

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. ~ John 19:17

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS are a special devotion, practiced especially during the penitential season of Lent. Stations of the Cross focus on the events from the moment that Jesus was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate until he was finally buried. During the devotion, through meditation and prayer, we walk with our Savior on his way of suffering. We focus on his suffering to help us recall his enormous love for us and the great price he paid for our redemption.

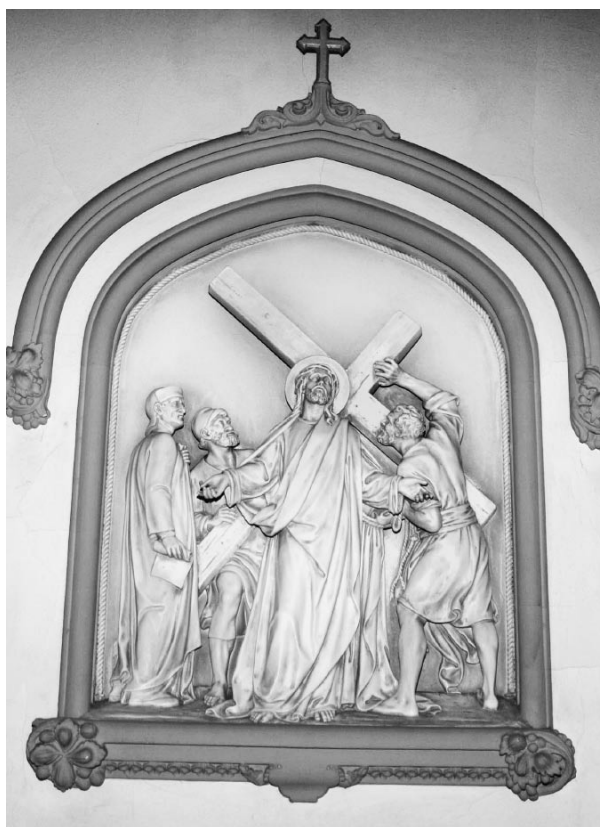
This devotion, which has existed in its modern form from the 16th century, has its beginnings in apostolic times. There is every reason to believe that the apostles, the disciples, and the close friends of Jesus also walked the way of suffering, meditating again and again on the Passion of their Redeemer and Master.

Most churches have the Stations of the Cross depicted in a prominent way on the inside walls of the church or in garden settings outside. There have been many beautiful meditations and prayers that have been written for the Stations. The most beloved of these prayers is the “Adoramus te, Christe,” which reads: “We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.” At each station, usually a Scripture is read followed by a brief meditation and then a period of silence. Before moving to the next station, the prayer above may be said.

The Stations can be done individually or in a group. Booklets are usually available in the church to help the individual pray the Stations. On Good Friday, during the papacy of John Paul II, the Pope made a practice of leading the people of Rome in a walk through the Stations in the Coliseum. Whether in a group, alone, or with the Pope on TV, the Stations of the Cross is a powerful meditation on the suffering of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Below are the fourteen traditional stations along with some chosen Scriptural passages:

I. Jesus is condemned to death.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,



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“We walk with our Savior on his way of suffering.”

that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

Prayer: We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

II. Jesus bears his cross.

“So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha” (Jn 19:17).

Prayer: We adore you...

“The Stations of the Cross is a powerful meditation on the suffering of our Savior.”



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Jesus dies on the Cross; 12th Station of the Cross in St. Teresa of Avila Church in Washington, DC

III. Jesus falls the first time.

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief... and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:3,6).

Prayer: We adore you...

IV. Jesus meets his Mother.

“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger” (Lam 1:12).

Prayer: We adore you...

V. Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.

“They came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross” (Mt 27:32).

Prayer: We adore you...

VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

“He who has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9).

Prayer: We adore you...

VII. Jesus falls a second time.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

Prayer: We adore you...

VIII. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (Lk 23:28).

Prayer: We adore you...

IX. Jesus falls a third time.

“Hear how I groan; there is none to comfort me.... for my groans are many and my heart is faint” (Lam 1:21-22).

Prayer: We adore you...

X. Jesus is stripped of his garments.

“Go, my children, go; for I have been left desolate. I have taken off the robe of peace and put on the sackcloth of my supplication” (Bar 4:19-20).

Prayer: We adore you...

XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Is 53:7).

Prayer: We adore you...

XII. Jesus dies on the cross.

“And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

Prayer: We adore you...

XIII. Jesus is taken down from the cross.

“But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (Jn 19:34).

Prayer: We adore you...

XIV. Jesus is placed in the tomb.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24).

Prayer: We adore you...

(CCC 1674)