let us pray in the words of Pope Francis.

“O, Our Jesus, guide us from the Cross to the resurrection and teach us that evil shall not have the last word, but love, mercy and forgiveness. O Christ, help us to exclaim again: ‘Yesterday I was crucified with Christ; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him, today I live with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today I am raised with Him’.” Amen

– Pope Francis’s Address, Good Friday, April 18, 2014

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

We are all in this together and will make it through. Stay strong and trust in the Lord.