

The following is an adaptation of the stations that the community of Bishop Moore Catholic High School will pray throughout the season of Lent.

Stations of the Cross

We come together to remember the final steps in the life of Jesus Christ, our Savior. For in life and death, Jesus saved each one of us. As we reflect on each Station of the Cross, we are to reflect on our own personal Cross, the Cross each one of us is invited to carry in our daily lives.

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

1st Station - Jesus is Condemned to Death

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

In Pilate's hands we see the Father's will. Though Pilate is unjust, he is the lawful governor and has power over Jesus. The Son of God is obedient. Yet obedience cost Jesus his life. For us, it costs much less, an act of will, no more. Yet, how hard it is for us to obey.

How quick are we to condemn those in our own lives - a simple disagreement, those we work with, our family, our friends. When we condemn those around us, we turn away from Jesus, shading the light of hope and turning it to darkness. In many countries, people are persecuted for expressing their faith publicly. Yet how many times do we deny our religion or condemn those who do not share our views?

Father, give us the courage to hear your will and to obey it as your Son did on our behalf.

Let us pray for those who are persecuted for their beliefs. We also pray for the imprisoned and those who feel the chains of restraint emotionally and physically. That we may share the light of hope with our neighbors, now and always. We ask this through Christ our Lord

2nd Station - Jesus Carries His Cross

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

Jesus struggled under the weight of the wooden Cross. He would be forced to carry it through the streets while being mocked, laughed at, ridiculed. Some even denied knowing Him. How painful that must have been.

We experience many crosses in our lives: fears, worries, frustrations. Many of us carry our Crosses with us daily - they weigh us down, they handicap us, they prevent us from being able to care for others and love unconditionally. Yet we are strengthened with the knowledge that Jesus promised to

be near us at all times. And so, as he carried his Cross, let us bear ours, knowing that Jesus once again helps us to carry it.

Let us pray for those who are carrying their Cross - for those who continue to carry their Cross alone, may Christ lift those who have buckled under the weight of their failures and personal challenges. We pray to the Lord.

3rd Station - Jesus falls the first time

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

So many people yet you carried your Cross alone. The same people that worshipped you with palms now spat at you in the streets. Struggling under the weight of the cross you fell to your knees. Was there something in your path that caused you to stumble? Did someone place something in your way?

When we really stop to think about it we place obstacles in your path almost every day. Maybe it is the way that we have of keeping our faith hidden except for Sundays. If no one knows we are Christians they won't expect anything special of us. No wonder you stumbled.

How many times have we fallen on the journey? Every day we struggle under the weight of life's challenges - while we stop, you continued on.

Let us pray for those who have fallen in our lives. For those who struggle with addictions to drugs, alcohol, gambling. That we may lift them up each time they fall. Through our prayers and tangible actions, may we help them seek the counsel they need to walk again. We pray to the Lord.

4th Station - Jesus meets His Mother

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

There is nothing more horrible than a mother seeing her child die. That's why it is so hard to understand how a mother could sacrifice a baby. But that is what happens each day in our world. Millions of babies die each year because they are inconvenient, they may be defective, or it's a way out of a difficult situation.

Your mother, Mary, knew you had to die. That didn't make it any easier to accept. How can anyone accept a death that is not necessary?

Lord, we know how difficult it is for single parents, for those who are faced with difficult decisions. Yet we pray that our community will have the courage to embrace their struggle and support them in their time of need. We also give thanks for our mothers and grandmothers - the gift of parents who guide us in our faith and welcome new members lovingly into their family.

Let us pray for all those who choose life. That we may embrace the light of Christ in each new birth, no matter what the circumstance. For mothers, parents and all those who will act as guardians of faith, hope and love throughout our lives. We pray to the Lord.

