



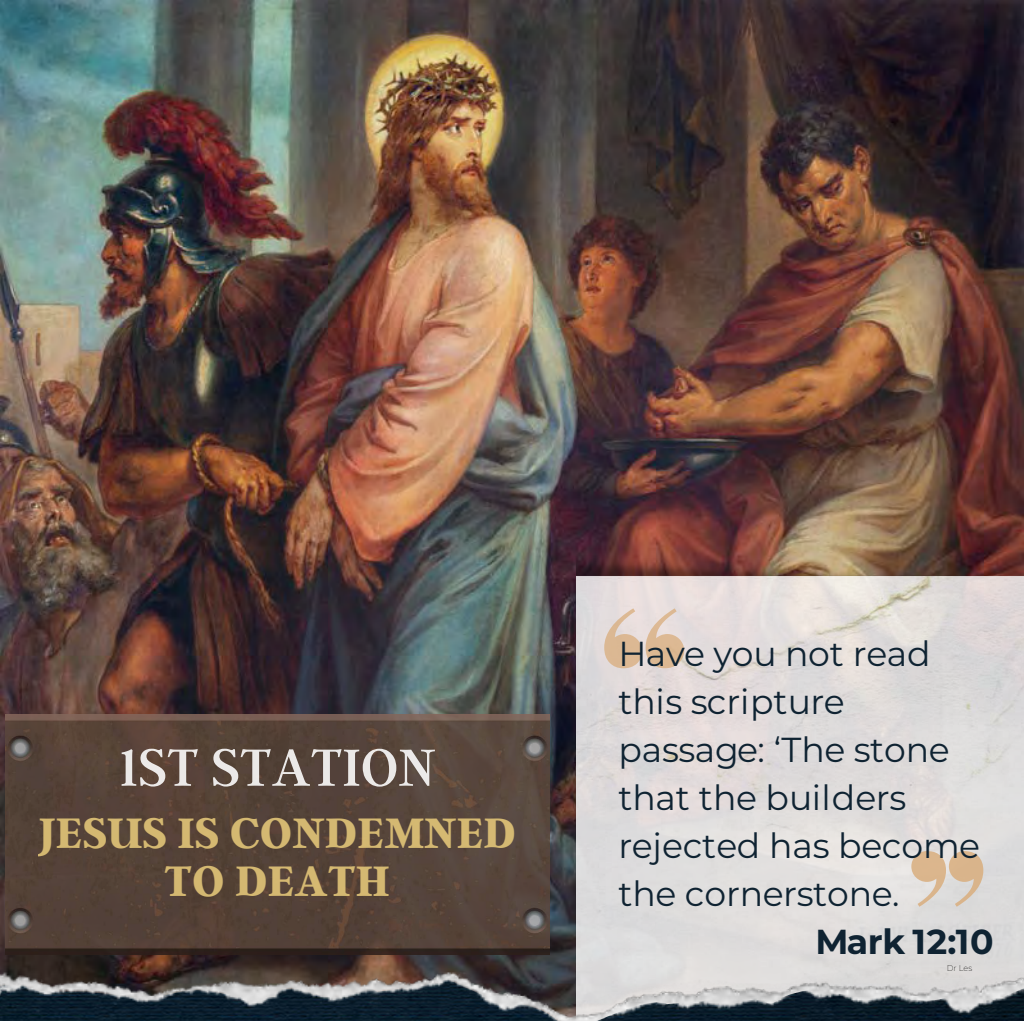
COUPLE TO
COUPLE LEAGUE

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Reflections written by the CCL
Board, Staff & Members for Lent

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, as we walk the Way of the Cross with You, help us to imagine what You saw and what You felt. As we listen to Your Word, help us to think about what it means in our lives today. As we reflect on what Mary saw and felt, may we know how mothers suffer when their children suffer. As we pass along each station, may we reflect on our participation in your suffering by our sin. We pray in Your name, Jesus, for You are Lord forever and ever. Amen



