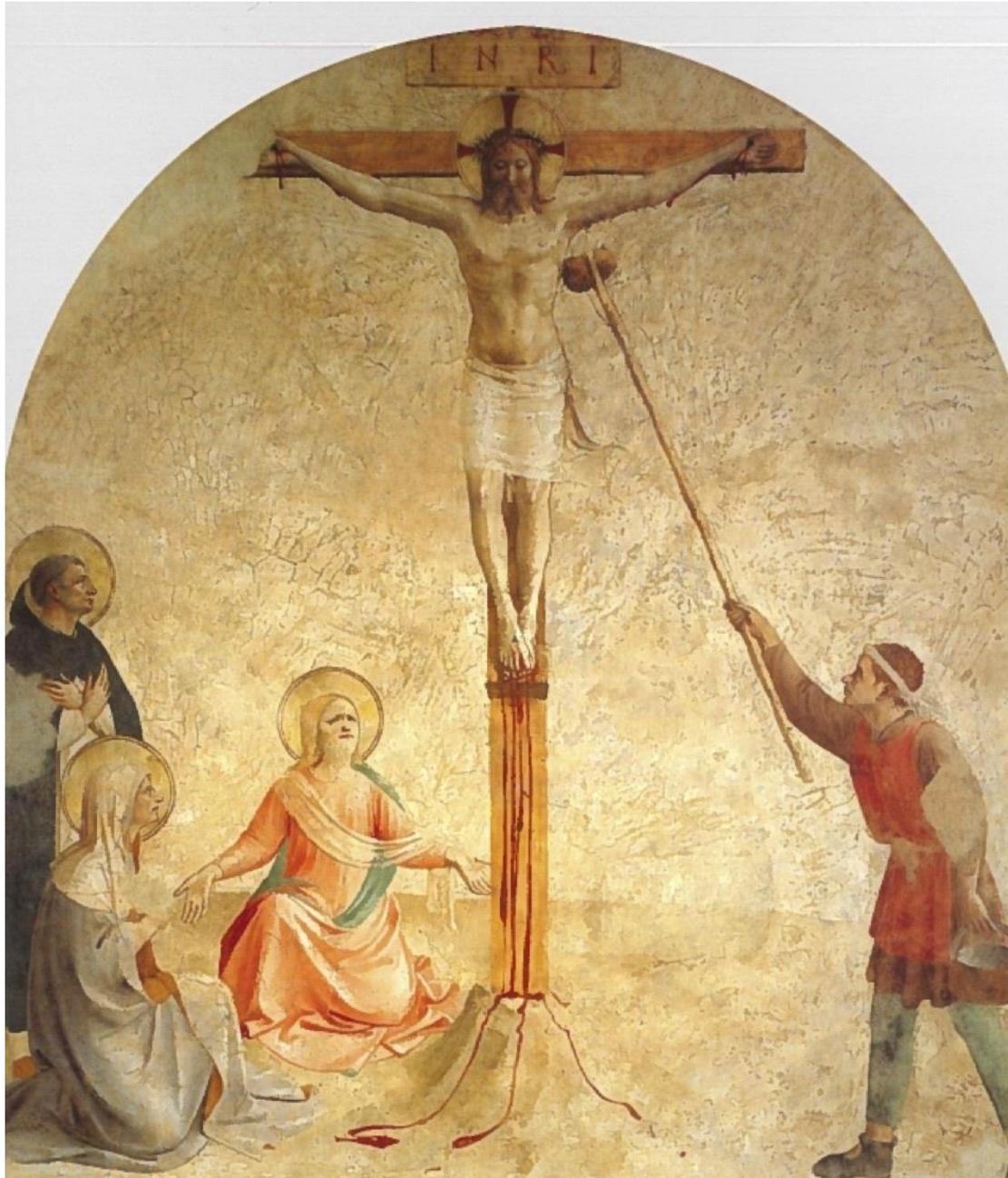


THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
FOR WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS



DAYLESFORD ABBEY

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross, the Way of the Cross, the Way of Sorrows, or the *Via Crucis*, all refer to the journey Jesus Christ travelled from the time he was condemned to death until his Body was placed in a burial tomb. Followers of Jesus have told the story of his Passion, Death and Resurrection while pilgrims who travelled to Jerusalem visited the sites where it is believed that Jesus was tried and executed. Journals have been discovered, dated as early as the fourth century, describing these pilgrims chanting psalms as they processed the *Via Dolorosa* (the Way of Sorrows) in Jerusalem. Liturgists view these processions as an embryonic form of the Stations of the Cross.

