



ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Meditations on The Way of The Cross

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation,
that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those
mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and saved your
people, though Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

First Station

Jesus is condemned to death

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

O Christ, Lord of life, deliver us from the dungeons of indifference, that we may not cease to plead on behalf of all who are wrongly accused, knowing that in their sufferings you are crucified again.

Second Station

Jesus takes up his Cross

Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Servant Christ, help us to follow you into the cross, to recognize the true way of life in your death, to see our hope in your self-sending love, to die to all within us not born of your love.

Third Station

Jesus falls the first time

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is the Lord our God.

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, when I feel myself sliding into the pit, stay close; sit with me in my silence and confusion and give me your shoulder to lean on. Prevent me from falling too far, and in your good time help me to rise to my feet again. In Jesus' name we pray.

Fourth Station

Jesus meets his afflicted mother

To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother: Mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Give us, O God, like Mary, the gift of patience; patience with others; patience with thirst while travelling; patience with weariness; patience with children; and so to accept everything with patience, both happiness and suffering.

Fifth Station

The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen*

Servant Christ, help us to follow you even unto the Cross, to share in carrying your cross like Simon the African; to recognize our life in your death, our help in your self-spendng love, to die to all within us that is not born of your love. Servant Christ, help us to follow you.

Sixth Station

A woman wipes the face of Jesus

We have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of men. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Creator God, since with such a wonderful delicacy of touch you have translated yourself in human terms; give us also sensitivity to recognize that each person made in your image, being unique and different from us, has something to tell us about yourself that no one else can tell.

Seventh Station

Jesus falls a second time

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, you suffered all the indignities of a prisoner; hear our prayer for all who suffer similarly today. Give us the wisdom to see you in prisoners of conscience all over the world

who are harassed and hurt each day. Give us the wisdom to know what to do to bring peace and justice to the world, and the courage to do it.

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

There followed after Jesus a great multitude of the people, and among them were 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."

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Jesus, who did console the women of Jerusalem, console today our sisters, daughters, brides, wives and mothers who are oppressed by sorrow because of the suffering of their beloved.

Ninth Station

Jesus falls a third time

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has besieged me and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. Though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. "Remember, O Lord, my affliction and bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!"

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Thank God for struggling churches. Struggling to pay their way in spite of diminishing resources. Struggling to remain involved with the rest of the Church in spite of fewer people to represent them. Struggling to care for the local community in spite of indifference or

hostility. Thank God for struggling churches: reminding us of the cost of being faithful, shining as a light in the darkness and a sign of hope to us all.

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his garments

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing."

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

This garment which impedes us from being freely yours, O Jesus; it is not easy to cast it off like a coat which one puts on in the morning and takes off at night, for it is stuck to our skin by all the wounds caused by our sin. That is why it was necessary, for your garments to be seized from you, tearing away from your flesh and causing your wounds to bleed once more.

Eleventh Station

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors"

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*

O God, we remember not only your Son but also his murderers; because through their crime we now follow your footsteps more

closely in the way of sacrifice. O God, your Son's blood has multiplied the fruit of the Spirit in the soil of our souls; so when his murderers stand before you on the day of judgment, remember the fruit of the Spirit by which they have enriched our lives. And forgive.

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the Cross

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished! And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom off your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Thirteenth Station

The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother

All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is in tumult; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi (which means Pleasant), call me Mara (which means Bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Mother of Sorrows, what cradle song have you crooned to your

child so still and stiff as in the days of his first slumber when your voice lulled him and behind his closed lids he smiled at you in his sleep, his still lips smiled to your singing lips? Mother, what cradle song have you sung to your Son in his slumber, to waken him from the night of the tomb? You know we have fear of that night. Give us the aid of your arms, the help of the voice of your faith so wholly resigned; sing us your cradle song, Mother of Jesus Christ.

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; And he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

O blessed Lord, your body is as cold as the stone around you, your skin as white as the shroud that covers you. O blessed Lord, you are all alone in the tomb, your friends too frightened to come near you. O blessed Lord, my heart is cold, my soul is white with fear; I feel lonely, I have no friends at my side. I wait for your glory, when the bright sun of God's love will warm all humankind, and everyone will be at peace with his neighbor.

Concluding Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for you live and dwell in glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

**OUR MISSION: WE SHARE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST
BY ACTIVELY LOVING AND SERVING
OUR NEIGHBORS IN THE WORLD**



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