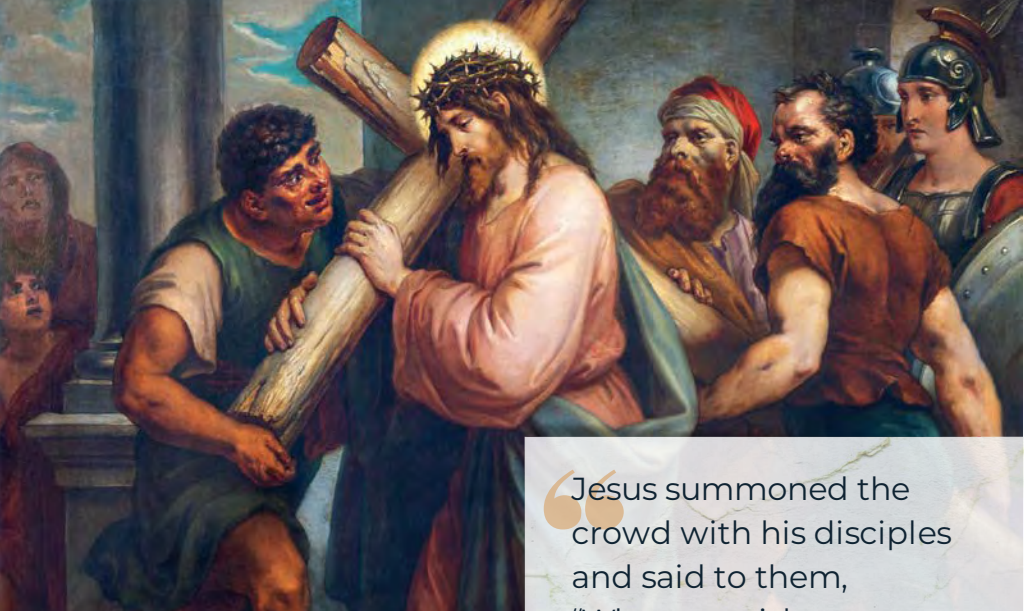
1ST STATION JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

“Have you not read this scripture passage: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.’”

Mark 12:10

Dr. Les

The cancel culture is nothing new. Always the forces of evil seek to convince us that all is hopeless, our efforts are ineffective or meaningless. Lies abound – adding to confusion in today’s society. Amid this, let us reach out to our cornerstone -- the Lord Jesus Christ. The battle is won! Dear Lord, let me hold the truth of your resurrection in my heart to be a light of hope and peace to my brothers and sisters to overcome the confusion of today’s world and look forward to our true home in heaven.



2ND STATION JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

“Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. - Mark 8:34”

Jesus, in this Station we see you willingly pick up the Cross. In your Passion, you showed us how to live and how to die. You chose to embrace the Cross - not to avoid it somehow - out of love for us, to save us from ourselves and our sin. Help me to see and to choose the ways you are inviting me to actively love all those entrusted to me, rather than to seek my own selfish desires or even just to avoid inconvenience and discomfort with regard to others. Help me, especially, to seek the true good of my loved ones: my family (especially my spouse and each of our children), co-workers, friends, godchildren, even when it comes at a cost of time or energy or a true sacrifice of my will and personal desires. Help me to recognize any crosses in my life as permitted by you for me to embrace in love of you and others. Help me to remember that you suffered first so that I would know you are with me always, especially in suffering, and that, with you, I find true and eternal life beyond any this world can offer.



3RD STATION JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

“The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little.”

