

## Stations of the Cross

In Jerusalem, there is a street called the *Via Dolorosa* - the Way of Suffering. Legend has it that this is the street upon which Jesus took his final walk, after being tried and convicted, to the hill of Calvary to be crucified. Tradition and scripture also describe certain things that happened along the way that tell us something about how we respond and should respond to the love Jesus showed for us.

The Roman Catholic service has fourteen stations of the cross are in. We will have seven points to reflect upon Jesus' actions - and to think about what we would do, and are doing, when we're called to follow Christ in today's world.

The right side of this page has a brief notation about each point that has been selected for this Maundy Thursday. Each point has a more thorough description of its significance in later pages.

Each point can have an accompanying item if you'd like to have a sort of scavenger hunt before going through this devotion. These items are noted in the next column.\*

## Select Points of the Stations of the Cross

**One:** Matthew 27:24

Jesus is condemned & Pilate washes his hands.

*\*Basin of water or use sink.*

**Two:** John 19:16-19

Jesus carries his cross

*\*Small piece of wood or twig*

**Three:** No specific scripture.

Jesus falls.

*\*Piece of 'glass'. Please creatively find something to use that won't be harmful (piece of plastic, a smooth shard, etc.)*

**Four:** Legend - no scripture attached.

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

*\*Piece of cloth*

**Five:** John 19:23-34

Jesus is stripped of his garments

*\*Strip or scrap of cloth that was once clothing or a small piece of clothing*

**Six:** Mark 15:25-30

Jesus is crucified.

*\*Small nail*

**Seven:** Matthew 27:57-61

The disposition of Jesus.

*\*Rock or stone*

**One**

Matthew 27:24  
The Message Bible

*Jesus is condemned & Pilate washes his hands.*

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was imminent, he took a basin of water and washed his hands in full sight of the crowd, saying, "I'm washing my hands of responsibility for this man's death. From now on, it's in your hands. You're judge and jury."

~~~~~

Pilate had been trying to gain Jesus' freedom through the tradition of releasing a prisoner during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. It had not occurred to him that the crowd would shout for Barrabas' release and Jesus' crucifixion. Eventually, Pilate washed his hands of the whole mess (literally and figuratively) and went along with the crowd.



**For Consideration**

How often do we go along with the crowd, doing what we know we should not do, saying things we know we should not say? How often does peer pressure prevail? How often do we wash our hands of what is right, of what we know Jesus would want us to do?

Why do we wash our hands of what is right in the sight of God? To remain popular and therefore not go against the crowd? It's easier? Or maybe doing what God requires of us is just too frightening?

~~~~~

In this time of pandemic, we have learned to wash our hands often for the health and safety of ourselves and others. Also, let washing our hands remind us that when we do less than what God requests of us in love, we also condemn Jesus to death in our lives.

## **Two**

John 19:16-19  
The Message Bible

*Jesus carries his cross.*

(Pilate) turned him over to be crucified. They took Jesus away. Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill (the name in Hebrew is Golgotha), where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote a sign and had it placed on the cross. It read:

Jesus the Nazarene  
the King of the Jews.

~~~~~



## **For Consideration**

Pick up your piece of wood or twig. Imagine when it was still part of a tree. Can you imagine the weight of it? Can you imagine carrying this cross?

~~~~~

Carry this wood as a symbol that we might have the courage to carry our cross and follow Jesus. It's not easy to go against what the world wants us to do in order to do what God wants us to do.

Taking up this cross and doing God's will takes courage. It also takes the willingness to recognize that God's desires are important. In fact, they are the most important things in our lives.

**Three:**

No Specific Scripture

*Jesus falls.*

There is no description in scripture of Jesus falling while carrying the cross. However, it is easy to imagine that it happened -- carrying an awkward, heavy burden; stumbling on an uneven street; most likely being whipped by the soldiers; being jostled by a crowd that presses closer and closer. Jesus is bound to stumble or fall - even break, if you will - under the stress of it all.

~~~~~



**For Consideration**

This cross that Jesus carries is for all of us, all the people in the world. All of us have contributed to the sin which forced the Cross on His shoulder. All of us have contributed to the heaviness, the awkwardness, the unevenness, the jostling, the whipping - to the cause of Jesus falling under the cross.

At this moment, Jesus is a very fragile human, in much the same way that glass is fragile. Glass can only hold up to so much before it shatters. Just as glass is the medium through which sunshine brightens our homes, Christ is the medium through which God's light shines to brighten our souls.

Every bit of sin, every moment of separation from God, every time we want to go our way instead of God's way, adds to the stress on the "glass" of Christ.

