

Presider's Script for The Way of the Cross: A Scriptural Approach

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This is the presider's script for the Stations proclaimed on 16 April 2005 at Vineyard Prayer Night, Rockefeller Chapel, University of Chicago. The traditional Catholic order of Stations is maintained, but the script takes a very ecumenical and Christocentric approach. Each station begins with an appropriate piece of Scripture about the station (from a gospel or Isaiah), pause, then a prayer based on the station.

This version is designed for Christian public group services. The NRSV translation is included. There is a travel song; *Crucem Tuem* is used instead of the *Stabat Mater* to keep focus. Station 7 explicitly provides an opportunity for intentions. Station 12 takes part of the Good Friday reproaches as a responsorial psalm. There is also a simple two-page handout with a description, the procedure at each station, *Crucem Tuem*, station names and readings, and space to print a hymn for the end. *O Sons and Daughters*, a good Easter tune, was used. In terms of preparation, the script does not require anything more than a presider and a cantor (and one could get by without the cantor, since the songs are pretty simple).

Unlike many scripts, this concentrates on the path to Calvary, and watching Christ. The opening and stations 1 to 3 set us on the road. Stations 4 through 9 look at Christ through different eyes, as the prayer for 9 explicitly states: mother, stranger, comforter, sufferer, and mourner. The suffering of Christ is emphasized, through the use of Isaiah 53 in the three falls and through the presiders' prayers. Stations 10 through 15 get back to the trinity, concentrating again on the actions, death, waiting, and resurrection. There's nothing fancy here, what it's designed to be.

There is no prayer truly new under the sun. The words of this script are mine, but I've drawn inspiration from two major sources. They are the pamphlet "The Way of the Cross", Barton-Cotton Inc., 1965, and Cardinal Newman's Long Meditations, found at <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/stations.htm>. Feel free to use any portion of this text if you find it helpful. Except for the song (copyrighted by Taize), I do not have vainglory enough to worry about legalities or such.

Opening

Mark chapter 14, versus 32 to 36. They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'

Almighty Father, accept our prayer of thanksgiving for your beloved Son, our Savior and Lord. As we travel the road of his sacred Passion, we ask you to watch over us, that all we say or do may be in union with Him, Christ, our Redeemer.

The First Station. Jesus is Condemned to Death.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Mark chapter 14, verses 61 to 64. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven."' Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death.

<PAUSE>

Jesus, it was our sins, not the high priest or the Jews or Pilate, that condemned you to death. Help us, as we continue down this journey, to turn away from our failings, our transgressions, our offenses against you. Lead us on the way to eternity, and grant that we never cease to love you.

The Second Station. Jesus Takes Up His Cross.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

John, Chapter 19, verses 14 to 17. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. Pilate said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

<PAUSE>

Jesus, you gave yourself for us. As the prophet wrote, you were not rebellious. You did not turn back. You gave your back to those who struck you, your cheeks to those who pulled out your beard. You did not hide your face from insult and spitting. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice, for taking up your cross, for showing your love for us. Help us to understand the depths of your love.

The Third Station. Jesus Falls the First Time.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Isaiah, Chapter 53, verses 1 to 3. Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

<PAUSE>

Jesus, as you bore the cross for us, as you walked the lonely road to Golgotha, your humanity came through. Your limbs failed you, and you fell. Yet then, you rose and carried on. Lord, strengthen us in our humanity, that we can remain faithful to our baptismal promises. And when we do fall, help us to rise and carry on the road with you.

The Fourth Station. Jesus Meets His Mother.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

John, chapter 19, verses 25 to 27. Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

<PAUSE>

Jesus, you showed your love for Mary, your mother, caring for her, even while on the cross. And Mary, the mother of God, showed her devotion and love, with him to the end. Jesus, help us to show that compassion and love to our mothers and fathers, even to the end. And Mary, as you did for your son, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death.

The Fifth Station. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Mark, chapter 15, verses 20 to 22. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).

<PAUSE>

Even as Jesus struggled with the weight of the cross, assistance came to him through a stranger, a man from the fields. Simon, the outsider, by lifting the wood, helped bear the struggles of us all. Lord, grant us the clarity to see the needs of the stranger, so we might help bear struggles like Simon.

