



SCI AF

Uniting to end poverty
Caritas Scotland

**“Children, our love
must be not just
words or mere talk,
but something active
and genuine.”**

— 1 John 3:18

SCI AF STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR LENT 2020

Written by Fr Stephen Reilly



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 Glasgow University. This is the third year Fr Stephen has dedicated his time to writing this resource for SCIAF, for which we are extremely grateful. We are sure you will find this year's Stations to be powerful and moving.



>

OPENING REFLECTION

A key message of Pope Francis in his papacy has been the importance of tenderness, indeed in a talk in 2017 he called for 'a revolution of tenderness'. He recently told a meeting of religious, "Tenderness is a word that today risks being removed from the dictionary! We must reclaim it and put it into practice once more. Christianity without tenderness does not work. It is the 'marrow' of our encounter with people who are suffering."

The Stations of the Cross invite us to enter with tenderness into the sufferings of Jesus, so that our stony hearts can be softened, allowing us to become aware of the needs of those around us and respond with generosity. The Cross, the Pope tells us, is in fact "the seal of divine tenderness, which is drawn from the wounds of the Lord."

In our prayer together today/tonight, let us learn tenderness anew from Mary's patient motherly presence, Veronica's small act of kindness, and the tears of the women of Jerusalem, as we accompany the Lord to his crucifixion.

>

OPENING PRAYER

God our Father,
 your Son showed tenderness and
 compassion
 throughout his ministry, and
 attentiveness to the needs of all:
 to the widow at Nain, bereft at the loss
 of her only son,
 to the centurion fretting for a beloved
 servant,
 to Martha and Mary mourning their
 brother.
 As we walk the way of the cross, let us
 learn from him.
 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.*

*"No one takes [my life] from me; I lay
 it down of my own free will, as it is in
 my power to lay it down, so it is in my
 power to take it up again." John 10:18*

In being condemned to death
 by Pilate, Jesus seems entirely
 powerless, at the mercy of events
 and Roman might. But St John
 reports that Jesus is in charge of his
 destiny, and that Pilate is an unwitting
 accomplice in God's saving plan. God
 can indeed write straight with crooked
 lines.

Lord Jesus, be close to those who
 seem to have received a death
 sentence, through poverty or a
 terminal diagnosis. Help them to see
 that your hidden providential plan is at
 work.

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.

*"He was humbled yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross."
(Philippians 1:8)*

Many have commented on the symbolic shape of the cross, which is rooted in the earth but reaches to the heavens, which stretches the Lord's arms to embrace all of humanity. We too can enter that embrace and keep our eyes fixed on the paradise which awaits us.

Lord Jesus, help us to learn the lessons of the cross, that we be both rooted in our family and community, and yearn for our true homeland in the world to come.

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.

"The stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone for people to stumble over." (1 Peter 2:8)

Here we see Jesus trip and fall to the ground. His sufferings would become a stumbling block to many which they could not overcome: how could the Son of God be so weak? Yet God made this obedient servant the corner stone of a Temple which will never be destroyed.

Lord Jesus, help us to avoid building our hopes and dreams on the shifting sands which this passing world offers, but rather see in you a rock on which we can build a house of love.

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.

"I was like someone who lifts an infant to close against his cheek, stooping down to him I gave him his food" (Hosea 11:4)

To see a mother with her baby is to see a study in attentiveness and patience. Time seems to slow down: to hurry would only bring frustration. In this meeting of mother and son, Mary and Jesus, a few intense moments snatched in the midst of chaos sum up their inseparable love, and seem to be a snapshot of eternity itself.

Lord Jesus, you made us for eternity. May we be fully present to those golden moments of love, romance or friendship, when we seem to touch eternity in our very midst.

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.

"They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross." (Mark 15: 21)

Simon was from Cyrene, a town in North Africa. We know his sons became Christian, and so we can see in Simon the first African disciple, destined to be followed by a countless procession of others, from St Monica and St Augustine to the martyrs of Uganda, from the deserts of the Sahel to the rainforest of Congo and the Great Rift Valley. Praise God for such a gift!

Lord Jesus, we bless you for the gift of the young churches of Africa, the green shoots of joy which are now blooming at the very heart of the Church.

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.

*"He is the image of the unseen God."
(Colossians 1:15)*

Of the countless representations of the Lord Jesus in the history of Christian art, from the wall frescos of the catacombs, to the icons of the eastern monasteries, to the masterpieces of the Renaissance, this is the first, a simple image of Jesus' face left on Veronica's cloth.

