STATIONS OF THE CROSS
March 5:
  Meditations by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP; Stations of the Cross by Martin Erspamer, OSB
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March 12:
  Meditations by USCCB Scriptural Stations of the Cross; Stations of the Cross
  by Nicholas Markell
March 19:
  Meditations by (TBD); Stations of the Cross by Janet McKenzie
March 26:
  Meditations by Fr. Jim Garvey; Stations of the Cross from Santa Fe Cathedral
April 2:
  Meditations by Johan van Parys: Stations of the Cross by Lucinda Naylor
**Introduction**

*Adoramus te*

Theodore Dubois (1837-1924)

*Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.*
We adore you, Christ, and we bless you.

*Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.*
For by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

**Sign of the Cross**
THE FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“[Pilate] said to the Jews, ‘Behold, your king!’ They cried out, ‘Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your king?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified” (John 19: 14-16).

Reflection:
The one thing of which we are sure is that one day we shall die. We all know our birthdays. We also have death days, the annual day of our coming death, but we do not know which day it is. People who are dying often have an acute sense of the gift of being still alive. If we remember that we too are condemned to die, then we may live every day as precious and unrepeatable, with the gifts and graces the Lord will give us today. Lord, give us gratitude for this day, and every day until we die.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, in this moment of condemnation, you take upon yourself all the accusations that human beings hurl at each other. You bear the contempt that has crushed people throughout the centuries. Give us the grace to lift the burdens off people rather than weigh them down and hold us up when we are accused. Now you are condemned to death. Be with us, as we face death, our own and of those whom we love, confident your love is stronger than death and will have the victory. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20).

Reflection:
Jesus says that if we are to be his disciples, then we must take up our cross and follow him. That may sound rather masochistic, as if we must positively want to suffer. Sometimes it has made Christianity seem grim. But it means that we dare to embrace the life that is given to us, with its joys and suffering, its blessings and limitations. It is no good wishing that we were someone else. This is our life, a gift from God, and even its rough and hard moments are steps toward happiness.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, now you take upon yourself the burden of the cross and all that weighs us down. Give us the strength to walk onwards, uncrushed by whatever is placed on our shoulders. May we help others to endure in the trials and sufferings of their lives, with joy undefeated. Amen.
THE THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
‘Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrow; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by
God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:4–5).

Reflection:
We all have many “first falls.” We may feel ashamed. I am not that sort of person! But let us
remember that Jesus is close to us and has borne the shame of all first fallers and continues to do
so. We can then dare to look at ourselves with honesty, and know that we are indeed just that sort
of person. We are not the perfect parents, or the amazing spouses, or the spotless pious priests that
we may have imagined. But God smiles on us as we are, warts and all. We may not be perfect but
nor are we despicable worms. We are fallible human beings who fumble our way to the kingdom,
keeling over from time to time.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, when we fall and feel discouraged, may we know that you are especially close to us then,
bearing our shame and giving us the strength to stand upon our feet and begin again. Make our
hearts tender towards all those whose falls bring upon them the righteous indignation of others.
May we be unafraid to be close to them as you are to us all. Amen.

STABAT MATER
Text:
Stabatr mater dolorosa;

Tune: STABAT MATER 88 7;
Mainz Gesangbuch
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Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Mother

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:  
“As one whom his mother comforts, / so I will comfort you; / you shall be comforted in Jerusalem” (Isa 66:13).

Reflection:  
The death of a child before one’s parents is outrageous. It contradicts the natural order of things. It is the child who ought to care for one’s parents and bury them. This is the appalling suffering of parents who lose their children in war or to illness. Think of the mothers whose children disappeared during the years of dictatorship in Argentina, Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, who did not even have the bodies of their children to bury. All this scandalous suffering is embraced by God when Jesus and his mother meet on the way to the cross. “As one whom his mother comforts, / so I will comfort you; / you shall be comforted in Jerusalem” (Isa 66:13). Jesus is every child lost prematurely, and Mary is every parent grieving for his or her child.

Prayer: *(recited by all)*  
Jesus, be close to all parents who lose their children. If through death, may they trust in the ultimate victory of God’s love which triumphs over every separation; if it is through alienation, may they never cease to reach out in tenderness, so that like the father of the prodigal son, they may see their children from afar and welcome them home. Amen.

*Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.*
THE FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus” (Luke 23:26).

