

**In communal celebrations,
the following would be appropriate**

For the entrance procession, the crossbearer accompanied by a candle bearer, the leader, and those representing Jesus, two members of the Sanhedrin, a Roman soldier, a bystander, a companion, Simon of Cyrene, Veronica, a woman of Jerusalem, and Joseph of Arimathea enter together in silence.

All bow to the cross and proceed to their stations.

During the way of the cross, the cross and candle bearers alone highlight the fourteen stations. All others read from their place in the sanctuary.

For the recessional, the cross and candle bearer return to the sanctuary. All bow to the cross and exit in silence as they entered.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



Emmanuel Publications

5384 Wilson Mills Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44143

Jesus carried his cross, and he stumbled and fell
on the paving stones of old Jerusalem.

Today we follow him on that sacred way,
pausing with him at each station, in our Christian journey to God.



FIRST STATION

For communal celebration see note on page 32.

Introduction

LEADER: Dear people of God, we have come together to try to penetrate the mystery of the Passion of our Lord, to make that dreadful walk with him and feel his sorrow and agony. We do this not in idle curiosity, but to understand as best we can that this sacrifice was not for history alone but to open our souls today to the true and fulfilling love of the Father. We pray that from this great sorrowful experience we may rise on Easter with our Lord to a new and greater life in God.

FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS:

How can this be?
A Roman voice speaks my fate!
And other voices that speak in my own
tongue rejoice in my condemnation.
This governor, this Pilate, a tawdry
Roman politician has washed his hands
of me, dismissed me from his presence to
send me to a higher dignity, the dignity
of the cross.

FIRST
MEMBER OF
SANHEDRIN:

I wish he had not been so condemned.
I fear this will enrage some of our people.
For us as Jews to have sent another Jew
to the cross!
I fear it!

SECOND
MEMBER OF
SANHEDRIN:

Why speak about that!
He was worry to us—a problem.
He did not show respect for our laws.
It is better the Roman dog should bite him.
Yes, let it be the Roman fault.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



SECOND STATION

Jesus Takes His Cross

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: I have not owned many things in my life, a seamless robe, and now this gift, this cross given not out of love, but I accept it. It is mine now and will be mine as long as there are those who suffer ingratitude loneliness, betrayal. It will be my burden, and I will bear it as long as human beings continue their inhumanity toward one another.

ROMAN
SOLDIER:

Why are we doing this?
Why do we abuse this gentle man this way?
What human quality do we lack that drives us to such bestiality?
Yet, even as I ask, my arm brings down the leaded whip across his shoulders. Within my heart, I ask his pardon, even as I strike!

LEADER: My Jesus, how like that Roman soldier I am. I know your love yet I strike out against it. I give you your cross and demand that you take my sin and bear it down the long road to Golgotha. As that heavy, brutal cross tears at your heart, I too ask your pardon.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE OF JESUS: O Father,
do not let me fall here
before these jeering faces!
Help me to reach my goal with dignity.
Must I be brought even lower?
Must I fall on the hard stones of this awful road?
Father,
I can learn from everything that comes to me.
I can learn to bear the pain, and even more,
the humiliation that comes to me.
O God, Father, bear me up. . . I fall!

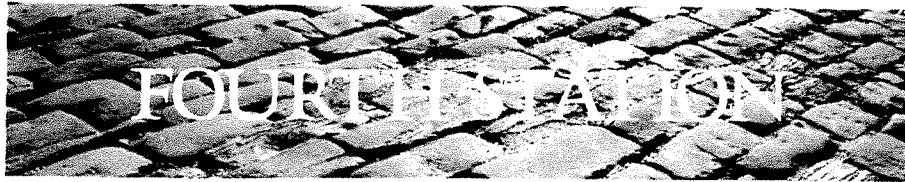
BYSTANDER: Look at that fool!
A stalwart Galilean peasant and he shames our Jewish manhood by dropping his cross!
He ought to bear his burden!

LEADER: His burden? No, the cross that brings him to his knees is my burden and your burden. He carries our burden, the sins of the world. We have already fallen because of the weight of our sins. But now we are lifted up and cleansed by his carrying our sins, so we can stand forgiven before God even as he is sacrificed for us.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Jesus Meets His Mother

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: Mary, Mary Mother, please do not see my agony. See my love.
You have borne me in your womanhood and now the pain of birth returns to your sweet soul.
I would spare you this pain, but so it has been and will be that mothers must stand by and sorrow for the tragedies of their children.
Father, be her strength, tell her of our love for her and for all mothers who cry in the night for their children.