5th Station - Jesus is helped by Simon

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

Traveling from Cyrenea, Simon was pressed into service to help carry your cross. This was not a job that he asked for, or an honour that he sought. How often do we consider helping others an honour? Not very often. Most of the time we think of it as an inconvenience, something to be tolerated. Or, worse still, we look for ways to use our acts of charity for our own benefit. If we give money to charity, we can deduct that amount from our taxes. When we do make such considerations for our own benefit?

Are we good stewards of God's many gifts, reaching out to serve the poor and suffering among us? Just as Simon helped you Jesus, perhaps we are called to seek those who we can help, not just as a special favor but as a way of life each and every day.

We pray for all those who are homeless, those who travel the streets alone with no one to carry them. May we serve as beacons of hope to those in need physically, emotionally and spiritually. We pray to the Lord.

6th Station - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

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

Tradition tells us that through an act of kindness Veronica was blessed to receive your image imprinted on the cloth that she used to wipe your brow. In a special way you rewarded her generosity.

When we reach out to another person in pain we are blessed with your image also. If we look deep enough into the eyes of the young man with AIDS we see your face. If we listen to the girl struggling with cocaine addiction we hear your voice. Yet, at times, it is easier to pretend that those people are not our problem. Their disease is not something that we caused. Why should we be concerned with them?

Lord, help us wipe every tear and comfort the sick. Each one of us knows someone close who is suffering. We've all experienced the loss of a loved one. May we take the time today to let those close to us know how important they are in our lives, wiping their tears with a kind word, a loving touch, a comforting embrace.

We pray for all those who are sick. May the healing hand of God ease their pain and bring them comfort knowing that God is watching over them, now and always. We pray to the Lord.

7th Station - Jesus falls a second time

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

Jesus, you know what it is to struggle and fall. Because of your suffering you know how hard it is to get up and try again. That's why every time we make a mistake you forgive us so easily. Your only request is that we continue to try.

Are we models of Catholic leadership in our homes, schools and families? Through our actions, often times we fail at living our faith each day. Whether it be giving into physical temptation, making hurtful comments to those who are different than us or by being indifferent to injustice taking place around us, we seem to forget our faith and fall once again. Yet, even when we fall time and again, you are there offering forgiveness if we are willing to accept it. By continuing on after your fall you have shown us how to pick ourselves up and continue on.

Let us pray for the times when we have failed to be models of leadership in our community. For our personal struggles - may we rise up from the fall and continue on the path, seeking forgiveness and learning from our mistakes. We pray to the Lord.

8th Station - Jesus speaks to some women

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

You spoke rather harshly to the women of Jerusalem that day. You told them to weep for themselves and their sins. You knew that mankind had much to be sorrowful for. You wished them to recognize their own pilgrimage rather than lament yours.

Jesus, we should be weeping for our sins today. We take and take from this world you have given us, with no regard for the future. What happens when this world has no more to give? We should be weeping for the future that we are creating for our children with our selfishness and greed.

Our world is struggling. Peace at times seems so far away yet we try to dialogue and speak together in a common language that will unite not divide.

We pray for peace in the world. Just as Jesus spoke with the women, may nations come together to speak the language of peace and hope. We pray for all those who have been lost due to war and violence - their loss should remind each of us that we should always strive for peace. We pray to the Lord.

9th Station - Jesus falls a third time

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

Overcome with exhaustion you collapsed a third time on your way to Calvary. And a third time you pulled yourself to your feet and moved on. Why didn't you refuse to go any farther? Make your tormentors carry you to the place of your death? Why were you so cooperative?

That was the example you were giving us. In the face of pain and death you continued to move forward. You refused to give up. What happens to people when they become so overwhelmed they decide to take their own lives? How do they arrive at that point? What could possibly be so hopeless that the only avenue of escape is death?

Young people go through so many difficult times - trying to fit in, relationships, wondering what to when you grow up? As a community, we need to support each other and let our young people know they are never alone - we will continue to be present to help them up when they fall.

Let us pray for those whose lives have been lost to suicide. For those who struggle with stress, those who find no answers to the daily questions that torment them. May God watch over them and help them know the light of hope and peace. We pray to the Lord.

