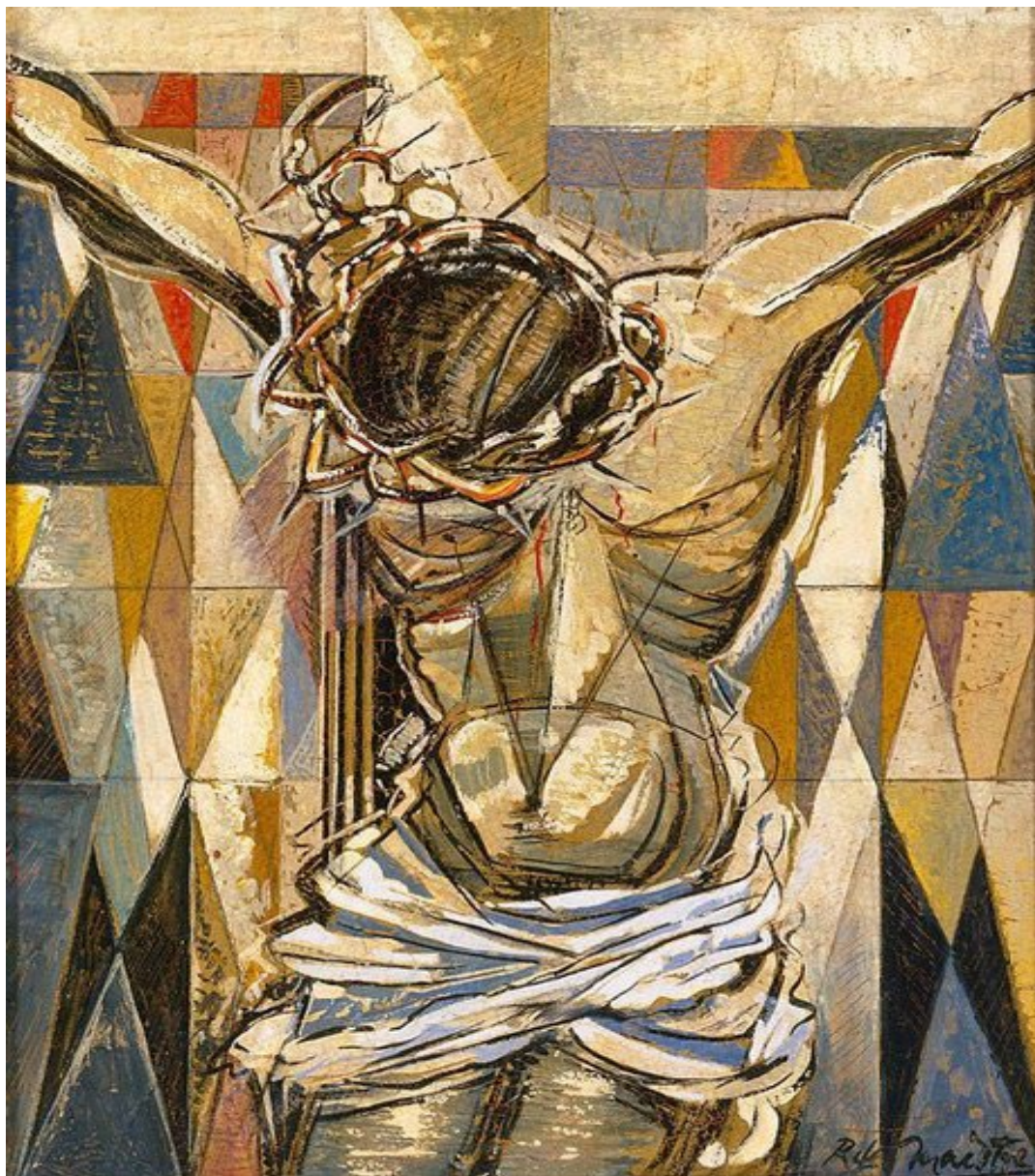


The Way of the Cross



A Contemporary Stations of the Cross
St Stephen's Episcopal Church, Seattle, WA

The Stations of the Cross

The Way of the Cross is a powerful way to meditate on, and enter into, the mystery of Jesus' gift of himself to us. The Way of the Cross, also known as Stations of the Cross, involves our senses, our experiences and our emotions. It takes the reflection on the passion of Jesus out of our head, and makes it an exercise of images.

