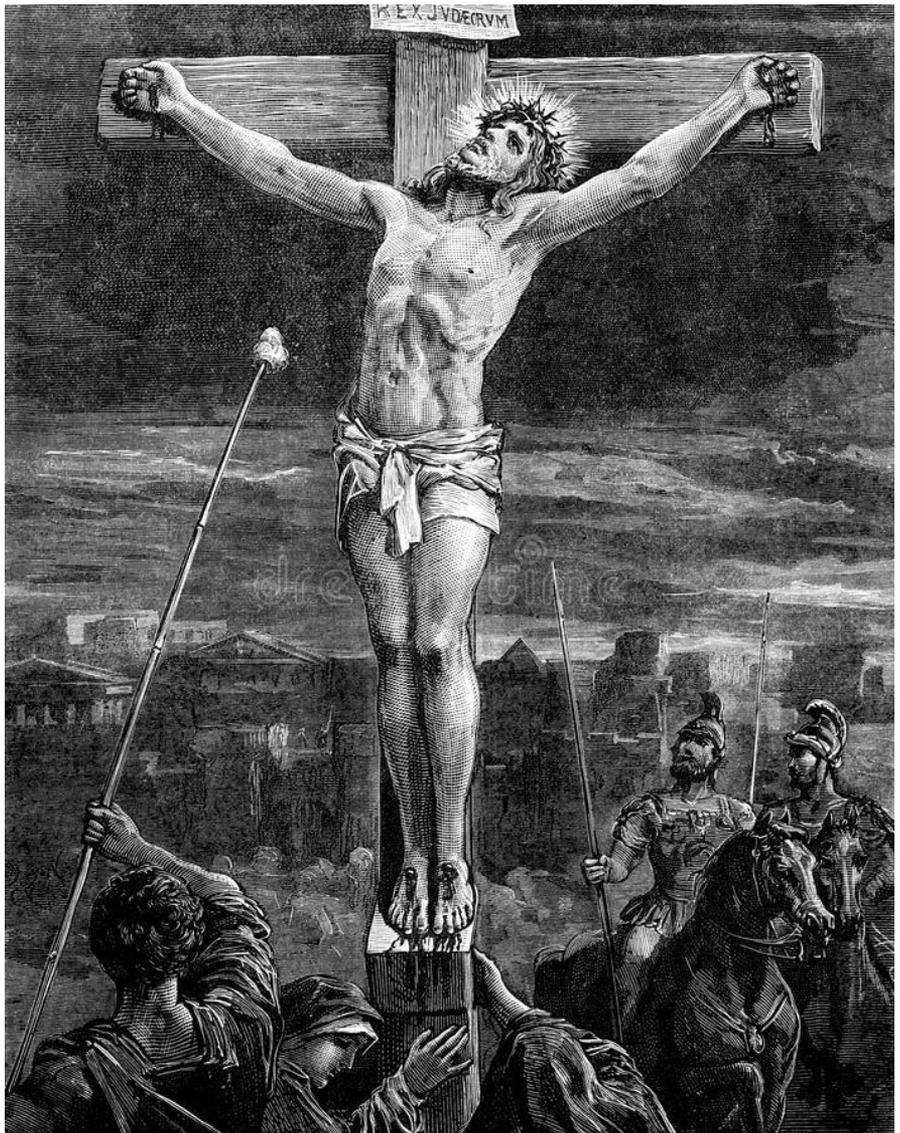


Stations of the Cross and Creation



Introduction:

Why should we connect the Stations of the Cross with creation? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the whole purpose of creation is Christ and the new creation (CCC 280). Christ is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). God foreknew from all eternity that he would send his Son to die for the world and redeem it. In the mysteries of the passion and the resurrection, the full meaning of creation is revealed to us.

In addition, during Stations of the Cross, we meditate upon the work of the second Adam. We cannot understand the work of the second Adam without understanding the first. These meditations help us to understand the importance of the first Adam within salvation history.

