

Stations of the Cross

Text developed over years with Cecelia S. Snyder (Director of Children's Ministries at Grace Church, Alexandria for 20 years, ca 1985- 2006 and Montessori teacher for over 40 years) and Chrissie Crosby (erstwhile assistant for Children's Ministries at Grace, MA in Biblical Interpretation, VTS 2014)

It may have been based on some other text that we have lost in the intervening years. If someone recognizes it, please let us know.

Artwork by Chrissie Crosby (mixed media, collage and marker) (mostly Sports Illustrated and the Economist—just so you understand why you are seeing basketball players)

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer 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, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The remaining six (numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 13) are based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend. If desired, these six stations may be omitted.

(from the Book of Occasional Services 2018 p. 46)

Opening Prayer

Reader: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

Reader: Let us pray.

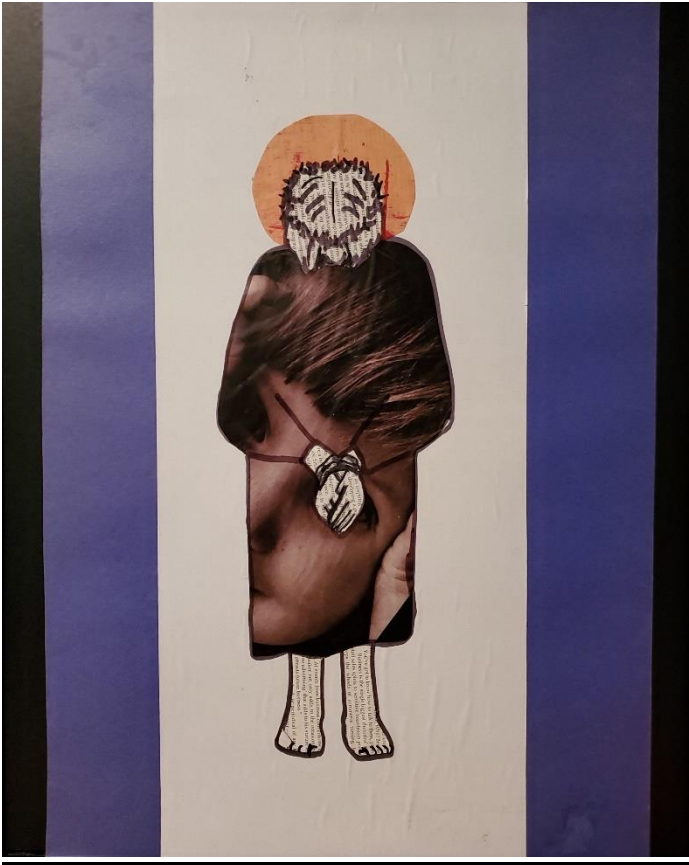
Almighty God, whose beloved Son Jesus gave himself to the hurt and shame of the cross for our salvation, help us always to see the grace of his resurrection around us: Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. ***Amen.***

Reader: Let us pray

All: ***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. Lead us
not into temptation but deliver us
from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom,
the Power, and the Glory for ever***

***Holy God, holy and mighty, holy
immortal One,
Have mercy on us.***

Station 1 Jesus is condemned



Reader: He stands quietly in front of Pilate, the Roman Governor. People seem angry with him. Why? What has he done? I remember Jesus as good and kind. Why are all these people yelling, "Crucify him?"

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

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Station 2 Jesus accepts his Cross



Reader: He watches the soldiers bring out the cross for him to carry. It looks so heavy. How can one man carry it alone? But he puts the wood across his shoulders and bends over with the weight and pain. It hurts me to watch him hurt.

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

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Station 3 Jesus falls for the first time



Station 4 Jesus meets his mother



Reader: The weight of the cross is crushing him and Jesus stumbles. Somehow, he gets back up by himself. No one helps him. Can anyone help him?

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Reader: Here is Mary of Nazareth, reaching out to her son. She looks so very sad to see Jesus like this. Why isn't she angry at the people who are hurting him? Why can't she stop them from doing this? My mother holds my hand very tightly.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 5 Simon of Cyrene carries the cross



Station 6 A woman wipes the face of Jesus



Reader: The soldiers grab someone to help Jesus. The man looked angry at first, but now he seems almost happy to help. Who is this man? He doesn't look like he even lives around here. I wonder if he knows Jesus. I wonder if he is only doing what the soldiers told him to.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Reader: Look, a woman broke through the soldiers and got close to Jesus! She is wiping his face with a cloth. How did she have the courage to challenge the soldiers? Jesus thanks her; maybe she made him feel a little better. But how can he say "thank you" at a time like this?

