

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR GRIEVING PARENTS

By Fr. David Convertino, OFM

Praised be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. He comforts us in all our sorrows and enables us to comfort those who are in need with the same consolation we have received from him. As grieving parents, we have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so through Christ do we share abundantly in His consolation.

Most High, Glorious God, enlighten the darkness of our hearts. Instill in us a faith that is unwavering, a hope that is secure, a love that is perfect, with sensitivity and knowledge so that we may accomplish your holy and true command.

PRAY THE STATIONS

1st Station - Jesus Is condemned to death



About Jesus:

He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth;
He was like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before
its shearers is silent.

The Station:

Pilate brings Jesus before the crowd, sentences Him to death, and then
washes his own hands, claiming that he could find no reason to condemn
Jesus.

My Reflection:

Lord, sometimes I feel like I have been condemned to death. I often feel like my life ended with my child's death. I also feel afflicted and overpowered. I may not open my mouth, not because of God's will, but because the grief is overwhelming and overpowering. I know you understand and are patient with me Lord, but help me be patient with those who are not patient with me.

2nd Station – Jesus Takes Up His Cross



About Jesus:

I have come not for the well but for the ill.

Lord, Jesus, have mercy on us and heal us.

The Station:

Tired from a night of questioning and torment, Jesus acts in obedience and love, taking up the heavy crossbeam, the weight of the wood and the weight of the world.

My Reflection:

Lord, help me to remember that you are no stranger to suffering.

Whether the burdens of this day are heavy with grief and pain or just wearying from trying to do the simple routines of each day. Help me, Lord, to remember that you are with me so that I may find in your presence some form of healing, comfort and peace.

3rd Station – Jesus Falls the First Time



About Jesus:

Though he was the Son of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, He emptied himself by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness becoming obedient, even to death, death on a cross.

The Station:

The weight of the Cross, combined with the beating and loss of blood He has endured, prove too much for Jesus and He falls hard under the weight of the Cross.

My Reflection:

I've fallen over and over again. Just when I feel that I can begin to move forward something happens that brings me down. Sometimes it feels like it's impossible to even get out of bed in the morning, but eventually I do. I don't know how, but I do.

Lord Jesus, you got up even under the weight of the Cross. Help me to get up even under the weight of my grief and pain.

4th Station – Jesus Meets His Mother



About Mary:

And your own soul a sword shall pierce that the thoughts of many may be revealed.

The Station:

As Jesus and Mary look at each other, each would spare the other the pain of this moment, but both know there is no turning back.

My Reflection:

A parent.....a mother or a father, it doesn't matter. To lose a child can only be understood by someone like me who has lost their baby, their teenager, their soldier, their son, their daughter..... their child. Mary understands. She has felt the searing pain, the deepest agony, the gnawing ache and emptiness. She understands how I can feel so powerless and lost and mournful. Loving Mary, Grieving Parent, open my eyes, my ears and my heart to healing and understanding.

5th Station – Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross



About Jesus:

Those who wish to follow me must take up their cross.

The Station:

They compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, to carry His Cross. It was Simon, a foreigner in Jerusalem, who was chosen to assist Jesus in carrying out the Father's will.

My Reflection:

There are so many people who have tried to help me and my family like Simon helped Jesus. But often unlike Jesus, I sometimes push them away. I know they are trying to help, but sometimes they say things that don't help, but instead can hurt because they don't have any idea what my life is like everyday. Often they are uncomfortable with my family and me and begin to stay away because of the awkwardness that they feel. Lord, forgive me when I push people away, and understand me when I don't even want to be around you. Let me be Lord, but always welcome me back into your arms.

6th Station – Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



About Jesus:

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.

The Station:

Moved by compassion, one woman steps from the crowd, removes her head covering and wipes the sweat and blood from the face of Jesus.

My Reflection:

Lord, Veronica embodied the spirit of compassion and care. She touched your face, and cared for you. Help me to care for the others in my life even when it is so difficult and painful to even move. It must have been so difficult for Veronica to break through the crowd, just as it is difficult for me to break through the pain. Lord Jesus, give me the strength of Veronica.

7th Station – Jesus Falls the Second Time



About Jesus:

But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

The Station:

Knowing that the end is near, Jesus falls again, increasing the pain and length of the journey.

