

Welcome to the Stations of the Cross

We move along as a group from Station to Station;
stop at the designed area; listen to the individual reflection;
pray; pause; and move to the next station.

LEADER

First Station – Jesus
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

PEOPLE

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNED TO REFLECTION

Reflection
Silence

LEADER

God of Love

PEOPLE

Strengthen all who struggle under the weight of the cross.
Help us to be more than spectators. May we show mercy. Amen
Silence

Move to the next station

- See following pages for reflections-

Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.

Who are those facing death in our world today? Sr. Kelly Moline OP

At this first station, Jesus joins us at a fundamental part of our humanity. As we embark on the spiritual journey offered by the Stations of the Cross, we follow him in this holy surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us. At this first station let us remember those condemned to die on death row, and those who face the death of loved ones, life limiting poverty, abandonment, injustice, homelessness, discrimination. For the immigrants and refugees risking death in pursuit of freedom. For all those crying out for their voice to be heard. And all those who come face to face with death each day. May we accompany them with compassion.

2. Jesus is made to carry the cross.

We remember those who are carrying heavy crosses today. Lee Casey

We remember those
who are carrying heavy crosses today.

Jesus, your cross may be described as,
Christ's Redemption Our Sanctifying Salvation.
God, please bring to mind
those whom we know
or have encountered
who are carrying a cross.
Lord, we pray for them,
our Brothers and Sisters
on the journey to you;
those carrying A cross of rejection,
a cross of persecution,
a cross of being misunderstood,
a cross of exclusion,
a cross of being
bullied, mocked and scorned,
a cross of
imprisonment, trials, and other hardships.
Jesus, you direct us
to pray for those who persecute us.
Let us pause and also pray for those perpetrators
who have caused or contributed to others
being made to carry crosses.
God, in your mercy,
bring conversion to their hearts,
repentance in their
thoughts, words, and deeds.
Holy Spirit, we ask you to strengthen us,
in the crosses we bear,
though often not our choices,
may these crosses
be lightened or removed
by your merciful and amazing grace.
Jesus we trust in you. Amen.

3. Jesus Falls the first time.

Remembering those who struggle with Sobriety. Caterina Mako

Sobriety begins with the acceptance that our fractured being, brokenness and imperfection is simply IS. And we are called to practice a spirituality of imperfection.

We all fall, at one time or another, under the weight of our own cross. We get up, we are compelled to keep getting up and if we are willing to embrace our brokenness, after each fall we are a little more humble. We continue on our journey a little more human.

We continue to seek meaning in the absurd, peace within the chaos, light within the darkness, joy within the suffering – without denying the reality of of absurdity, chaos, darkness and suffering.

Those in recovery have a lot to teach us – mainly the truth that is humility and surrender in suffering.

4. Jesus Meets His Mother.

Parents watching their children suffer. Kathleen Ponce

I think that many of us have prayed the Stations of the Cross as seen through the eyes of Mary, Jesus' mother. More than thirty years ago, it was this version of the Stations that I was invited by my parish to lead one Friday evening during Lent. When I accepted the invitation, it was not clear who the cross-bearer for the evening would be, but as that particular Friday drew closer, I discovered that the cross-bearer would be my then 12 year old son, Jamie. It was a visceral experience for me at each of the stations to say words that Mary may have expressed as she witnessed all the events that had occurred on that first Good Friday. Mary's words for the Fourth Station went something like this:

“As I pushed and shoved to move through the crowds to be as close to my Son as I could, we came to a place in the road where he stopped. He saw me. And we looked into each other's eyes. I didn't want him to see my tears or know my pain, but I long ago accepted how thoroughly he knew me. The love from my heart poured out in the only kind of embrace I could give him.”

I have never forgotten that Lenten experience. Several years after that particular Lent, I became a chaplain, and now I am the mother of a 44 year old Jamie. I've lived the ups and downs of Jamie's life, and like most of us who are parents, have experienced both joy and sadness, pride and pain.

All of us, as chaplains, have sat with mothers and fathers experiencing both delight and despair. Perhaps, as chaplains, we see parents in times of suffering more than in times of joy. I recall long visits with emotionally broken and physically ill grandmothers who were responsible to care for their grandchildren when their moms or their dads were incarcerated or had died, often because of violence in their neighborhoods. Ministry for many of us has included staying close by to a mother screaming in the emergency room after learning that a tragic accident had happened to their child. I've stood with broken-hearted parents at the death of their beloved little 10 year old daughter after many years of walking the journey of cancer with her.

