

GOOD FRIDAY
Stations of the Cross for Social Justice

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we offer our prayers to you today for our world, our country, our state and our local community. We too must experience the weight of the cross on the road to Calvary.

Help us to use the opportunities that we have to speak out against the injustices around us and around the world.....and so we pray:

ALL: Forgive us Lord. Show us the way.

STATION 1: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reflection

The high priest questioned him, saying: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said to him, "I am. And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." The high priest tore his robes and said, "What need of witnesses have we now? You have heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?" Their verdict was unanimous: he deserved to die. Some of them started spitting at his face, hitting him and saying: "Play the prophet!" (Mark 14:61-64)

Jesus is trapped by the same system that brings us the death penalty, the harshness of life in prison, political prisoners, torture, white color crime, racial profiling, the criminalization of the poor, and all of the inequities of our world's criminals justice system.

An innocent man is to be killed, and the laws of the land will not protect him. A crowd has gathered - not to protest, but to cheer. Government leaders are indifferent, more concerned about politics than justice.

Help us to use the opportunities to speak out against the injustices around us, knowing that you desire justice for all.....and so we pray...Forgive us Lord. Show us the way.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for those being persecuted for their faith

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 2: JESUS IS MADE TO CARRY HIS CROSS

**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reflection

“Here is your king” said Pilate to the Jews. But they shouted, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king except Caesar." So at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out to the Place of the Skull, or as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.” (John 19:14-17)

Jesus carries His burden as do all those who work the land, labor for low wages, struggle to find workfare for their children and family, attend poor schools, are abused by their bosses, or in any way struggle to make it in this world and carrying His cross Jesus said to Pilate, “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” Pilate replied dismissively, “What is truth?” Pilate embodied the attitude that leads to so much discrimination and injustice in every age.

Too often, we do not want to know the truth. We dismiss the daily discrimination faced by people of color - the disparaging looks, the job interviews that don't materialize, the lower- quality opportunities, the disproportionate police stops. We would rather think that our society is color-blind and that everyone has an equal chance. The truth, however, is that racism is an endemic part of life in our culture.

Jesus. Help us to acknowledge and speak the truth with honesty and courage about the magnitude of the heavy crosses and the injustices that many of our brothers and sisters face.....and so we pray....Forgive us Lord. Show us the way.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the sick and suffering.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 3: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.**

Reflection

For my part I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. (Isaiah 50:6)

The burden that crushes Jesus can be compared to the burdens of today.....the burden of debt that crushes the poor economies of the world, the unequal distribution of resources which stifles development for many people and nations. Jesus accepted his cross and carried it valiantly despite his weakened state. But he could not bear up under the heavy load. He fell..

Jesus, the cross of injustice is heavy. Help us not to dismiss it as “just the way things are, “but rather to acknowledge the crosses others must bear because they are different, and find ways to accompany them in their journey. Jesus, the road to injustice is heavy. We pray that we live a life committed to justice and.....NOT Just Us!

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for victims of war and violence.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 4: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "This is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

Jesus looks on his mother with love and sees all the pain and possibility of relationship, deep family love and fidelity, abuse and violence, mutual loving care, separation and divorce, loneliness and community. A mother's pain is no different today. When her child suffers, she suffers. When her child is deprived of opportunity, she aches. When her child is beaten and abused, she nurses the wounds and when her child is murdered, she identifies the body.

Jesus looked into the eyes of his mother and felt her pain.

Jesus, although at this time you could not relieve your mother's fears, you did acknowledge her pain. Help us to stand with anxious and grieving mothers and work to end the injustices that besiege them. And so we pray...Forgive us Lord, show us the way.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for all mothers and expectant mothers.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 5: SIMON HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus." (Lk. 23:26)

Jesus' story becomes Simon's story as well. Globalization can be both a burden and a relief, a freedom and a limit. Jesus and Simon are both victims and helpers. Good and evil play out as their lives are connected. Although Simon did not have a choice but to carry Jesus' cross, we do. We can overlook a racist comment, or we can challenge and explain why. We can keep our distance, or we can reach out to connect with someone who has been pushed to the peripheries of our society. We can stay in our own lanes, or we can work to lift society to a higher place.