We hope these meditations will help guide you in reflecting upon the greatest mysteries revealed to mankind.

The Old and New Testament readings are optional, but can help guide reflection. They have been included on the righthand side so they can easily be skipped if time does not permit their reading.



Opening prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, by your passion you have undone the curse of the First Adam. Whereas Adam was disobedient, you were obedient. Whereas Adam's death led to the death of all men, your death led to eternal life for all who are faithful. We are heartily sorry for all the sins we have committed, and so we look to your cross now, which alone can save sinners. Our sin offends your infinite goodness, but your death on the cross was infinitely merciful. As we meditate upon your passion, hear us, O Lord.

For Each Station:

Invocation:

Leader: Lord Jesus, as the second Adam, you willingly took upon yourself the punishment for the sin of the first Adam. You broke the power of sin and death, reconciling us with God and offering us the gift of new life. Guide us as we meditate on your passion through this station of the cross.

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have freed the world from Adam's sin.

Closing Prayers:

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.

Leader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Leader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

1 – Jesus is condemned to death

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, you have come to stand before Pilate and, although you have committed no crime, you have been sentenced to death. Even when Pilate considers granting you mercy, the crowds cry out that you must be crucified. Even the chief of your own apostles has abandoned you.

After the First Adam fell in the Garden, he was condemned to death. We have also been condemned to death on account of his and our sins. For no man is sinless, but you Christ. All have turned away from God, and so no one comes to defend you.

For you too, O Second Adam, have now been condemned to death; not on account of your sins, but on account of ours. You took the sentence we deserve to free us from the sentence.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O Lord who took the just punishment for our sins, grant that the whole world might know of your saving passion. For all of us have been sentenced to death in Adam, and by their own trespasses they increase their own punishment, but through your sentence by Pilate and the Jews, all mankind can now become inheritors of eternal life.

Grant us too, we pray, the remission of all our sins so that after departing this life we may not be condemned to eternal death but might live forever with you. And in this life, strengthen us that we might proclaim your saving gospel to all the nations.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 3:9-13, 17-19

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.”

And to Adam God said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.”

New Testament Passage: John 19:4-6, 14-16

Pilate went out again, and said to them, “Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

2 - Jesus takes up his cross

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, you have now taken up your cross. This is the cross with which you yourself will be crucified. But rather than refusing death, you take on the weight of the sins of the world.

When we commit sin, we must bear the suffering that comes as a consequence. The wicked refuse to accept this. When Cain killed his brother Abel, he declared “My punishment is greater than I can bear.”

You, O Lord, did not commit a single sin, but nonetheless, you have now taken up your cross; not because of any suffering you have caused, but to remove the suffering our sins have caused.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, give us the courage to take up the crosses you have given us in our life, knowing that your Son has already carried our cross and is by our side. Let us be united to him through our sufferings, submitting to your will and trusting in your loving plan for us.

We also pray for those who feel overwhelmed by the crosses they bear, and we ask for your grace and strength for them. And when we ourselves feel that we can no longer bear our suffering, may we turn to you in faith and trust, knowing that you are with us and will never abandon us. Help us to rely on you in our weakness, and to find hope and peace in your Son’s passion and cross.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 4:8-16

Cain said to Abel his brother, “Let us go out to the field.” And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” And the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me.” Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

New Testament Passage: Matthew 16:24-28

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

3 - Jesus falls for the first time

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, the cross you bear is heavy, for upon it is the weight of the sins of the world. You suffer from the weight, and as a man, you have grown so weak that you have fallen to the ground.

At the fall of the First Adam, all men were condemned to death. We have been condemned to go back down into the ground. When we fall into sin, we can either choose to remain in the dust, or we can repent of our sins, get back up, and continue to struggle against temptation.