Many churches typically contain fourteen Stations but as an outgrowth of the Second Vatican Council, a fifteenth Station was added reflecting our Lord's victory over suffering and death and the Good News of Easter – the Resurrection. As we are a post Vatican Council II church, all of our Stations of the Cross, both inside the church and outside, reflect this more complete narrative. Today, Christians everywhere follow Jesus' final journey to unite their suffering with his in the hope of sharing in his Resurrection. In the words of St. Paul: "*I wish to know Christ and to be conformed into the pattern of his death, so that somehow I may come to know the power of his Resurrection.*" Phil 3:1

DISPOSITION FOR PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Suffering – in one of its many forms - invades all of our lives; no one needs to search for it. We may attempt to deny or run from suffering but it cannot be avoided. What is demanded is the need to come to terms with suffering. It is in this context that we provide the Stations of the Cross for Various Circumstances. We invite you to pray these Stations as a means of uniting your personal trials with our Lord's, so that you too might share in his Passion so as to rejoice in his Resurrection.

We believe in a God who became incarnate through his Son, Jesus Christ, who chose to suffer for the sake of our redemption. This Passion is made visible in the physical Way of the Cross and metaphysically in the psychological, emotional and spiritual suffering that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane – which one might call the overture to the *Via Crucis*.

The radical symbol of the Cross - ubiquitous throughout the world - has lost much of its shocking, paradoxical impact. We see the Cross hanging on walls, towering above churches and suspended from one another's necks in precious gold. The Cross has become a thing of beauty - and it should - for without the sacrifice made on the Cross, there would be no hope of eternal happiness with God.

When we pray the Stations, it is not for the purpose of undertaking an historical remembering of what occurred, but to show us what is happening now - what is happening within each of us. The reason for praying the Stations of the Cross is to enter into the mystery of Jesus' gift of himself for us – to experience his means of transforming suffering through love. We do this “through, with, and in him”, step by step, learning how this plan of love can be carried out by us today. In one form or another, his trials are revealed in ours and our trials in his. This frames the spiritual pilgrimage which you are invited to undertake through your particular circumstances, in contemplation of the Passion of Jesus Christ inspired by our faith in the Resurrection.

Allow One Hour

“Could you not watch and pray with me for one hour?” MT 26:40

For the Cross of our Lord's Passion becomes our Tree of Eternal Life

ABOUT DAYLESFORD ABBEY'S STATIONS OF THE CROSS

THE ARBOR GATEWAY

Thresholds are primarily spiritual in nature, not simply physical. Thus, crossing a threshold confirms one's willingness to move from the natural world to the supernatural. Our gateway entrance marks passage through a holy doorway designed to symbolize one's decision to enter into the life of Jesus.

SAINT RAPHAEL

Raphael, which translates as "It is God who heals", is the archangel known for facilitating all manners of healing. He is one of only three of the seven archangels named in the Bible. Raphael is credited with driving an evil spirit from Sarah and restoring Tobit's vision through the use of a fish. Tobit 6:7 Raphael is the patron saint of pilgrims and the appropriate guide for all who travel the Stations - particularly those seeking physical, emotional or spiritual healing. Pilgrimages in early times were a dangerous consideration. Pilgrims made wills before their journey as there was no certainty of a safe return. Unlike tourists, pilgrims travel toward their center; while tourists travel away. As a guardian to pilgrims, Raphael is often depicted holding a staff as well as a fish. The mission of Daylesford Abbey is healing and reconciliation, thus providing a suitable home for St. Raphael.

THE TRAIL

Most Stations of the Cross are typically laid out so that one follows a trail where station posts are staked and one pauses to pray. The Abbey's Stations are designed with alcoves where one must physically exit the trail - a place of certainty - so as to enter the spirituality of each Station's mystery. Physically, one interrupts their journey to undergo an experience of potentially unitive and transformative change.

