

LENT: The Stations of the Cross

THE EIGHTH STATION

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

The women in the crowd who wept for Jesus were crying because the situation called for tears. The crowd were stirred up, emotional and noisy. The women were too curious to leave, but too afraid to keep quiet, and so they cried. As Jesus passed by he heard them. He told them to stop the phoney crying and to weep instead for the evil that was being done. He was asking for the women to follow their own hearts and not the crowd.

Thought – What suffering do you see that upsets you? What prejudices do you hold even though you know they are wrong? Who can you help today?

Prayer – Jesus, forgive us for the times we have gone along with the crowd.

Forgive us for the times we do nothing, even when we have the chance to do something.

Help us to be brave as we take a path that is sometimes different from what society says is acceptable. Help us to befriend, accept and value everyone. Amen.



THE NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Jesus fell three times with the cross on his shoulders. What were all those people who were watching thinking? He had helped and loved so many of them, but now not one of them had the courage to come forward. Were they afraid of the soldiers and the angry crowd? Or was it simply that Jesus was no longer one of them? And so they let him fall.

Thought – Do you need to apologise to someone? Do you need to ask for their forgiveness for something hurtful or cruel you have done or said? Do you need to forgive yourself for anything?

Prayer – Lord what was going on in your heart and mind when you fell a third time? Did you feel that God had abandoned you? Do the horror, suffering and cruelty in our world today make you feel sad? Forgive us Lord, when we make fun of others. Give us the courage to lift them up when they fall, even when they don't "fit in". Help us to understand that you love us even at our worst. Teach us how to love and forgive like you. Amen.

THE TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

Jesus was stripped in front of a whole crowd of people. He stood there without the comfort and security of his clothes. He was stripped of his dignity like a criminal. How must he have felt?

Thought – Do you care more for good clothes, than good people?

Do you care more for designer labels than the needs of others?

Think again about how you would feel to be humiliated in front of your friends?

Prayer – Forgive us Lord, for the times we have made fun of people for the way they look and for the clothes they wear. By the power of your spirit help us to respect each other. Give us the strength to make good choices for our bodies and minds each day. Teach us how to love ourselves as we are, and to love others as you do. Amen.

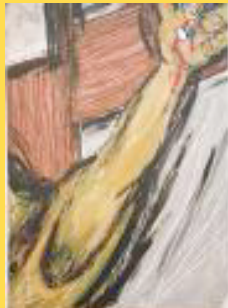


THE ELEVENTH STATION JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Imagine what being crucified must have been like. The agony of the nails being pounded through your hands and your feet, the pain shooting through every part of your body. Jesus was the victim of anger, jealousy and misunderstanding. He had stirred up the people to see things differently; he had accepted everyone he met as equals. Now he was paying the price. There must have been people in that crowd who knew he was innocent, but they stood silently by and watched as Jesus was nailed to the cross.

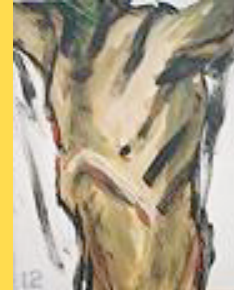
Thought – Are you hurting someone through your words, thoughts and actions? What steps can you take to be more loving to that person?

Prayer – Jesus forgive us for the times we have “nailed” others to the cross because they were different. Forgive us for the times we hurt others by insulting them, gossiping or spreading rumours. Help us to love and value people as you did. Amen.



THE TWELFTH STATION JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

It was now the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the temple was torn right down the middle; and Jesus cried out in a loud voice, he said, “Father into your hands I commit my spirit”. With these words he breathed his last.



Thought – We all have good periods in our lives that we dread coming to an end. There are good and bad days. Always believe that even at the darkest of times the best is still to come. Don't allow a bad time to overwhelm the next day.

Prayer – Lord we thank you for this great act of love. You said that true love was laying your life down for your friends. Lord help us always to realise that you are our friend. Teach us to love as you loved and to forgive as you forgave. Amen.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Mary had been the one who had held Jesus in her arms in the manger at Bethlehem. Now here is her son, broken, lifeless, seemingly without hope. But silently in her heart she knew that this is how it had to be. Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus, came forward and claimed the body of Jesus. Had he come to realise that Jesus really was the Son of God? He showed goodness and courage.



Thought – Do you ever walk away from painful situations and from the people in them? Do you have a friend who would be prepared to support and help, especially when you're struggling with hopelessness and despair?

Prayer – Lord give us the courage to act on our beliefs, no matter how afraid we feel. Help us to accept that death is part of life. Help us to accept that you are always with us. Amen.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Jesus had spent his public life preaching, healing and helping others. He had promised good things to those who followed him. But here he is crucified, lifeless and being placed in a tomb.

At this moment his followers were frightened, confused and would have felt that they had lost all hope, a moment of great sorrow and failure.

Thought – Do you see your life as a gift? How can YOU take responsibility for your life and its direction?

Prayer – Forgive us Lord for failing to recognise the precious gift that life is. Forgive us for the times when we complain about being bored. Help us to get involved and to make a difference in our world. Help us to look deeper into our lives. By the power of your Spirit help us to live each day more fully. Amen.