- 1 Peter 5:10

Jesus fell under the weight of the cross, the weight of our sins, burdens, and pride. Everyone stood around, mocked him, never helped him. I would say he was suffering more than a little. Yet, as promised in 1 Peter 5:10, God restored and strengthened him. He did not just stand up, he stood up to continue walking towards his death to save us from a life of sin. Wow! To me, Jesus falling was not a tragedy nor a weakness, but another way Jesus showed us, through his example, to turn to God. How many times have I fallen under much less suffering than Jesus? Did I turn to God to help restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish me? Or did I hold onto my pride and arrogance and just got up myself? Am I better or worse for this? I also often read this passage and cannot believe why no one helped him? Surely, I would have if I was there, right? But how many times was I the one who the caused the suffering for others to fall? Did I hold out a hand to help them? Did I turn to God for forgiveness? So, I pray, Lord, guide me to your everlasting love and grace when I fall. Through this grace, shine through me in my actions and words to help others who have fallen or who I have caused to fall.



4TH STATION JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Luke 1:41-42

Mary, seeing her son as he was dragging the wooden beam through the streets, would never have imagined this scene when she heard Elizabeth's greeting and proclamation, "Blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Mary, journeying along the way to Calvary with Jesus, making her way through the throngs of those reviling him, heard only, "Crucify him! We have no King!" She would have been desperately seeking just a glimpse of him then there he was in front of her, weak, bleeding, searching her eyes, knowing how much she was suffering to see him suffer. A moment between mother and child, forever sealed into her memory to be treasured and pondered in her heart. Mary, look at me as you did your son in that moment, loving me unconditionally as a mother does her child, praying for me that I, too, will persevere to the end and attain Heaven with your son.



5TH STATION SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure. Faithful friends are beyond price, no amount can balance their worth. Faithful friends are life-saving medicine; those who fear God will find them. Sirach 6: 14-16

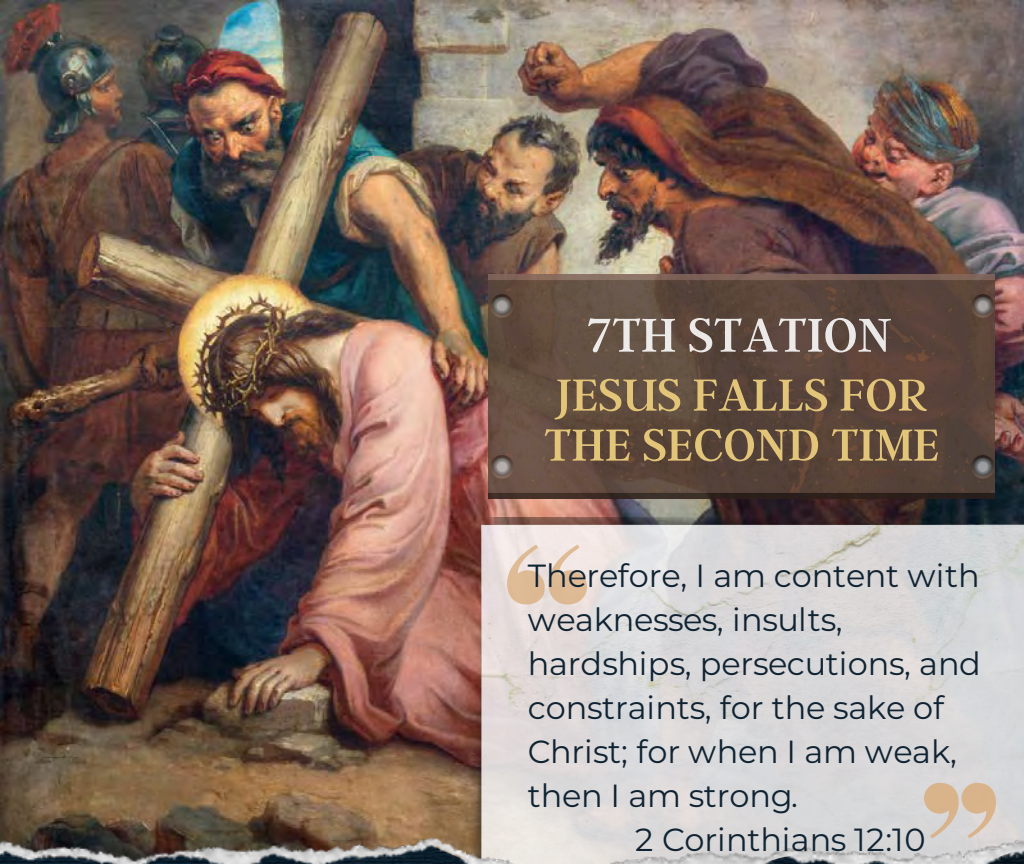
We are relational beings. All of us are called to be in relationships with God, family, friends, coworkers, and communities. Relationships are often treasured in times of hardship, or the pain is felt when one is suffering and there is not another there to help ease the pain. Jesus promises us that He never abandons us, even for a moment. The God of the universe is always present to us at every moment, but He understands how we can still feel alone. At this moment, the Lord has already experienced so much pain- physically, mentally, and emotionally. The Lord felt this immense and often hidden pain, the cross of loneliness, on his way to Calvary, especially after his dear disciples and friends abandoned him. Simon of Cyrene was a helper to Jesus, physically, but also relationally, by carrying his cross of loneliness. At times, following the church's teachings and practicing NFP feels lonely in a world that rejects or does not know the truth about human sexuality. The Lord sends us friends, community members, and others to walk alongside with us as a reminder that through the help of others, our crosses are carried together.



