



Teleza, Malawi

SCIAF **Stations of the Cross** **Lent 2022**

Written by Fr. Stephen Reilly





Teleza and her daughter Martha, Malawi

To those leading the stations

The Stations of the Cross have long been a feature of the Church's devotional life, especially during the season of Lent. When used in a parish setting, these Stations may be a preparation for daily Mass or may follow immediately afterwards. As always, they may also be used in private prayer.

This year's Stations are written by Fr. Stephen Reilly, Co-ordinator of Spiritual and Pastoral Formation at the University of Glasgow. We are incredibly grateful to Fr. Stephen for the time and continued dedication he shows to SCIAF.

We are sure you will find this year's Stations to be powerful and moving.

Opening reflection

The Stations of the Cross offer us an engaging and powerful opportunity to enter into the Passion and death of Jesus, as we re-tell in art, prayer and devotion the central act of God's love for us.

The Gospels relate insistently that Jesus' Passion was the fulfilment of all the promises made to God's holy people: to Abraham and Isaac, to Rachel and her children, to Job and his family. It also represented the culmination of Jesus' ministry, concentrating into a few hours every teaching, gesture and attitude of Jesus, fulfilling his own predictions and promises. Therefore, fulfilment will be the uniting theme of these reflections.

Opening prayer

We pray in a special way for the people of Malawi, known as the warm heart of Africa, and the focus of this year's SCIAF WEE BOX appeal. May the renowned hospitality and faith of this proud nation – which rejoices in its historical and present connections to Scotland – bring its citizens abundant blessings.

As Malawi is an economically fragile nation affected disproportionately by climate change, during these Stations we pray also for our environment and recognise our responsibilities to God's beautiful creation.

**God our Father,
your eternal Son became one of us,
to share our human nature in all its
joys and pains,
and to fulfil every promise you
made to your people.
Help us to trust in your
faithfulness,
and to understand that you never
abandon those whom you love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord,
Amen.**

First Station

Jesus is condemned to death

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you." (John 8: 10-11)

When Jesus looked with compassion on the woman caught in adultery, wishing to spare her shame and pain, he forgave rather than condemned. Here Pilate condemns him without pity.

Lord Jesus, in your ministry you showed us the way of mercy, compassion and tenderness, forgiving even those who condemned you to death. May we open ourselves to your gift of pardon, and forgive others in our turn.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Second Station

Jesus accepts his cross

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac." (Genesis 22: 6)

As Abraham climbed Mount Moriah he laid the wood of sacrifice on his beloved son Isaac, fearing the consequences, yet trusting in God. As Jesus sets out with the wood of the cross on his shoulders, he is obedient to his Father to the end.

Lord Jesus, help us to trust in the Father even when we do not see his loving will in our own trials. Help us to draw strength from your trust and obedience.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Third Station

Jesus falls the first time

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"On coming to the house, the Wise Men saw the child with his mother Mary, and they fell to their knees and worshiped him" (Matthew 2: 11)

At his birth, the Wise Men fell to their knees before the divine Jesus, yet here it is Jesus who falls down. He has emptied himself completely, not grasping his dignity and equality with God, but kneeling with all who are broken in the dust.

Lord Jesus, teach us the gift of solidarity with all who are the poorest and most broken, including our suffering planet, not looking down from our privileged perch but owning and sharing our own poverty.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Fourth Station

Jesus meets his mother**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble." (Luke 1: 52)

In the house of her cousin Elizabeth, inspired by the life growing within her, Mary sang of God who lifts up the lowly. She is now the instrument of God, lifting up her son Jesus, giving him hope through her motherly care.

Lord Jesus, you lifted up many wounded people throughout your ministry, giving them hope and purpose, but in your hour of need you also needed to be lifted up. Help us to both give and receive tenderness and compassion.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Fifth Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them." (Matthew 23:4)

In his confrontation with the Pharisees and Scribes, Jesus criticised their imposition of law without mercy. In Simon he discovers the simple goodness and kindness of a stranger, helping him to shoulder the load.

Lord Jesus, give us the courage and decency to see the needs of others and to respond with generosity, not standing by with apathy or hostility, but helping a sister or brother on life's road.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Sixth Station

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." (Luke 2:7)

Jesus' birth and death see him wrapped tenderly in cloth: to be laid in the manger and to be laid in the tomb. Veronica gently wraps his face here, to cover his shame for an instant and to provide some comfort in the midst of sorrow.

