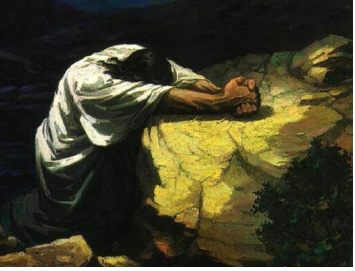


STATIONS OF THE CROSS



MEDITATIONS BY BR. PAUL MILLER, OFS FSDM



STATION 1: CHRIST PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

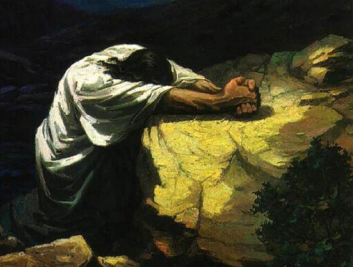
All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 26:36-46

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Meditation

I sometimes think that Jesus suffered the most in Gethsemane, because the realization that the world had abandoned Him must have been overwhelming. Even His



STATION 1: **CHRIST PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

own disciples couldn't stay awake during this most painful beginning of His passion. If you have ever doubted Jesus' humanity, you see it in His request to His Father, "... if it is possible, let this cup pass from me..." Jesus knew the price He had to pay to love us, yet He faltered for a moment. Finally, He capitulated, "... not as I will, but as you will."

Have you ever failed when put to the test? If you are human, you probably have failed numerous times in your life. Unlike Jesus, we too often rely upon our own strength rather than ask God for the grace to persevere.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, as You gave Your only begotten Son the strength to follow Your will, please grant us the grace to follow Your will each day of our life. Amen.



STATION 2: CHRIST, BETRAYED BY JUDAS, IS ARRESTED

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 26:46-50

“Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.” While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him.” Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi!” and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, “Friend, do what you have come for.” Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Meditation

Imagine how Jesus must have felt when He saw Judas approaching. He already knew Judas would betray Him, yet it still must have been extremely painful when it finally happened. Judas had been one of the twelve, a “friend”, but even being in Jesus’ presence for three years



STATION 2: CHRIST, BETRAYED BY JUDAS, IS ARRESTED

was not enough to save him from this temptation. Unlike Judas, Jesus knew the full effect of this betrayal, that is, His crucifixion.

Have you ever been betrayed by a friend or family member? Remember the hurt and sadness you experienced? Have you ever betrayed someone? Did you realize the effects of this betrayal?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, grant us the grace to never betray anyone who is deserving of our love, that is to say, everyone. Amen.



STATION 3: THE SANHEDRIN CONDEMNS CHRIST TO BE CRUCIFIED

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 26:57-66

Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter was following him at a distance as far as the high priest's courtyard and going inside he sat down with the servants to see the outcome. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward who stated, "This man said, 'I can destroy the temple of God and within three days rebuild it.'" The high priest rose and addressed him, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him in reply, "You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see 'the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming on the clouds of heaven.'" Then the high priest tore



STATION 3: **THE SANHEDRIN CONDEMNNS CHRIST TO BE CRUCIFIED**

his robes and said, “He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?” They said in reply, “He deserves to die.”

Meditation

Have you ever been falsely accused by someone? It is a terrible experience. You feel so outraged that you want to strike back at your accuser, but Christ chose not to do so. Why? In thinking about Jesus’ reaction to the false accusations made against Him, we see divine forgiveness emerging from Jesus’ Sacred Heart. He was able to forgive even those who wanted Him dead. Could you do that?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, please give us the grace to be forgiving, even to those who hurt us whether in word or deed. Amen.



STATION 4: **PETER DENIES CHRIST FOR THE THIRD TIME**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about!” As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.” Again, he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!” A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.

Meditation

Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him. He even foretold this betrayal, yet Peter



STATION 4: PETER DENIES CHRIST FOR THE THIRD TIME

did so anyway. Jesus knows that we also will deny Him through our own sinfulness. Each time we sin, we turn away from Jesus just as Peter and Judas did, yet Christ doesn't want us to despair like Judas did. He wants us to seek reconciliation which He freely offers us.

Do you take advantage of reconciliation?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, You know all things. Even our sinfulness is apparent to You. Help us to turn toward Your mercy at all times. Amen.



STATION 5: CHRIST IS JUDGED BY PILATE

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 27:11-26

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?” But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called (Jesus) Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, “Which one do you want me to release to you, (Jesus) Barabbas, or Jesus called Messiah?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him.” The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They answered, “Barabbas!” Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Let him be crucified!” When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands



STATION 5: **CHRIST IS JUDGED BY PILATE**

in the sight of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.” And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Meditation

What was Pilate’s sin? He knew Jesus was innocent, yet he was afraid to create insurrection, so he had Jesus crucified. He tried to assign blame for this horrific act by declaring himself innocent, but that isn’t so.

Have you ever been in the position to “do the right thing” but couldn’t do it out of fear or pride? Worse yet, have you ever tried to deflect responsibility for this action by blaming others?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, do not allow me to be a coward when called upon to do the just thing. And grant me the grace to take responsibility for my faults and actions. Amen.



STATION 6: **CHRIST IS SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 27:27-29

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet cloak round him and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!'

Meditation

The indignity of being falsely condemned was not enough. The wickedness of the Roman governor extended to having Jesus beaten in a very savage way. Even the Roman guards made sport of this horrible act by crowning Jesus with thorns and mocking Him.