6TH STATION
VERONICA WIPES
THE FACE OF JESUS

“Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.”
- Ephesians 4:32

My Lord, in this station you encounter Veronica, a humble woman who represents all of us who follow you and wish to console your Sacred Heart. She inspires us to seek your Face every day at home and at work, especially in the people who need the consolation of a kind word or deed. Veronica did not carry the cross like Simon, but she did what she could by consoling you and soothing your wounded face. It was a courageous act of compassion out of love. Lord, open my eyes to the opportunities in the day to do small acts of kindness to my family and my friends. Lord, let me console you by loving the people you place in my path every day.



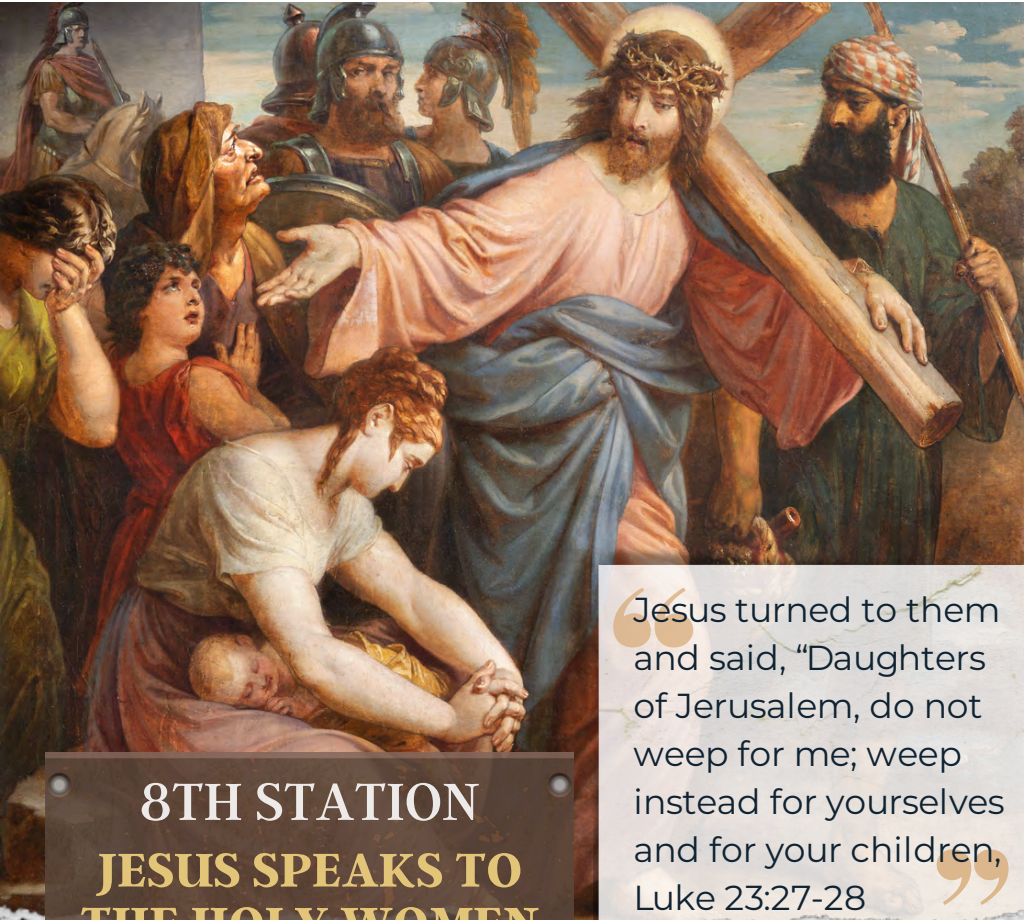
7TH STATION JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

“Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

2 Corinthians 12:10”

On this Station, Jesus falls again. The fall does not surprise him because little by little he has felt his own weakness. He feels the weight of the burden of the cross more acutely. He is tired and he knows the worst is yet to come. He falls to the ground and then gathers his strength and continues.

Weakness and strength are a paradox in Christianity. St Paul says he is weak, he is strong. Jesus was stronger than any of us and he fell. To fall is not necessarily to fail. St Josemaria Escriva once wrote, “You have not failed; you have gained experience. Forward!” Lord, grant me the grace to stand like you did after I fall. Let me not succumb to the discouragement that can creep in when I am less than perfect. Help me to find my strength in you and stand.



8TH STATION

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE HOLY WOMEN

Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, Luke 23:27-28”

As Jesus walked along the road toward His death, some people laughed. Some stood in silence and wondered who He was. Some cheered. But one group of holy women, seeing Him hurting, tired, and beaten down, cried. This small act of faith and courage in the face of hardship supported Jesus in his grief, perhaps when He needed it most. O Jesus, may we reflect on your sufferings, and may we weep and mourn; may we perform small acts of faith; may we accept your graces to comfort You by loving You and our neighbors, and may we accept our own crosses and sufferings.

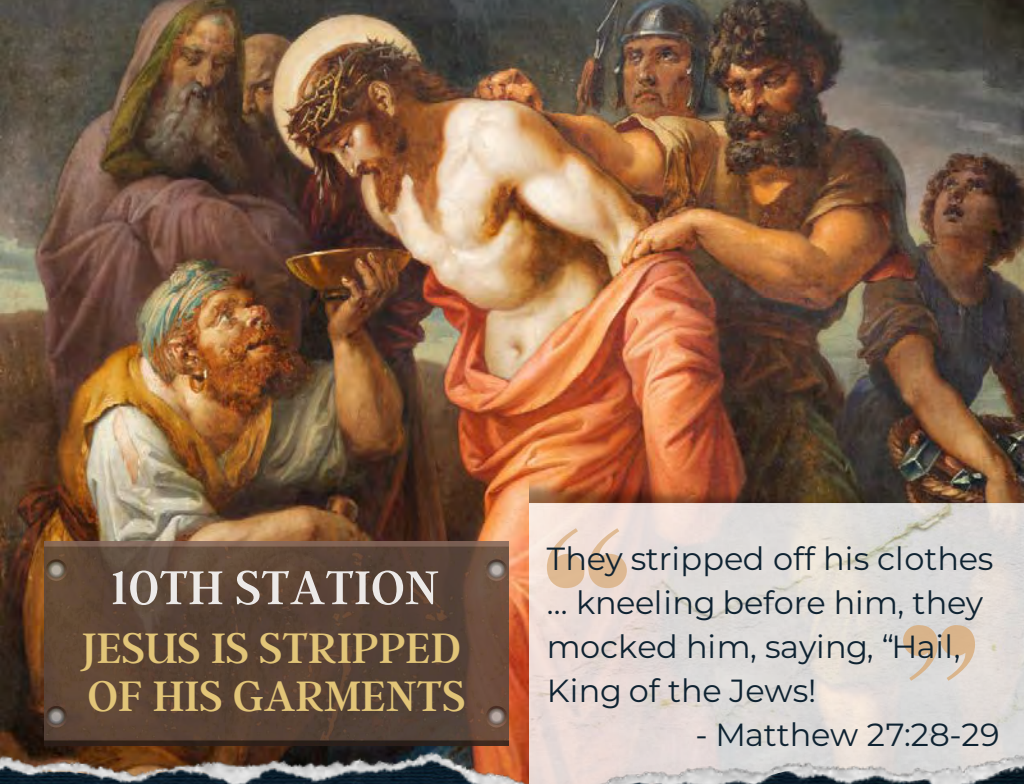


9TH STATION JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15-16 Dear Jesus, as we see you fall for the third time, may we reflect on how weak and tired and in such terrible pain you were; may we reflect on how many times we have fallen into sin and how those sins have increased the weight of the Cross which you bore on your weary shoulders. Jesus can now see Golgotha in the distance. He knows the end is near. Still, his executioners mercilessly urge him on. Do you feel God’s loving forgiveness, even when you sin, even when you fall, over and over again?



10TH STATION JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

They stripped off his clothes ... kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

- Matthew 27:28-29

We find Jesus standing among those who cannot recognize him. This paradox should not surprise us. He already said that you need to be last if you are going to be first, that you have to die to yourself if you want to live an Eternal Life. Yet, rather than receiving all glory and titles, he is being stripped of his vestments, mocked, wounded, and finally crucified. People who called him "Master" now cannot recognize his leadership. This statement begs the question, what are the world's ideas of a successful leader? It does not take long to realize that Jesus of Nazareth's Kingdom is not of this world. Name-calling, maneuvering, and personal gain are not in his repertoire. None of us will suggest that he had the wrong advisors, the wrong theology, or was "off message." Instead, we would have to accept that Jesus took "the narrow path" towards his victory over Sin, Death, and the World. Our Savior let go of his prestige, titles, and even his vestments, to become the ultimate self-giving Sacrifice. What does success look like for you as His follower? What is He inviting you to let go?