THE STATION FRAME

Wood is a powerful, consistent symbol throughout Scripture: the tree in the Garden of Eden, Noah's ark, the altar in Exodus, the kindling Isaac carries. It is not by happenstance that both Jesus and Joseph were carpenters. For Christians, all wood signifies and leads us to the one salvific wood of the Cross. Jesus' sacrifice, which redeemed us on Calvary, is re-membered today in the Eucharistic sacrifice that takes place on the altar. All grace flows from the Cross, from our Abbey's altar, which is why our Station's frames are designed to replicate the Abbey church. They are crafted from Brazilian hardwood of substantial weight and density but are ecologically respectful of the Amazon forest, reminding us of God's original commission to humankind in Eden - to be stewards of creation.

THE STATION IMAGES

The Station scenes are bas-relief replicas from the bronze doors located at the Basilica of San Zeno in Verona, Italy. According to tradition, the crypt inside the Basilica was the marriage site of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The church is Romanesque in design typical of 12th century architecture. Our holy father, St. Norbert, lived during that time and established the Order of Prémontré in 1120, thus connecting the Stations to the founding of our Order.

THE TREE TRUNK BENCHES

Daylesford Abbey took root and evolved from our original home at the site of the former Cassatt Estate. As Providence would arrange it, an oak tree was being removed from that property while our Stations were under construction. Our plans called for some seating to be formed from large tree trunks. This coincidence provided the symbolic means to represent our historical roots.

WE BEGIN: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself
and take up his cross every day and follow me. LK 9:23*



I JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

The helpless are crushed, laid low; they fall into the power of the wicked, who say in their hearts, "God pays no attention, shows no concern, never bothers to look." Rise up, LORD God! Raise your arm! Do not forget the poor. Why should the wicked scorn God and say in their hearts, "God doesn't care?" But you do see: you do observe this misery and sorrow; you take the matter in hand. To you the helpless can entrust their cause; you are the defender of orphans. PS 10:10-14

Your Son, who was to be judge of all the living and the dead, stood before a Roman judge and received an unjust sentence. Though you knew he was the "suffering servant" prophesied by Isaiah did you wonder why he had to suffer this humiliation and in this way? As widows and widowers, we sometimes question God's providence and his love for us. Was there anything done or undone that hastened the day or the hour? Why did my spouse have to die instead of me? Help me to trust that even the day and the hour of my spouse's death was known to you and that they are enfolded in your Sacred Heart now and forever.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .
May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



II JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

They took him, and he went out carrying the Cross himself, to a place called The Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. JN 19:1

Many of us spent long hours at the bedside of our spouse, anticipating the separation that would come. Others of us experienced the tragedy of our spouse's sudden, unexpected death. Just as nothing you could have said would have persuaded Jesus to evade the Cross, we had no choice but to accept what we could not change.

Jesus, you endured all the trials we face, up to and including that final, wooden Cross. You are with us every moment, in the pain and up to those final moments of our spouse's earthly life. Then and now, you want us to rest our weary heads in your lap so that you can console us but we are too busy coping to come to you. As we look upon the second Station and see you accepting your Cross, let us also see that you were holding us up through the intensity of our pain and loss.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



III

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

He was despised and rejected by humankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ISA 53: 3-5

Mary, you saw your strong Son fall under the terrific weight of those beams. As you watched helplessly, waves of weakness filled your own body. Did those feelings remind you of the grief you felt when Joseph died? Watch over us, as our own physical strength dwindles slowly. Stay with us after the funeral, when we can hardly rise from our beds. Watch over us and lend us your strength and help us to move forward in hope.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



IV JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

And Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary his mother: "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed and a sword will pierce our own soul, too." LK 2:34-35

Mary, as I meditate upon this Station of the Cross, I am struck by what an unforgettable encounter this must have been between you and your Son. It reminds us that deeper even than shared joy is shared agony! Pray for us now. Some of us looked into the eyes of our spouses as they left this world. Some had no chance to say goodbye. They died far away or instantaneously, without warning.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



V SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Outside they found a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and forced him to carry the cross. MT 27:32

Mary, you wished you could carry that Cross for your Son. You must have sighed in relief to see Simon bearing the weight. As widows and widowers, even after many years, we can feel lonely, overwhelmed, and hopeless, desperately wishing for help.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



VI VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

And I, for my innocence, I'll see your face, waking my joy in your presence. PS 16:15

