

Walking the Way of the Cross with St. Joseph

Introduction

Minister: While Our Lady walked the Way of the Cross, close to her Son on the road to Calvary, St. Joseph, you had to have a “heaven’s eye” view of the mystery of the Passion of Christ. We invite you now, as Universal Patron of the Church, to reflect with us on this Way of the Cross. May we honor you, O faithful and righteous St. Joseph as we seek to pray, as it were through your eyes, your heart and holy soul. All heaven was in awe of Christ’s saving sacrifice, so we unite ourselves with those in the Kingdom, adoring the One who died for us!

First Station Jesus is Condemned to Death

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Then they brought Jesus to the praetorium. They did not enter there in order not to be defiled, so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said, “What charge do you bring against this man?” They answered, “If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.” At this, Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.*

Reader 2: My Son stood before Pilate as an innocent man. It was not enough that I was unable to prepare a better birthplace for him. He grew up in obscurity in Nazareth working with me as a carpenter. They always judged him: he was just the son of a carpenter. Even when he began his public ministry the religious leaders did not accept him. Finally, even his own followers abandoned him. I faithfully obeyed God, as my Son was always obedient to me – I prepared Him for faithful obedience to the mission entrusted to Him by His heavenly Father. Innocent of any wrongdoing, I never imagined I would have to experience seeing my Son unjustly condemned to death.

Minister: See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him – so marred was his look beyond that of the sons of man – so shall he startle many nations, and because of him kings shall stand speechless.

All: St. Joseph, your innocent Son was condemned to death because of fear and pride. Over the centuries, so many innocent people have been mistreated, condemned, and killed. How many times have we preferred success to truth, our reputations to justice? Strengthen the quiet voice of our conscience; just as you heard the voice of the Father, help us to hear his voice in our lives. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Second Station Jesus Carries His Cross

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Pilate brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge's bench in the place called the Stone pavement. It was preparation day for the Passover. He said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!" They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" They answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed Him over to be crucified.*

Reader 2: As a carpenter in Nazareth, I taught Him how to work with wood. Now my Son was forced to carry the cross on which he would be nailed and executed. At each step it cut deeply into his battered body. I couldn't believe he could manage even a few steps. We can look back now and remember that this is all for us. Each of us can say it was "for me." As we imagine each step Jesus took, we can pause now to say "thank you" deep in our hearts.

Minister: He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, and we held him in no esteem.

All: Good St. Joseph, your Son willingly subjected Himself to mockery and scorn. Help us to resist the temptation to look down on the weak and suffering. Help us to acknowledge the face of Jesus in the lowly and outcast. Help us to follow the path of love and, in submitting to its demands, to find true joy. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Third Station Jesus Falls the First Time

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *It was our infirmities he bore, our sufferings he endured, while we thought of Him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole and by his stripes we were healed.*

Reader 2: To see my Son fall under the weight of that cross was unbearable. Words cannot express how helpless I felt – I am his father – I was entrusted to protect my son. Everything within me wanted to make them stop, but there was nothing I could do.

All: St. Joseph, you know the weight of wood. Your Son fell to the ground under the weight of our sin, the weight of our pride. You came to Him when He was a child and picked Him up. Help us to understand that you are there to pick us up when we fall. Help us to abandon our pride and, by learning from your humility, help us to rise again. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Mother

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, smitten for the sin of the people, a grave was assigned to him among the wicked, though he had done no wrong or spoken any falsehood.*

Reader 2: Mary pushed through the crowds to be as close to our Son as possible. We'd felt so helpless and overwhelmed when we lost Him in Jerusalem. Tears welled up in my eyes as she saw Him now. I wish I could pick Him up into my arms as I did when we found Him in the Temple.

Minister: O St. Joseph, foster-father of the Lord, you remained faithful when the disciples fled. Just as you believed your dreams' incredible messages – that you were to protect and defend the Son of God – so too you believed at the hour of His greatest suffering. In this way, at the hour of the world's darkest night, you became the foster-father of all believers and Patron of the Church.

All: St. Joseph, we ask you to teach us to believe as you did, that our faith may bear fruit in courageous service and be the sign of a love always ready to share suffering and offer help. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*
 Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.