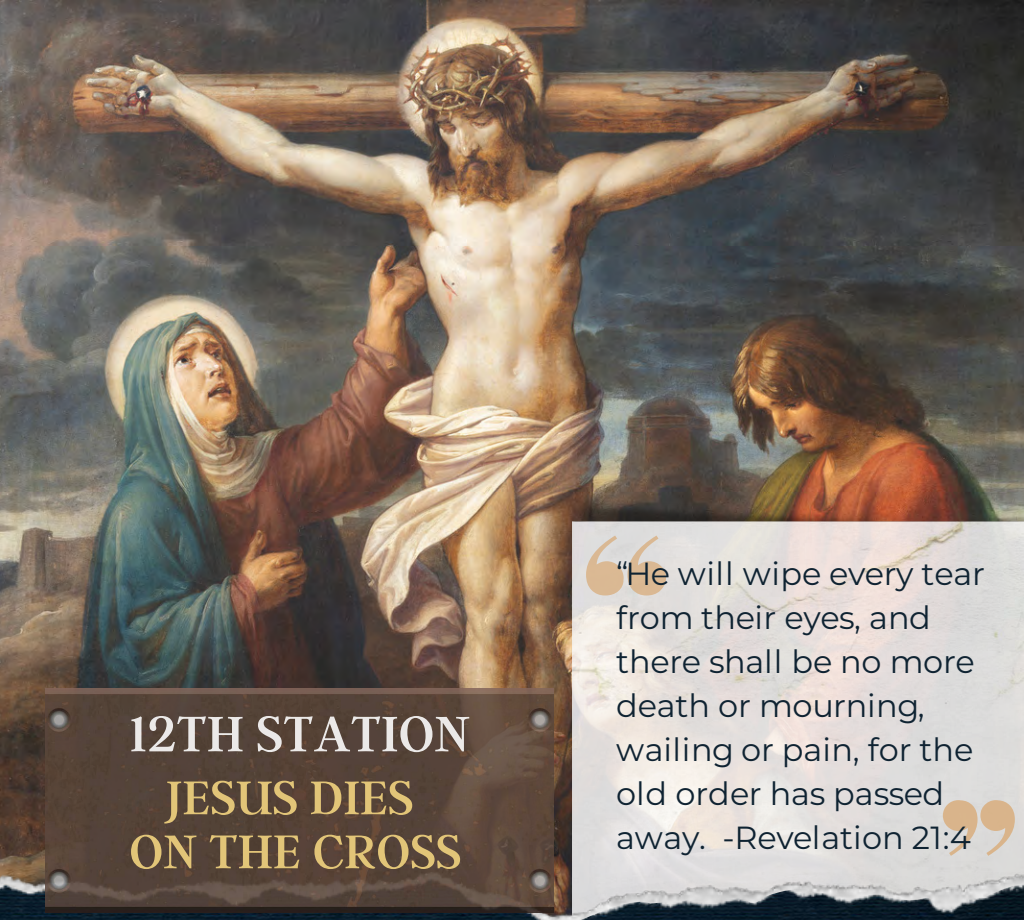


11TH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied to him, Today you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43

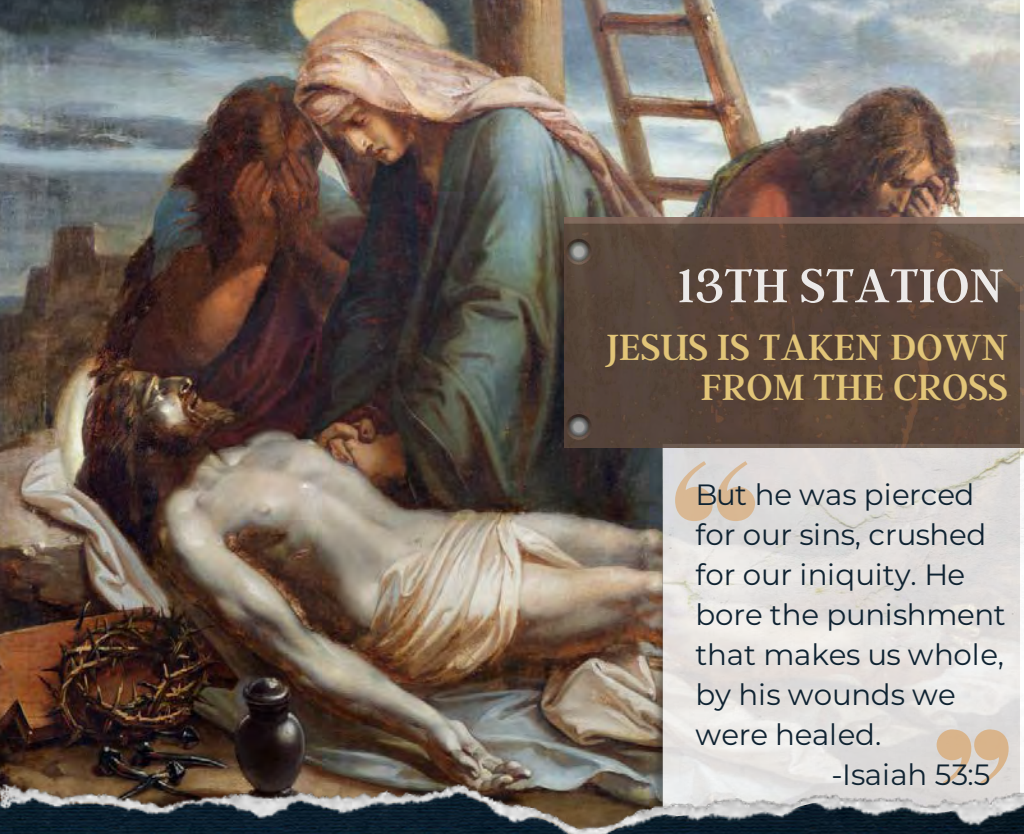
We all face low moments in life. Sometimes we feel trapped or helpless, like Jesus felt when he was nailed to the cross. Some people face difficulties with negativity or despair, like one of the thieves crucified with Jesus. Other people use hardships to change, to grow and to turn to God for help, like the good thief. Turning to Jesus in the challenging times of our lives can change everything. Lord, help me to seek you out when I am troubled and recognize you as my King and Savior.