You, O Second Adam, have now fallen down to the ground. Rather than continuing in the dust though, you have gotten up and continued on our mission to free us from sin.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, strengthen us whenever we fall into sin. We desire to follow after you, but because of the corruption given to us by Adam, we often find it difficult to do so. Grant us the grace to repent of our sins and to resist even the near occasions of sin, recalling how your son got up after his fall.

May we also remember the gift of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of confession, which offers us the opportunity to confess our sins and receive your forgiveness and grace. May we make use of this precious gift regularly, turning to you in humility and trust, as we recognize our weakness as children of Adam.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 2:7, 3:19

The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

[And after the fall God told him] “out of the dust you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

New Testament Passage: Hebrews 4:15-16

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



4 - Jesus meets his mother, Mary

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, your mother Mary has come to meet you. When you were only a young child she already knew this day would come, but now she must face it.

When the First Adam got up from sleep, he met the First Eve. However, the First Eve soon after tempted him in bringing sin and death into the world.

Now you, O Second Adam, as you carry your cross you meet with Mary the Second Eve. She has now come to work with you as you free the world from sin and death.

Eve was the mother of all humanity, but through sin died. Mary through her assumption intercedes for us now and at the hour of our death.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

Most Holy Virgin Mother, intercede to assist us in all our struggles, just as you cooperated with your Son in his work of redemption. And grant that through you we might receive the merits of his passion to aid us as we seek to grow in holiness.

Grant that we may trust in your intercession as we pray the Memorare, as we recall your maternal love and protection.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen

O Lord Jesus Christ, grant that the whole world might recognize the gift of your mother, and might accept her as their own mother.

Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 2:21-24

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

New Testament Passage: Luke 2:22, 24-25, 34-35

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own heart also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."

5 - Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, the weight of your cross has become very great. The Romans become impatient, and grab a man out of the crowd, Simon of Cyrene, to help you carry the cross.

For the first six days, you alone carried out the work of creation. However, on the sixth day, you created man in your own image to continue on your work.

Now, O Lord, one of the men you created, Simon of Cyrene, has come to assist you in carrying your cross. He was called not of his own free will to bear this cross, but he patiently bears it anyways in imitation of you.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, strengthen all those who are called in this life to bear heavy crosses. Give them the ability to overcome their weaknesses in this life and give them the assistance of others where they need it. Enable them to serve you in these struggles and offer up all their sufferings to you. Help me to show compassion and care to those in need, use me as your hands and as your feet to participate in the love you pour out to your children.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

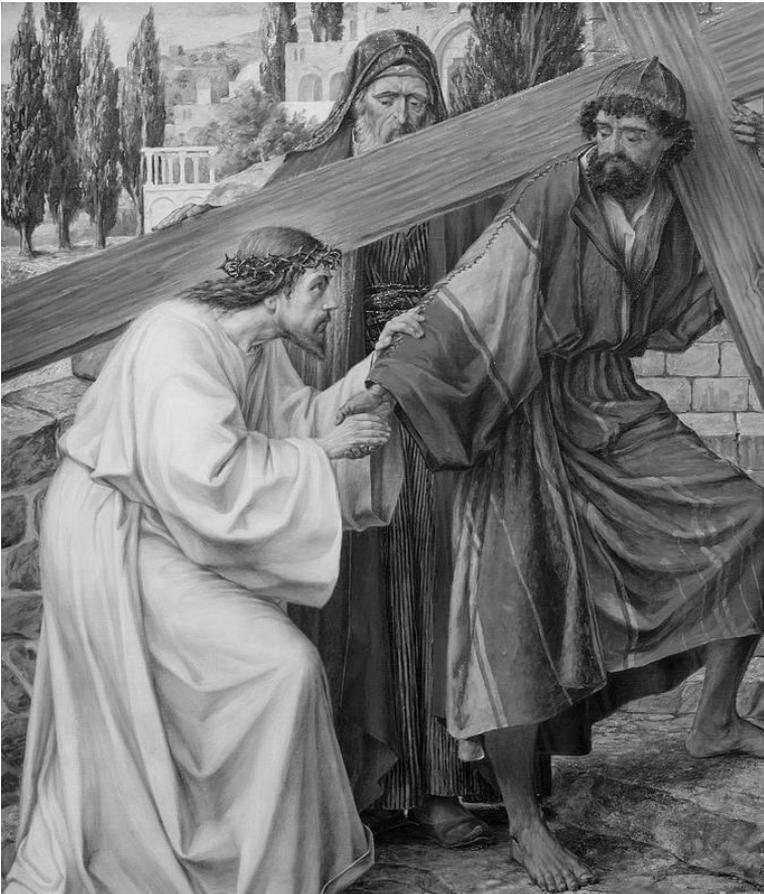
Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 2:15-17

