

Stations of the Cross

Remembering Selma

History

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross (in Latin, *Via Dolorosa*, the Road of Sorrows) is an ancient custom originating in the observances of pilgrims to Jerusalem, offering their prayers at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death.

The number of Stations, which at first varied widely, has come to be fixed at fourteen. The best-known version of the Stations is a mixture of events drawn directly from the interweaving of the four Gospel accounts, plus elements inferred from the Gospels as well as pious legend. At St. Thomas, however, we are using a version popularized in 1991 by then-Pope John Paul II, following the Passion narrative alone.

Traditionally, the Stations are observed by aid of a series of markers within a church or other appropriate space. These may range from simple plain wooden crosses to illustrated plaques placed around the walls of the church. With each Station there is sometimes associated a pictorial representation of the event being commemorated, which often take the form of paintings on wooden boards or sculpture using clay, metal, or stone.

St. Thomas is using contemporary, artistic interpretations of the stations. These installations are in place temporarily during Lent and Holy Week, and offer neighbors an opportunity to reflect on the traditional Stations while pondering an extra layer of artistic interpretation offered from a contemporary viewpoint.

Many different contemporary themes have been used to interpret the Stations in the light of current events. These stations honor the Civil Rights Movement and the Freedom Marches in Alabama, the photographs document those journeys in which many suffered and died – and, indeed, continue their struggle even today – as a lens through which we can represent Jesus' journey and suffering in relation to happenings closer to our own time and place.

Devotional Ritual

This devotional ritual is adapted from *The Book of Occasional Services*. It is designed to be used by individuals or groups of any size. The text in italics is instructional commentary, not a part of the prayer itself. Group prayer is shown by plain text for the Leader, any single voice, to read, with the response for the rest of the group in **bold face**. Should you be praying the Stations by yourself, you may read the full text alone, either silently or aloud, as you prefer. We hope that you will find in these pages a means to deepen your contemplation of Jesus' saving action on Good Friday, even while looking forward, as we always do, to the Resurrection.

Opening Devotions

Leader: Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One,

All: have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
in whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

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.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Station 1: Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
— *Matthew 26:36–41*

After a time of contemplation, the Trisagion may be prayed as you move to each succeeding Station:

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 2: Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.
—Mark 14: 43–46

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 3: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us,” but he replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth.”
—Luke 22: 66–71

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 4: Jesus is denied by Peter

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about!” As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!” A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.
—Matthew 26: 69–75

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 5: Jesus is judged by Pilate

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

—Mark 15: 1–5, 15

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 6: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

—John 19: 1–3

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Station 7: Jesus takes up his cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

—John 19: 6, 15–17

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 8: Jesus is helped by Simon to carry his cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. —Mark 15: 21

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 9: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ At that time, people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?” —Luke 23: 27–31

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 10: Jesus is crucified

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”] —Luke 23: 33–34

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 11: Jesus promises his kingdom to the repentant thief

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, to-day you will be with me in Paradise."
—Luke 23: 39–43

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 12: Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.
—John 19: 25–27

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 13: Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.
—Luke 23: 44–46

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**



Station 14: Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb. —*Matthew 27: 57–60*

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, **have mercy upon us.**

Concluding Devotions

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve God the Creator, through the Spirit be glory and dominion for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Photographs

1. John Lewis and fellow SNCC workers praying before a demonstration
2. Jail in the Leflore County Courthouse where voting rights activists were held
3. Alabama State Troopers waiting for Selma marchers
4. White officer photographing Freedom Summer workers, including Linda Wetmore Halpern of Berkeley (in plaid dress)
5. Left: George Wallace inaugurated as Governor of Alabama. Right: White protestors watching Selma marchers
6. Top: Marchers confronted by Alabama State Troopers at Edmund Pettus Bridge. Bottom: Marcher being tear gassed on Bloody Sunday
7. Selma to Montgomery marchers silhouetted against the skyline
8. President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965
9. Row 1: Diane Nash, Daisy Bates, Viola Gregg Liuzzo. Row 2 Pauli Murray, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Josephine Baker. Row 3: Young women singing freedom songs in Selma church
10. Ku Klux Klan rally
11. Marchers arrive at their goal singing and carrying the American flag
12. Listening to Dr. King's speech after the Selma to Montgomery march
13. Amelia Boyton Robinson beaten unconscious by state troopers on Bloody Sunday
14. Shattered car window of martyred voting rights activist