

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ASSEMBLY

Taize Chant: 'Stay Here With Me'

Head of Religion: Introduction and Welcome

The format for our service this afternoon is as follows:

Each reader will announce the station. This will be followed by everyone saying the prayer: 'We adore you, O' Christ, and we praise you! Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.' The reader will then read a reflection on the station. Then there will be a meditative pause and everyone will sing the Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me' for two verses. Each station will conclude with everyone saying a prayer, which will appear on the screen above, followed by an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Please remain seated throughout the service until the 12th station when you will be asked to stand and remain standing until the end of the service.

Now, I invite you to prepare yourselves and join with me as we accompany Jesus on his final journey.

Leader: Opening Prayer:

During Lent, and especially on Good Friday,
we take time to remember the journey of Jesus to Calvary.
Jesus loved his Father always.

In his journey to Calvary, Jesus loved his Father to the end. (Pause)

We will hear about people who hurt Jesus by their sins.

We will be asked to reflect on how we have hurt others by our sins. We will hear of the people who helped Jesus by the good things they did. We will be asked to reflect on how we help others.

Reader: First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

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

Reader: (Read slowly)

We remember Jesus standing before Pilate as a prisoner. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. He had the power to release Jesus, but he chose not to because he was afraid of the crowd. Jesus had been beaten and abused by the soldiers. He was weak and powerless. He was alone, abandoned by all his friends. He was condemned to death, even though he was innocent. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, you stand all alone before Pilate. Nobody speaks up for you. Nobody helps defend you. You devoted your entire life to helping others, listening to the smallest ones, caring for those who were ignored by others. They don't seem to remember that as they prepare to put you to death. (Pause)

As a child, sometimes I feel alone. Sometimes I feel that others don't stand up for me and defend me when I am afraid. Sometimes I don't feel like I am treated fairly, especially if I am scolded or corrected.

As an adult, sometimes I feel abandoned and afraid as well. Sometimes I too, feel like I am treated unfairly or blamed for things I'm not responsible for. I have a hard time when people criticize me at home or at work.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer:

All: My Jesus, Help us to be grateful for what you did for us. Help us to accept criticism and unfairness as you did, and not complain. Help us pray for those who have hurt us.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory Be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Leader: Second Station: Jesus Receives His Cross

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

Reader: (Read slowly)

We remember Jesus as he takes up his cross. He feels it as it presses on his shoulders and his back which is cut and bleeding after being beaten by the soldiers. It is a heavy load to carry. It is the weight of our sins that Jesus is carrying. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, as you accepted your cross, you knew you would carry it to your death on Calvary. You knew it wouldn't be easy, but you accepted it and carried it just the same.

As a child, sometimes I don't like the problems that come my way. Sometimes I try to get others to take care of them or solve them for me. Sometimes I become upset and crabby when I'm asked to do even the smallest thing to help others.

As an adult I sometimes feel like I'm not appreciated. Sometimes I feel as if I accept more responsibility than I need to. I can feel sorry for myself, even though the crosses others carry are much larger than my own. In my self-pity, I don't reach out to help.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer:

All: My Jesus, you took on our troubles, our sins and carried them to Calvary. Your sacrifice was not in vain. Each time we participate in the Eucharist may we become more resolved to help others to carry their cross in life and to ensure that our thoughtlessness and self-pity does not add further burden to others.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory Be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First time

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as he trips and falls under the weight of the cross. Jesus was weak and tired. He had been up all night and had been cruelly treated by the soldiers. Now a soldier beats him as he struggles to continue with the heavy cross. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, the cross you have been carrying is very heavy. You are becoming weak and almost ready to faint, and you fall down. Nobody seems to want to help you. The soldiers are interested in getting the job done and going home, so they yell at you and try to get you up and moving again.

As a child, sometimes I start to do something, but then get tired of it. I hurry to get finished and sometimes don't do my work well. Sometimes I don't pay attention to what I should be doing. When things get hard for me, sometimes I give up.

As an adult, I sometimes put things off. I give up too easily, and sometimes don't do my work as well as I know I can.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer:

All: My Jesus, you fell down under the weight of the cross and the taunts of your captors. Even though it was so difficult, you got back up on your feet and you pushed ahead. You did not give up. Give us the courage and strength to rise above the scorn of others and our human weakness and to keep going when times are difficult.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory Be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

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

Reader: We remember Jesus as he meets his mother, Mary. She braved her fears and the crowds to go out to meet Jesus. What a shock it must have been for her to see Jesus, her son, this way. She is with him in his struggle, every step of his journey. She reaches out to give him comfort. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, you feel so alone with all those people yelling and screaming at you. You don't like the words they are saying about you, and you look for a friendly face in the crowd. You see your mother. She can't make the hurting stop, but it helps to see that she is on your side, that she is suffering with you. She does understand and care.