One night sitting several hours with a man who was waiting for his wife to be delivered of a still-born baby, his grief was palpable. He told me that he and his wife had a collection of footprints and locks of hair from several previous pregnancies where the babies didn't make it to live birth. The pain of his disappointment at not being a father and

his sadness for his wife who would, once again not have a chance to be a mother, was heartbreaking.

As much as a child can be loved, was Jesus loved by his mother, Mary. In their humanity, they experienced both life and death. Their gift is that they have tasted the separation and grief that every person in the world who has lost a loved one knows. And we, as chaplains, often without words, become one with those who have watched their children suffer and die.

Jesus became so completely one with all of us. His humanity was, is, and always will be one of God's most enduring blessings.

5. Simon Helps Jesus Carry his Cross.

Finding blessing through being forced in to help. Rick Bauer MM
(Artwork © Br. Mickey McGrath, OSFS)

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

because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

I see you, Jesus, crushed beneath the weight of the cross.

I see that you can't do it alone: At your moment of greatest need, you remain alone, without those who called themselves your friends. Judas betrayed you; Peter denied you; the others abandoned you. Yet suddenly there is an unexpected encounter with someone unknown, a mere passerby, who perhaps had only heard about you and not followed you.

Yet now here he is, at your side, shoulder to shoulder, to share your burden. We continually encounter new experiences and new people, sometimes by choice, sometimes not. In unexpected meetings, in accidental events, in strange surprises, there are hidden opportunities to love, to care, to serve, to be with the Lord on a journey to Calvary.



Prayer: Lord, help us to welcome opportunities to be Simon in our daily lives. In those times when we can help, let us have the generosity or at least a willing spirit. May we continue the spirit of Simon of Cyrene in our daily mission and work. May we have the humility to accept the Simons along our own roads who help us in our moments of need.

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Our memories of caring for those suffering.

Reflection not provided

7. Jesus Falls a Second Time.

Those challenged with Mental Illness. Rev. Kenneth Ekeke

This second fall of Jesus reminds us that the struggle for survival and mental health is real. The struggle to survive mental health issues is real. Mental health challenges are additional burden people go through in life. Yet as they struggle with these challenges, they often face with their families; worries, discrimination, stigmatization, and stereotype. As Chaplains, let us pause at this second fall of Jesus and reflect on how we have ignored or despised others because they are different from us or we do not carry their burdens, how we have shown apathy instead of empathy, indifference instead of compassion and understanding.

Let us pray

Lord, this second fall and the indifference of some people have made me question my indifference toward others. And to say sorry for the many times I have failed to show understanding in the struggle of others, particularly those challenged with mental health. At this hour of grace, fill me with your spirit to be in others' shoes and assist them, when necessary, in my ministry and journey. Amen.

8. Jesus Speaks to the women of Jerusalem.

The women in the life of Jesus.

Women in the life of Jesus
Women he loved and treasured.
Women he walked with
And ate with
And spoke with,
Those he taught
And who taught him.
Mary and Mary and Mary and Martha and Mary
and Salome and Joanna.
And, the nameless ones;
The enemy woman by the well,
And the one pleading for her children,
A poor woman in the temple,
And the mother-in-law,
Some with diseases that made people cringe
and pull away,
Some caught in sin like adultery,
Some the subject of stories;
finding a lost coin,
baking bread,
virgins with oil,
a persistent widow and the judge.

Women in the life of Jesus,
Some he sought.
Some sought him.
And some were imaginations in his mind,

The women in the life of Jesus.
He saw them.
He saw something different than most people
saw when they looked.
He saw the now of them, The essence of them.

And found them worthy;
Worthy of more than they had been given,
More than they knew of themselves.
And he expected more of them.

He connected with them,
Listened to them,
Called forth their strength,
Revealed to them their wisdom,
Found them beautiful,
Found them fountains of grace.
He saw past their exterior
And into their soul.

And the women responded,
Bloomed,
Glowed.
They found their dignity,
Their grace,
Their joy.
Soaking up his warmth,
Knowing his forgiveness,
Glowing in his acceptance,
Awed at what he had made them.

The hope inside
A sliver,
A spark,
Grew into a flickering flame
That pushed them,
Propelled them
To be his light.
And passion flowed from them,
Warming others,
Serving others,
Gifting others.