Throughout Scripture, God's people are called to remember. But they are not called to remember events for their own sake. They are called to remember because those events are part of who they are, and what they will become. In this way of remembering, the people are called on to "re-present" the events of the past as part of a living story that has not yet ended, a story in which we still participate. They become markers of a journey as those who were no people become a people, as those who grope awkwardly in the darkness come into the light of God's presence, as those who were far off draw ever nearer to God's grace and forgiveness.

So, too, the journey of our faith as modern Christians is not merely a journey marked by events in the past. It is a journey of our own growth in relationship with God, as a community of faith, and as individuals maturing from self-centered children into faithful servants. It is a journey that we need to remember just as deeply and profoundly as we remember the journey of God's people across all the years of human history, or the journey of Jesus from Pilate's Hall to Golgotha.

A Brief History

From the earliest of days of The Way, followers of Jesus told the story of his passion, death and resurrection. When pilgrims came to Jerusalem, they were anxious to see the sites Jesus' ministry took place on earth. These sites became important holy connections with Jesus. Eventually, following in the footsteps of the Lord, along the Way of the Cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit. The Stations came about when it was no longer easy or even possible to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's, villages all over Europe started creating "replicas" of the way of the cross, with small shrines commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem. Eventually, these shrines became the Stations we now know and are placed in churches throughout the world.

The Stations of the Cross – Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

Ephesians 2:13-14

A brief moment of silence, then follows:

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Holy God, holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

1



Jesus is condemned to Death

All the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. Pilate said to them, 'What should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!' So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he flogged Jesus, and handed him over to be crucified.

[Matthew 27.1-2,22-24,26]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Betrayed. Deserted. Alone. Jesus stands before Pilate. Palm branches preparing the way of the king are gone and forgotten. Soldiers pummel, whip, and crown him with thorns. Jesus is condemned to die.

Prayer

Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world, you knew no sin and yet were sentenced to death. Assist me by your mercy to see the beam in my own eye and to remove it before I look to the speck in the eyes of others. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

2



Jesus takes up the Cross

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

[Matthew 27.27-31]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Heavy, rough wood. A beam laid on the back of a carpenter. The crowd jeers. The procession to the place of the skull begins.

Prayer

Lord, you called for us to take up our cross and follow you. Then you took up your own cross and led the way not just to calvary, but to the empty tomb and beyond. Give us the courage to follow where you lead. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

3



Jesus falls for the First time

My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by the Lord's hand they were fastened together; they weigh on my neck, sapping my strength; the Lord handed me over to those whom I cannot withstand. For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed. Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her; the Lord has commanded against Jacob that his neighbors should become his foes.

[Lamentations 1.14,16-17]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Stumble. Fall. Collapse. Jesus' sweat mingles with dust as he falls to the earth. The weight of the sins of the world on his shoulders. Barely able to stand. He can not carry the cross without falling.

Prayer

Holy God, you know our weakness, our temptations, our failings. Support us by the power of the Holy Spirit that we do not so stumble as to fall away from you. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

4



Jesus meets his Mother

What can I say for you, to what compare you, O daughter Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin; who can heal you? All who pass along the way clap their hands at you; they hiss and wag their heads at daughter Jerusalem; 'Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?' Cry aloud to the Lord! O wall of daughter Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite!

[Lamentations 2.13,15,18]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Mother and child. Madonna. There is no angel messenger. No heavenly choir. No shepherds in the night. No wise men. Gone are the gifts, the pondering. Mary sees her battered son through a veil of tears

Prayer

Son of God, son of Mary, your mother's heart that once pondered your birth, is now pierced by the crowd heaping scorn upon you. Grant us the grace to see those in needless suffering and to reach out to them showing the love you wanted to show to your mother Mary on the way toward Calvary. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station



Simon of Cyrene is forced to carry the Cross

As they led him away, the soldiers seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

[Luke 23.26; Matthew 16.24; Matthew 11.29,30]

5

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Stranger. Neighbor. Crossbearer. Simon takes up your cross; and another innocent man joins the procession to Calvary.