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

New Testament Passage: Luke 23:26

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.



6 - Veronica wipes Jesus' face

Invocation

Mediation:

Despite the suffering and shame you were enduring as you carried your cross, you took the time to acknowledge and thank Veronica for her act of compassion and courage. In response to her gesture, you offered her a special blessing, imprinting your image onto her cloth.

Now, O Lord, as Veronica wipes your face, your image appears on her fabric. You are the true image of your invisible Father in Heaven, and by your incarnation you have enabled us to make images of God.

You made man in the image of God. By observing man, you can help us understand to a certain extent what your Father in heaven is like. However, in the Old Covenant, since no form of God was seen, He told Moses that no graven image of God could be made.

You are the first artist, as all things in heaven and on earth were created, through you and for you.

By Veronica, as she expressed heroic virtues, you offer us to participate in your art.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, strengthen all Christian artists that they might create beautiful images of you and your saints to beautify the houses of God and edify your faithful. May all art transmit the beauty of your Creation and may artists use their skills for the Glory of your name and to transmit to society the truth about your love and compassion which you show us each day in your creation.

O God, use the skills you have given me to share the beauty of your creation with all people. Help me transmit the stunning

beauty of the world you gave us and that I may always appreciate and celebrate your handiwork.

Give me the courage and compassion of Veronica, so that in all that I do, I may do it for you, and that you may use me to reflect your love and grace. Use me as a source of joy and wonder for others, and a reminder of your goodness and creativity.

We ask all this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Deuteronomy 4:15-20

[Moses said to the people:] “Therefore take good heed to yourselves. Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them, things which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. But the Lord has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own possession, as at this day.”

New Testament Passage: Colossians 1:15-17

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.

7 - Jesus falls for a second time

Invocation

Mediation:

At each step you take, it feels like the cross gets even heavier. Your body can barely take the weight of it. All of a sudden, you fall to the ground once again. Rather than fall into despair though, you accept the sufferings and offer them up for the sins of the world. You pick up your cross and continue to Golgotha.

When you created the world, you created periods of darkness and light. Before we can reach a day, we must go through an evening and night. But because of the merits of your passion, one day we will join you in eternal light without any darkness.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, as we meditate on your Son's second fall, we are reminded of the weight of our own burdens and the struggles we face in this world. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and to lose hope, but we know that your Son is with us in our pain.

Help us to trust in your love and to offer up our sufferings for the sins of the world, just as your Son did on the cross. May we find strength and courage to pick up our own crosses and follow in his footsteps, even when the path ahead seems difficult.

As poor banished children of Eve, we know that this life is filled with ups and downs, but we have hope in the promise of eternal light and joy with you in heaven. May we hold onto that hope and trust in your plan for our lives.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 1:1-5

And God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

New Testament Passage: Revelation 22:1-5

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.



8 - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, as you go along your journey to the cross, you encounter women weeping for you. But you tell them not to weep for you. You have the full strength of your divine nature. Even as your human nature grows weak, nothing can stop you from accomplishing your mission since you are truly God.

Rather, you tell the women to weep for the suffering that will soon come upon Jerusalem. While you are God, we are fallen human beings. However, like you, we can draw strength from the divine nature. We can turn to God and draw strength from him.

