

# **An all age “stations of the cross”**

## **St.Margaret of Antioch Leigh-on-Sea.**

The Stations of the Cross follow the last steps of the journey of Jesus from his trial in front of Pontius Pilate to his Crucifixion and burial in the tomb. They have been used by Christians of all ages as a means of following Jesus, allowing him to speak to us and our world in our own day. We reflect on his sacrifice and prayer for us and for everyone in all places and ages.

You will find them in many churches around the inside walls, and often outside in the gardens too. They can be used for prayer individually or followed as a journey alone or together.

We are very fortunate to have at St.Margaret's a very large and beautiful set of stations around the side aisle walls. They were made in the 1930's at St.Peter's Convent in Kilburn London. It was a revered and much loved Anglican women's community committed to the care of the poor and needy, especially children and their parents, in the middle of the Great Depression of the 1930's, through the Second World War and beyond. Let us hope they continue to inspire us to likewise pray for and care for our community as Jesus calls us to do.

*The Revd Fr.David Wylie Royal Navy  
Vicar of St.Margarets and former Curate of St.Augustines Kilburn*

*Holy Week 2020.*

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

### **Opening prayer:**

Dear Jesus, open our minds and hearts for a short time to journey with you that you may speak to us and teach us. Help us to know that hearing your call we will lose nothing that matters and may gain everything that does. Amen.

## First Station. Jesus is Condemned to death by Pilate



Every day in the world people are condemned; for being the wrong colour, race, religion, age or sex. Someone who is just different is condemned by being left out, ignored or joked about. They just don't fit in. Jesus didn't fit in. He upset the powerful; religious leaders and political, and so he is scapegoated and condemned to die on a cross.

### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us those times we have condemned you in others through our silence and indifference. Help us to love and welcome all as you did. Teach how to follow you.

## Second Station. Jesus carries the cross.



All around us people carry burdens. Some we know – perhaps our parents or brothers and sisters, our friends – physical and mental burdens. Others seem a long way off injustice or threat of war and hunger elsewhere in our world and country. It's easy to shut off – we have enough burdens and worries of our own, just as some in the crowd watched the burden of the cross dropped onto Jesus's shoulders and then left perhaps to do some shopping.

### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for the times we have walked away from the burdens of others, help us not to be deaf and blind to their pain. Teach us how to follow you

### Third Station – Jesus falls the first time.



It's embarrassing when we fall flat on our faces in front of others. The dumb word or action that's our fault or not being shut out for no fault of our own – the wrong accent or clothes. Jesus fell flat in front of the soldiers, in front of people who had believed in him, in front of his mother who still did. He was here because he took risks for others and now falling under the cross is his reward. What must he have felt?

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for the times we have shut others out and refused to help. Help us to look beyond ourselves to be aware of their needs. Teach us to follow you.

### Fourth Station Jesus meets His mother.



Most parents and guardians expect much of us – they want us to succeed. Good marks, grades, reports careers, families and more. That we choose what is right and we want them to think the best of us even when we now we have not chosen right. Mary wanted the best for Jesus and now grieves as he carries a criminals cross. Did she ever doubt her love or support?

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Forgive us those times we have resented those who truly care for us, help us to become ourselves and be grateful for their love and support.

### Fifth Station Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus



Sometimes at school, work or church we are forced to sit next to an outsider – not someone we would choose! We are thinking about ourselves not them. “Do I really want to be seen with them?” Poor Simon – a foreigner, already different in the crowd, and now he is picked on to help a “criminal” carry his cross. He would feel watched and looked at, more concerned for the crowd he would return to, than the plight of Jesus under the cross.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for the times we have hurt others by not caring about they feel. Show us true compassion. Teach us how to follow you.

### Sixth Station. Veronica wipes Jesus' Face.



Sometimes a person stands out from the crowd and shows them up for what they are. They might be joking drinking laughing and a brave voice says “that isn’t right” and refuses to play their game. Veronica bucked the crowd. Her sympathy overcame fear. She wipes the blood and sweat from Jesus’s face; he matters more than the crowd and consequences for her.

#### **Silence.**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us the times we have laughed at those who stood out from the crowd to do right. Give us like courage. Teach us how to follow you.



### Seventh Station. Jesus falls again



Failure can be unbearable, none of us wants it. What will our family and friends think? That is our concern as well as concern for self. Sometimes though others fail us let us down – even those we thought loved us. That is doubly hard. What did Jesus think? Where were his friends would no-one step forward? He is more and more alone.

#### **Silence.**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for those times we have failed to be there for others when they needed us and thank you for sharing our aloneness when we feel abandoned. Teach us to follow you.

### Eight Station – The women weep for Jesus.



Sometimes crowd mentality takes over. Things we would never do by ourselves seem okay – the gang speak creeps up on us all. The women in the crowd are caught up in the hysteria of the crowd it calls for weeping so they weep – but know not who or what they are weeping for. Jesus calls it out – fake tears. “Cry not for me but for Jerusalem your world and the evil being done” – follow your hearts not the crowd.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for when we have followed the crowd and fashion. Help us to connect with what is right, what we really think and feel. Teach us to follow you.

