

## THE FIFTEENTH STATION

### *The Resurrection*

**“On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their heads to the ground. But the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”**

**Luke 24.1-5**

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

At the heart of our faith is the belief that as Jesus rose from the dead, so shall we as his followers also rise from the dead. God in his great mercy revealed the strength and depth of his love for us that in the death of Jesus on the cross, the worst and greatest evil can be turned into new life. By his death and resurrection Jesus has showed us that the power of sin and death has been broken. “Oh death where is your sting, Oh grave your victory?”

*Lord strengthen this faith and hope in us all the days of our lives. Thank you for being a Saviour for each of us, for in your Father’s house there are many mansions. Increase our trust that you have gone before to prepare a place for us, and as you prepare a place for us, prepare us also for that happy place, that where you are, we may be also for ever more. AMEN.*

*Celebrant:* By your cross and precious Blood  
you have redeemed the world.

*All:* **Save us and help us we beseech you, O Lord.**

## THE VIA SACRA

### **Meditations for the SACRED WAY in the garden of Holy Trinity Church, Funchal**

Life is a pilgrimage for all of us, it is a Vale of Soul-Making when by God’s grace we can become the people he wants us to be. There are many turns and false alleys along the way. We make mistakes, but sometimes it is the mistakes and painful experiences that prove in the end to be most productive.

We have tried to create here in our garden a symbol of that journey of faith in the form of a winding path. We invite you to follow the Via Sacra, the Sacred Way, and as you do, to reflect on your own individual journey of faith, with all its joys and sorrows, its periods of darkness and doubt and fear, its failures and its dreams, its moments of exultation and glory. It is a journey all of us must make and in its end we will find eternal life.

Along the way you will be asked to follow the progress of Jesus from Pilate’s palace to his place of execution at Golgotha, and beyond this, to His Glorious resurrection on the third day.

#### **THE BEGINNING**

The journey begins at the Lady Chapel of the Church. You may care to light a candle as a symbol of your prayer for yourself at this moment and for those you hold most dear who share your journey with you.

*LORD, I am about to walk in prayer the Way of the Cross with you. May I travel with you firm in the faith, loyal to the truth, obedient to the will of the Father, along the one true path that leads to eternal life. Open my heart to the riches of our faith and my mind to its meaning. Amen*

## THE FIRST STATION

### *Jesus is condemned to death.*

The Chief priests and the guards cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate replied, "Take him yourselves and have him crucified, for I find no case against him."

John 19.6

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

This is a scene being played out in many countries even as you stand here now, torn apart as they are by war and bloodshed. Jerusalem is still divided and fear of the future clouds our vision. It was the same then. There were riots and marches and terrorists who sought to impose their will. Suddenly the shouts die down and there is hushed silence: Christ appears at the door of Pilate's court room – a man alone and condemned. Pressure groups have won the day. Jesus must die.

*Lord grant us the grace, not to condemn life but to affirm and respect it. Human life is sacred and no motive can justify its destruction. May we celebrate the dignity of every person to whom God has given the gift of life. May the gift of your Spirit lead us to recognise, across cultures and frontiers, the faces of our brothers and sisters, as all children of God, our Father in heaven. AMEN.*

*Dying you destroyed our death.  
Rising you restored our life.  
In you shall all be made alive.*

*Celebrant:* By your cross and precious Blood  
you have redeemed the world.

*All:* Save us and help us we beseech you, O Lord.

## THE FOURTEENTH STATION

### *Jesus is laid in the tomb.*

So Joseph took down the body of Jesus, wrapped him in a clean linen sheet and laid him in his own new tomb, that had been cut out of the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and left.

*Matthew 27.59-60*

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

The hill of Calvary is a symbol of liberation and hope. Each new ridge we conquer opens up new insights into the beauty of God. The summit is its prize: heaven, where the sun and scorching wind cannot touch us any more; where the Lamb will lead us to springs of living water; where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

*Lord as we lay our loved ones to rest let us remember that pain and suffering have no power over them. Give peace to all that mourn. Give strength to all who suffer and are near death and to those who must watch and wait by their crosses of pain. Lighten their burdens and give them faith to know that by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. AMEN*

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*All:* Save us and help us we beseech you, O Lord.

## THE THIRTEEN STATION

### *Jesus is taken down from the cross*

It was now evening and there arrived a wealthy man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and the governor ordered that the body be given to him.

Matthew 27.57-58

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

Joseph and Nicodemus took down the body of Jesus from the cross and placed it in his mother's arms. Mary gazed at the wounds in his hands and feet and side. Christ still bears these wounds in his risen and glorified body. They are the pledge of his powerful intercession on our behalf before the throne of God. The crucified Jesus is the only accurate picture of God that the world has ever seen. And the hands that hold in existence are pieced by unimaginable nails.

*Lord, we look on your wounded hands. We think of our own hands that could do so much more that is good. We look at your wounded feet which recall your journeys of mercy. We think of our own feet which have so often gone astray. We look at your wounded side that reveals a heart that was broken for love of us. May your wounds help us to live with more regard and sympathy for others. Grant us grace to love you with intensity and sincerity Grant us patience to bear our wounds and to use them for your glory. AMEN*

*Celebrant:* By your cross and precious Blood  
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*All:* Save us and help us we beseech you, O Lord.