This is why you told us not to be anxious. If we seek first the kingdom, you will feed us as you feed the birds of heaven.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, comfort all those who are troubled. Help them to draw strength from you so that they will not be anxious. Help them to set you first above all the cares of this life.

Comfort all those suffering the calamities of war. Help to bring peace to the whole world.

Help us to turn to you when we face difficulties in life. Help us to seek first the kingdom that we might offer up all our suffering in reparation for our sins.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Isaiah 3:18-4:6

In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs; the headdresses, the armllets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the signet rings and nose rings; the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; instead of beauty, shame. Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. And her gates shall lament and mourn; ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground. And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach."

In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, every one who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. It will be for a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

New Testament Passage: Luke 23:27-31

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

9 - Jesus falls for a third time

Invocation

Mediation:

You have fallen to the ground a third time. The Romans think you will not be able to get up, that you may die just from the journey alone. But, O Lord, if not even death could hold you, how could a fall?

You once reminded the Pharisees of the sign of Jonah. Jonah was thrown into the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights. But since God was on his side, neither death nor a fish's stomach could hold him.

Jonah had God on his side, but you are God himself. A fall, even though at the height of your passion, is nothing compared to your infinite power. You get back up and continue on your journey.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, as we meditate on the suffering of Jesus on the way to Golgotha, we are reminded of your immense strength and power. Even in the face of death and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, he rose up and continued on your journey.

Help us to find strength in your example and to trust in your power to overcome any challenge we may face. May we remember that, like Jonah, we too have you on our side and that nothing can hold us back from your love and grace.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Jonah 1:17, 2:1-3, 6, 9-10

The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice. For thou didst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood was round about me; all thy waves and thy billows passed over me. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me for ever; yet thou didst bring up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God. I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to thee; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!"

And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

New Testament Passage: Matthew 12:38-41

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

10 - Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, the Romans have now stripped you of your clothes. They wish to shame you and prove you are not the messiah.

But when you created the First Adam in the garden, he was naked, yet he was not ashamed, for at that time he had no sin.

You, O Lord, also have no sin. In stripping you naked, they have not shamed you, but have shown you forth as the Second Adam.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, comfort all those in the world without clothes, or home, or food, or anything they need to live. Give them sustenance and raise them up from their suffering. Let them know your goodness, so that they may praise you forever.

Help us to see those who are naked, bullied and suffering so that we may see you in each one of them and be willing instruments of peace and mercy in your hands.

Comfort us also in all our troubles. And help us to love those who try to persecute and humiliate us. Let us follow the example of your Son so that we might be examples of love to all those who hate us. And bring those who hate the Church to a knowledge of its truth.

We ask all this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

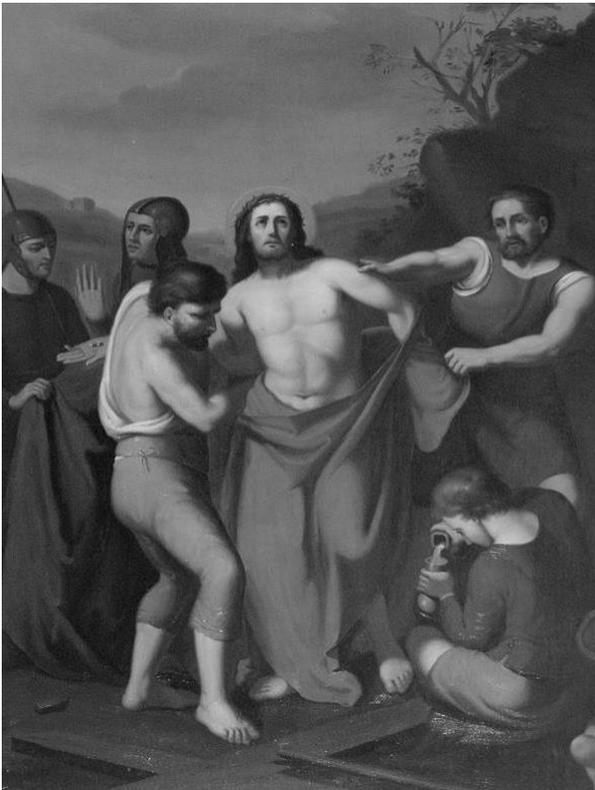
Old Testament Passage: Genesis 2:25, 3:7

