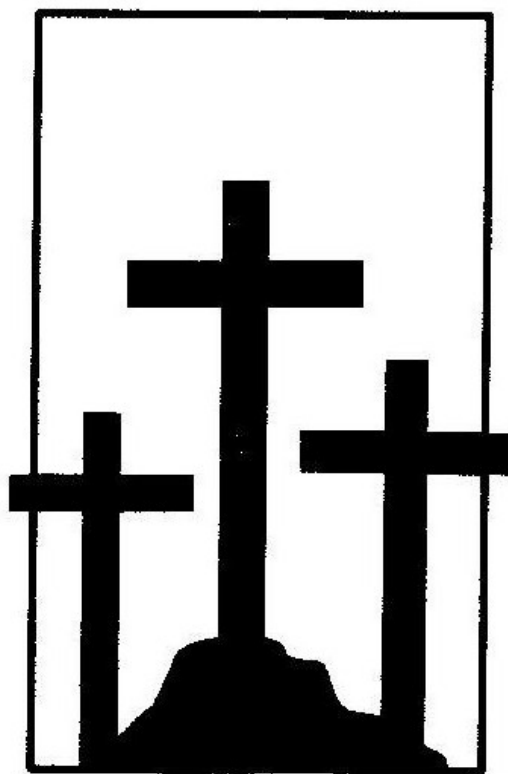


STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Compiled by Tony Crouch



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St. Helen's is part of the parish of the Sacred Heart, North Walsham, Norfolk.

The Stations of the Cross pictured are the Stations in St.Helen's church, Hoveton as is the picture of the tabernacle. Photographs by Terry McIlwee.

Introduction

Before we start to follow Christ's journey to Calvary let us consider how often we really do think of the sufferings that he underwent. His agony in the Garden of Gethsemene; His being apprehended by the soldiers: His humiliation during questioning: His being crowned with thorns and, finally, His crucifixion.

Jesus Christ was God and of God but he was also human in the same way that we are. He must have experienced fear when being taken from the garden and a feeling of utter helplessness in the hands of the rough soldiery. The pain as the thorns pierced His skull and the indignity of having to drag his tree of execution through the streets before the jeering mob.

Imagine the first nail being driven through your flesh – His humanity must cry out in pain- and yet we are told that Jesus uttered not a word except forgiveness for his executioners.

Breathing is difficult when the cross is erected because the body is stretched and suspended, unable to find any ease: and finally the crucified person suffocates! How would we have reacted if we had been part of the crowd? Would we have been like the other 'sheep' calling for His death?

Let us think of these things as we undertake this meditation- imagine that you are in the crowd, but let us pray that we are never put to the test or, if we are, we are never found wanting!

Please pray for the world that it might be a better place because of one man's suffering- a suffering that in His Godliness he could have sidestepped so easily.

Think of these things as we make this journey with Jesus.

Prayer before the Altar

O Jesus Christ, my Lord, with great love didst Thou pass over the painful road which led Thee to death: and I, how often have I abandoned Thee!

But now I love Thee with my whole soul , and because I love Thee I am sincerely sorry for having offended Thee.

My Jesus, pardon me, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou art going to die for love of me, and it is my wish also, my dearest Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, in Thy love I wish to live. In Thy love I wish to die.

Amen.





FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Here we see Jesus unjustly accused, scourged, mocked, judged and finally - Pontius Pilate having washed his hands of any responsibility - being handed over to the Jewish authorities and the mob to be crucified.

The Governor, Pilate knew in his heart that Jesus was innocent of all the charges made against him but had not the courage to free him for fear of the anger of the mob and the possibility of a riot. I have to ask myself what would I have done if I had been alive at that time in history? Would I have been part of the mob baying for the death of this man? Even though I had seen the wonderful things which he had done and listened to his teachings would I have had the courage to be a dissident voice? Perhaps I like Pilate, would have washed my hands of the whole affair and expressed no opinion. I wonder?

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

*At the Cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping
Close to Jesus to the last*



SECOND STATION

Jesus receives His Cross

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

A heavy Cross has been prepared and this was lifted onto the shoulders of Jesus. Can you imagine the agony that this caused to His beaten, bruised and bloodied body? And He was doing all this for me – though I was not yet born. But if I had been there, would that thought have even crossed my mind?