BYSTANDER: Never have I seen such sorrow mixed with faithful serenity.
She must be someone close to that man.
His mother you say!
See how she holds her head high, proudly, even as tears fill her eyes.

COMPANION: See that look they have for each other. It is almost as though they smiled a secret between them.
There is a bond between mother and son, but these two show such quiet strength.
Oh, if I could love like that.

LEADER: My Jesus, if only I could show such love for you.
If only I could feel such depth of love for you and your Church.
So often I neglect her that brought me the faith and knowledge of you.
Jesus, help me to give myself to you and to the Church that nurtures me.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Simon Helps Jesus

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: Must it end here on these hard stones?
I cannot go on.
My weakness is my defeat.
I resisted the temptation in the desert to cast myself down.
Now, Father, send an angel to minister to me.
I am in need.

SIMON
OF CYRENE: What a sorry parade they provide in this sick Judea!
To drag a poor, exhausted, brutalized man to his death is bad enough, but to make him carry his own cross!
But then it is none of my business.
I have too much to do to waste my time on this sorry spectacle.

O my God, they are making me a part of this horror!

Why me, a Cyrenian?

I am not in this political mess!

But he is looking at me, and now somehow I feel as though I know him and have known him.

But what is this?

His blood, covering the cross, is now on me.

From it I feel a surge of strength and joy as I bear his cross.

By our father Abraham, may I be allowed to go this second mile for him!

VOICE
OF JESUS: Out of the far places he comes, this strong and loving Cyrenian, to save me from more degradation.
So it will be that people from the far places will respond to my need.
For even as I now stagger, he takes the burden to spare my strength.
He helps me on in an exchange of love.
Father, grant to the Simons everywhere, all those who share the burdens of others, the blessings of eternal life with you.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: O Father, my blood from these torturing thorns fills my eyes.
I would like to see the faces of my people here.
How I look for a sign of love, a look of compassion, the kind of compassion I have for them.
Is there no one to wipe my face even as I have washed their feet?
At last, at last, someone.

VERONICA: Look at the blood, the sweat, pouring down his face, mixing with the dust and dirt from the street, staining the paving stones. Perhaps I could use my veil to wipe his face.
Perhaps I can make it through this crowd.
But will the soldiers stop me?

VOICE
OF JESUS:

This woman has defied the soldiers and has wiped my blood from my face.
I see her face now.
Father, again I find a good Samaritan along the road.
It is my prayer that those who take my part be given that immortality that comes with true charity.
Courage to love, strength to give in self-sacrifice, the ability to forsake self-centeredness, these are the qualities that will forever sustain me and my Church.
And for those who say "no" to me and my need, give added blessing to fill the emptiness in their lives.
Wipe the darkness from their inner eyes and reveal to them the glorious joy of your love, O my Father.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls Again

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE OF JESUS: I cannot go on.
My strength is all gone.
My body no longer responds to my will.
Again I fall, ignominiously.
Let me rest here on the stones.
Let me press my body against the pavement and the earth I love so very much.
But I must rise.
I cannot die here.
My destiny requires more of me before I reach my goal.

OLDIER: How did I draw this duty?
If this damned centurion were not here I would spare this human wretch with one swift blow of my short sword.

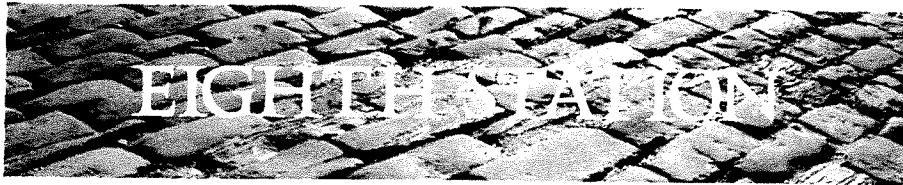
But the Roman will must be satisfied by his crucifixion.
On your feet!
By the gods, he is almost finished now.
Such a bloody mess.
And now his blood is on my hands . . . warm!
The aches of all the lonely years of soldiering seem gone.
It must be my imagination.
Up wretch, stand and make a worthy spectacle of Roman justice!
You cannot cheat Rome of its victim.

VOICE OF JESUS: I hear the inner voice of empty pity and unlove.
Why do they give in to the unlove?
Why do they deny themselves the greater self?
Why do they ignore the glorious heights of God's love and try to fill their darkened lives with artificial brilliance, when the light of God continuously beckons to them?