The man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

[And after the fall] the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

New Testament Passage: John 19:23-24

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the scripture, “They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”



11 - Jesus is crucified

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, they are now nailing you to the cross. The Romans think they are stopping you from becoming the messiah, but really they are helping you to save the world from sin. Above you they put a sign calling you “King of the Jews” and they lift you up high as they raise up the cross. This is done in mockery, but the title is truly fitting, for they have truly made you the king of the Jews.

This was done to fulfill what had been spoken from the beginning. God told the serpent that his head would be crushed, and all he could do is bite the heel. St. John in his vision called you the lamb which is slaughtered from the foundation of the world. That ancient serpent now bites your heel and thinks he has killed you, but now he has given you victory.

Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, bring all those who do not know the saving love of the cross to a knowledge of its truth. Give them the grace to be like the thief on the cross who said, “remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And for all those who know of your Son’s saving passion but do not know the Church you established, the heretics and the schismatics, help them to find your Church so that they might receive the fullness of what you have given to mankind.

Help us to be instruments of evangelization to share with our friends and neighbors the infinite love that you showed on the cross.

And give us the grace of final perseverance, so that at the end of our lives we might not abandon your saving cross but might cling to it evermore fervently.

We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Genesis 3:14-15

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

New Testament Passage: Luke 23:33-43

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? 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 justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

12 - Jesus dies on the cross

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, as you hang upon the cross, you know the hour is near. Your friends and family weep below you. The Romans look at you with derision. You simply continue to pray.

Long ago, the Psalmists sang of your crucifixion. The prophets foretold it. Now, it has come to pass. When Adam sinned, he was brought to death. For thousands of years, the whole creation has been groaning with travail, but now you have come to undo the curse.

At last, you give up your spirit and descend down into Hades. The ancient curse is no more. You have taken Adam's place in death and brought about a new creation.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, as we meditate on your sacrifice on the cross, we are filled with gratitude for your love and your willingness to bear the weight of our sins. We are moved by your compassion for those who mock you and your dedication to fulfilling the will of your Father.

We pray that your example will inspire us to live selflessly and to serve others, even when it is difficult or unpopular. Help us to follow in your footsteps and to trust in your loving plan for our lives.

We pray that as we reflect on your death, we will be filled with hope and joy, knowing that through you, we have the opportunity to be reconciled with God and to experience new life in him.

We thank you for your sacrifice and for the salvation that you have won for us. May your name be forever praised.

Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Psalm 22:1, 14-18

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

I am poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint;

my heart is like wax,

it is melted within my breast;

my strength is dried up like a potsherd,

and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;

thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

Yea, dogs are round about me;

a company of evildoers encircle me;

they have pierced my hands and feet—

I can count all my bones—

they stare and gloat over me;

they divide my garments among them,

and for my raiment they cast lots.

New Testament Passage: Matt 27:45-50

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, la’ma sabach-tha’ni?” that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

13 - Jesus' body is taken down from the cross

Invocation

Mediation:

O Lord Jesus, even though you have broken the ancient curse, no one yet knows it. Your enemies think they have triumphed. Your followers think you have failed.

To give your followers hope, you send signs to demonstrate what has happened. Whereas Adam died and went into the ground, now many men rise out of the ground. Adam was cut off from the garden, and God had taught the Jews this by cutting them off from the Holy of Holies in the temple. Only once a year could the high priest enter it, to make atonement for sins. But now you have torn the veil on the temple. You have opened back up Eden. After your resurrection, you will ascend into heaven and be high priest forever, to present to the Father the blood of the atonement for our sins.