Lord God, you have arranged the universe so that one person's action can help ease the burden of another. Embolden us to reach out and to speak out, to make others' crosses easier to bear. And so we pray....forgive us Lord. Show us the way.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for all fathers and expectant fathers.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 6: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

“Down in the dust I lie prostrate; true to your word, revive me. I tell you my ways and you answer me; teach me your wishes. ... I am melting away for grief; true to your word, raise me up.” (Ps. 119:25-26, 28)

This “small “ act of charity is a most wonderful action of great compassion. It seems to be all that Veronica can do at the moment, yet the injustice remains. She cannot stop the suffering of Jesus. The compassion of Veronica calls out for social change, for an end to injustice, for a new way of living together.

How do we react when we see someone who is suffering unjustly? The human tendency is to avoid eye contact, to walk away quickly. In short, we do not get involved. This allows the injustice to continue. Veronica got involved. She saw the suffering of another person and reached out to help—at the risk of drawing attention to herself.

Jesus, so many of our brothers and sisters suffer daily from injustice. Give us the gift of courage to be like Veronica and reach out to those whom society has rejected and show them love,... the homeless ones, the addicted ones, the hungry ones, the illegal ones, the different and despised ones, the mental and abused ones. Help us to recognize and respond with compassion to the pain within our midst. and so we pray...ALL: Lord, forgive our lack of courage to do the right thing. Show us the way, Lord.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the homeless, the hungry and those in prison.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 7: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

"Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger, and make you welcome; naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and go to see you?" And the King will answer, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this for one of the least of my sisters and brothers, you did it for me." (Mt 25: 37-40)

The burden that crushes Jesus is unfair, as are the economic and political inequalities of our day—wages, resources, schools, rights, power, savings, taxes. Our systems are often unfair. Jesus fell a second time under the weight of the cross. Undoubtedly, some who saw him were quick to look down on him unsympathetically, as being a criminal... As soon as we start mentally separating people based on racial or ethnic stereotypes, we judge falsely and break the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

God, it is easy to fall into the trap of biased thinking without even being aware of it. Help us to accept all people as individuals with unique dignity, and not to divide them up based on their membership in one favored or disfavored group. When the road to justice becomes littered with obstacles, help us to be determined to stay on course. And so we pray... ALL: Lord, forgive our apathy. Show us the way.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be For those who suffer from addiction

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 8: JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children." (Luke 23:27-28)

Women bear the burdens of the world in a special way. They disproportionately struggle under the injustices of our systems. The experience of women throughout the ages calls us to end the injustices. It calls us to a new heaven and a new earth, to a new way of being sisters and brothers.

The women of Jerusalem were able to see beyond themselves and grieve the injustice done to Jesus. They made Jesus' cause their own. Will we show the same concern? Will we insist that injustices that affect anyone is a concern for us all? Or will we ignore it when it has not happened in our community? For whom shall we weep?

Jesus, You call us to speak out against all injustice, not just the injustices that hurt our own communities. Help us to develop hearts that beat with genuine compassion when anyone's community suffers injustice. And so we pray...forgive us Lord. Help us.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the unborn and aborted children.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 9: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

Ill-treated and afflicted,
he never opened his mouth,
like a lamb led to the slaughter house. (Isaiah 53:7)

The burden that crushes Jesus is like the burden of materialism. Every time the world worships things before people, power before justice and consumption before spirit, we lose what it means to be human and alive. Tragedies such as the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, usually fall most heavily on minority communities. Toxic waste sites and industrial facilities that pollute the water and air are more likely to be located near communities of color. Low-income people of color are hit hardest by Hurricanes like Katrina and Harvey and find it hardest to recover. Children of color suffer lead poisoning disproportionately. Differences in the distribution of educational resources disadvantage African Americans, Hispanics and native Americans. Our social structures have allowed patterns of systemic racism to persist. We must work to change these patterns.

Jesus, the call to social change and economic structures that perpetuate racism can be uncomfortable. Help us to acknowledge the roots of racial injustice and work to change them.

And so we pray....forgive us Lord. Help us Lord.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for immigrants.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 10: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

“They took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem, so they said to one another, “Instead of dividing it, let’s throw dice to decide who is to have it.” (John 19:23-24a)

This radical loss of everything continues to be felt in the lives of all of the poor—those without enough food, clothing, shelter, education, respect, dignity, human rights, and community. We are called to transform our society with God’s love Yet our society still allows some to be stripped of their dignity. As members of the Body of Christ, our dignity is intertwined with theirs. How can we not stand humiliated before the cross, knowing that we have failed to adequately protect the dignity of all our brothers and sisters?