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Jesus Consoles the Women

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE OF JESUS: What has brought these women here? Some, so many, see only a man of misery and offer empty pity. By nightfall, they will have forgotten, and the dreary way of their lives will go on. They will return here and walk on these paving stones as though I had never fallen on them.

WOMAN OF JERUSALEM: Look at the poor man, hardly able to take another step. I wonder if he will make it to Golgotha. It must be terrible to suffer so. I thank God he is no son of mine. But what if he were?

VOICE
OF JESUS:

What a waste is pity that does not come to grips with the pitiful. It is better to have the mountains fall on such. Then at least there would be an outpouring of true love. But for those who know me and see me this way and still hope and trust, may the Father grant the Kingdom he has promised.

LEADER: Eyes that see only the surface of life see but the superficial. But eyes that see with love see the beauty of life. Even in tragedy, they find comfort and solace in God's love. Lord, may we have mercy on those who are in need. Pity is not enough. We need to respond to the needs of others—needs of body, soul, and spirit—with the holy action of love.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Jesus Falls a Third Time

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: O Father, I cannot bear another step.
the weight of my own body is too much.
And the pain!
So here I am, stretched out on these stones.
But I will not give up.
The kicks and blows will not do me in.
To die here would be too easy.
Your love, Father, and my obedience,
will bear me to the end.
Father, give me strength.

ROMAN
SOLDIER:

By the gods, I hate this part of my job!
This man has taken far too much. I could
end his misery with one good stroke of
the sword.
But Roman justice must be served.
So let him get up and on his way before
we have to carry him.

LEADER: O Christ, is there anyone, knowing you
and your passion, who would not rise
with you and stagger on?
I would, Lord, I would overcome my
weaknesses and carry on your work of
redemption. . .
With your help, I would.
Let not my neglect become the kick, the
blow that tries to end your reign.
Let us stand together and move forward
into the light of the world, our Father in
heaven.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE OF JESUS: Now I have nothing left to bind me to the world.
All is gone. No, not all.
The richest possession still is mine, my self.
I am richer than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.
I am more than rich.
I am clothed in God's love.

BYSTANDER: This man astounds me!
The more they beat him down, the more he moves with the spirit, with dignity.
This is dirty business we are about here. I doubt that I shall leave here unmarked.
This Jesus is teaching me something I cannot yet understand.

LEADER: See, our Lord stands naked before the vulgar gaze of others. Yet, his simple majesty clothes him beyond the riches of the world. If only we could possess such greatness of soul, no prejudice, no envy, no false pride.
Oh, to be as rich as he who stands naked, without pretense, before us.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Jesus Is Crucified

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE OF JESUS: Oh, the agony, the searing pain, is like an animal tearing at my body. My tortured nerves scream in silence. My reason reels and shudders. The pounding agony is almost beyond bearing. But I accept this, for worlds beyond this world and times beyond this time, and for people as numerous as the grains of sand on the sea, I will not desist. Nothing will deter me from bearing the love of God to others.

BYSTANDER: Is there anything in the world so valuable that it requires this? Is all the worth of all the Ceasars great enough to warrant this? There must be some reason beyond this life and world that can account for this.

LEADER: Yes, there is. There is love, the love of God, our Father. There is love flowing down from this cross to lighten our lives. As Christ is lifted up upon the cross, we are lifted up to receive the most precious gift of all: the eternal love of God.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.



Jesus Dies upon the Cross

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

VOICE
OF JESUS: The end of this life is upon me.
But before the end, I must fulfill my final earthly duty.
Father, forgive them, all of them who now and in the future bring malice into the world.
Send down the healing grace of your love on all who stand in need.
Mother who bore me, release me now.
Turn to my beloved apostle and accept him as you have accepted me.
And you, beloved disciple, I give to you, and to all who follow me on this way to God the love that has been mine in this earthly life.
Take your new mother, Mary, the Church, and accept her gentleness and love.
My work is over.
The Church must now carry on my mission.
One last breath . . . It is finished.

LEADER: Finished? No! The agony goes on. Lives are lived in torment. Executioners still ply their trade, killing minds, bodies, souls.
Evil still holds sway, and we who tolerate the evil help to build other crosses on which God's children will die.
Jesus died that we might live. That is the light of the cross, a heavenly gift for all of us. Having embraced the cross, we too must die to the evil that Christ overcame once and for all.