Jesus, each of us has a cross to carry, though not of the same magnitude as yours; and not with such patience, dignity and love. Lord I implore you to help me carry my cross with patience and resignation for it was my sinfulness that caused you to suffer so ignominiously.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

*Through her heart His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword has passed.*



THIRD STATION

Jesus falls for the first time

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

It had to happen! There was this poor soul with a heavy cross to carry on His scourged and battered body trying to walk on an uneven road. It had to happen – he tripped and fell. The weight of the cross caused the crown of Thorns to bite further into His head, causing even more pain. There was no doubt a mixed reaction from the crowd viewing this sorry sight. They were used to seeing crucifixions, probably on a daily basis. So some laughed and shouted, and others remained quiet – perhaps beginning to realise that somehow this was different and, once again I ask – what would I have done if I had been there?

Lord forgive me the many times that I have caused you such agony and pain. You have witnessed all the stupid mistakes I have made during this life that you have given me, but even so you have still found in your Blessed Heart to encourage me to live a life that will bring me closer to you. Thank you Jesus.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Oh, how sad and sore distressed

Was that Mother highly blessed

Of that sole- begotten one!



FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets His Mother

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Having been roughly raised to His feet by the soldiery accompanying Him, and loaded once again with the heavy Cross, this tortuous journey continued. Imagine then the feelings that must have surfaced when Jesus met His Mother. Their eyes must have spoken volumes of the love they had for each other and Mary must have been distraught at the sight of her Son and the sufferings He was having to endure. She may well have recalled the words Simeon spoke in the Temple, "and sorrow like a sharp sword will break your heart" .

Holy Mother help me to have a continual remembrance of the Passion of your Son that I may remain aware of the torture and pain my sin has caused Him.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Christ above in torment hangs:

She beneath beholds the pangs

Of her dying glorious Son



FIFTH STATION

The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

His tormentors seeing Jesus was on the point of expiring took a man – Simon of Cyrene – from the crowd and forced him to help carry the Cross. I often think about Simon. Who was he? Was he in town for the day to watch the spectacle? Perhaps he was too near the front and got caught without being asked? Could he have been a follower of Jesus? Could he have been an Angel of God sent to help His Son?

I do not know the answer but pray that God will enable me to be available and willing to help others when their crosses become too big to carry.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Is there one who would not weep,

Whelmed in miseries so deep

Christ's dear Mother to behold



St. Veronica wipes our Lord's face.

SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

By now the journey was becoming harder, for the road was in an upwards direction. Jesus was weak and, even with the help of Simon, His poor face was bathed in sweat and blood. Then from the crowd came a Holy woman named Veronica who wiped his battered face with a towel on which was left the impression of His holy countenance. This surely was a miraculous happening!

Like your Holy face my Lord; as it was once beautiful so was my soul when I received Thy grace in the Sacrament of Baptism. It hasn't however taken me long to disfigure it, by sinning; but if I keep your commandments the Passion that you endured will redeem my soul. On my knees I beg your forgiveness.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

*Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain
In that mother's pain untold*



SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls for the second time

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Even with the help of Simon of Cyrene Jesus is so weak that He falls for the second time. Imagine how hard He falls to the ground with the weight of the Cross on his shoulders: the impact his knees have on the cobblestones on the road. His body is so weak but he is made to continue the uphill struggle.

I look back at all the times that I have fallen and failed you and caused you even more pain. Lord, I am appalled at the frailty of human nature and how easily I forget what you suffered for me. I don't want to sin and implore your grace to strengthen my resolve not to cause you more hurt.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,

She beheld her tender Child

All with bloody scourges rent.



VIII

Jesus consoles the women.

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Here there is a meeting with some women from Jerusalem. I am never sure whether these women were followers of Jesus or just a group which happened to be observing the proceedings. However, they obviously had compassion for Jesus because He stopped to speak to them, and Scripture tells us He said “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children”. Even in the midst of this tortuous journey Jesus still had thought for others and tried to comfort them.

My tears, my Lord, are for my apparent inability to serve you as I would wish. I make the same mistakes over and over again; not willingly, but because I am such a weak person within myself. Help me please Jesus, to serve you faithfully to the end of my days.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

For the sins of His own nation

Saw Him hang in desolation

Till His spirit forth He sent



NINTH STATION

Jesus falls for the third time

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

It was inevitable that Jesus would fall again, even with the help of Simon. He was so weak by this time and His executioners were forcing Him on with excessive cruelty so that their work could be completed sooner rather than later. Let us imagine this pathetic figure, covered in blood and probably having had nothing to eat or drink for many hours, staggering along the road to His execution. How could the people have continued to watch this tragedy?