Prayer

God of grace, through the good Samaritan you taught us that everyone in need is our neighbor. Help us to follow in your way of love that we do not need be compelled to take up the cross of another when they can not bear their burdens alone. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station



Veronica wipes the sweat from Jesus' Face

My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people. My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

[Lamentations 3.48-50; Numbers 11.24-26]

6

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Tradition tells of a woman wiping Jesus face providing a moment of comfort and in the process gaining an image of Christ painted in his blood on her cloth. Tradition tells us her name was Veronica

Prayer

Immanuel, God with us, you came as the image of God made flesh and we scorned you. Help us to honor your name by acts of mercy done with great love, so that in relieving the suffering of others we, too, may find the face of Jesus. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

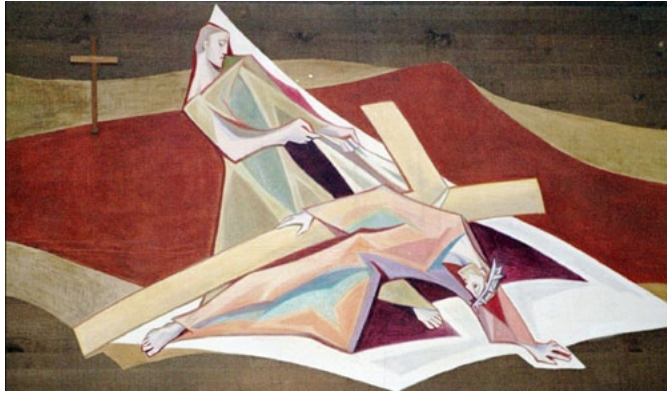
Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

7



Jesus falls for the Second time

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

[Isaiah 53.3-6]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Oppressed. Afflicted. Suffering. Even though Simon carries the cross, Jesus can not continue. He bears our infirmities and carries our sorrows. Crushed under their weight, Jesus falls once more.

Prayer

God of all compassion, we have all wandered about in our own ways. Grant that when we fall into sin, we may return from going our own way to following in yours. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

8



Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord.'

[Luke 23.27-28; Acts 21.13]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Tears. Wailing. Grief. Women mourn openly for the Son of Man, but his concern is for them and their children in the days of woe yet to come.

Prayer

Son of Man, you told the women of Jerusalem not to weep for you, but for themselves and their children. Give us the gift of tears for our own sins, that we may mourn and truly repent and return to you. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

9



Jesus falls for the third time

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Do not, O Lord, withhold your mercy from me; let your steadfast love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever. For evils have encompassed me without number; my iniquities have overtaken me, until I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.

[Psalm 22.1; Psalm 40.11-13]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Bruised Dazed. Weak beyond measure. Approaching nearer to Calvary, Jesus collapses. Jesus is pulled up and shoved inexorably toward his death

Prayer

Loving Lord, you fell that we might rise. You taught us that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Help us to die to ourselves so that we might live to you and bear much fruit for your Kingdom. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

10



Jesus is stripped of his Garments

The soldiers took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'

[John 19.23-24]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Roughly handled. Stripped. Humiliated. The crown of thorns is all that remains. Holding nothing back, Jesus offers up his life.

Prayer

Bread of Life, you came that we might have life and have it abundantly. You emptied yourself, taking the form of a slave that we might be free, and died that we might live. Give us the grace to be stripped bare of all that separates us from you. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

11



Jesus is nailed to the Cross

They took Jesus to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

[John 19:16-19,25]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Cold steel. Warm flesh. Nails rip through tendon and muscle. Blood soaks into splintered wood. Jesus responds. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Prayer

Merciful Redeemer, you declared your forgiveness from the cross, showing love to those who killed you and to the thief dying alongside you. Help us to know and count the cost of our forgiveness, bought at so great a price. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our crucified Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

12



Jesus dies on the Cross

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

[Matthew 27:45-46,50,54]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Loud Cry. Last Breath. From top to bottom the veil of the Temple is torn in two. The Holy is revealed.

Prayer

Lamb of God, judged for our transgressions, condemned in our place, slain for our sins: hear us as we cry to you, have mercy on us. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our crucified Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

13



Jesus is taken down from the Cross

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

[John 19.38-40]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Joseph. Nicodemus. Pilate, again. Spices and the body quickly wrapped together for a hasty burial.

Prayer

Crucified Savior, in your death and resurrection we who mourn find the peace and comfort your own mother lacked as your body came down from the cross. Help us to bring the hope of the resurrection to all who mourn. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our crucified Lord. Amen.

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Station

14



Jesus is laid in the Tomb

Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

[John 19.41-42; Luke 23.55-56]

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A reading of scripture detailing each station (at left) may be read followed by reflection and meditation.

Meditation

Stone Cold. Shrouded Darkness. The disciples gather in fear. The world lies in wait for the fullness of God.

Prayer

Lord God, you are Alpha and Omega, you are beginning and end. In death you conquered death so that even at the grave we praise your name. You are the way, the truth and the life. Lead us out of darkness into the glory of your light. This we pray in the name of Jesus, our crucified Lord. Amen..

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

The Stations of the Cross – Concluding Prayer

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A brief moment of silence, then follows:

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

Amen.

We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