Lord Jesus, you are the image of the unseen God, and you reveal that we too are God's work of art. Help us to resemble you more and more each day.

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.

*"Anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck."
(Matthew 18:6)*

Jesus is weighed down by fatigue and the weight of his cross, and falls, as if a great millstone had been on his shoulders, like the one he said would be preferable to being a scandal to his little ones. Yet his love never exploits, and indeed the great and the small alike can come to him to relieve their own burdens, as he is gentle and humble in heart.

Lord Jesus, you show us the way to love, with selflessness, integrity, and gentleness. Heal those whose innocent hearts have been bruised, and give them rest.

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.

Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children." (Luke 23: 27-28)

How typical of Jesus' selflessness that he asks not for the women's tears for himself. Their tearful solidarity with the suffering can instead be directed down the ages, even to their sisters of today whose rights are violated in a sometimes cruel world.

Lord Jesus, the psalmist wrote of God, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle" (Psalm 56:8). Gather up the tears of those who weep, that they may one day bathe in an eternal ocean of healing.

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.

"[There is] a time for throwing stones away, a time for gathering them up." (Ecclesiastes 3:5)

Jesus was never one to cast stones, indeed he refused to condemn and punish a so-called 'fallen woman'. Instead he picked her up and set her on the path to righteousness and freedom. Here, as he rises from the ground one final time, he who is without sin raises up all who are fallen.

Lord Jesus, you bid us be witnesses of God's mercy, not throwing stones but gathering them up to build God's kingdom.

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.

"I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these." (Matthew 6:29)

Do not worry about your life, Jesus had said. God clothes the flowers of the field with beauty greater than Solomon in his royal garments, how much more beautiful is the clothing he has given you? Here Jesus, stripped in humiliation, is clothed in the shining robes of the Word made flesh.

Lord Jesus, we know that these weak mortal bodies of ours are God's gift to us, made to shine with your risen glory when we rise again. Help us to treat our bodies, and those of others, with the dignity befitting the children of God.

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.

"The Son of man must be lifted up." (John 3:14)

One of the most emotional moments of our church year is the veneration of the cross on Good Friday. The sight of young and old, even babies, coming to tenderly kiss the bare cross or the feet of figure of Jesus, is profoundly moving. We join a procession of tenderness for the crucified Lord which began with Mary, Simon and Veronica, and which will continue to the end of the world.

Lord Jesus, you said that if we showed compassion to the littlest of your brothers and sisters we showed it to you. Give us the grace to allow the tenderness of our Good Friday devotion flow outwards into our daily actions and attitudes.

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.

"To the disciple he said, this is your Mother. And from that moment, the disciple made a place for [Mary] in his home." (John 19:27)

At the Last Supper, Jesus' disciples moved from being servants to friends, and on the cross from friends to brothers, blood brothers bonded eternally through the Lord's saving death. John is the first brother, as he becomes the son of Mary in a single household. We too are Jesus' brothers and sisters, washed in his blood in Baptism, members of the holy household of the Church.

Lord Jesus, you made us your family in a Church which is called to be an icon of the unity of all humanity. Guide us to work for the peace and harmony for which you died.

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 AND PLACED IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last." (Mark 15:36)

Anyone who has emptied the house of a loved one who has died knows the pain of this sacred duty. Familiar, beloved pictures and books are taken down from walls and shelves, and placed tenderly in boxes, as memories crowd in. Here, the Lord's precious body is taken down lovingly from the cross by his family, to find its resting place in the tomb.

Lord Jesus, help us to remember that pain is often the price of true love. Comfort all who have lost a loved one and mourn their absence.

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.

"Why look among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here." (Luke 24:5)

There is such a sense of finality here, as Jesus' body is wrapped for burial, and the stone is rolled to seal the tomb. But our God is God of surprises, whose creativity is never quenched, for whom there are no dead ends, but who always opens before us the horizon of the future and its possibilities.

Lord Jesus, at your Resurrection your Father broke the finality of death by the power of the Holy Spirit. Remind us daily that we are an Easter people, a people of a hope which no one can ever take from us.

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,
your Son's passion and death
was a triumph of the power of
tenderness over harshness.
Soften our stony hearts, through
prayer, tears and suffering,
that we may witness to your infinite
tenderness and mercy to those in
most need of it.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For the intentions of our Holy Father
Pope Francis:

**Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be**



Big change



Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official overseas aid and development charity of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family.

7 West Nile Street, Glasgow, G1 2PR Tel: 0141 354 5555.

Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327.

Photos: Angela Catlin