

The Stations of the Cross – Quarantine Style



The Stations of the Cross follow the path that Jesus was forced to take from Pilate's Judgement Hall to Calvary, and that his disciples continued, taking his lifeless body from there to the tomb. Moving from station to station, following the events in the words of scripture and letting the prayers draw us into the narrative, we are given the opportunity to understand something of Christ's passion and our involvement in it. The movement and the events are at the heart of this devotion.

The stations, scriptures and prayers are a combination of a devotional by Faith Bosland (Journey to the Cross), and from St. Augustine's Prayer Book.

Meditating on the events of Jesus' final days and his resurrection can be profound. The challenge for most of us is shutting out the noise and distractions of everyday life long enough to quiet our souls and listen to the Spirit of God.

Here's how you can set up an inspiring means to interactively meditate on Jesus' Journey to the Cross: create stations for contemplation around your home during this season of physical distancing and self-quarantine.

Feel free to adapt stations as your home allows, and journey through the stations together as a family or on your own. Expect to spend an hour to an hour and a half walking through the entire exercise. Take time to journal some of your experience as you journey.

Preparation

Beforehand, gather the necessary props and set up each station as fitting for your home.

Props

Station 1, Outer Noise. Livingroom - TV tuned to static (or at a loud volume).

Station 2, God in the Flesh. Front door - A pair of men's sandals.

Station 3, Dying Seeds. Outside – Stalks of grain, grass, or seeds.

Station 4, The Cross. Outside – Large piece of wood (2x4) or large tree branch.

Station 5, Hospitality. Bathroom – Clean wash clothes, warm water.

Station 6, Betrayal. Bedroom – A collection of coins.

Station 7, Humility. Bedroom – Mirror, hats, sun-glasses, scarves.

Station 8, Jesus' Crucifixion. Basement - Wood, nails, hammers.

Station 9, Jesus' Death. Kitchen Table - Candles, candlesnuffer, matches.

Station 10, Jesus' Burial. Back door - A large rock.

Station 1 – Outer Noise

Living room (or TV room)

Be still, and know that I am God.

—Psalm 46:10

Sit in front of the TV turned up loud.

This TV represents the noise and distractions of our lives.

Sometimes we're so caught up with the busyness of life that we tune out God.

Even today as you come in, you have many thoughts going through your mind. Take a moment to acknowledge the static in your mind.

Turn off the TV. Look at the blank screen. Use its stillness as a reminder to quiet your spirit before God. Take a moment to be still and know that he is God. Breathe deep and slow.

Ask God to quiet your thoughts and put aside distractions so you can focus on him and hear his voice through this journey.

Jesus Condemned to Death

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

Isaiah 53:7-8 Living Bible (TLB)

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he never said a word. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he stood silent before the ones condemning him. From prison and trial, they led him away to his death. But who among the people of that day realized it was their sins that he was dying for—that he was suffering their punishment?

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, though you were condemned to suffer and die, all judgement has been placed in your hand. Grant that we may be saved from all false judgements against our neighbour, and at last may stand before you, forgiven by your great mercy, for the sake of your love. AMEN.

Station 2 – God in the Flesh By the Front Door

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

—John 1:14

Today you're invited on a journey through the last hours of Jesus' life.

In front of you is a pair of sandals, the kind that any ordinary man would wear.

As you begin this journey, focus on what it means for the eternal God to become a man. Think about what it means that Jesus once stood in sandals like these, just like any of us might.

The God who created the world stepped into an ordinary human body. Take time to meditate on the mystery, majesty, and humility of Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus takes up His Cross

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

Matthew 27:28-31

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and made a crown from long thorns and put it on his head, and placed a stick in his right hand as a scepter and knelt before him in mockery. "Hail, King of the Jews," they yelled. And they spat on him and grabbed the stick and beat him on the head with it.

After the mockery, they took off the robe and put his own garment on him again and took him out to crucify him.

Let us pray:

Grant us patience, O Lord, to follow the road you have taken. Let our confidence not rest in our own understanding but in your guiding hand; let our desires not be for our own comfort, but for the joy of your kingdom; for your cross I our hope and our joy now and unto the day of eternity. AMEN.

Station 3 – Dying Seeds

Outside on the grass

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
- Isaiah 53:4

If you are able, kneel down on the grass. Pick some and hold in your hands. If you have wheat nearby, look at the grains of wheat. Let them fall to the ground.

Reflect for a moment of things in your life that have died. Dreams, hopes, relationships. Our lives are filled with blessings and losses. Take a moment to acknowledge the pain that these losses have incurred. Imagine Jesus sitting with you, sharing the weight and pain of your losses. Reflect now, on any fruit that has come from these times. Are you stronger? Are you braver? Are you more compassionate with others as they endure loss? Are there areas you still need to grow?

Jesus Falls the First Time

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

John 12:23-24

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Let us pray:

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all the dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Station 4 – The Cross

Outside with a large piece of wood or branch.

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

- Galatians 6:14

Pick up a large piece of wood or branch and place it over your shoulder and walk across the yard. Feel the weight of it on your shoulder. As you feel that weight, reflect on some of the things that are weighing you down right now. Fears, pain, shame, grief. As you walk imagine Jesus walking beside you and share with Him the things that are weighing you now.

The Cross is Laid on Simon of Cyrene

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

Luke 23:26

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Let us pray:

O Lord Christ, by whose condemnation we are acquitted, in whose death we have life, and whose cross is our hope, keep us mindful of your boundless love and when we are called, like Simon, to bear the cross, make us to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for your sake and unite what we offer with your perfect sacrifice, through the merits of your eternal redemption. AMEN.