As a child, sometimes I feel like too many things are going on. Sometimes other kids pick on me and call me names. I need to look around me for a friendly face, and for the help I need. I need to share my troubles with those who truly care about me.

As an adult I sometimes feel overwhelmed by many things. Life is so competitive, and I worry so much about my future and those who have some control over it. I need to remember that being an adult does not mean having to solve every problem all by myself. I need to look around me for a friendly face, for the help I need.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, you and your mother had a special bond. Her sadness at your suffering can only be imagined. Be with all parents today who face the loss of their children. Be their comfort, ease their heartbreak and heal their pain.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry the Cross

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

Reader: We remember Jesus as Simon's strong arms and hands help him to lift up the weight of the cross. Simon had come in from the country and was minding his own business when he was pulled in by the soldiers to help Jesus carry his cross. Simon may have been reluctant to take part, but nevertheless his help was a gift to Jesus in his hour of need. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, the soldiers are becoming impatient. This is taking longer than they wanted it to. They are afraid you won't make it to the hill where you will be crucified. As you grow weaker, they grab a man out of the crowd and make him help carry your cross. He was just watching what was happening, but all of a sudden he is helping you carry your cross.

As a child, sometimes I see people who need my help. Sometimes I pretend not to hear when my parents call me. I disappear when I know others could use my help.

As an adult, sometimes I try to do as little as I can and still get by. Others might need my help, but I ignore their needs. Even when I'm asked to help, I sometimes claim to be too busy.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, help end our indifference to the needs of others. Every day in the news we see or hear of people suffering, but because we cannot see them face to face, we shut out their silent pleas for help. May we become Simon for them in their hour of need and take on the role of servants in imitation of Jesus who came 'to serve' and not to be served.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as Veronica stepped forward and wiped his face with a cloth. Veronica braved her own fears of what the soldiers might do to her or what the crowd might say when she moved out from the crowd and approached Jesus. She showed great love and compassion by her action. She gently wiped the blood from the face of Jesus. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, suddenly a woman comes out of the crowd. Her name is Veronica. You can see how she cares for you as she takes a cloth and begins to wipe the blood and sweat from your face. She can't do much, but she offers what little help she can.

As a child, sometimes I know someone could use a little help and understanding. They may be picked on or teased by others, or just sad or lonely. Sometimes I feel bad that others don't step in to help, but I don't help either.

As an adult, I notice the needs around me. Sometimes my own family members crave my attention, and I don't even seem to notice. Sometimes a co-worker, friend, or family member could use help or understanding, but I don't reach out to help in case of criticism, or that they demand more of me than I'd like to give.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, Veronica shows us your face of suffering. Give us the insight to see your face in the people we meet each day and the grace to offer help when we can. Help us too, not to forget the poor and marginalized throughout the world. Let us not forget those who hunger and thirst. Let us not forget those who weep because of disease and loss. Let us resolve to face up to our responsibility in helping to relieve the pain of others.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

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

Reader: We remember Jesus as he falls the second time. He must have been in terrible pain, struggling to put one foot past the other - to go on blindly, amid the jeering of the crowd - and then to fall. The soldier responded by beating him as he lay on his hands and knees in the dirt. (Pause)

Reflection: This is the second time you have fallen on the road. As the cross grows heavier and heavier it becomes more difficult to get up. But you continue to struggle and try until you're up and walking again. You don't give up.

As a child, sometimes things get me down. Others seem to find things easier to do or to learn. Each time I fail, I find it harder to keep trying.

As an adult, sometimes I think I should know more than I do. I become impatient with myself and find it hard to believe in myself when I fail. It is easy to despair over small things, and sometimes I do. Help me when things seem difficult for me. Even when it's hard, help me get up and keep trying as you did. Help me do my best without comparing myself with others.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, it is tempting to lie low

when things get difficult - to hide ourselves away and not to keep trying. We become impatient with ourselves and with others and we allow ourselves to become depressed and lose hope. Jesus, grant us the courage and strength to keep trying as you did. Give us the grace to continue on the journey, one step at a time.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have Mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as he consoles the women of Jerusalem. He tells them not to cry for him. He tells them that they have enough worries of their own. It is typical of Jesus to be so selfless in his own hour of pain. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, as you carry your cross you see a group of women along the road. As you pass by you see they are sad. You stop to spend a moment with them, to offer them some encouragement. Although you are have been abandoned by your friends and are in pain, you stop and try to help them.

