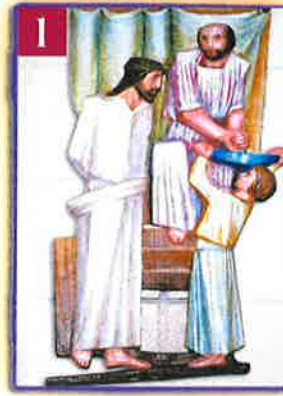
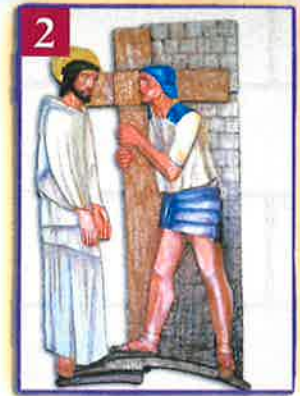


Stations of the Cross

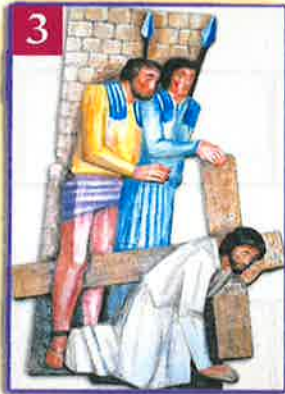
In the stations we follow in the footsteps of Jesus during his passion and Death on the cross.



Jesus is condemned to die.



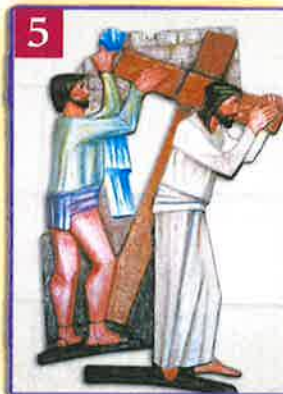
Jesus takes up his cross.



Jesus falls the first time.



Jesus meets his mother.



Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



Jesus falls the second time.



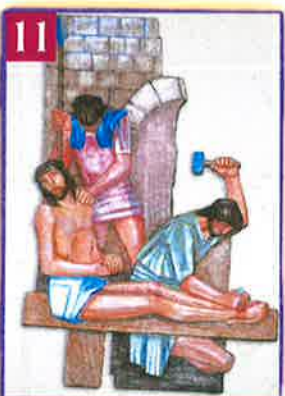
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.



Jesus falls the third time.



Jesus is stripped of his garments.



Jesus is nailed to the cross.



Jesus dies on the cross.



Jesus is taken down from the cross.



Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

First Station ~ Jesus is condemned to die

Jesus, it is hard to imagine how you stayed quiet when so many people wanted to hurt you. Be with me when I feel afraid. Remind me to trust in God's love for me.

Second Station ~ Jesus takes up his cross

Jesus, the cross was such a heavy load for you to bear. Yet you took it on your shoulders and carried it bravely. Give me courage when I have to face something difficult in my life.

Third Station ~ Jesus falls the first time

Jesus, the weight of the cross caused you to fall down. Lift me up when I make mistakes that cause hurt to others or to myself. Help me to trust in your forgiving heart.

Fourth Station ~ Jesus meets his mother

Jesus, you saw the sadness in Mary's face when you met her on the road. How painful it was to see you suffering. Fill my heart with kindness when I meet someone who is sad.

Fifth Station ~ Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

Jesus, Simon's help in carrying the cross must have been such a relief. Remind me how important it is to be helpful when others need my assistance.

Sixth Station ~ Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Jesus, did you expect a strange woman to come forward to wipe your bleeding face? It was a simple thing to do and yet it provided so much comfort. Show me small ways I can soothe the pain of others.

Seventh Station ~ Jesus falls a second time

Jesus, once again you fell to the ground. Even with Simon's help, it was a struggle to get up and continue your journey. Strengthen me when I am tempted to give up and remind me to rely on your love when I need to keep going.

Eighth Station ~ Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Jesus, even in your anguish you stopped to offer encouragement to the grieving women. Help me to be a comfort to others.

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

Ninth Station ~ Jesus falls the third time

Jesus, this fall must have been the hardest. You were tired and in great pain yet you struggled to your feet and resumed your journey. Inspire me to keep going when the way grows long and weary.

Tenth Station ~ Jesus is stripped of his garments

Jesus, how humiliating it was to be stripped of your clothes in front of a large crowd. Remind me to show respect to others and to do nothing that robs them of their dignity.

Eleventh Station ~ Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus, I can't imagine the agony of having nails driven through my hands and feet. Yet, in the midst of your pain you forgave those who did this terrible deed. Grant me the courage to forgive when I am wounded by others.

Twelfth Station ~ Jesus dies on the cross

Jesus, with a great sigh you gave up your spirit. Show me how to surrender in small ways so that each day I make an offering of my life to you.

Thirteenth Station ~ Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus, it was heartbreaking for Mary to hold your lifeless body in her arms. Comfort me when I grieve over the loss of someone I love.

Fourteenth Station ~ Jesus is laid in the tomb

Jesus, how dark and lonely it must have been to walk away from the tomb and yet your friends would know great hope in the days ahead. Remind me of the light that emerges from darkness because of your great love. May my faith in you grow stronger each day.

Background on the Stations of the Cross

The origin of the Stations of the Cross stretches back to the Crusades when, as a result of the conquering of the Holy Land, Christians began making pilgrimages to the sacred sites where Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead. Today, the Stations are depicted in many ways, including paintings, sculpture, and stained glass.

The meditations for this prayer practice vary as the tragic walk from condemnation to the cross unfolds. As pilgrims on a journey of faith, we use the Stations of the Cross to reflect on the ways we suffer humiliation, rejection, suffering, and death. This makes the Stations more than a historic re-creation of Jesus' walk to Golgotha. The prayers draw us into considering how Jesus accompanies those who suffer in today's world. The injustice of being arrested and falsely accused, the pain of enduring mockery, torture, and being forced to carry the means of one's own death, the grace of small acts of compassion in the midst of an agonizing climb, and the surrender of heart and soul to God's infinite mercy all draw us into a story that is as contemporary as it is ancient.

The Stations of the Cross are one of many spiritual practices that we can reflect on as we make our way through Lent. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we can seek ways to find and extend mercy to those who shoulder heavy loads. We can fast from destructive, cynical, or critical thoughts and behaviors, and embrace ones laced with gratitude, humility, and compassion. And we can pray for understanding and generous hearts so that we emerge from Lent, living as disciples of Jesus Christ.