Jesus, in becoming human you ratified the dignity of all humanity. Help us to see every person’s dignity as important as our own and create social structures that promote dignity for all.

And so we pray....Forgive us Lord. Help us

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for volunteers who assist the sick and suffering around the world.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 11: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him and the two criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:33-34)

Jesus is a person of active nonviolence, yet, here He comes to know violence against His person, the same violence that is seen in our wars, and preparation for war, in the violence on our streets and in our homes, in our weapons of mass destruction, in ethnic cleansing, in genocide, in all of these countless acts of violence. This violence is sin. The structures of sin in our own society unfairly deprived some of their basic human rights. When we fail to speak out against these structures and reform them, our complicity cannot be ignored

Savior, forgive us for the sins we have committed and also for the sins of omission that allow injustices to persist.

Help us to stand up to the structures of sin and become accomplices in the work of Justice.....and so we pray.....Forgive us Lord. Help us Lord.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for missionaries and peacekeepers around the world.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 12: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

It was now about the sixth hour and the sun's light failed, so that darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Sanctuary was torn right down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice saying, "Father into your hands I commend my spirit." With these words, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46)

Power and control dominate values in our world, yet Jesus loses all of these things that the world considers important. But at the same time, in Jesus nailed to the cross, we see a person of great freedom and compassionate love and a special awesome power—the power of the suffering God crying out for justice. We are called to be united with those who suffer injustice. Their pain should be our pain. Are we willing to acknowledge injustice and see others in a new way, to connect with them and testify to their pain? Am I taking intentional steps to welcome the stranger, socialize with people from other communities and learn about people from other cultures, races and backgrounds?

Jesus, when no one else cares, you care and you call us to care as well. Lead us to a deeper conversion that bears fruit in true solidarity with those who suffer from racism and all other injustices.....and so we pray, Forgive us Lord. Help us Lord.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for military men and women and their families.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 13: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because he was afraid of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well ... and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, following the Jewish burial custom (John 19:38-40)

Jesus is radically stripped of everything. He is a human person whose rights and dignity have been taken away. In Jesus, we see all of the women and men of our world who still seek their basic human rights—the right to food, water, clothing, shelter, education, political freedom, development and justice etc. We need to dismantle the structures of the injustice sin of our day, and we may need to risk our own comfort and safety to do so.

Working to change economic and social policies is not easy. We will need courage but we cannot remain silent. We must engage with others in respectful conversations and take action to reform structures that perpetuate injustice.

Love took you from the cross Lord. We pray that love will move us to remove others from the crosses that they bear.....and so we pray Lord give us the courage to transform our institutions so that the work of all injustices may bear fruit. Help us Lord.

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the conversion of sinners.

*Pause for a moment of quiet personal prayer and reflection;
move to the next Station*

STATION 14: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Reflection

At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden and, in this garden, a new tomb in which no-one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. Joseph of Arimathea then rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. (John 19:41-42, Mark 15:46b)

Jesus is carefully placed into the earth, an earth that is the divine creation, a planet that we so often abuse as we waste our precious resources, as we seek profit before all else, as we consume without awareness and as we disrespect the awesome beauty that is God's gift to us.

This beautiful land that gives us food, water, shelter, joy, peace and tranquility suffers many injustices also. Because we don't take care of our planet it suffers drought, fires, floods and many other injustices. Teach us Lord to love our land and take care of it. And so we pray...thank you Lord for our beautiful planet and help us Lord to take proper care of it. (THE LEAST OF THESE by Janet Sullivan Whitaker)

Let us pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be for the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis.

CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord, my voice joins in prayer with my brothers and sisters throughout these forty days of Lent as we seek to know and to do your will. In obedience to Your Word, I am putting self aside and am casting out into the deep waters of Your love, mercy and grace. Guide my net to the exact place and persons where you would will it to fall. Grant to me Lord, the time and opportunity to speak and witness to the ones whom my net will touch. Send forth your Spirit, dear Lord, to shower me with wise and gentle actions and words that You would have me to do and speak. My net is now cast with you, O God, to walk each day by faith and not be sight.

Lord, I believe and trust in Your power to perform miracles and to redeem all who cooperate with your grace. Bless our faith and our walk, in the name of Jesus we pray...Amen.

Some prayers created by Therese Wilson Favors and Denise

Jones Dorsey Stations of Justice by John Bucki, SJ

Excerpted Prayer to Address the Sin of Racism originally written by Tom Faletti and adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 2020

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