My Reflection:

Lord, just when I feel I can stand up and begin to live the day, I fall into my grief again. Sometimes it's a paralyzing pain and sorrow, and I can't go on. Jesus, so many times I want to give up, but then I remember something - a memory, a poem, something my child said, or You Lord, and I rise up and begin again, like you did. Even though it still hurts, I can move and feel and maybe accomplish even one thing that day, and I know Lord, that it's okay.

8th Station – Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem



About Jesus:

Jesus knows He is fulfilling His mission. These women see what is before them: a man of sorrows.

The Station:

Jesus met a group of women and said to them, “Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children.”

My Reflection:

Lord, they saw you as “the man of sorrow.” Some see me as a woman or a man of sorrow too. They see me as totally overwhelmed by my grief and pain. That is true at times and yet there is also a hope that I feel and can pass on to others. Lord you know that I’m not always a person of sorrow. Lord, you know that sometimes I am a person of hope who can help other parents who are grieving by sharing my story and listening to theirs. Help me, Jesus, to be there when others need me, and thank you Lord for bringing them into my life.

9th Station – Jesus Falls the Third Time



About Jesus:

Jesus makes this journey willingly. He gives himself to others’ control because it is the Father’s will.

The Station:

The weight of the Cross overpowers Him, and combined with His loss of blood and the beatings, He falls again.

My Reflection:

Jesus, as we go through life, our dreams, expectations and abilities change. My life changed forever with the death of my child. Things will never be the same again. Even though I may begin to feel my life taking shape again, inevitably something happens and I fall, a third or fourth or fifth time.

10th Station – Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments



About Jesus:
And for my clothing they cast lots.....

The Station:
The soldiers administered one last humiliation and divided Jesus' garments among themselves.

My Reflection:
Lord, since my child died, sometimes I feel like I've been stripped bare of my emotions, my spirit and my life. When I lost my child my world collapsed and I felt stripped of everything. Help me Lord, to put my life's clothing back on – little by little.

11th Station – Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross



About Jesus:
Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

The Station:
And when they came to Golgotha, there they crucified Him, along with two criminals, one on His right and the other on His left.

My Reflection:
Lord Jesus, I'm nailed to my cross too. Everyday I can feel the nails of searing grief, deep sorrow and indescribable loss. Sometimes I scream out in pain and other times I'm silent in my grief. Lord, help me through the pain so I can discover the hope that is right before me.

12th Station – Jesus Dies On The Cross



About Jesus:

When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished."

With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The suffering of Jesus is over, His earthly mission completed.

The Station:

Jesus bows His head and dies. His earthly ministry is finished.

My Reflection:

Lord Jesus, like you, I know the sting of death, and yet you have given me the hope of eternal life for my child. Your suffering gives me hope, and your death gives my child and me new life. Lord I believe, help my unbelief.

13th Station – Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross



About Jesus:

He is dead. His life is over. Or is it?

The Station:

Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

But when the soldiers came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

My Reflection:

Only your Mother Mary knows what it feels like to hold a child after death has taken them.

Only she knows the terrible anguish of a parent who has lost a child. Only the Mother of Sorrows can share the feeling of hopeless grief and deep emptiness.

Like Rachel crying out for her children, am I.

14th Station – Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb



About Jesus:

Jesus, there was so much left for you to do. There is so much still to do. What can I do to help?

The Station:

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

My Reflection:

I have laid in the tomb of sorrows, imagined my child there, and cried tears of emptiness. Now I must look into the future. Jesus will rise again. Will I? Will I allow myself to be alive again? Will I allow myself to begin to move forward – never forgetting but not holding back? The tomb is not the end, but a different beginning. Can I really accept that? Can I look beyond the tomb to the resurrection of my child and of myself? Help me Lord, to know that the tomb is only a stop in life and not the end. It's hard to believe Lord – help me to believe and to live again.

15th Station – Jesus Is Raised From The Dead

About Jesus:

Jesus is raised from the dead by God the Almighty Father.

The Station:

The tomb is empty.

My Reflection & My Resurrection:

YOU WRITE THIS ONE.....IT BELONGS TO YOU!

The Stations of the Cross For Grieving Parents.

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