~~~~~

Use a piece of 'glass' to be reminded of how easily stress can shatter our spiritual lives. Let it call you back to God and the comfort and strength that only God can provide.

## **Four**

### Legend

*Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.*

This story is not found in scripture. The legend that appeared in the early Middle Ages, probably about 900 or so years ago. The face of Jesus has now suffered blows by the soldiers. Legend says that Veronica was standing in the crowd and ran forward to wipe Jesus' brow. When she took back the cloth, she found an image of his face imprinted on it.

~~~~~



## **For Consideration**

Please use a piece of cloth as a reminder to be prepared to help others bear the burdens of their Crosses, and give comfort to them.

Jesus said, "If you help any of my brothers or sisters in trouble, you help me."

Be prepared to use this cloth - and any other talents you have - to care for others. Use it as a reminder to help the marginalized, the "least of these."

**Five**

John 19:23-34  
The Message Bible

*Jesus is stripped of his garments*

When they crucified him, the Roman soldiers took his clothes and divided them up four ways, to each soldier a fourth. But his robe was seamless, a single piece of weaving, so they said to each other, "Let's not tear it up. Let's throw dice to see who gets it." This confirmed the Scripture that said, "They divided up my clothes among them and threw dice for my coat." (The soldiers validated the Scriptures!)

~~~~~



**For Consideration**

Documents from the Roman Empire indicate that when a person was crucified, he was stripped completely, and the soldiers at the site of crucifixion were permitted to divide his worldly possessions among them.

Jesus literally had nothing other than the clothes on his back. He had no possessions. He had never had possessions. Scripture never mentions packing up their bags and moving on to the next place, town or mountainside. Jesus' followers left *everything* behind them to be with him.

What possessions do we have that keep us from being close followers of Jesus?

~~~~~

Use yet another piece of cloth (or small piece of clothing) as a reminder of sacrifice - of Jesus' sacrifice for us and what our call as Christians means in ways of sacrifice.

**Six**

Mark 15:25-26  
The Message Bible

*Jesus is crucified.*

They nailed him up at nine o'clock in the morning. The charge against him—the King of the Jews—was printed on a poster.

~~~~~



**For Consideration**

If we had been there, in Jerusalem, almost 2000 years ago, what are the chances that we would have been a part of the crowd that cried for crucifixion, that followed and jeered as Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha? The nature of our sinfulness means we may have denied Jesus and fled. Who knows, we may have even driven the nails into his flesh and into the cross.

The nails represent our sins -- our own indifferences, cowardice, spinelessness, hatreds, and hypocrisies -- all of our sinfulness.

~~~~~

A nail can serve as a reminder of the Christ on the Cross, who takes away our sin and gives us back the gift of grace.

## Seven

Matthew 27:57-61  
The Message Bible

### *The disposition of Jesus.*

Late in the afternoon a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock, and rolled a large stone across the entrance. Then he went off. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting in plain view of the tomb.

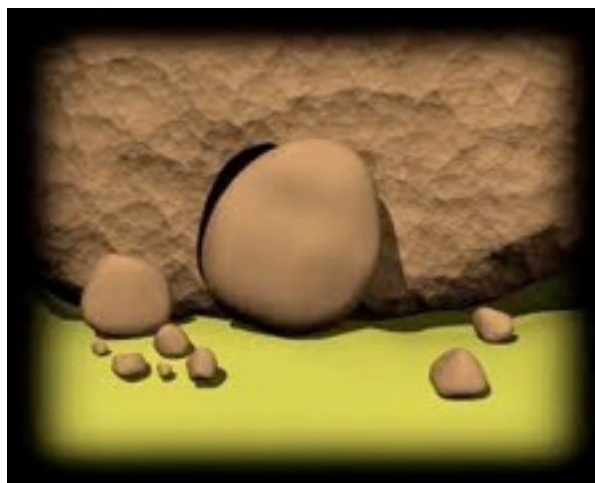
~~~~~

The women plan to return to the tomb after the Sabbath to finish preparing Jesus' body. Everything had been done in such a rush after he died -- get permission to take the body down and get it buried before sunset. Even the tomb he was in was borrowed!

## For Consideration

Can you imagine the finality of the stone being placed in front of the tomb? What would Mary, the mother of Jesus, be feeling right now? What sense of hopelessness prevails when Jesus had preached hope to the poor, the downtrodden, the marginalized. That stone must have seemed like it was the barrier to everything Jesus had preached.

~~~~~



Please use your stone as a reminder of those things that act as barriers in our lives between us and the life Jesus would have us lead.