Reflection:
Western culture has promoted the ideal of the self-sufficient person who does not need anyone else. We should stand on our own feet. It is humiliating to need others, especially strangers. But this dependency is part of being human, and is embraced by God in Jesus at this moment. God says to St. Catherine of Siena, “I could well have supplied each of you with all your needs, both spiritual and material. But I wanted to make you dependent on one another so that each of you would be my minister, dispensing the graces and gifts you have received from me.” In Jesus, we see God needing us, needing a drink from the Samaritan woman at the well, needing help with carrying his cross. It’s okay to be needy.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, may I be unashamed to accept help when I need it, and eager to offer it when others do. May our mutual dependence be a source of joy and an occasion of grace, knitting us together into the community of your love. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
‘She has done a beautiful thing to me…Truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her’ (Mark 14. 6, 9).

Reflection:
The face of God became flesh in the face of Jesus, who smiled upon sinners with tenderness. He looked with pleasure on pompous little Zacchaeus up in the tree and decided to stay with him rather than the self-righteous and respectable people. He smiled on Levi, another tax collector, and called him to discipleship. He looked with kindness on Peter after he had betrayed him. But what about us? We do not see his face and we do not even know what Jesus looked like. We are the Body of Christ and so we must be his face. It belongs to the ministry of every baptized person to be the face of Christ in the ordinary interactions of our daily lives. It is the small but necessary beginning of all Christian witness. According to the legend, Jesus on the way to the cross found among a crowd of hostile faces one that gazed on him with pity, and to her he gave an image of his face. May our faces be shaped by grace into tenderness and welcome, “true images” of his.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, May my eyes be open to see with you compassion, and to smile with your radiance, so that your eternal tenderness may be made flesh and blood in me. May I always be alert to those who feel invisible and despised, recognizing every human being as having the dignity of your brother or sister, however concealed by the bruises of this life. Amen.

*Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.*

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**STABAT MATER**


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THE SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
‘[Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people.] For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted’ (Hebrews 2:17–18).

Reflection:
Our macho society is tempted to look patronizingly on people who are physically weak. Our Lord shared that physical weakness and blesses it. He also embraces us in our moral weakness. When I am weak, I may discover that I am not alone battling against the wind and the storms. Jesus shared our weakness so that we may share his strength. At the core of each of us is the strong Son of God. In my deepest interiority, God abides, and his grace will lift me up again and again, and put courage back in my heart. Pope Francis said that morality is not “never falling down” but always getting up again. We keep on walking.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, lift me to my feet when I feel that I go can go further. When I feel battered by the storm of life, with neither energy or strength, then may I know that you, the strong Son of God, will bear me onwards. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
**Lector:**
“A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’” (Luke 23:27-29).

**Reflection:**
During his journey to the cross, the only people whom Jesus addresses are women: Mary, his mother, and the daughters of Jerusalem. Even in his agony Jesus feels deeply the pain that will be theirs when Jerusalem is destroyed. He is touched by people’s pain in the pit of his stomach, and he enjoys their joy more than they do themselves. God's promise is that he will take out our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh. A heart of flesh is one that shares another’s joy without a hint of jealousy and another’s sorrow without a tiny bit of schadenfreude. Unqualified joy is only possible when the ego no longer impedes a spontaneous identification with the other person and we no longer see the other person as our rival. Until then our happiness will always be insecure, keeping an eye open for competitors who will knock us off our perch. May the Lord chip off our stony hearts the thick rind of egoism that makes us dead to what others live!

**Prayer: (recited by all)**
Jesus, give me a heart of flesh so that I may rejoice with those who rejoice and sorrow with those who are saddened. Liberate me from the protective shell of selfishness, so that I may be one with others in the dramas of their lives, free to act with your own spontaneous generosity. Amen.

*Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.*

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**STABAT MATER**


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THE NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls for the Third Time

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
‘Three times I sought the Lord about this [weakness], that it should leave me, but he said to me “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”’ (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Reflection:
Jesus collapses, crushed. People can be crushed by low wages, wondering whether to eat or keep the house warm, dependent on food banks. Often they are despised by the media. Jesus’ fall brings him close to them so that they too may one day share his glory. Oscar Romero adapted a saying of St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Gloria Dei vivens pauper, “The glory of God is the living poor person.” There are also those who feel crushed by moral failure, like Peter who denied Jesus three times. Jesus struggles up and carries on, one step nearer to the cross, and one step nearer to Easter. Then he will lift the burden from Peter, and from us all, with infinite delicacy. Without even referring to his failure, he will give Peter three opportunities to unspeak it: “do you love me more than these [others]?” (John 21:15). Peter will be able to reach down below that superficial desire to save his skin to the deep, abiding hunger of his life, the love of his Lord: “you know that I love you.” And then he too will be able to stand up and walk again. Whatever we have done, Jesus lifts us to our feet.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, after so many falls, let me not lose hope of holiness. If you are with me, then I am not doomed to be stuck in the endless repetition of my familiar failures. May your grace bud in the wilderness of my heart. Grant a fresh beginning even today. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“I can count all my bones— / they stare and gloat over me; / they divide my garments among them, / and for my raiment they cast lots” (Psalm 22:17-18).