Lord Jesus, you revealed that we will be judged on whether we have clothed the naked, and responded to others in their need. Give all Christians warm hearts, which will make us the heirs to Veronica's kindness today.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Seventh Station

Jesus falls the second time**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around Paul, and he fell to the ground." (Acts 9: 3-4)

On the road to Damascus, St Paul fell down before the might of God's presence, so overwhelming was God's glory. The same glory and power of God resides in Jesus, yet he is the one who falls, renouncing everything in order to suffer for us.

Lord Jesus, you emptied yourself for our sake. Give us the grace to take the path of humility, not clinging to possessions, status or comfort, but sharing them generously with present companions and future generations.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted." (Matthew 2: 18)

The tears of the women of Jerusalem mingle with those of the mothers of Nazareth at the loss of the Holy Innocents, with those of Rachel weeping for her children, and with mothers down the ages. Jesus notices, consoles, encourages and heals.

Lord Jesus, comfort us and all those who fret for their children. Give us a hope deeper and wider than mighty Lake Malawi, irrigating the spirits of the poorest and drying the tears of all who weep.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Ninth Station

Jesus falls the third time

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." (Philippians 2: 10)

In his Letter to the people of Philippi, St Paul marvels that the same Jesus who was brought so low on the way to the cross was raised up and exalted by the Father, so that now it is we who should bend our knees before his very name.

Lord Jesus, your holy name is our most precious word, a name to be breathed in our most intimate prayers, a name to sing and shout in praise, a name to accompany our dying breath. May we always treasure it.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his clothing

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." (Job 1:21)

In his anguish and loss, Job maintained his trust in the God of his ancestors, considering his possessions and even his clothes as a gift to be returned. Here Jesus shows the same detachment, shedding everything to embrace the cross.

Lord Jesus, we jealously guard and hoard so much while others starve and shiver and the earth's resources deplete. Everything we have comes from God: may we give with as much generosity as we have received.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Eleventh Station

Jesus is crucified

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"James and John asked Jesus, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.' Jesus said, 'You don't know what you are asking.'" (Mark 10: 35-38)

As he enters the painful moment of glory on the cross, Jesus does indeed offer a place at his right and left, but not the thrones dreamt of by James and John: rather the throne of the cross by which the Good Thief enters into the glory of Paradise.

Lord Jesus, you allowed others to suffer alongside you on the cross, a suffering which brought redemption. Allow us to share in your Passion, to make up what is lacking in your body for the salvation of the world.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the cross**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." (Mark 9:31)

An awareness of the probability of his death was a constant companion of Jesus as he walked the dusty roads of Palestine, as he taught and healed. Still, he continued his ministry, full of hope, encouragement and obedience to the Father's will: his trust would not prove to be in vain.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all who have to live with a life-limiting illness or a serious diagnosis. Raise their spirits, that they may be our inspiration as they speak from a place of authenticity and hope.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Thirteenth Station

Jesus is taken down from the cross**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"As he approached the town of Nain, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." (Luke 7: 11)

The death of the young man from Nain and the sorrow of his widowed mother foreshadows the mourning of Mary over her dead son as he in turn is carried out for burial.

Lord Jesus, as you once comforted a widowed mother and raised her son, so through your Resurrection transform the pain of all who mourn into a dance of eternal joy.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb**Leader:**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Leader:

"A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how." (Mark 4: 26-27)

As Jesus is laid in the rock-cut tomb at sunset, darkness begins to fall. Yet a seed has been placed deep in the heart of the earth, growing silently under the watchful eye of God, ready to sprout and burst forth as the sun begins to rise.

Lord Jesus, tend the quiet but insistent seeds of trust which you have placed in us. Like the sun rising on the beautiful flag of Malawi, full of optimism and hope for the future, may we be the Easter heralds of your Kingdom which will never end.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Concluding Prayer

God our Father,
in Jesus Christ your Son, you fulfilled the promises made to our fathers and mothers in the faith.
Help us to wait in silent hope with a multitude of witnesses: with Abraham, Rachel, Job, Mary, the Wise Men, with the widowed mother of Nain, and all who have placed their trust in you in every age.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis:

**Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be**



Tamala walks home with her family, Malawi

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me
what you will.**

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

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