

Concerning the Service

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 traditional stations, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels, with the remaining six based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend.

In 1991, Pope John Paul II inaugurated a new set of fourteen stations, based strictly on events in the Gospels. The following form uses the same scriptural events, adding versicles drawn from scripture and collects drawn from *The Book of Common Prayer*, previous editions of the *Book of Occasional Services*, and new compositions.

This form is appropriate either as a public service or as a private devotion, particularly on the Fridays of Lent, but it should not displace the Proper Liturgy of Good Friday.

Traditionally, the stations are made before a series of plain wooden crosses placed along the walls of the church or in some other convenient place. With each cross there is sometimes associated a pictorial representation of the event being commemorated.

The hymn *Stabat Mater* ("At the cross her vigil keeping," *The Hymnal* 1982, 158) has frequently been associated with this service, but is not an integral part of it. Selected stanzas of this hymn may appropriately be sung at the entrance of the ministers, and (after the opening devotions before the Altar) as the procession approaches the first station.

In the form which follows, the Trisagion ("Holy God") is the chant recommended as the procession goes from station to station. Alternatively, the Trisagion may be used to conclude each station, and stanzas of appropriate hymns sung as the procession moves. It is appropriate that all present take part in the procession. The procession should conclude at the altar, after the fourteenth station.

The presider at the service, whether clerical or lay, customarily leads the opening versicle at each station and reads the concluding Collect. The Readings (and the versicles which follow) are appropriately assigned to other persons.

A Scriptural Way of the Cross

A hymn or other song may be sung during the entrance of the ministers.

Opening Devotions

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Presider and People

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.	Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.	Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

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

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

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.

The procession goes to the First Station.

First Station

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–41)

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

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

V. All we like sheep have gone astray;
R. We have all turned to our own way,

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus entered the garden of suffering and confronted the agony of impending death: Give strength and courage to the dying, that they may be comforted in their affliction and share in the hope of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

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Let us pray. *(Silence)*

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Have mercy upon us.*

Second Station

Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is arrested (Mark 14:43–46)

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; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

V. Let the lying lips be silenced

R. Which speak against the righteous.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, whose Son was betrayed by the kiss of a friend: Forgive us our betrayals and denials of him, that we may be reconciled to him in his redeeming love, through the same your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

Third Station

Jesus is condemned to death (Luke 22:66–71)

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

When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"

V. God did not spare his own Son,

R. But delivered him up for us all.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

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

Fourth Station

Jesus is denied by Peter (Matthew 26:69–75)

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. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

V. My friend and my neighbor you have put away from me,
R. And darkness is my only companion.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Most merciful God, you love everything you have made and reject no one who turns to you: Look with compassion on our inconstancy and failings, strengthen our resolve to walk in your ways, and guide us to do as you would have us do; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

Fifth Station

Jesus is judged by Pilate (Mark 15:1–5, 15)

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

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

V. He was despised and rejected by others,
R. A man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

God of all power and might, whose Son stood mute before his accusers: Help us, we pray, to bear with patience the trials of this life, that we may share in the glory of his kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

Sixth Station

Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns (John 19:1-3)

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 flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

V. Upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
R. And by his bruises we are healed.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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

Seventh Station

Jesus takes up his Cross (John 19:6, 15-17)

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 police saw Jesus, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

V. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all;
R. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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

Eighth Station

The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21)

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

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus.

V. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me
R. Cannot be my disciple.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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

Ninth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-28)

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

There followed after Jesus a great number of the people, and among them were women who were wailing for him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

V. Those who sowed with tears
R. Will reap with songs of joy.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

Tenth Station

Jesus is nailed to the Cross (Luke 23:33–34)

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 which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

- V. Christ entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf,
R. To remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*

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

Eleventh Station

Jesus promises his kingdom to the penitent thief
(Luke 23:39–43)

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

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

- V. He bore the sin of many
R. And made intercession for the transgressors.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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

Twelfth Station

Jesus speaks to his mother and the disciple (John 19:25–27)

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

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

V. God has made us his children by adoption and grace
R. And renews us with his Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, who willed that when your Son was crucified, his Mother should suffer with him, grant that your Church may share in his sufferings and also know the power of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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

Thirteenth Station

Jesus dies on the Cross (Luke 23:44–46)

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, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

V. Christ for us became obedient unto death,
R. Even death on a cross.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

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

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb (Matthew 27:57–60)

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. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

V. You will not abandon me to the grave,
R. Nor let your holy One see corruption.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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

Concluding Prayers before the Altar

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.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

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 his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*