As a child, sometimes I think a lot about myself. I think about what I want and would like people to spend their lives pleasing me.

As an adult, sometimes I act like a child. I become so absorbed in myself and what I'd like that I forget about the needs of others. I take them for granted, and often ignore their needs. Help me think more about others. Help me remember that others have problems, too. Help me respond to them even when I'm busy or preoccupied with my own problems.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, you always reached out to others and offered comfort and hope to the suffering. You were selfless in your love. Help us to follow your example and to trust that nothing can happen to us that we, with your help, can't handle. Keep us on the road of selflessness with hearts open to the needs of others.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have Mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as he falls for the third time. He is completely exhausted. His suffering is immense. Again the soldiers beat him as he lies in the dirt. Despite all this, Jesus summons his strength and gets back up on his feet again (Pause).

Reflection: Jesus, your journey has been long. You fall again, beneath your cross. You know your journey is coming to an end. You struggle and struggle. You get up and keep going.

As a child, sometimes I fail time and time again. I find it hard to get along with my sisters and brothers, sometimes I'm not honest, sometimes I'm lazy. I'm tempted to stop trying. It's just too hard sometimes.

As an adult, I often feel I should have conquered my weaknesses by now. I become discouraged when I'm confronted by the same problems over and over again. Sometimes I get weary. When I have health problems, I can become discouraged and depressed.

Help me think of the cross you carried. Help me continue to hope that I can make the changes in my life I need to. You didn't give up. I can have the strength to get up again as well.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: Lord, we are human and sometimes we give up completely if we fail more than once. Give us the courage and strength to pick ourselves up as you did on the road to Calvary. Give us the humility to accept the help of others on our journey and turn to you for inner strength when we feel alone and dispirited.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in Peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as his clothes are pulled from his body by the soldiers. This must have been so difficult for Jesus. The soldiers didn't think about what Jesus was going through. They didn't think about the pain and humiliation that Jesus must have felt. They simply wanted his clothes for themselves and they cast lots to see who would get them (Pause).

Reflection: The soldiers notice you have something of value. They remove your cloak and throw dice for it. Your wounds are torn open once again. Some of the people in the crowd make fun of you. They tease you and challenge you to perform a miracle for them to see. They're not aware that you'll perform the greatest miracle of all!

As a child, sometimes I'm tempted to make fun of another student or treat someone with disrespect. I sometimes try to act grown up by using crude and bad words.

As an adult, sometimes I repeat stories that are disrespectful of others. I can entertain thoughts that are not pure. Sometimes I give the young people around me a bad example to follow.

Help me to keep myself pure in my thoughts and actions. Help me say things that build up the people around me. Help me overcome worldly desires that I may become more like Jesus. Help me set a good example for others to follow.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, you knew humiliation and embarrassment when you were robbed of your very dignity. You were always the champion of the poor, the ones that everyone else had forgotten about. You always treated everyone with respect and great love: women, lepers, sinners, tax-collectors, the sick and the disabled. Help us to follow your example and to restore the dignity of those who are made poor because of our selfishness.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus as he was stretched out on the cross. We see him arch his back in pain as the nails are driven through his hands and feet. We remember the cruelty and indifference of the soldiers. We remember the agony of Jesus as the cross is lifted up and set into its place. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, you are stretched out on the cross you have carried so far. The soldiers take big nails and drive them into your hands and feet. You feel abandoned by the people you loved so much. People seem to have gone mad. You have done nothing but good, yet they drive nails through your hands and feet.

As a child, sometimes I hurt others. Sometimes I join with friends and decide not to like another. We gang up against another and cause them hurt and pain. Sometimes I say or do hurtful things to my brothers and sisters. I can wonder what they'd think about themselves if they believed everything I told them about themselves.

As an adult, sometimes I discriminate against others. Even without thinking, I judge others because of their colour, intelligence, income level or name. I forget that I am to live as a brother or sister to all people. Sometimes I use harsh words when I speak to my children and family members. I can find it easy to look for something that isn't very important and make it very important.

