

A DOMESTIC STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A Guide to A Domestic Stations of the Cross

In this version of the Stations of the Cross you will find some suggested objects to gather as an aid to reflection, the readings from the Scriptures for each Station, some comments on the text and some questions you may want to use to go deeper into the experience.

Because the Stations are most often undertaken individually they are a guide that fits well with our time of isolation.

The Stations take us through an intense story. You may want to experience a few of these stations every day of Holy Week or you may want, as in some traditions, to do them all on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

We invite you to take this journey at your own pace, dipping in and out of this material in whatever ways feel right to you in the moment.

Be gentle with yourself. Holy Week is an intense time every year and this year even more so. Thank strength in the knowledge that God is with us in these moments, and we are with each other and thousands of people across the world in spirit as we reflect and pray this Easter.

The Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a traditional Christian devotion that follows, in a symbolic way, invites Christians to remember and meditate on Jesus' last hours on earth.

The Stations can be traced back to at least the 15th century when pilgrims walked the *Via Dolorosa* (Latin for "Sorrowful Way") the route in the Old City of Jerusalem, believed to be the path that Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion.

There are traditionally 14 'stations,' usually small artworks or icons corresponding to readings from the passion story of the gospels. Each participant becomes a pilgrim as they walk between the stations reflecting on and entering into the events of those final hours.

Earlier traditions of The Stations included non-scriptural traditions such as Veronica wiping the face of Jesus. The version followed here does away with the non-Scriptural traditions of the older Stations. This version, the Scriptural Way of the Cross was introduced in 1991 by Pope John Paul II.

A Domestic Stations of the Cross

This Easter, few of us will be able to visit established Stations of the Cross (they are often permanently set up in the gardens of monasteries and on the walls of churches) so we will need to do a different kind of pilgrimage.

If, along with millions of Christians throughout the world and throughout time, you would like to pray the Stations of the Cross this Holy Week, this guide offers suggestions. In this Domestic Stations of the Cross, you are invited to use ordinary things from around your home to create a Stations of the Cross to experience alone or with those with whom you live.

Hopefully you will find all of our Station 'art works' around your home. Why not gather them together before you begin?

You could sit and do all the Stations in one place or you could place the 14 items around your living space and undertake a domestic pilgrimage as you move between each Station.

Things you will need

To use this guide in your devotions, you will need the following:

A Bible

1 – A clear glass or jar filled with water

2 – A sharp knife

3 – A Bible or other book.
String or ribbon

4 – A small bowl. Cooking oil

5 – Kitchen tongs

6 – An extension cord or power cord for any powered device

7 – Heavy pan or pot

8 – Screwdriver or can opener

9 – Flashlight/torch

10 – A mirror

11 – Something given to you by another

12 – A seed (mustard, tomato, pumpkin, something from the garden)

13 – Something broken (a vegetable, flower stem, stick, piece of paper etc. you have broken in half)

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The Stations

Station one — Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Look at the jar or glass filled with water. Spend some time paying attention to the play of light. Look through the glass and the water and see how the world appears changed.

Read: Matthew 26:36-41

Jesus knows that his constant clashes with the authorities and his popularity with the people will soon mean the hammer will fall. He prays honestly and truthfully; if there is a way of escape, he wants it. But Jesus knows he must face his future friendless and alone. He sees the world from a different perspective

What is my honest and truthful prayer? What must I face?

Station two — Jesus is Betrayed by Judas and Arrested

Look at the knife. See its sharpness and its danger.

Read: Mark 14: 43-46

The forces of power and control are now arrayed against Jesus and, with at the sign of a kiss, usually meant to signify friendship, Jesus is violently cut off from his community. He is betrayed and he is alone.

From what or whom have I been cut off?

Station three — Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin

Tie the Bible or book closed with string or ribbon. Look at it and feel the strangeness of a text that can't be accessed.

Read: Luke 22: 66-71

Those who should, in this of all moments, be embracing and extending the love and life of God to all are spending their time controlling and manipulating Jesus.

When have I experienced rejection?