Their lives spent
Singing of him,
Of his power,
Of his love,
Of his gifts,
And of his glory.
And, in the end
They wept for him,
Walked with him,
Stood by him to his death.
They were the discoverers of his resurrection
And the first to tell of his glory.
And we remember them
And honor them
And learn from them.

9. Jesus Falls a Third Time.

Remembering those losing mobility and control. Heather Deneen

I met Ted (pseudonym) in the hospital. The Bismarck PD found him slumped over in his banged up car downtown at two in the morning. I got to know him over the course of his hospital stay. He has an absentee nephew handling his finances and no other family. He told me that he was the cook for the best diner in Garrison and how he would improve the hospital food. Before the visit ends, Ted asks me to go to the post office for him and pick up his mail. "I've got bills. I have to know my bank balance and I'm no debtor." I gently refuse him and end with a prayer, which Ted tells me it helps him "treat the nurses with respect."

This pattern goes on for about two weeks and on a visit, Ted tells me that “the doctors have told me I have dementia. I don’t have dementia! I was the main cook at the best diner in Garrison! I’ve gotta get outta here! I’ve got bills to pay! I’ve gotta get to the post office. Can you go to the post office for me?”

I gently reply “no, you know I can’t go to the post office for you,” and the pattern of our visits repeats as it had in the fifteen previous visits and ends in prayer. After the visit, I learned from the nurses that Ted has been approved for state guardianship, that his nephew has been unreachable for the last three weeks and Ted is no longer in need of the acute care the hospital provides. Ultimately, he ends up at a nursing home one hundred miles from where he lives, because the state determined Ted was incapable of making decisions due to Alzheimers. This once vibrant man, who was in charge of the kitchen in the best restaurant in the county, is no longer able to go to the post office by himself.

The loss of mobility and control was humiliating for Ted and meant gaining trust in God and others for everything (which gradually happens.) As it was for Jesus, who lost control and emptied himself the moment he was handed the cross.

We pray that those who are losing mobility and control trust as Jesus trusted You. Amen.

10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.

Abuse and Human Trafficking. Tina Margaret Balentine

Our outer garments say a lot about us...it may identify what we do for a living, our sense of fashion, who we support in sports, and maybe what makes us...US

Being stripped of our outer garments leaves us exposed, in all of our nakedness. We have nothing between ourselves and others...we are vulnerable in this nakedness...without protection, shield, or cover. Nothing to protect their faces, backs, stomachs from a fist, a slap, or a weapon. Nothing to shield from angry words meant to tear down dignity and bring shame. No thing to shield from being made to feel like an object of ridicule instead of a human being. Jesus, just as you suffered this indignity and form of heinous torture, remember those who are victims of human trafficking as well as those who are suffering the same physical, verbal and sexual abuse from family members, spouses and authority figures. Lord, be their shield, their protection, their cover...may they find sanctuary in you.

11. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

Racism and Racial Profiling. Linda Wainwright

Bishop Robert Barron commented on the violent demonstration during a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 by saying that “Racism is America’s original sin” (wordonfire.org).

Indeed, it is. Africans were sold to wealthy plantation owners who accumulated enormous wealth while subjecting them to horrendous abuse. Native American tribes were stripped of both their ancestral lands and their dignity through a forced migration known as the Trail of Tears. During the Great Depression, hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens with Mexican heritage were stripped of their citizenship and their homes when they were forcibly expelled from or coerced to leave the country. Throughout World War II, more than 100,000 innocent Japanese Americans lost their freedom when they were incarcerated in internment camps.

Societal structures were built to ensure that oppressed groups stay poor, unhealthy and without access to needed resources. Brutal acts, harsh and insulting language, crude and uncivil behavior robbed oppressed groups of their dignity and their hope. Everyone suffers from this.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.” All people are made in the image of God. Silence in the face of the evil of racism will continue to drive the nails of our sins into Jesus’ hands and feet.

Jesus Christ took all our sins, all our fears, all our shame, and nailed them to His cross to set us free. The freedom Jesus gives enables us to reach across what divides us to find brotherhood and sisterhood. We as Chaplains possess the skills to listen with holy curiosity to those who are different and struggle with the effects of racism, and then demonstrate compassion by a response of empathy as well as an action of advocacy.