Reflection:
Jesus is stripped of all his clothes. On the cross he will be naked. Even the clothes of Jesus are mere booty, to be shared between the soldiers to supplement their pay. They are part of his “net value.” The Son of the Most High God is treated as a piece of property, redeeming all those who are bought and sold, from footballers to sex workers. Who does not have a price? With the eyes of faith, we can see his nakedness otherwise. David stripped to fight Goliath. Jesus, the Son of David, strips to fight against every humiliation that we endure, every shame that makes us shrink. He climbs the cross to win the victory for our dignity.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, I fear to be seen as I am, with my foolish fears and many failures. I would be ashamed and wish to hide, like Adam and Eve. But for us you have been stripped naked and born and borne the jeers of the world. Comfort those who are mocked, and free me from fear. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS CRUCIFED

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left” (Luke 23:33).

Reflection:
He deliberately draws close to us in our helplessness. He is inside all our experiences of being lost and astray, so that we may not be victims but victors with him. He was nailed to the cross, nailed firmly to all our failures, identified with everyone who seems to be a let-down, the child who disappoints a parent, the husband or wife who turned out to have feet of clay, the disgraced priest. He embraces all those who feel that God has abandoned them. His strong grace is in all who feel that their lives are coming apart, and that there is nothing they can do. In him, no life is a dead end. This darkest moment, when the sun and the moon do not shine, is a revelation of glory.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, your life had seemed so full of promise, and yet it ended in this disgraceful failure of the cross, between two criminals. Embrace all those who seem to be complete failures; be with me when my life seems to go nowhere. And as you are close in this dark moment, so may we share with you in the triumph of your resurrection. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies on the Cross

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“My God, my God, why [have you] forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34)

Reflection:
What can we say of anyone’s death, since we do not know what it is to be dead? Dying we know, but not death. What possible words can we have for the death of God? The Word of God is silenced. What words do we have? Yet this dead man on the cross is the Word that speaks most loudly of a love beyond imagination. Pain and destitution often make people feel deeply alone and isolated. No one can understand the suffering that we endure. It is beyond sharing. But in Christ, one is never alone. In him God embraces everyone who feels abandoned and betrayed: people struggling with the loss of those whom they love, those who are angry at senseless terminal illness, those who feel that God has let them down. In Jesus, God embraces the absence of God. God has come near to us in our desolation, and so we can come into his presence.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, be close to all who face death. May those who feel abandoned by God know that he is closer than we can imagine. May those who feel that there is no God at all be astonished by his intimate presence. In you, no one is far from God. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.

Word of Life, of death defiant, Bowed his head-the world is silent; Through his death came life anew.
THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“In order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath . . . the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (John 19:31).

Reflection:
The Lamb of God, not one of whose bones have been broken, has become an obstacle to the celebration of the feast. He is in the way of religion. Dictatorships and tyrannies often find Jesus inconvenient. Oscar Romero had to be disposed of because he opposed the religion of the government of El Salvador, national security. We may also sometimes find Jesus gets in the way, with his demands for nonviolence, his identification with sinners and the poor. It is tempting to celebrate our comforting religion without the disturbance of its Lord.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, now you are lowered into the hands of those who love you and have stayed by your side to the end. May we have the courage to remain faithful to you and your commandment to love one another, even when it seems futile and unrealistic. Give us the grace to hang when others fade away. Amen.

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Stabat mater dolorosa;

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Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.
THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

V. We adore you, Christ, and we praise you.
R. Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.
Lector:
“Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed” (Matt 27:59-60).

Reflection:
This looks like the end of the story. But Jesus is on the cusp of a new beginning. There lies before him an unimaginable future, which he will share with everyone whose life seems to have reached a final impasse. No dead end can finally defeat God’s creative touch. The African-American spiritual asks, “Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?” We were all there, every one of us, when we feared that there was no way forward, when the path was blocked by some great rock. He is there whenever we feel entombed, hemmed in, in the darkness.

Prayer: (recited by all)
Jesus, now you are laid to rest in the tomb. May we rest in your love, confident that even when the future is dark, we remain in God’s care. Grant us patient endurance until we hear your final summons to the fullness of life. Amen.

Please respond at the bidding of the cantor.

Sign of the Cross

Adoramus te
Theodore Dubois (1837-1924)

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
We adore you, Christ, and we bless you.
Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.
For by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.
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