Station four — Jesus is Denied by Peter

Put a small amount of cooking oil in the bowl or cup. Dip your fingers in it and then rub your fingers together. What are you noticing about how slippery they are?

Read: Matthew 26: 69-75

Not long before, Peter was crowing about how he would never abandon Jesus. Now things have slipped away.

When have I experienced my resolve and sense of conviction slipping away from me? What pressures was I feeling then?

Station five — Jesus is Judged by Pontius Pilate

Pick something up with the tongs. Experience the distance between you and the item.

Read: Mark 15: 1-5, 15

Each authority dealing with Jesus passes the buck, unwilling to take responsibility for the situation.

When have I been tempted to pass the buck and avoid responsibility for justice?

Station six — Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

Hold the power cord. Feel its potential.

Read: John 19: 1-3

Jesus is tortured. The powerful use their powers against him and abuse their power to make an example of him.

When have I been the powerless? When have I been the powerful?

Station seven — Jesus Bears the Cross

Hold the heavy pan or pot for as long as you can. Feel the weight of it. Notice how you struggle to keep holding it up.

Read: John 19: 6, 15-17

Jesus's final condemnation comes from everywhere. With everyone calling out for blood and nowhere else to turn, Jesus begins his final journey to the place of death.

What is weighing me down?

Station eight — Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

Look at the screwdriver or can opener without touching it. Next move it so you can see it from different angles. Consider its potential as a tool for forcing things open and a tool for building things up. See its potential for force. See its potential to help.

Read: Mark 15:21

No one in this story is safe from the voracious grasp of power. Everything and everyone is pressed into the relentless drive to 'get it done' no matter the cost.

When am I the driver, forcing things, ignoring the needs and desires of others? When am I feeling driven and without the power to resist?

Station nine — Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Leave the flashlight/torch off to begin with. Think about its potential for illumination and all that that offers. Switch the flashlight/torch on and illuminate something.

Read: Luke 23: 27-31

Jesus tells the women in this story, some of the most vulnerable and powerless people of his culture, that the world is going to become very dark for them and their children. He does not shy away from truth however painful and shocking.

What hard truths am I avoiding? Can I have the courage to face those truths?

Station ten — Jesus is Crucified

Approach the mirror from the side so that you can see other things rather than yourself reflected in it. How do they look to you? Slowly move until you can see your reflection. Spend some time examining you face.

Read: Luke 23: 33-34

Jesus is in physical and emotional agony in his final moments and it is in these moments that he calls out to God for forgiveness for those who are in the act of destroying him.

Where in my life do I need forgiveness? What hurts or resentments do I need to let go of?

Station eleven — Jesus makes a promise to a thief

Look at the item that was a gift to you. Remember the person who gave it to you. Recall the circumstances of the gift. Ask yourself what it means to you.

Read: Luke 23: 39-43

Even in the midst of his agony Jesus does not abandon what he knows to be true. The original paradise of communion with God is being restored and the one dying with him will be welcomed.

When do I lose my grasp of the deep reality that my life is a gift? When do I close down and refuse entry to this truth to interacting with them judgementally instead of openly?

Station twelve — Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

Hold the seed in your hand and imagine the plant hidden with it. Imagine the steps required for that potential plant to be realised.

Read: John 19: 25-27

Even at the moment when everything is over and the dream is crushed, the new community of love and care is being created. In the midst of death: resilience.

Where can I see new moments of community in the midst of dissolution? Where am I connected?

Station thirteen — Jesus Dies on the Cross

Look at your broken thing. What value does it now have? What might it have been if not broken?

Read: Luke 23: 44-46

In the final moment, when Jesus' world was broken and torn apart, he knew his spirit — the essence of who he always was and would ever be — belonged in God.

I sit quietly with the truth that my essential self lives in the depth and breadth of God.

Station fourteen — Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Take your broken thing and put it where you will see it between now and Easter Morning.

Read: Matthew 27: 57-60

Jesus's shattered friends do what they can. They place his body in a tomb on the eve of the Sabbath (when no work can be done) and wait...

I must wait. In hope, in despair, in emptiness. I must wait.