

First Station: Jesus in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

Jesus said, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus struggling and wrestling in prayer.
What did it cost him to pray so honestly?

Are there things in your life you'd like to be spared?

Can you join Jesus' prayer 'thy will be done'?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you entered the garden of fear
and faced the agony of your impending death:
be with those who share that agony
and face death unwillingly this day.

You shared our fear and knew the weakness of our humanity:
give strength and hope to the dispirited and despairing.
To you, Jesus, who sweated blood, be honour and glory
with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen.

Second Station: Jesus betrayed by Judas and arrested

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' So when he came, he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus' experience of Judas' kiss.

Have you ever been betrayed, or been a betrayer?

Do we pin all the blame on Judas, or is he a part of us?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed by the kiss of a friend:
be with those who are betrayed and slandered and falsely accused.
You knew the experience of having your love thrown back
in your face for mere silver:
be with families which are torn apart by mistrust or temptation.
To you, Jesus, who offered your face to your betrayer,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Third Station: Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

The high priest stood up and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven".' Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?' All of them condemned him as deserving death.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus experiencing all this wrath and condemnation.

Who is Jesus to you?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were the victim of religious bigotry:
be with those who are persecuted by small-minded authority.
You faced the condemnation of fearful hearts:
deepen the understanding of those who shut themselves off
from the experience and wisdom of others.
To you, Jesus, unjustly judged victim,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Fourth Station: Peter denies Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

The cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus hearing Peter's denial, and Peter's tears when he knew what he had done.

Have you denied Jesus in word or deed?

Seek his grace, forgiveness and restoration.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as Peter betrayed you,
you experienced the double agony of love
rejected and friendship denied:
be with those who know no friends and are rejected by society.

You understood the fear within Peter:
help us to understand the anxieties of those who
fear for their future.

To you, Jesus, who gazed with sadness at your lost friend,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Fifth Station: Jesus judged by Pilate

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus experiencing rejection and violence.

Do you ever 'go with the crowd'?

What's the cost of seeking the truth rather than convenience?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency:
be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of
the powerful.

You were the victim of unbridled injustice:
change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters
to your way of peace.

To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Sixth Station: Jesus scourged and crowned with thorns

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus' experiencing mockery and bullying.

Do you ever tease or belittle others?

What kind of King is Jesus to you?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you faced the torment of barbaric punishment and mocking tongue:

be with those who cry out in physical agony and emotional distress.

You endured unbearable abuse:

be with those who face torture and mockery in our world today.

To you, Jesus, the King crowned with thorns,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever.

Amen.

Seventh Station: Jesus carries the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus receiving the burden of the cross.

What burdens are you carrying in your life?

Can Jesus help you with your load?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough streets of Jerusalem:
be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength.
You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross:
help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love for us.
To you, Jesus, bearing a cross not your own,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Eighth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Reflection

Meditate on Simon's experience of receiving the cross.

Is anyone helping you with life's burdens now?

Is there anyone whose load you could share?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue:
be with those from whom life drains all energy.
You needed the help of a passing stranger:
give us the humility to receive aid from others.
To you, Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in need of help,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Ninth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

There were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed." Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us"; and to the hills, "Cover us."

Reflection

Meditate on the women's encounter with Jesus.

Where are women grieving and assaulted right now?

Could someone's suffering stir your tears this day?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you:
move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.
You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the 'city of peace':
bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound peace.
To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept for the city of peace,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Tenth Station: Jesus is crucified

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus stripped and nailed to the cross.

Ponder the cross – do you see love or pain, or both?

Who is sharing Christ's Cross this day?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you bled in pain as the nails were driven into your flesh:
transform through the mystery of your love
the pain of those who suffer.

To you, Jesus, our crucified Lord,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Eleventh Station: Jesus promises paradise to the penitent thief

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

Reflection

Meditate on the encounter between Jesus and the thieves.

Can you join the penitent's prayer? Can you hear Jesus' voice?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, even in your deepest agony
you listened to the crucified thief:
hear us as we unburden to you our deepest fears.
You spoke words of love in your hour of death:
help us to speak words of life to a dying world.
To you, Jesus, who offer hope to the hopeless,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.
Amen.

Twelfth Station: Jesus on the cross; his mother and his friend

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Reflection

Meditate on Mary and John's encounter with Jesus.

Who might be your 'mother'; who your 'child'.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed with you
to the bitter end,
yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them:
be with all broken families today
and care for those who long for companionship.
You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes:
give us a love for one another
that is stronger even than the fear of death.
To you, Jesus, loving in the face of death,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Reflection

Meditate on Jesus in that dark place of forsakenness.
Have you ever been there? Jesus is with you.
Can you pray for someone in that place right now?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree of shame,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Bible Passage

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Reflection

Meditate on Joseph's final kindness for his dead friend.