10th Station - Jesus is stripped of his garments

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

When you finally reached the place of your death, your tormentors were not satisfied with the humiliation you had already suffered. They took your clothes and cast lots for them, the only things you had left. They even took your dignity from you.

Today we continue to add to your sorrow by not acknowledging the dignity of people. There are those who sell their bodies, others who live on the street. We sometimes even forget the elderly among us, forgetting them or ignoring their cry for companionship. How little effort it would take, if we all worked together, to make these lives a little brighter.

We pray for those who have been stripped of their garments physically, emotionally and mentally. For those in our midst who have been abandoned, who have known no love, who return home each day feeling so incredibly alone. That we may give them the gift of dignity and respect, remembering that we are each frail in our own way. We pray to the Lord.

11th Station - Jesus is nailed to the Cross

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

Did you cry out, Jesus, as the nails pierced your flesh? Why were they doing this to you? Was it because you loved too much? Was it because you cared for others? No, you suffered that way because we care too little. We attach too many strings to our love.

We too persecute people. Their only crime is complaining because they are hungry or cold. Why do we fail to reach out to them? Why do we not hear their cries for help? When we ignore their cries we drive the spikes a little deeper into your flesh.

We pray for the times when our words have pierced the flesh of those around us. When we fail to look at others through the eyes of Christ, for times when we drive the nail deeper by hurtful words and actions. May we treat others with kindness and care, now and always. We pray to the Lord.

12th Station - Jesus dies on the Cross

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

There weren't many there for you when you died. Most of your followers had gone into hiding because they were afraid. How alone you must have felt.

There are thousands daily who die alone in the streets of Calcutta and in Africa. Some are children. We have so much surplus today, the least of your people, do not have to die in want. But we don't make time to work on their behalf. We forget they exist, that they go to bed hungry.

Let us pray for the children of the world. That they will be cared for as children of God. We pray that young people everywhere be given the opportunity to have their voice heard, to share their gifts and talents with the community and to weave the thread of faith through their daily actions. We pray to the Lord.

13th Station - Jesus is taken down from the Cross

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

The worst was over for you but the pain had only just begun for those who received your body from the cross. Mary, like so many mothers today, received into her arms the dead body of the child she had borne, fed, clothed, washed, listened to, loved. Help us not turn our eyes from the tears of the mothers whose children are dying on our streets.

It is never easy to lose a loved one, no matter what the age or circumstance. It is our prayer and belief that these people have moved on to eternal life. We offer comfort to each other and find peace through our faith.

Let us pray for all those who have gone before us, for friends and family who remain behind and mourn their loss. May we be present to those struggling and offer them our prayers, our hearts and our hands. We pray to the Lord.

14th Station - Jesus is laid in the tomb

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

Joseph of Arimathea needed to see that you had a decent burial place so he donated his tomb. Not satisfied with doing the minimum he went to Pilate for permission to bury you. He could have left the details to someone else but he risked the displeasure of authorities and took care of it himself.

So often we are content to do the minimum that is expected. We grudgingly spend one hour at Mass and complain if it's one minute longer. We drop our few coins in the basket and claim to be doing our fair share. Don't ask us to give our time too. We tolerate those people that are a little different; don't ask us to love them.

Jesus, you went to the tomb without a word of protest even though you were innocent. How many of us can say the same? All around us people suffer and we fail to reach out to them. We fail to reach out in love to those who are closest to us. Lord, help us to walk our way of the cross with a little more faithfulness. You said that in order to follow you we must pick up our cross daily. Help us to recognize our crosses with joy, because in accepting them we imitate your life. In imitating you we will eventually share your death and resurrection. Amen.

We pray for all those gathered here today. That we may live a faith that acts and be messengers of the Good News as we continue our personal journey. May we find strength, guidance, peace and support from our faith and from each other. We pray to the Lord.