The Sixth Station. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Matthew, chapter 25, verses 37 to 40. Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

<PAUSE>

We know little about Veronica, save from tradition, and her one small act of compassion. She literally saw and touched the face of God. Lord, grant us the compassion to see the face of God in every human being, but particularly in the weakest and most vulnerable – the hungry, the thirsty, the prisoners, the sick. Help us to act like Veronica, caring for those in need.

The Seventh Station. Jesus falls the second time.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 4 to 6. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<PAUSE>

Lord, as the pain of the wounds and the wood increased, again your limbs failed you. Again you fell. We identify you with those who are suffering at this time, our intentions for which we pray.

Intention space

Remember our prayers, O Lord.

The Eighth Station. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Luke, chapter 23, verses 27 and 28. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

<PAUSE>

Beloved Jesus, with tears of pity the women of Jerusalem turned their eyes to you, broken, bruised, and beaten, along the road to Calvary. You reminded them not of your sacrifice, but of their pain, their struggle. Deepen our faith, we beg You, and let us weep; for our sisters and brothers suffering, our intentions, and for those in the world needing our compassion.

The Ninth Station. Jesus falls the third time.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 7 to 10. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him in infirmity.

<PAUSE>

Almighty God, you permitted your son to be weakened, broken, and crushed, so that he might rise from the dead freed from the ravages of sin. Along the road, we have looked at him through the eyes of the mother, the stranger, the comforter, the sufferer, and the mourner. As we complete his journey, grant us the wisdom from each view, that all the paths lead towards you, O Lord.

The Tenth Station. Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

John, chapter 19, verses 23 and 24. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'

<PAUSE>

Jesus, you endured the indignities of the priests and the people, condemnation, and the burden of the cross. Then came another, to be stripped, to stand fully exposed to the crowd, bleeding and bare. You took upon this shame at Calvary, so that we might be spared the shame at judgment. We thank you, Jesus, and ask you to help us remember the depths you travelled for us.

The Eleventh Station. Jesus is nailed to the cross.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Luke, chapter 23, verses 33 and 34. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'

<PAUSE>

They had pierced your hands and feet, Lord. Yet even then, you found the strength to forgive, even as the nails drove into your flesh. Grant us that forgiveness, Lord, when we sin, turn away, and pierce our relationship with you. Grant us that forgiveness, Lord.

The Twelveth Station. Jesus dies on the cross.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Luke, chapter 23, verses 44 to 46. It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

<PAUSE>

O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me, o answer me.

I led you from slavery to freedom, but you handed me over to the high priests. O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me, o answer me.

I bore you up with manna, but you struck me down and scourged me. O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me, o answer me.

I gave you a royal scepter, but you gave me a crown of thorns. O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me, o answer me.

I raised you to the height of majesty, but you have raised me high on a cross. O my people, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me, o answer me.

Holy is God! Holy and Strong! Holy immortal one, have mercy on us.
Amen.

The Thirteenth Station. The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Mark, chapter 15, verses 42 to 45. When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

<PAUSE>

Beloved Savior, you humbled yourself on the Cross, breaking your body, descending into death, so the the Father might restore all to you a hundred fold in the glorious resurrection. Help us, we beg you, to act like Joseph, to give generously of ourselves in service to you, while we await the day of the resurrection.

The Fourteenth Station. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

John, chapter 19, verses 39 to 42. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

<PAUSE>

Lie down and sleep in peace for a little while, dear Lord, and then wake for an everlasting reign. All our treasure, all our life, is lodged with you. When our turn comes to die, grant, sweet Lord, that we may sleep calmly too, the sleep of the just. And let us remember those with you now, in the kingdom, particularly Pope John Paul the second. Let your mercy shine upon them, Lord.

The Fifteenth Station. The Resurrection of Jesus.

We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the World.

Mark, chapter 16, verses 1 to 6. When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.

<PAUSE>

Song: O Sons and Daughters, verses 1 through 4.

Closing Prayer:

Christ, you arose from the tomb to the eternal throne, Heaven, the New Jerusalem. The river of the water of life flows through the holy city, and nothing accursed will be found there any more. You will reign forever and ever. Watch over us, that have travelled the road of your Passion, that all we say or do may be in union with you, Christ, our Redeemer.