### Ninth Station - Jesus falls for the third time.



To be ridiculed once is bad enough but again and again is too much. In our world there are repeat victims of such treatment they just fall for it again and again and we can help make it happen. Jesus fell three times with the cross on his shoulders. What about all those onlookers – he helped lots of them but not one stepped forward. Were they frightened of the crowd, the soldiers or just felt “he wasn’t worth it” he wasn’t one of them? Let him fall.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for the times we ridicule others, help us to be people to raise up others not crush them. Teach us how to follow you.

### Tenth Station – Jesus is Stripped.

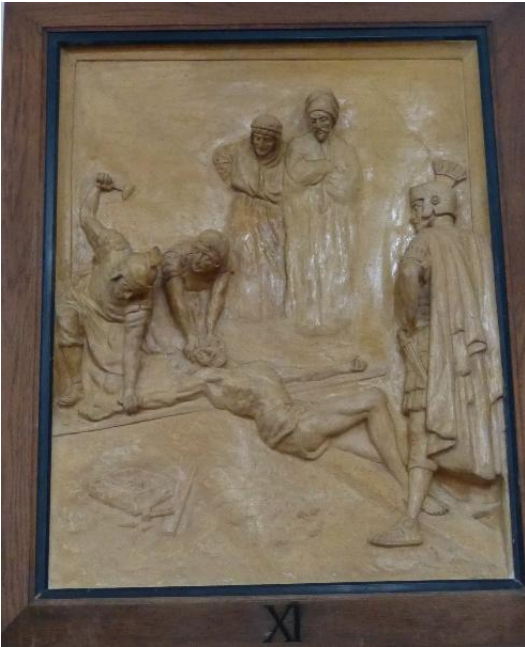


Clothes are a big deal. The right ones can cost – sometimes more than we or our family can really afford. Looking right is so important in our perfect picture world. We judge by outside things. Jesus was stripped of his clothing in front of a whole crowd of people. He stood without the comfort and dignity of clothes – stripped of his dignity like a criminal. What did he feel?

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus, forgive us for the times we have cared for the way people look than who they are. Help us never to value things more than people and their needs. Teach us how to follow you.

### Eleventh Station – Jesus is nailed to the cross.



Sometimes we do things that are ugly and wrong. We say and do things we know in our hearts are wrong – sometimes after the heat of the moment. Jesus was the victim of anger and jealousy. He had stirred up the people. He had said and done different things. “Remove the log from your own eye before seeking the splinter in someone else’s”, “forgive your enemies” and “it’s what comes out of a person that makes them unclean not what they eat”. He accepted all people equally and now was paying the price. Innocent the crowd egged them on he is nailed to the cross.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us for the times we have “nailed others to the cross” because they challenged accepted and wrong ways of speaking and doing. Help us to love and value others as you did. Teach us to follow you.

### Twelfth Station – Jesus dies on the cross.



We all think about dying sometimes. For some when things seem to go very wrong in school relationships work and life. Perhaps we feel trapped in a bad place and death can seem easier than life. Jesus says “I come that you may have life in all its abundance”. Yet now the end is near for him and still he prays for us and draws us to choose life real life – “father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing” Was he really so unselfish praying for others as he died?

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us the times we quit too easily because things are hard or thinking of ourselves help us to share with you and those we trust that we may find the unselfish courage you show. Teach how to follow you.



### **Thirteenth Station – Jesus is taken down from the cross.**



Sometimes we recognise a lost cause; the team that is going nowhere, a friendship broken beyond repair. We don't want to be part of a lost cause. But what if we are? Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus because he was afraid of the leaders, finally came forward to do the right thing for his body. A wealthy man he takes charge of the body of a "criminal". Perhaps he was ashamed of waiting so long but did something right at the end.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us the times we walk away from painful situations and from people in them. Give us courage to act on our beliefs, no matter how afraid we might be. Teach us to follow you.

### **Fourteenth Station – Jesus is placed in the tomb.**



"Work hard and you'll get results" we are told. We don't expect blame or punishment for doing our best. Jesus spent his life preaching, healing helping others especially "outcasts". He promised good things to those who followed him. Now it's a graphic reality dead from the cross, seemingly nothing good at all. Sorrow failure and abandonment seem better words.

#### **Silence**

**Prayer.** Jesus forgive us those times we have measured our success by the applause of others than the eyes of God. Helps us to see beyond the surface with faith. Teach us how to follow you.

Often Christians will now gather around an altar where we celebrate communion or the mass. The table or altar reminds us of a tomb Jesus's tomb – but the tomb is empty for Jesus is risen. He defeats death and faces the worst the world can offer with the best that God can offer – himself in love. He lives in heaven he lives in you and me. Alleluia He is risen he is risen indeed alleluia.

#### ***An Easter prayer.***

***Jesus we know your story did not end in the tomb on Good Friday. Your "failure" is turned to victory on Easter morning when we see that love is stronger than hate and your light stronger than any darkness. Give us courage to follow you through the realities of life confident in the power and promise of God's love in your name. Amen***