## THE SECOND STATION

### *Jesus accepts his cross*

Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified. They took him in charge and bearing his own cross, Jesus went out of the city to what is called the place of the skull, in Hebrew. Golgotha.

John 19.16-17

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

"If any man has a mind to come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me." Jesus goes forward with great courage to do his Father's will in what lies before him. "Your will be done not mine." He accepted the cross to show us how precious we are in the sight of God. His grace can transform every cross we meet into a victory of love.

*LORD, Your Gospel does not promise that we will be spared from pain. Help us to understand that no matter how we try to escape the cross it remains a human reality, but your death and resurrection give it meaning. You did not resist the heavy load. Obediently you carried the cross without complaint. Keep us from bitterness and despair. Teach us come prayerfully, in poverty of spirit and with open hands. By your grace may we accept reality and to live with our crosses and with ourselves. AMEN.*

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## THE THIRD STATION

*Jesus falls the first time.*

Then Jesus said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains a single grain, but if it dies it produces much fruit.”

John 12.23-24

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

Jesus is now on his way to the hill of Calvary, Golgotha. The road is long, the road is uneven and the heat of the noonday sun is merciless. He arrived at the foot of the hill and began to climb. The way become more difficult, already weary from lack of sleep and the ill treatment he has received he grew ever more weak under the heavy burden and he stumbled and fell.

*LORD, your first fall is like the fall of a young person on the thresh-hold of adolescence. There are always so many challenges and temptations for the young. Give them courage and strength of purpose as they prepare for their future in the new century that will belong to them. Help us to protect them from the threat of drugs and alcohol. Help those who lead them to build an environment of love and trust where they can make the right decisions for their future. When the bitter reality of the world shatters their youthful idealism, give them grace to rise from their fall and try again. AMEN.*

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## THE TWELFTH STATION

*Jesus dies on the cross*

From midday darkness fell over the whole land until mid afternoon. At about three o'clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lamma Sabbachthani?” which means: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?...Then Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and gave up his spirit.

Matthew 27.45-46,50.

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

This is the Gospel passage that recalls the hour of supreme sacrifice. Love in all its beauty has reached a climax; the lover has given his life for the beloved.

*Lord Jesus, wounded healer and suffering servant, it is now our turn to bring help and healing to a broken world. You have no hands but ours, no faces but ours that you can show to our generation. With St Francis, we pray that you will give us the grace to encourage rather than depress, to bring love where there is hatred, hope where there is despair, joy where there is sadness, light where there is darkness. Let the aim of our lives be to bring comfort, to understand, to pardon and to love. AMEN.*

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## THE ELEVENTH STATION

### *Jesus is crucified*

People passing by shook their heads and insulted him, "Saying Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days. Now save yourself and come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God."

Matthew 27:39f

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

Our eyes almost refuse to look on this most appalling aspect of Christ's passion. Hammers are raised, blows descend and iron spikes tear their way through his flesh. His muscles spasm and stiffen. The crowd taunt him with accusations of madness, failure and folly, Jesus prays for his murderers: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

*LORD OUR GOD, we ask you to forgive us for the suffering we cause to others, for our lack of understanding and judgement, for nursing grudges, for keeping up resentments, for not admitting when we are wrong, for the bitterness and spite we feel towards others. AMEN.*

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## THE FOURTH STATION

### *Jesus meets his mother.*

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "See him; he will be for the rise and fall of the multitudes of Israel. He shall stand as a sign of contradiction while a sword will pierce your own soul."

Luke 2:34-35

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

A mother meets her son. Mary encountered Jesus. It is a soul-piercing experience. She is there at the right time, in the right place. She offers encouragement and sympathy, aware that her Son is fulfilling his Father's will.

*MARY you were a woman who knew the pain and hardness of the world. Your son gave you to us to be our mother. Gentle Mary, mothers are often torn between anguish and hope, baffled at seeing their children suffer, tempted to think that they have failed their family and that God has abandoned them. Give to women a calm vision of life. Where they suffer persecution and bullying, where their human rights are denied, give them courage and fortitude. May they be evangelists in the home and society, maintaining with the special grace given to them, life and love. Mary gentle guide, Mother of the Church, protect the gift of innocence in today's youth. Take them by the hand and lead them back to Jesus your Son. Queen of peace, be with us now and in the hour of our death. AMEN.*

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## THE FIFTH STATION

*Simon Jesus carry his cross.*

When they led Jesus away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the fields, and laid the cross on him, to carry it behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26

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

The cross has become too heavy for Jesus. A passer-by is forced to help lighten the burden. Christ accepts gratefully. Christ needed Simon. That small gesture of charity would never be forgotten, and his sons Rufus and Alexander became believers.