Fifth Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry His Cross

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *As they went out, they came upon a man named Simon. This man was forced to carry the cross for Jesus. Jesus had told his disciples, "If any man wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

Reader 2: My Son must have been exhausted to simply not be able to carry the cross any further alone. I was so relieved that He was getting help at the time, even though my heart went out to Simon who was forced to join Jesus in his painful journey.

Minister: When the gospel writer says that Simon was "forced" into service, he uses the same word Jesus used when he taught, "And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." As Simon travels into Jerusalem, he is forced to turn around and carry the cross towards Calvary.

All: St. Joseph, prudent and brave, help us to aid our neighbors in need, even when it interferes with our own plans. Help us to realize the grace of sharing the cross of others and, in this way, to know that we are walking with Jesus along the way. As we share in His suffering and the sufferings of the world, may we become servants of salvation and like you, help to build up the Church. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*
 Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.

Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." Don't hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off or forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

Reader 2: I can't describe His face, with the blood and the sweat, and the bruises and swelling from the beatings. As a father, the protective role I had, it was painful to see my Son's face so battered. I wanted so much to help Him, protect Him. Then, out of the crowd came a woman whose compassion for my Son was so great that she pushed past the Roman soldiers and wiped his face with her veil. His clean face, for a moment, revealed the loving face of the Son I knew.

Minister: As He smiled at the woman and continued on the journey, those who were nearby looked at her veil and saw the gift He had given her. There on her veil was a stunning likeness, a true icon of the cost of His sacrifice and the depth of His love.

All: St. Joseph, guardian of women and the vulnerable, pray that we may have a heart like yours. Keep us from the blindness which sees only the surface of things. May we have the purity of heart which allows us to recognize the face of Christ. When we are not able to accomplish great things, may we have courage, born of humility & goodness. Impress your Son's face on our hearts. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Seventh Station

Jesus Falls the Second Time

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath. He has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has blocked my way with stones and has made my paths crooked. He has made my teeth grind on gravel and made me cower in ashes.*

Reader 2: When I saw my Son fall the second time, my heart sank. He just crumbled to the ground. I wanted to run and wrap my arms around Him to protect and shield Him, but I was helpless. Just as I unconditionally accepted Mary, my Son has unconditionally accepted His cross.

Minister: St. Joseph, comfort of the troubled, help us carry our burdens & the weight that makes us fall. Lift us up, for by ourselves we cannot rise from the dust. In place of hearts of stone, may we have hearts like yours, hearts of flesh, capable of seeing, capable of resisting the forces of evil.

All: Help us to recognize the spiritual and material needs of others, and to give them the help they need. Lift us up, so that we may lift others up. Intercede for us, so that we may hope at every moment of darkness, so that we may bring hope to the world. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Eighth Station

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,” and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”*

Reader 2: As I continued to watch my Son walk the road to Calvary, I noticed a group of women weeping. I saw my Son suddenly stop in front of them. With all His pain and suffering He stopped to comfort them and gives them a special mission. Soon they would understand that this suffering they witnessed so closely was for them. My heart was overwhelmed, full of love and pride.

Minister: St. Joseph, noble son of the house of David, your Son spoke words of repentance to the weeping women. On the Day of Judgment, when all of us will stand before Christ our Just Judge, speak words of mercy for us. Help us to understand the call of Christ. You are the role model of our responsibility; help us to understand the danger of being found guilty and without excuse at our own moment of judgment.

All: St. Joseph, by your example help us in our conversion to new life, that in the end we will not be dry wood, but living branches united with the true Vine, bearing fruit for eternal life. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when he has it laid on him; let him put his mouth in the dust – there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.*

Reader 2: This final fall was by far the worst. It was too much to bear. I saw him there on the ground and thought he was dead, his arms and face sprawled in the dirt. I am His father who was entrusted to protect and care for Him. If I could just pick Him up and tend to Him but I cannot.

Minister: St. Joseph, our Church often seems like a boat about to sink, a boat taking water in on every side. When we fall, help us to lift ourselves up as your Son did.

All: St. Joseph, do not let us be dragged down into the earth. Help us to rise again. Plead for the Church and ask that Christ might sanctify us all. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Skull Place), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall. When he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.*

Reader 2: The sword passed through my heart again as my Son is completely stripped of any pride. I remember looking at His body that was once so beautiful, now wounded and bleeding, exposed and vulnerable, no shield or security to protect Him.