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 7 Jesus falls a second time

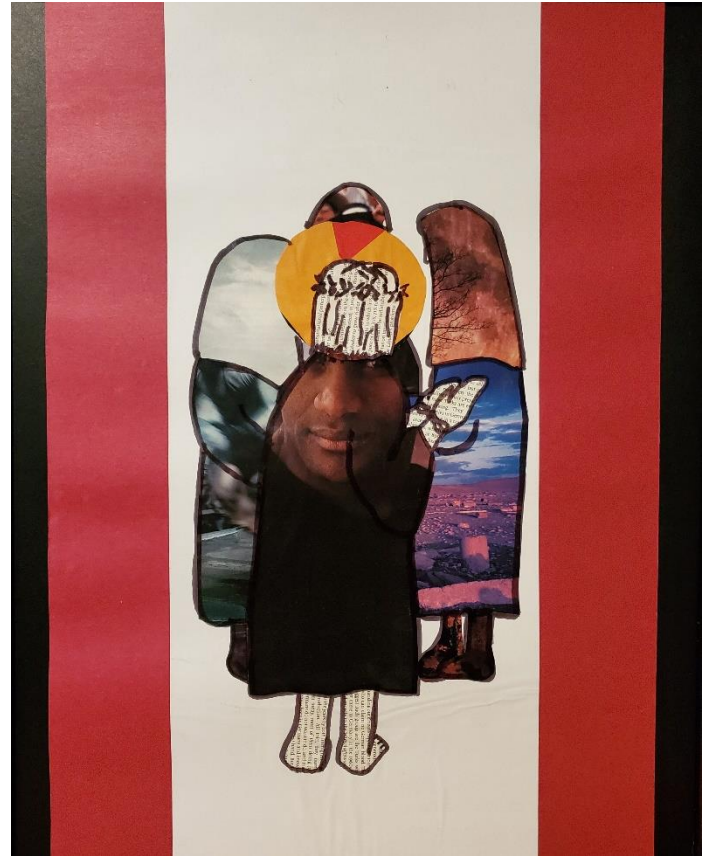


Reader: Even without the cross, Jesus can hardly walk. He is much weaker and falls to the ground again. I want to help him, but I can't get past the soldiers like the woman did. I want to help Jesus! I want this awful thing to stop.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 8 Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



Reader: A group of women are crying out loud, walking along besides us. Jesus reaches out to comfort them. I don't understand everything he says, but he is calm. How can he be so calm when he is about to die?

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 9 Jesus falls a third time



Station 10 Jesus is stripped of his clothes



Reader: We've been walking uphill for a while, and Jesus falls again here. He looks so very tired. The soldiers pull him off the ground and Jesus struggles to get up again. I have to look away. I don't want to see anymore.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Reader: We've come to Golgotha, the place where the Romans crucify criminals. Jesus will die here. The soldiers take his clothes. They seem more interested in them than in him and they throw dice to see who gets his robe. Jesus waits.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 11 Jesus is nailed to the cross



Reader: The sound of the hammer is a slow drum beat. I cannot see him because there are too many people in the way, but the sound will not go away.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 12 Jesus dies



Reader: Darkness settles over us, even though it's the middle of the day. The earth is shaking. I am afraid. I feel like everyone here is afraid. Why is it so dark? I wonder what is happening.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.***

Station 13 Jesus is taken down from the cross



Station 14 Jesus is laid in the tomb



Reader: It's been a long time now, but it is over. Some of Jesus's friends take his body down from the cross. They let Mary, his mother, hold him. I wonder if she remembers holding him when he was a baby. Everyone is very sad, but we have to move his body away before sundown. It is the law.

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you
have redeemed the world.***

Reader: We bring his body to the garden of a man named Joseph. He is from Arimathea. He has a brand new tomb we can use for Jesus. It is a little room cut into the rock of the hill. We place his body in the room, all wrapped up in cloth, just like he was a baby. I am still confused. Who was this man, Jesus? Why did he have to die? Why do I feel like he died for me?

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

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you
have redeemed the world.***

Litany

Lord Jesus, as we remember how you died for us
and rose again to bring us to new life, we ask for
your strength to help us now.

For those times we hurt other people.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we don't listen.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we take each other for granted.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we don't reach out for love.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we are too scared to do what's right.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we put other people down.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we react in hate and fear.

Lord, have mercy.

For those times we don't do our very best for you.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord God, we ask for your help in all these things,
that we may be able to put all our trust and faith in
your great mercy, which you showed us by the
sacrifice of your son, Jesus. We pray that we may
always serve you with gladness and to the honor of
your Name. ***Amen***