Your followers do not yet understand these signs. Covered in tears, they take your body down from the cross. But one Roman soldier understands, and weeps at the evil he has just helped to commit.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for your sacrifice on the cross and for the salvation that you have won for us. We are grateful that through your death and resurrection, you have reconciled us with God and made it possible for us to experience new life in him.

We pray that your signs of victory, even in the midst of your suffering and death, will give us hope and strength in times of difficulty and uncertainty. May we trust in your loving plan for our lives and follow you with courage and faith.

May you enlighten the eyes of all those who seek to persecute you, just as you enlightened the eyes of the centurion who crucified

you. Let them trust in the sacrifice of your cross and be united to your holy Catholic Church.

Take away from us and from them all iniquities, we beseech Thee, O Lord; that with pure minds we may all be made worthy to enter into the Holy of Holies.

Amen.

Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Leviticus 16:1-2, Exodus 30:10

The Lord spoke to Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died; and the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercy seat which is upon the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.”

“Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations; it is most holy to the Lord.”

New Testament Passage: Matt 27:51-54

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

14 - Jesus is laid in the tomb

Invocation

Mediation:

Jesus, your disciples are now laying your body in the tomb. Your disciples weep bitter tears over your body. They think this is the end. Were you really the messiah? What has happened?

But, O Lord, the tomb cannot contain you. Where Adam brought death, you brought life. The righteous for thousands of years have been waiting in the Bosom of Abraham. Prophets had come and told them of the good news, but they still awaited the day of their vindication. Now you have come to break down the gates of Hades and free all the righteous forever.

Your disciples on Earth know nothing of this. They think they have lost. But really the greatest victory ever has been won, and in three days, they too will know of it.

Scripture Readings

Prayer:

O God, although Christ broke the gates of death and opened the door of paradise, many men have not heard of this or do not believe it. Grant them the gift of faith so that they might know of the salvation that is offered to them.

Grant us faithfulness and perseverance, so that even in the face of suffering, we might remain faithful just as your Son did.

As we continue to meditate on your passion, through Lent and every day of our lives, may we be instruments of love and mercy in your hands. May we recognize in our lives the greatness of your Creation, the depth of your Redemption and the Glory of your salvation.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

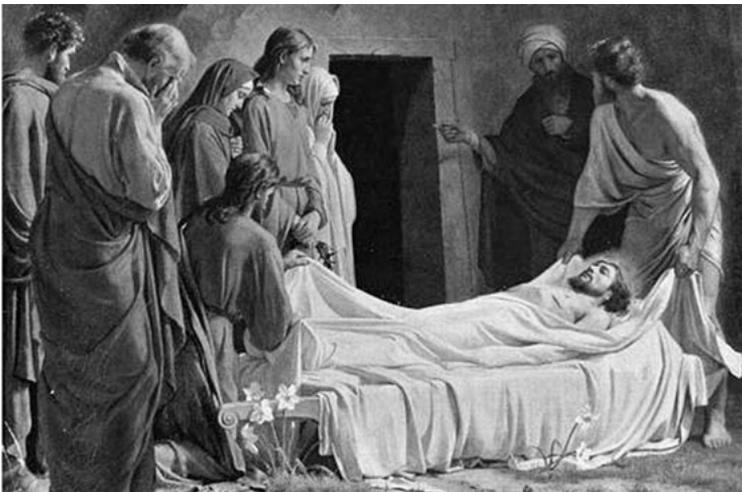
Closing Prayers

Old Testament Passage: Isaiah 53:7-9

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

New Testament Passage: Luke 23:50-56

Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.



Closing Prayers

Blessing: *(if a priest is leading)*

Priest: May he who freed us from the curse of Adam and crushed the head of the ancient serpent, protect and keep us, through the prayers and intercession of his immaculate mother, the new Eve.

And may almighty God, who created the world out of nothing and renewed it through the blood of the cross, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