At this 11th Station, Jesus asks us to remember and know His suffering—to touch the scars left on His hands and feet by the nails. Stripped of His clothes and His dignity, and hanging from a Roman instrument of shame and torture, He gazes upon each of us and asks us to see the faces of our brothers and sisters who daily are judged unfairly, condemned without being heard and understood, and stripped of their dignity.

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12. Jesus Dies on the Cross.

Violence in our society. Roxanne Miner

Jesus experienced the most brutal violence of his day, and we, too, live in a world profoundly broken by violence and marred by harms we inflict on each other. Violence is so imbedded in our culture, we have many names for it:

- Domestic violence
- Gun violence
- Workplace violence
- Racial violence
- Sexual violence
- Ecological violence
- Psychological and emotional violence
- Economic violence
- Spiritual violence
- Child abuse
- Abortion
- Elder abuse
- The list goes on and on.

As chaplains, we are not immune to the violence that surrounds us. Daily news reports of mass shootings, war in Ukraine, destruction of our environment, sexual exploitation, mistreatment of immigrants, and debt reduction at the expense of the poor and vulnerable-- inundate us to the point we risk becoming desensitized. We listen to stories of violence in encounters with our patients, their families, and our staff members. We walk alongside victims of violence in all the complexities of human suffering -in their pain, their shame, their grief and trauma, while they attempt to make meaning out of apparent meaninglessness.

But let us not forget, we are also prophets of Hope! Within our Christian theology we understand the connection between violence and redemption and the reality that grace exists in the midst of the darkest moments of our lives. Our task as chaplains is to bring hope and healing to those whose hearts and minds have been wounded by violence, so that they can come to know and feel the redeeming power of God's grace. For what Grace truly is, in its most radical form, is the incredible insistence on love amid fragmented, unraveled human lives.

13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.

Remembering First responders who care for those in need. Robert Englund

Those close to you witnessed the brutality of your death. With your lifeless body taken down a traumatized, grief stricken mother held you in her arms as the other women and men in the group encircled you physically and emotionally with tears and supportive love. Some pondered what to do next. The profound movement forward enveloping the divine mystery and plan not yet understood nor the revelation of what would follow. Lord, in our broken and chaotic world be present to guide and protect our First Responders in their uncertain movements forward. These our men and women firefighters, law enforcement officers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, Emergency Room doctors and nurses often attempting to do the best they can under stressful conditions, for wisdom and compassion in their duties (their words and actions) to protect, and care for those in need.

14. Jesus is laid in the Tomb.

Remembering those who are Grieving.

Reflection not provided

15. The Resurrection.

Hope Julie Scott

John 20:19-20: *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

When my mother Helen was dying from bone cancer, I did not want to leave her side. We were locked in the room of the valley of darkness. Her suffering was intense and caring for her exhausting. Her doctors said there was nothing more they could do. All hope for her recovery was lost. Where are you, God?

Pope Francis speaks of the mystery of the Redemption as rooted in the loving involvement of God with human suffering. Hope is always possible because in the Cross of Christ are concentrated all the suffering of the world:

- *physical suffering*, of which the Cross, that instrument of an infamous and shameful death, is the symbol.
- *psychological suffering*, expressed in the death of Jesus in the darkest solitude, abandonment, and betrayal.
- *moral suffering*, manifested in the commendation to death of one who is innocent.
- *spiritual suffering*, displayed in a desolation that seems like the very silence of God.

I believe that Mom's suffering united her with Jesus as she was nailed to her cross by bone cancer. As her daughter, it was both painful and peaceful to let go and let God. "Peace be with you, Mom." Jesus spoke these words first to his disciples after his resurrection. *After he said this, he showed them his hands and side*, proof of his suffering. First peace, then love, then hope. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw our risen Lord. They knew they were loved. There was certain hope for eternal life.

As Chaplains, we must personally bear witness to this radical hope to those suffering. "Peace be with you" takes on a whole new meaning to one who is suffering or fearful of pain and death. Chaplains, bear this Christian witness of hope to your patients, families, nurses, and physicians. Chaplains, we are called to accompany the sick, particularly in the critical and terminal stages of life. "Peace be with you" is at the center of our hearts. "Peace be with you" is letting go and letting God work through us. "Peace be with you" is our sacred call to repair wounds of desolation and open hearts to the luminous beams of hope.

Let us rejoice, Chaplains, as disciples of Christ. *The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.* Hope is alive.
He is risen! Alleluia.