Minister: St. Joseph, lover of poverty, you provided for the needs of the Holy Family; yet your Son was stripped of His garments, exposed to shame, cast out of society. He took upon Himself the shamed of Adam and healed it. He takes upon Himself the sufferings and needs of the poor, the outcasts, and all the sin of our world. And in this very way He fulfills the words of the prophets.

All: St. Joseph, help us realize that our Father holds us and the whole world in His hands. Give us a profound respect for humanity at every stage of our existence, and in all the situations in which we encounter our brothers and sisters. Clothe us in the light of grace. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Over his head they put the charge against him, which read: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right hand and one on his left. The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. If he is the King, let him come down now from the Cross & we will believe in him."*

Reader 2: As I see my Son, arms outstretched on the cross, the sound of hammer on nail makes me shudder. I remember pulling the first of many splinters from his fingers as He worked with me. The precious hands that healed so many, now with nails thrust through their flesh. Still, He offers love, understanding and forgiveness to the good thief. He is forever wise, caring and sympathetic.

Minister: Jesus was nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of His body and dignity, allowing Himself to be nailed fast; he did not try to escape or lessen the suffering.

All: St. Joseph, help us to remain faithful to the Cross. Lord, grant us perseverance that we may never stop seeking you. Help us to be "bound" to You, that we may discover true freedom.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Twelfth Station Jesus Dies on the Cross

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the Cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.*

Reader 2: I watched my Son struggle to breathe, pulling Himself up to get air in His lungs. I recalled the risk of Herod's murderous plan, when I was ready to lay down my life to protect my bride, just as my Son lay down his life for His Bride, the Church. He gave Himself into God's hands one last time, took His last breath & died. It is unforgettable to witness the death of one you love.

Minister: St. Joseph, patron of a happy death, at the hour of Jesus' death the sun was darkened. Even now our actions nail Him to the Cross. At this present hour of history we are living with much darkness. Through Christ's great sufferings and the wickedness of many, the face of God seems obscured, unrecognizable. And yet, on the Cross, Christ revealed God's great love for us. From the Cross on high the living Word triumphed.

All: St. Joseph, help us to recognize God's grace at this hour of darkness and tribulation. At the moment of our death, help us to receive salvation in Christ. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Thirteenth Station Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.*

Reader 2: It seemed like forever before my Son's body was removed from the cross, and I watched them lay Him in a tomb. I never imagined when He left for His ministry that it would come to this. My heart was broken; however, I trusted, as always, in God's promise.

Minister: Joseph, you were there in spirit when your Son's body was wrapped in a shroud. Faith has not wholly died; the sun has not fully set. In an hour of darkness, help us to know God lives. Do not abandon us when we're tempted to lose heart. Give us the fidelity to fight times of loss with a love able to embrace suffering, like your beloved wife Mary, who holds Jesus to her heart.

All: St. Joseph, help us, poor and rich, simple and learned, to look beyond our fears and prejudices and to offer our abilities, our hearts and our time, and thus prepare for the Resurrection. Amen.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Fourteenth Station Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Minister: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

All: Because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader 1: *Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb. A great stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb, and he departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were still there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

Reader 2: No parent should ever have to bury a child. The pain and grief are overwhelming. Yet, I have always done as the angel of the Lord commanded, called to be faithful even when I do not understand. Now I watch my Son being placed in the tomb, faithful to the will of the Father, even unto death.

Minister: St. Joseph, faithful guardian of Christ, in His burial He took on death, and became the lifeless grain of wheat which produces abundant fruit for every age and for all eternity. The eternal Word, through His Incarnation and death, has become a Word which is close to us. He has put Himself into our hands and into our heart, so that His Word may grow within us and bear fruit.

All: St. Joseph, foster-father of our Salvation, through your intercession may we become nourishment for others, and make known in this world Christ's saving life.

Song of Meditation: *Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom.*

Concluding prayer

Minister: O God, who in your inexpressible providence were pleased to choose St. Joseph as spouse of the most holy Mother of your Son, grant, we pray, that we, who revere him as our protector on earth, may be worthy of his heavenly intercession. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