Where are the tombs (literal and figurative) where we bury our loves and hopes?

Could the tomb become a womb?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us:
be with those who feel worthless and as nothing in the world's eyes.
You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from sight:
be with all who suffer and die in secret,
hidden from the eyes of the world.
To you, Jesus, your rigid body imprisoned in a tomb,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.
Amen.

Why do we call this Friday 'Good'?

It's a strange phrase, isn't it: 'Good Friday'.

What's good about a day of pain, grief and death?

Why not call it 'Long Friday', or maybe 'Sad Friday', as others do?

Well, English Christians name the day 'Good Friday' because good came out of it. God did a good thing. God brought goodness into our lives.

Jesus showed the full extent of his love.

Jesus gave himself to overcome evil and death.

Jesus offered us a new way of life, our sins forgiven.

Jesus showed that the power of love is greater than hatred, violence and rage.

If that's true, it's what we call 'Gospel' – 'Good News', from the first Good Friday.

What did Jesus do on the Cross?

It can be hard to understand how Jesus' dying changes things.

Christians have described it in various ways:

Jesus shows amazing love, which inspires us to love him.

Jesus' death reveals how real evil can be, then he triumphs over it when he rises again.

Jesus' blood is sacrificed as a 'blood transfusion' to give us life.

In Jesus, God takes upon himself the penalty for our sins, so that we can be set free.

What did Jesus do on the Cross?

It can be expressed many ways, and still there's more to say. Here are some thoughts about the cross from children of St Michael's School:

'Jesus died and sacrificed himself on the cross for us. Jesus forgave us when he died on the cross for us, for all we have done wrong.'

'The cross represents Jesus dying for the world and then all the sin is gone.'

'The cross where Jesus died brings light back into the world after all the darkness of sin and bad things that were put into the world by us, humans.'

'Although it was a sad time when Jesus died he took away all our sins and gave us hope for a better world.'

First Station: The empty tomb

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Bible Reading

Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

Reflection

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

What does the empty tomb provoke – fear, hope, shock?

Have you buried anything in your heart which needs opening up to the life of God?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for in your resurrection the power of love breaks open the earth and frees life from death.

As the angel rolled away the stone from the prison of the tomb, so release those imprisoned by life's misfortunes.

To you, Lord Jesus,

whose life brings surprises beyond our wildest expectations, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

Second Station: Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Bible Reading

Jesus said to Mary, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' He said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!'

Reflection

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

What tears do you carry today, in your heart, or memory?

Could Jesus be calling you by name, as he did to Mary?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for the love which drew Mary Magdalene to your tomb to weep over your death.

As you broke into her grief with your death-shattering life, so reach into our broken hearts with your promise of hope.

To you, Lord Jesus, reaching into the deepest tombs of our despair, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

Third Station: Jesus reveals himself to Thomas

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Bible Reading

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Reflection

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

Do you come today with faith, or doubt, or both?

Can you join in Thomas' praise of Jesus 'Lord and God'?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you come to us even in our doubting.

Through the sovereign work of your Spirit,
and the loving hands of your people,

continue to reveal yourself where doubt is stronger than faith.

To you, Lord Jesus, whose resurrection body bears the murderous marks of
the cross, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

Fourth Station: Emmaus

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Reading

They urged Jesus strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem.

Reflection

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

When did Jesus most recently make your heart burn?

When did he last vanish from your life?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you are with us,

even when our eyes are closed to your companionship.

Walk this day alongside the disconsolate and the despairing,
open their eyes to your gentle illumination,

and let their hearts burn within them at your invisible presence.

To you, Lord Jesus, walking by our side,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

Fifth Station: Jesus restores Peter

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Reading

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Reflection

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

Jesus asks 'Do you love me?' – what would you say?

What does it mean for you, for Jesus to say 'Follow me'?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for even in the glorious victory of the resurrection you understood the failure of Peter who denied you.

As you restored him to relationship with you, remember all who feel downcast and worthless in this world's eyes and give them a sense of purpose and value.

To you, Lord Jesus, loving us despite our denial, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Sixth Station: The ascension

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.

Reading

Jesus said to the disciples: 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Meditation

Meditate on the flower arrangement and enter the story.

Where is the risen Jesus: away in heaven, or right here?

How can *your* life witness to the resurrection?

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for in your ascension you are crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.

As we worship you on your heavenly throne, prepare our hearts for the coming of your Spirit.

To you, Lord Jesus, who will come back in the same way you went up into heaven, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**