*LORD, Sometimes we find it burdensome to involve ourselves with people. Teach us that the essence of Christianity is love; that every person is our neighbour. Help us to see your presence in all people. Give us, O Lord, the grace and purpose to break through barriers of hatred; to plant seeds of love and forgiveness in barren places; to build bridges that will unite and us spiritually. Help us to recognise you especially in the poor, the sick and the elderly. May we do the menial tasks that no one else will take on. Make us humble enough to accept help from others. Thank you, Lord, for the good neighbours and friends who bring us sunshine laughter and love. AMEN.*

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## THE TENTH STATION

*Jesus is stripped of his clothing.*

When the soldiers crucified Jesus they divided his clothing into four parts, one for each of them. But as the tunic was woven in one piece from top to bottom, they said, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots to decide who will get it." This fulfilled the words of Scripture: They divided my clothing among them; they cast lots for my garment.

John 19:23-24

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

Jesus is stripped not just of his cloak but of his dignity, his respect and his rights. Stripped and naked our Saviour our Saviour waits patiently for what is to come. He is a poor man and the poor always must wait. His nakedness challenges our affluent society with its false standards and shallow values.

*LORD, you know the loneliness of the empty chair, the parting with loved ones, the going away of children. Lord help us when sickness seems to strip away our protections and nails us to a bed of pain. Strengthen us when all the supports we have in life, family health possessions, are taken away and we stand raw and bleeding because these things have been so much a part of us, Lord let us remember this moment of your passion and be consoled. AMEN.*

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## THE NINTH STATION

*Jesus falls the third time.*

How long shall the wicked, O Lord, how long shall the wicked exult? Pouring out words of arrogance, evildoers make a show of their insolence. They crush your people, O Lord, they oppress your inheritance. They murder the widow and the lonely, they massacre the helpless. Psalm 94.3-6

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

It is difficult to be old in an uncaring world where many feel the aged have nothing to contribute. This stations gives hope to the old, to the depressed and to those who have given up on life. Christ is near the end of the road and is completely drained of strength. This time it is more difficult to rise. "In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. Look on my right hand and see - there is no-one who takes notice of me, no refuge remains to me, no one cares for me." Psalm 142 3-4. But Jesus did get up and struggled on.

*Bring to the sick your comfort and healing. Be to the old and bedridden their stay and companion. Teach patient tolerance to all that are no longer young, as well as to those who care for them. Give to the dying the peace you won for them as you struggled on and the assurance that when the final moments of life ebb away you will come again and take them to yourself. AMEN.*

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## THE SIXTH STATION

*Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.*

He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows familiar with grief, a man from whom people hide their face, spurned and considered of no account. Yet ours were the sorrows he bore, ours were the sufferings he endured.

Isaiah 53.3-4.

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

A woman stepped from the crowd. Gently but courageously, Veronica wiped the face of Jesus. She braved threats, verbal abuse and even violence. In gratitude, Jesus signs by his sweat the towel with the imprint of his face.

*LORD, fear often makes us run away from demanding situations. Give us the strength to question the attitudes of the company we are in and the fashions of the times, and test them by the standards of the life and teaching of Jesus. Give us courage to resist the desire foolishly to follow the crowd. Help us to speak out when Christian values are at stake. Give us the courage to follow our own consciences no matter what others may think or say. Keep us faithful to your teaching and grant us the grace to accept the difficulties which come from standing alone. AMEN.*

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## THE SEVENTH STATION

### *Jesus falls the second time*

How long, O Lord, will you forget me and hide your face from me? How long must I suffer pain in my soul and grief in my heart all the day long? How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Psalm 13.2-3

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

We could compare the second fall of Jesus to the trials and stresses of middle age. Jesus' strength ebbed away and he struggled up the hill of Calvary. He stumbled and fell for the second time. But just as Jesus got up and struggled on, so we also are challenged to begin again each time we fall. Amen.

*LORD, when we are drained and discouraged from continual frustrations and setbacks, give us the strength to accept ourselves with humble patience. We are not a failure because we fall. When life seems to crumble and we imagine that we are useless and unimportant, help us to pick ourselves up. Listen to our cry of brokenness and confusion; help us to rise with dignity and begin anew. When we find it difficult to forgive ourselves or others help us to know that all of us are accepted by you and that our cry of repentance is never rejected. Let us pass this supreme hope on to others. AMEN.*

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## THE EIGHTH STATION

### *Jesus speaks to the women and children*

A large crowd of people followed him; among them were women beating their breasts and wailing for him, but Jesus turned to them and said, "Women of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, weep rather for yourselves and your children."

Luke 23.27-28

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

Along the Way of the Cross, there were women who wept in pity. Jesus accepted their compassion but warned, "Weep first for yourselves and your children." He foresaw the sad things to come; the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish State. People would choose to reject the Saviour and the healing power of God's forgiveness.

*GOD OF MERCY AND COMPASSION, teach us that even if our hearts condemn us you do not come to reject us, but to reveal yourself as the God of immense tenderness and unparalleled gentleness. In your providence, all things co-operate for good; even, in a mysterious way, our sins. You gave us Jesus to be our Brother and Saviour. May there be joy and celebration when Christ welcomes us back home. May he embrace us in the Sacrament of his Mercy and welcome us to the Table of the Eucharist. AMEN.*

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