

INTRODUCTION

This version of the Stations of the Cross focuses on persons with disabilities, and on those who may be homebound or chronically ill, and their families. We all have disabilities of a sort, whether it is poor vision and we need eyeglasses, or we have a chronic but manageable disease, or we have a broken leg that impairs us temporarily. Not all persons with disabilities suffer pain or are ill, but they all may find life difficult and challenging from time to time; they may suffer workplace discrimination or bullying or find everyday tasks difficult. Jesus purposely let himself be disabled on the cross and has forever united himself in love and hope to those with disabilities.

The Stations of the Cross presented here may be used by individuals or in a group setting such as a nursing home, hospital, or parish. If using these stations in a group setting, a leader could be selected and may announce each station and lead the group in the traditional opening: “We adore you O Christ and we bless you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.” The leader will read the reflection, and then all may recite the station’s prayer together.

Stepping off...

If you are praying these stations by yourself, begin by putting yourself in a relaxed position. Close your eyes for a moment and gather your thoughts. Let God fill your heart. Picture yourself on a rural dusty road. You see a busy town just ahead. You have heard of a healer who is visiting, and you have traveled a long way to meet him. You are in need of his healing hands, and he is in need of a traveling companion. Jesus meets you on the edge of the town and invites you to journey with him to Calvary. He warns you the road may be rough but full of wonders at the end. You begin the journey of the cross together in hope and love.

TWENTY-THIRD PUBLICATIONS *A division of Bayard*

1 Montauk Avenue, Suite 200 • New London, CT 06320 • (860) 437-3012 or (800) 321-0411 • www.twentythirdpublications.com
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The First Station

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

*We adore you, O Christ,
and we bless you,
For by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*



When we receive bad news, our lives can be turned upside down. We may receive a devastating diagnosis, lose a job or our home, or learn of a loved one's passing. We can feel very alone in our grief and our suffering and may even feel abandoned by God as we struggle to cope with what life brings us. God is still there, but we cannot always see him in the darkness. When we suffer, God, our Father, sees that we are about to enter into a journey full of unknowns that may lead us to question our very self and the purpose of our being. God suffers when we suffer.

Our Father would like us to join his Son as he begins his own journey of suffering. Jesus has just received the news that



he is to be condemned to death. Jesus feels very alone as one by one his followers leave him and deny him. Jesus knows we may be experiencing unbearable situations too, and he invites us to walk with him, for he knows that his pain and suffering will have a purpose, and our suffering will too. Our pain, whether in the body or mind, real or imagined, joins us to Christ's own suffering, thus bringing us closer to him. Let us now walk together on the road to Calvary sharing our struggles, our pains, and our love as hope awaits us on the cross.



AS JESUS BEGINS HIS JOURNEY TO CALVARY, WE PRAY FOR ALL THOSE BEGINNING THEIR OWN JOURNEYS OF WORRY, ANXIETY, AND SUFFERING.

The Second Station

JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

*We adore you, O Christ,
and we bless you,
For by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*



The cross is heavy, rough, and splintered. It is awkward and long. Can any one person carry it? Jesus accepts the challenge of carrying the cross; it is the first step of his journey, a path that will be difficult and full of anguish and will result in his death. But Jesus accepts his cross willingly and with purpose, for he knows the journey will bring new hope to many. He picks up his cross with determination and invites us to do the same.

Life can bring us situations that are more than we can handle. In these times, God offers us a cross to bear. When we accept our crosses to carry, we ask ourselves, “Will we be



able to carry the cross and bear the burden and the suffering? Will we be able to go the distance and complete the journey to the end? Can we do it alone?” Jesus is alone in bearing his own cross, but as we walk with him, bearing our own crosses, we find ourselves with a lighter load. As Jesus carries the weight of his cross, we find his love helping us to carry ours. Jesus is always walking with us, helping us with our difficulties, our sorrows, our pains, and our cross, even as he carries his own.



WE ACCOMPANY AND PRAY FOR ALL THOSE WHO LIVE WITH DISABILITIES, AND THOSE WITH A CHRONIC OR TERMINAL ILLNESS. MAY THEY HAVE THE COURAGE TO ASK JESUS TO HELP THEM TO CARRY THEIR CROSS.

The Third Station

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

*We adore you, O Christ,
and we bless you,
For by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*



Carrying our cross may feel overwhelming. The cross is extremely heavy and awkward to carry. We may think we cannot go on. We stumble and fall, praying that the weight of the cross, our tears, and our distress don't crush us before we reach the end of our journey. We take a rest, and we see that Jesus has stumbled too. We close our eyes and pray that we may find the strength to get back up and continue on. When we open our eyes and gaze into Jesus' face, we are filled with a renewed energy to continue, and we arise.

When we are in distress or struggling in life, we often stumble and fall. Sometimes it is difficult enough just getting up



off the ground. We can choose to stay on the ground if we are too afraid to go on, or we may choose to get up and run away from the cross, but neither of these choices will end our difficulties and struggles in life. Only by finishing our walk with Jesus will we find hope and new life. Jesus encourages us to pick up our cross so we may resume our journey together. We continue on with renewed strength and resolve, fueled by the love of Christ.



WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE STUMBLER UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THEIR CROSS AND MAY BE TOO AFRAID TO GO ON. MAY OUR LOVE STRENGTHEN THEM AND GIVE THEM HOPE TO CONTINUE THE ROAD TO CALVARY.