Station 5 – Hospitality

The Bathroom

Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood.

- Hebrews 13:12

Take a clean washcloth and run it under warm water. Wipe your face and your hands with it. Feel the warmth. Touch it to your lips. As you enjoy this sensation, imagine how Jesus longed for the tender compassion to sooth his wounds, to wet his lips.

Reflect on a time you were tired and thirsty. A time when you had worked hard, or been far from home, and the comfort of warm water was all you longed for. Reflect on a time when someone did a small act of kindness for you that gave you hope, encouraged your heart, gave you strength. Think of ways that you might be able to offer a small blessing to someone else.

A Woman Wipes the Face of Jesus

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

Hebrews 13:1-3

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Let us pray:

Lord, teach us to see your face and to find its imprint in all acts of mercy and compassion, and in all for whom you died; by your Holy Spirit, change us, and conform us to your own image, that through our lives, your light may shine in this dark world, for the glory of your name. AMEN.

Station 6 – Betrayal Bedroom Dresser

Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

—Matthew 26:14-16

Judas was one of Jesus’ closest friends, one of the twelve disciples who had been with him for three years. He agreed to betray Jesus for just thirty silver coins.

Hold one or two of the coins in your hand. How could Judas betray Jesus, his friend, for money? How do you think Judas felt when he looked at the coins in his hand and realized what he had traded for them?

Is your own heart tempted to betray Jesus over material things? Take this time to talk with him about it.

Jesus Falls Again

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

Lamentations 3:52- 57

I have been hunted like a bird by those who were my enemies without cause;
they flung me alive into the pit and cast stones on me;
water closed over my head; I said, ‘I am lost.’

“I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit you heard my plea,
‘Do not close your ear to my cry for help! ‘You came near when I called on you;
you said, ‘Do not fear!’

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ save us from all false pride and keep us from despair, that in strength or weakness, we may face the difficulties and challenges of our lives, seeking to serve you and accomplish your will. We ask this for the sake of your love. AMEN.

Station 7 – Humility

Stand in front of a mirror

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

- 1 Peter 5: 5-7

Put on some of the garments, hat, scarf, sunglasses.

As you look at yourself in the mirror what do you see? Do you have ways to hide your true self?

Now take off the items and look again. What do you see?

“The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1Sam. 16:7)

Reflect on whether you have habits, attitudes, judgements in your heart that need to be brought before the Lord, for his cleansing and healing.

Jesus is stripped of His Garments

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

Philippians 2: 6-8

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Let us pray:

*Lord Jesus, you stood before the world, with no one beside you and nothing to protect you, exposed to ridicule and grievously wounded; make us strong in the face of suffering, strip us of all false pride, and for your sake, who suffered such cruelty, make us abhor all injustice and violence.
AMEN*

Station 8 - The Crucifixion

Basement or other Bedroom

The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;
I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me. They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

- Psalm 22:16-18

Jesus died a brutal death on a Roman cross, an instrument of torture. Kneel in front of the cross. Imagine yourself there at the scene. What is going through your mind?

Don't rush this part.

The sin of all human beings made Jesus go to the cross, not the Roman soldiers who arrested and beat him. His love for sinful human beings held him there. He could have answered the taunts by calling the angels of heaven to bring him down, but he didn't. He chose to stay.

Think of a sin in your life, possibly something terrible you have done in the past or something you should have done but did not, possibly an attitude your heart tells you is disappointing to God.

Pick up a hammer and a nail. As you hammer that nail, think about how your sins were nailed to the cross that day in history. With each stroke, remember Jesus' words: "It is finished." He bore the pain of the cross so you could be forgiven and set free from slavery to your sin.

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

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

Luke 23: 33-43

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Let us pray:

Bring us to stand close enough to your cross, O Lord, that we hear your voice, and in your promise of forgiveness and welcome, let us rest our hope for this life and for the life to come. AMEN.

Station 9 - Jesus' Death Kitchen Table

He humbled himself by becoming **obedient to death**— even **death on a cross!**

- Philippians 2:8

Light a candle on the table. As you gaze at the flame imagine what it would have been like to be at the foot of the cross.

When Jesus died that day, so many people watching must have thought that their hopes had died as well. Darkness came over all the land that day.

Choose a candle and extinguish it. Remember the darkness that the whole world—and heaven itself—must have felt that day.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

Matthew 27:45-54

From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” —which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He's calling Elijah.”

Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.”

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

Let us pray:

By your death, O Lord, we are given life; grant that we may receive this great gift with awe and humility, and let our lives be no longer our own, but yours, now and to the day of eternity. AMEN.

Station 10 - Jesus' Burial Back Door

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

—Matthew 27:57-61

The rock you see here is a fraction of the size of the rock that sealed Jesus' tomb. Imagine the heaviness of it. Touch this rock. Feel its weight. Place it against the backdoor so no one can come in or go out.

Can you sense the heavy weight the disciples and those who loved Jesus must have felt as Jesus' tomb was sealed? In their eyes, death had won. This was a stone that no one could move. It was final. Jesus was gone and buried.

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

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

Psalm 88: 3-7,18

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help, like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me; my companions are in darkness.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, as your body was laid in a tomb, you descended into hell, to break its ancient doors and free those held in its grasp; give to us, and all the faithful departed release from sin and the torment of separation from you, for you are mighty to save, now and forever. AMEN.

Final Prayer

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

Almighty and Everlasting God, who, of your tender love towards humankind, has sent your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all should follow the example of his great humility:

Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever, AMEN.

May the glorious passion of our Lord Jesus Christ bring us to the joys of paradise. AMEN.

* Compiled and written by Cheryl Buchanan