

DEVOTIONS – Stations of the Cross (SA Style)

As we prepare for Easter, let's turn our hearts to Jesus.

There are exactly 14 days until Easter so I'd like to take us through 14 stations of the cross. This is a regular practice of the Catholic church.

To be sure everything is Biblically sound and backed up with scripture, these stations may not be exactly as the Catholic church presents. But the integrity of the practice has remained intact.

Perhaps you'd like to focus on one per day for the next 14 days leading up to Easter Sunday.

1. The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Scripture Reflection: John 19:1-16; Matthew 27:24-26; Isaiah 53:1-3

Jesus was sentenced to death as an innocent man, having done nothing wrong. But He chose to accept His death to save us, knowing it was God's will.

Reflection question: Have you ever been falsely accused of something? How did you respond?

2. The Second Station: Jesus is Flogged

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 27:26-31; John 19:1-3; Isaiah 53:4-5

Jesus was given over to be beaten and mocked. He took all of that pain, knowing He was without blame and later that day would die to forgive the men who beat Him. He was literally living out His teaching of "turning the other cheek" and loving our enemies (Matthew 5:38-48).

Reflection question: How can you love your enemies and forgive those who have hurt you?

3. The Third Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

Scripture Reflection: John 19:15-17

Jesus' carried the heavy crossbeam to which He would soon be nailed. His cross was literal, but we, too are called to daily take up our cross and follow Jesus (Mark 8:34-35). Our cross can get heavy at times. Just remember, Jesus' cross was heavier, and He knows how we feel (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Reflection question: Is the cross you've been asked to bear feeling heavy today? How can you let Jesus help you with your cross?

4. The Fourth Station: Jesus Continues on the road to Calvary

Scripture reflection: Matthew 27:31-32; Isaiah 53:7

With a crown of thorns cutting into His head and fresh wounds from His beating, Jesus walked the road dehydrated and exhausted by the weight of His cross. Not only was He physically exhausted - He was emotionally exhausted. His followers had left Him. Some had even betrayed Him. He probably felt so alone.

Does it sometimes feel like you are carrying the weight of the world alone? Do your burdens seem too much for you to bear?

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus reminds us that we can come to Him with our burdens and find rest – His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Reflection question: How can you further rely on Jesus to help carry your burdens?

5. The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:26; Mark 15:21-22

Seeing His exhaustion, the Roman soldiers knew Jesus might not make it to Golgotha. And they weren't about to help Him. So, they picked out Simon

from the crowd to help Jesus the rest of the way. Do you think Simon wanted to help Jesus carry His cross, or do you think he helped out of fear of the Roman soldiers? Regardless, it was part of God's plan for Simon to help Jesus and we can only imagine that it had a profound impact on him.

Reflection question: When have you helped someone carry their cross? Were you willing to help or were you resentful? How did helping affect you?

6. The Sixth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:27-31

Even in the midst of his agony, Jesus heard the cries of these women and recognized their pain. He sees and knows our sorrows and pains and hears our prayers every time.

Reflection question: Do you look for the sufferings of others? How can you support your friends and family in their own time of need?

7. The Seventh Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Scripture Reflection: John 19:23-24

After the pain, and the blood, and the sweat, Jesus now faces humiliation. His clothes, His dignity, have been stripped away even further. Jesus knows the sting of indignity and shame. And He bore it without question.

Reflection question: When have you been utterly humiliated? Have you ever humiliated others? Who might you need to ask for forgiveness today?

8. The Eighth Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:33-33; Mark 15:22-27; John 19:16-22;
Isaiah 53:6

Touch your hands. Imagine stakes being driven into your hands. Imagine the sound of the hammer hitting the metal. Imagine the fear of the pain.

Now imagine the temptation of knowing that you could make it all go away in an instant - but you don't. Jesus chose this pain and sacrifice for us.

Reflection question: Where in your life is God asking you to sacrifice for Him? Where can you sacrifice for others?

9. The Ninth Station: Jesus Mocked on the Cross

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:35-38; Matthew 27:39-44

As Jesus was suffering while being publicly tortured, people hurled insults at Him and mocked Him. Even as He endured further humiliation and torment, Jesus prays from the cross, "Father forgive them."

In Luke 23:39-43 We also see Jesus ministering to the criminal hanging next to Him. Even as He suffered, He poured out His love and forgiveness!

Reflection question: How are you suffering for Jesus today? Can you put aside your needs for a moment to help others?

10. The Tenth Station: Jesus Sees His Mother

Scripture Reflection: John 19:25-27

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, watched her son endure ultimate pain and suffering for us. A mother has a unique outlook on her child's life. Mothers see when their child needs them and will kiss every wound, calm every fear, and soothe every sickness. She fiercely protects her tribe. How incredibly helpless Mary must have felt!

Reflection question: Put yourself in Mary's shoes. Imagine the agony she must have felt watching her son endure the torture of the cross.

11. The Eleventh Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross and Veil is Torn

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 27:45-53; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-37;
Mark 15:33-38

After three hours of complete agony, Jesus dies. In doing so, He saves us from our sins and allows us the gift of eternal life. The veil in the temple was also torn giving us direct access to the Father. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice – once for all (Hebrews 10:10).

Reflection question: How can you thank God for the gift of Jesus? How can you live out your thanks to Him in your every day life?

12. The Twelfth Station: Jesus' Body is Removed from the Cross

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:50-54; John 19:38-42; Mark 15:42-47;
Matthew 27:57-61

The world was still. Jesus' mother, Mary, and the other disciples were shattered. Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, interceded on behalf of the disciples and Mary, asking Pilate if he could remove Jesus' body from the cross and prepare Him for burial.

Reflection question: How can you intercede for others or offer comfort and support today?

13. The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:38-42; Mark 15:42-47;
Luke 23:50-55

Jesus' body is laid in the tomb and it is sealed. He is gone. For the moment, all hope appears to be lost. But God's greatest moment, the Resurrection, is about to begin.

Reflection question: James 1:2-3 reminds us to consider it pure joy when we face trials. Reflect on your life. When has something incredible happened after a time of difficulty? How did that increase your faith?

14. The Fourteenth Station: Jesus raised from the dead

Scripture Reflection: John 20:1-18; Luke 24:1-12

The tomb is empty! Jesus is risen! He is alive! He has won the victory over death! Now we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life! It is no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me! (Galatians 2:20)

Reflection question: After reflecting on the death and resurrection of Jesus, are you moved to know him more today?

Lead Me to Calvary (song #179 SA Songbook 2015)

Jennie Evelyn Hussey

King of my life I crown Thee now-

Thine shall the glory be;

Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,

Lead me to Calvary.

Refrain:

Lest I forget Gethsemane,

*Lest I forget Thine agony,
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.*

Show me the tomb where Thou wast laid,
Tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed
Guarded Thee whilst Thou slept. [Refrain]
Let me like Mary, thru the gloom,
Come with a gift to Thee;
Show to me now the empty tomb-
Lead me to Calvary. [Refrain]

May I be willing, Lord, to bear
Daily my cross for Thee;
Even Thy cup of grief to share-
Thou hast borne all for me.