12TH STATION JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away. -Revelation 21:4”

Sometimes we hit the darkest of time--the desolation of the soul. It is hard to understand how we will ever get past the challenge and loneliness of these moments—especially as we face the death of loved ones. “There are some things that time cannot mend. Some hurts that go too deep...” says Frodo in the Lord of the Rings. And so it might seem, but we know that death is only the beginning of eternal life—bought and paid for by Jesus’ death on the cross. And there, beyond time, every tear will be wiped away and death shall be no more. Lord, help me to know that you are with me always and most especially as I face dark and challenging times. That it is then that you are holding me close to your heart.



13TH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

“But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.

—Isaiah 53:5”

Jesus has died. This body, which was once a baby cradled in Mary and Joseph's arms, who has walked the streets of Nazareth, and has performed countless miracles, is taken down from the cross. Jesus appears so lifeless and cold, his body covered in bruises and wounds. Mary once again embraces her son in her arms with immense sorrow. In moments of extreme pain and heartache, including infertility, it feels like the sorrow will last forever, and that Easter Sunday will never come. Yet, in moments of extreme sorrow, we can still have hope. Jesus' body has hope. There is a Resurrection. These wounds will become a reminder of His glory and the faithfulness of God. When you have your own Good Friday, let your Heavenly Mother hold you in her arms. She weeps with you and shares her joy with you. She will comfort you and lead you to your Easter Sunday. Your wounds will be transformed to be a place of healing and strength for you, just as Jesus' wounds were transformed for our glory.



14TH STATION
JESUS IS LAID
IN THE TOMB

“Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock.”

Mark 15: 46

O my dear Jesus, now that you have given your life for us, may we reflect on your tortured, broken body; may we see Mary and the friends of Jesus prepare his body for burial and lay it in a tomb cut from solid rock. They have forgotten – or perhaps failed to believe – the promise Jesus made to them. He will rise from the dead. As they roll the rock across the entrance, sealing the tomb, they feel that this special time with Jesus has come to an end. They know their lives will never be the same again. May we reflect on how often we have forgotten your promise of eternal life and the resurrection of the body; may we remember that life is not ended, but it is changed. Jesus, we thank you for your sacrifice. Amen.



CLOSING PRAYER

O Jesus, our savior, our Lord, our Redeemer we are now at the end of the Way of the Cross, and your ultimate triumph over sin and death . You showed in your great passion, true grace, unconditional love and infinite patience and mercy in the face of extreme cruelty and violence. Help us to embrace and trust our Father's will as you did; help us to love you as you loved me; help us to accept difficulties and suffering as you did for me; help us, O Jesus, with your continuing graces we travel our own 'way of our Cross'. Amen

“Today you are being called to proclaim that the way of perfect love passes through the total and constant gift of oneself. Wherever people are suffering, make it your task to serve them.”

- St John Paul II