Mary, most likely you knew this valiant disciple, and saw the imprint of your Son's face on that cloth long after his ascension. Did you wipe the face of St. Joseph, just as we wiped the brow of our spouse in their final moments? Did the image of your spouse's face remain with you long after? When words can do little, gestures can do much. All of us treasure the image of our spouses, if not on a cloth, then in photographs. Pray for us as we remember.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



VII JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

All we, like sheep, had all gone astray, we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ISA 53:6

Mary, more than any other witness, you understood how the Cross of Jesus was part of the Father's plan of salvation. As your Son fell again, did you think of us sinners, through the centuries, coming to repentance? In your great distress, did your heart rejoice to see us repenting as we prayed these very Stations? During our long widowhood we have ample time to remember how often we fell from grace, when our own faults and sins hurt our spouses.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



VIII JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

And there followed him a great multitude of people and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." LK 23:27-28

Mary, were the women who braved the jeering crowd to console Jesus on the Way of the Cross, the same women who surrounded you when Joseph died? Surely they would not have left the mother of Love alone in her hour of need! When we first became widows and widowers, more seasoned mourners came forward to comfort and inspire us with their survival skills and their trust in you and in Jesus. Pray for us that we will do the same for others.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



IX JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. MT 11:28

Mary, despite your unique and exalted privileges as Mother of God, you must have felt your status in the world fall when you were no longer “Joseph’s wife” but only a poor widow. In our times, most of us grieve our new state each time we fill out a form and are forced to check the “widow/widower” box instead of the “married” box. Sometimes our social life falls because we are not part of a couple. Often, our income falls as well. Pray for us as we feel our place in the world diminish.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



X JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

After they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. MT 27:35-36

Mary, did you keep any of your Son's things after his death? Perhaps, you even kept some of Joseph's belongings? We cannot know for certain. What we do know is that Jesus was parted from his clothes by force, an act of violence. After the death of our spouses, it was a painful process to go through their possessions. As we stripped away those clothes, we felt the memories connected to those clothes slip away as well. In another sense we feel stripped of everything our spouse's presence meant to us, especially on anniversaries and birthdays. Pray for us as we struggle to place all our losses into the hands of God.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father . . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



XI JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

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. LK 23:33

Mary, you had to watch your Son endure one of the worst deaths ever devised. You saw the nails, blood, wounds and his horrible, agonizing pain. At the crucifixion, you reflected the pain and strain your Son was experiencing. You became a mirror of his crucifixion. Many widows and widowers recall having witnessed the awful, gut-wrenching miseries of a spouses' suffering. Like you, Mary, we became mirrors of that suffering. Our faces, previously more often expressive of lighthearted joy, now manifest the heavy sadness of death.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



XII JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

When it was about the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in half. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice said "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And having said this he breathed his last breath.
LK 23:44-46

Mary, how often the ways of God must have surprised you, from the Annunciation on through all the mysteries of your life. Perhaps as Jesus was being crucified you waited expectantly for another miracle, hoping that somehow the Resurrection would occur right then. But that did not happen. Instead Jesus gave you another unexpected gift; the gift of spiritual motherhood. You were to become mother of his Church, symbolized in the person of John, the beloved apostle.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



XIII JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave permission. Then he came and took the Body of Jesus. JN 19:38

Mary, great artists and sculptors have depicted the tender moment when you held the Body of Jesus for the last time. Did you also remember holding the body of St. Joseph for the last time? How often we wish that we could see our husband's again in the flesh, and embrace them in love. Pray for us that we might offer these longings back to God. Turn our grief into powerful seeds of prayer.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



XIV JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Joseph took the Body, wrapped it in clean linen and laid him in his new tomb which he had hewn in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. MT 27: 59-60

Mary, some who write about you believe that Jesus first appeared to you, his mother privately. We do not know who that was, but we do know that you understand how we feel at the burial of those we love. Even with the numbness that often comes with a death, the farewell at the gravesite is always poignant.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



XV THE RESURRECTION

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

He is risen. MT 28:6

Mary, as you witnessed the living presence of your Son following his Resurrection, your heart must have soared from its depths. We long to see our spouses someday in heaven. Be with us now in compassionate understanding of where we are. Remind us that we must live among the living in service to your Son.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be to the Father. . .

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the
mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

Adapted from: "Walk with Me, Jesus: A Widows Journey", Ronda Chervin, Simon Peter Press.
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