Help me look again at the people around me. Help me see the hurt and pain I have caused in others. Be with me to help me make amends for the harm I have done.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, words are not enough to describe the pain and suffering of your ordeal. Forgive us for all our unkind thoughts, words and actions that cause such pain to you and to others. Open our eyes to the heartbreak our selfishness can inflict on others. May we never turn away from our responsibility toward others and always seek to reconcile rather than to divide. May our efforts ensure a peaceful and just society.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: All Stand

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember Jesus now as he hung on the cross. The pain must have been unbearable as he tried to push himself up so that he could breathe. The taunts of those who jeered at him must also have been difficult to bear. Crucifixion was a slow and painful death. When the person no longer had the strength to push themselves upwards, their body fell forward putting intolerable strain on their lungs and chest. They slowly suffocated. Death by crucifixion usually took between three and six hours. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, as you hung on the cross, you forgave the soldiers who had crucified you, and prayed for your mother and your friends. You wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so you gave all you had for us.

Jesus, let me take a few moments now to consider your love for me. Help me thank you for your willingness to go to your death for me. Help me express my love for you!

We spend a moment now, in silence, remembering all those who have died. (Pause) We remember particularly, all those who are mourning the loss a loved one. (Pause)

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant: 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer:

All: My Jesus, you gave everything so that others could live. You willingly gave your life for us and suffered so terribly so that we will be able to live forever with God. Give us the grace to follow your example and to give of ourselves and not count the cost.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Thirteenth Station: The Body of Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember as the body of Jesus is taken down from the cross. We remember the grief of his mother and of his friends. They are relieved that his suffering is over. His body is now relaxed and no longer racked with pain. His mother tenderly cradles him in her arms and weeps at her loss. (Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, how brutally you were put to death. Now, gently you are taken from the cross. Your suffering and pain are ended, and you are put in the arms of your mother. The dirt and blood are wiped away. You are treated with great love.

As a child, sometimes I treat others better when they're sad or in pain. When somebody dies, I become very gentle and kind. I notice the good and kind things people say about those who have died.

As an adult, I seem to be kinder when someone dies. If only I could learn to see the good things about them while they were alive. If only I would tell those around me how much I love them, while I still have the opportunity to do so.

Help me look for the good in those around me, especially those I love the most. Help me live this day as if it were the last. Help me become a more gentle and loving person through my greater appreciation for those around me.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant: 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, the sadness of Mary is lived again in the sorrow of people throughout the world who have lost loved ones. Give us the grace to offer comfort to those whose lives are touched by death. Help us to live every day as if it were our last and to truly appreciate the many blessings which we have received in our lives.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: Have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Fourteenth Station: The Body of Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

We remember as the body of Jesus is gently wrapped in clean linen and is carried by his friends and placed in a new tomb hewn out of the rock. They roll a great stone in front of the opening to seal the tomb. We feel their sadness as they lay to rest their loved one.

(Pause)

Reflection: Jesus, your body is prepared for burial. Joseph gave you his own tomb. He laid your body there and rolled a large stone in front of it, then went home. What a sad day it has been for so many people.

As a child, sometimes I try to keep everything for myself. I find it hard to share my things with my brothers or sisters and with my friends.

As an adult, I can be selfish too. I can accumulate things and keep them for myself. I try to make sure I have what I want before I share what I have with anybody else.

Help me think of Joseph of Arimathea, who risked his own life as he accepted Jesus' body for burial. Help me think of how Joseph loved Jesus so much that he gave him his own tomb.

Meditative Pause: Taize Chant: 'Stay Here With Me'

Prayer

All: My Jesus, help us to be more giving of our time, our energy, our resources, and our skills. Help us to give and not to look for something in return. Keep us always mindful of our need to work together for a better world for all people.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....

Reader: Jesus Christ Crucified.

All: have mercy on Us.

Reader: May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, Rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Reader: Fifteenth Station: Jesus rises from the dead

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

Reader: (Read Slowly)

At the very end of the Gospel the evangelists all report that the women go to the tomb early on the Sunday morning. When they arrived, they found that the large stone covering the entrance had been rolled away. An angel appeared to them and told them to not be afraid, that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he said he would. The angel also instructed them to go and tell the disciples of Jesus that he had been raised to life and that he was on his way to meet with them.

(Pause)

Reflection: This was amazing news. Jesus was alive. All was not lost. The reality of the resurrection brought a new beginning for all humankind. We rejoice in this new beginning. The darkness of Good Friday had been transformed. Easter day is a celebration of new life and hope. May we this Easter be encouraged to focus our energy on being more fully alive, so that we may give more to others and be better disciples of the Risen Jesus.

Leader: Concluding Comments

Closing Prayer

Leader:

*Lord Jesus, you were sent by your Father to bring us the Good News.
You never stopped showing us God's love.
Even on the cross you forgave those who were putting you to death.
On Easter Day you rose again to new life.
You ask us to live like you now
so that we will live with you for ever in your new life.*

Sign of the Cross

Final Hymn: Taize Chant: 'Jesus, Remember Me'