You, my Lord, were undergoing all this suffering for me . How can one human being suffer so much to benefit me; and show such love for me that is beyond all my understanding? So many times have I spurned your love O Jesus! How many times have I become one of the crowd watching from the sidewalk? Have mercy on me Lord for the weakness of my humanity I beg you.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

O thou Mother font of love

Touch my spirit from above

Make mine heart with thine accord.



TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Finally, Jesus, the heavy Cross and His cruel guards reached the place of execution – Calvary. Here this poor soul was stripped of all his garments which now adhered to His flesh. They tore them off so roughly that His skin came with them. There was no compassion shown to Jesus.

There is no comparison Lord between the love that you extend to me with all my weaknesses and the love I can offer in return. But I do offer such love and my whole being for as the psalmist says: “Here I am Lord, I come to do Your will”.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Make me feel as thou hast felt;

Make my soul to glow and melt

With the love of Christ my Lord.



ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Here we see Jesus having finally reached Calvary, being nailed to the Cross for His execution. We are told he made no sound and meekly stretched out His Blessed hands in submission to the executioners. Imagine the agony of the nails going into your hands and then your feet. His humanity must have been aghast at what was happening to Him and He must have felt very alone. But He had faith in God who had sent Him to be our Saviour and willingly offered up the sacrifice of His life to the Eternal Father for our salvation.

Nothing I can say or do can, in any way, make amends for such suffering which was so freely and readily given for me. Lord, I only have myself to offer, and this I do willingly. Please help me to become worthy of your love.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Holy Mother! Pierce me through

In my heart each wound renew,

Of my Saviour crucified.



TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

After three hours, hanging on this infamous gibbet, Jesus abandoned Himself to the weight of His body, offered His spirit to God the Father, bowed His head and died.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph I give you my heart, my life and my soul.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph may I breathe forth my soul in peace, in your Blessed company.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

*Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.*



THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Throughout this agonising day Mary, His mother, had been at His side. What must she have been suffering watching the agonies of the Son she had borne and nurtured for so long? Unable to help Him, all she could do was offer her prayers to the one true God who had placed His trust in her so many years before. And now Joseph and Nicodemus, two of Jesus' disciples, took Him down from the Cross and placed him in the arms of His grieving Mother.

Holy Mother I pray that you will not disown me for all the hurt that I have caused your Son. I beg you to pray for me that I may become worthy of His suffering for I wish for nothing more than to serve Him faithfully all the days of my life.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Let me mingle tears with thee

Mourning Him who mourned for me

All the days that I may live



FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Ldr. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

We are told that there was an empty tomb not far away from where Jesus died and this is where His body was laid. What must have been in the minds of those disciples as they closed the tomb and walked slowly away. Were they in despair, or had their faith been strengthened by the terrible happenings of the day? Again I wonder what my reaction would have been had I been there?

Jesus I beg you to strengthen my faith that I may be a credit to you in meeting other people. Help me to open the eyes of people who do not believe in You. Endow me with the ability to explain what Your life and death meant, and still means, to the human race created by God the Father. Our need for this faith is as great today as it ever was. Lord, grant me Your mercy and hear my prayer.

I love You, Jesus, my love, above all things: I repent with my whole heart for having offended You. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love You always: and then do with me what You will.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

By the Cross with thee to stay;

There with thee to weep and pray,

Is all I ask of thee to give.

Prayer to Our lady of Sorrows

O most holy Mother, Queen of sorrows, who didst follow thy beloved Son all The way of the Cross, and whose heart was pierced with a fresh sword of grief at all the stations of that most sorrowful journey, obtain for us, we beseech thee, O most loving Mother a perpetual remembrance of our Blessed Saviour's Cross and Death, and a true and tender devotion to all the mysteries of His most holy Passion.

Obtain for us the grace to hate sin, even as He hated it in the agony of the garden; to endure wrong and insult with all the patience as he endured them in the judgement hall; to be meek and humble in all our trials as he was before His judges; to love our enemies even as He loved His murderers, and prayed for them on the Cross; and to glorify God and to do good to our neighbour, even as He did in every mystery of His suffering.

O Queen of Martyrs, who by the Dolours of thy Immaculate Heart of Calvary, didst merit to share the passion of Our Most Holy Redeemer. Obtain for some portion of Thy compassion, that for the love of Jesus crucified, we may be crucified to the world in this life, and in the life to come may, by His infinite merits and thy powerful intercession, reign with Him in glory everlasting.

Amen.