ALL: Lord, we accept your Church as our spiritual Mother,
and we shall be as children to her, as sons and daughters supporting her and ministering to her, as she herself ministers to God's people everywhere.
With Christ's death, hell trembles, the oceans roar, and the earth is shaken to its foundations. For those who believe, the light of the world has been raised aloft.
Those who do not believe are left in darkness to brood upon their deeds.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

CENTURION: You, old man,
you want the body of this dead man?
I thought you were one of those who
gave him up to Pilate.
I have seen many men put to death, but
this one bothers me.
How can anyone talk of love and call on
God to forgive those who are crucifying
him?
It makes no sense, unless he is what they
say he is.
I could believe.
Here, take his body.
Wait, his mother is here and would rock
her child once more.
We can wait a minute longer.
It has been a long, sad day, and I am so
tired of blood, war, and being despised.
And now this last execution!
God help us all.

JOSEPH OF
ARIMATHEA:

This gruff and hardened Roman!
I must thank him, thank him for the
body of my Lord.
Once again, my Lord comes to me, this
time in death, but with the love he
spread abroad he shall live forever in our
hearts.
I long for his smile, his look of friendship.
Loneliness, emptiness, these are tombs
darker than any burial vault.
The light of our lives has gone out, at
least for now.

LEADER: Where are we? Why are we? Where are
the answers we need to understand life
and death? The reason for living is
entombed in silence. Without the living
Jesus, life makes little sense for us. Yet,
we do have his words, healing words,
gentle blessings, and the promise that
what is taught us is salvation and eternal
life.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

LEADER: Lord, have mercy.

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

LEADER: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us.

ALL: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

LEADER: Jesus was placed in "his" tomb, they say. Of course, it is not so, for the son of Man has no place to lay his head. Jesus came into the world like all of us, owning nothing, and like all of us (such is our prayer), he left the world after gaining life. But unlike us, Jesus gained life, not for himself alone, but for all human beings.
He did receive a last earthly gift, someone's tomb, and the stone that sealed it. The members of the Sanhedrin, the Roman soldier, the bystander, and the others, all may have thought him defeated but his death and burial brought life. The tomb would endure as a lasting memorial to his victory over death.

ALL: How many times have we buried him?
How many times have we laid him to rest, counted him dead, denied we ever knew him?
O God, we have dug our own grave by turning from the one who loves us.
O Lord God, it is so dark, lonely and empty without you. But we remember your promise and hold our spirits high, confident that you will never be far from us.

LEADER: We remember the words our Lord taught us, and so we bow our heads and say:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven. . .

LEADER: O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,

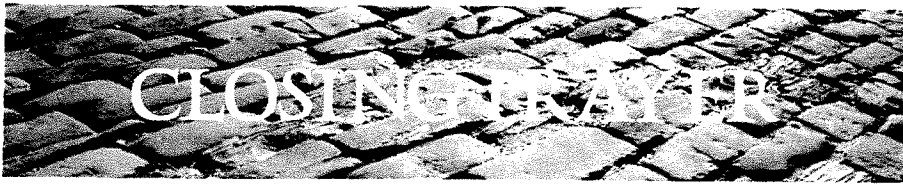
ALL: have mercy on us.

LEADER: O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,

ALL: have mercy on us.

LEADER: O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,

ALL: grant us peace.



LEADER: Holy and eternal Father, we have tried to walk with your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his agony and death. It has been a difficult, a brutal experience. Yet through all the agony, our strong sense of hope has never slackened. We have heard the words of love and forgiveness spoken to us from the cross, and we still hear those words today as we continue our journey.

Grant that this experience of the way of the cross may enrich our lives and those of others. May it overflow in service to you, and through you to all you love.

Father, raise us up even as you raised your Son in triumph on the cross. Let us all go forward into the world, rejoicing in our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

All recess in silence.

The following is recommended as the closing prayer for Good Friday.

LEADER: Blessed be our God.

ALL: For ever and ever. Amen.

LEADER: Let us pray.

Almighty God, on this day when we solemnly commemorate the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray you, graciously to behold your family, for whom Jesus was betrayed, given into the hands of sinners, and put to death on a cross. Guide your Church in the way that it should go and give your grace to each of us as you see our need.

ALL: Amen.

LEADER: Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold those you have called to serve your Church. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the Church, and help all of us to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

All recess in silence.