Have we ever been so cruel in our thoughts or actions? Have we made Jesus suffer



STATION 6: CHRIST IS SCOURGED AND CROWNED WITH THORNS

through our sinfulness, even to the point of being sacrilegious? Each time we sin, it is like another strike of the whip. Or have we treated another human being with such scorn and lack of love?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, grant us the grace to be loving to each person we meet. Help us to always be merciful, not vindictive. Amen.



STATION 7: CHRIST CARRIES HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

John 19:16-18

So at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out to the Place of the Skull or, as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha where they crucified him with two others, one on either side, Jesus being in the middle.

Meditation

After His torture and suffering the ultimate harassment was having to carry His own cross. The pain caused by this penultimate torture must have been excruciating. Jesus must have been tempted to just lay down and die, but He knew he had to fulfill the will of His Father. And so He persevered.

Do we persevere when we are faced with adversity, or do we give in to the difficulty at hand? When Jesus asks us to take up our cross and follow Him, do we really do that?



STATION 7: CHRIST CARRIES HIS CROSS

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, grant me the grace to take up my cross and follow in the footsteps of Your beloved Son Jesus. Amen.



STATION 8:

CHRIST IS HELPED BY THE CYRENIAN TO CARRY HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Matthew 27:32

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, called Simon, and enlisted him to carry his cross.

Meditation

Simon was an unwilling participant in the Passion of Jesus, yet he was compelled to pick up the cross of Jesus. He didn't want to be involved, but that didn't matter to the Roman soldiers.

How many times are we asked to help bear the burden of another person in need? Do we ignore that need and try to not be involved, or do we willingly offer our help? Are we able to love our neighbor in this way?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord



STATION 8:
**CHRIST IS HELPED BY THE CYRENIAN TO CARRY
HIS CROSS**

Prayer

Father, grant us the grace to always respond to the needs of our neighbor with love and support. Amen.



STATION 9: CHRIST COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Luke 23:27-29

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. For look, the days are surely coming when people will say, “Blessed are those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne children, the breasts that have never suckled!”

Meditation

Why was it that, except for His beloved disciple John, only women accompanied Jesus on His Passion? Could it be that these women were able to love heroically? They risked persecution and even death by daring to support Jesus during His death march. Not only were the Romans a risk, but also their fellow Jews were a threat to them. Yet, still they loved Jesus enough to follow Him.

Do we love Jesus heroically?



STATION 9:
CHRIST COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERSUSALEM

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, teach us to love the way Your beloved Son Jesus loves. Amen.



STATION 10: **CHRIST IS NAILED TO THE CROSS AND CRUCIFIED**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

John 19:23-24

When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, 'Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.' In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothes. That is what the soldiers did.

Meditation

Jesus, how You must have suffered that final indignity of being nailed to the cross, stripped of Your garments and hung up for all to see. Even while You endured this horrific end, the soldiers gambled away Your clothing as if You meant nothing to them.

How often have we forgotten who Jesus is? Do we treat Him with disrespect? Do we



STATION 10:
CHRIST IS NAILED TO THE CROSS AND CRUCIFIED

lack love and compassion for His gift of redemption to us?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, help me to show love, thanksgiving, and praise to Your beloved Son, our savior, Jesus. Amen.



STATION 11:
**CHRIST PROMISES HIS KINGDOM TO THE
GOOD THIEF**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals hanging there abused him: ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well.’ But the other spoke up and rebuked him. ‘Have you no fear of God at all?’ he said. ‘You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ He answered him, ‘In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.’

Meditation

The mystery of God’s mercy is unveiled in this act of mercy to the “good thief.” Even while Jesus was literally dying, He thought about saving this repentant soul.

Do you know that Jesus’ mercy is greater than any sin? Do you seek this mercy in your daily life? Are you likewise merciful to all those you encounter?



STATION 11:
**CHRIST PROMISES HIS KINGDOM TO THE
GOOD THIEF**

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, make me aware of the boundless mercy You offer to us, and grant me the temerity to ask for this mercy. Amen.



STATION 12: CHRIST SPEAKS TO MARY AND THE DISCIPLE

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

John 19:26-27

Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

Meditation

It is difficult to even imagine the emotional pain it must have given Jesus in His final moments to address His mother and His beloved disciple in this way. I am sure that no human being could have ever loved his or her mother the way Christ loved Mary. It was His way of saying goodbye and at the same time presenting His mother as the mother of us all. How Mary must have suffered these final words of her beloved Son.

Do we recognize the sacrifice and suffering Mary endured, and do we go to Mary for her help and for her intercession?



STATION 12:
CHRIST SPEAKS TO MARY AND THE DISCIPLE

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



STATION 13: **CHRIST DIES ON THE CROSS**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Mark 15:33-37

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling on Elijah.’ Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying, ‘Wait! And see if Elijah will come to take him down.’ But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Meditation

In a final proof of Jesus’ humanity, He asks His Father why He has forsaken Him. In these few words Jesus captures the anguish of every dying human being. There can be no doubt that Jesus’ suffering and death were the ultimate act of love for His Father and for us.



STATION 13: CHRIST DIES ON THE CROSS

Do we connect with the price Jesus payed for loving us? Can we even imagine being willing to offer ourselves in the way Jesus did? Do we ever say “Thank you, Jesus” for paying the ultimate price for our redemption?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, let us never forget the sacrifice Your Son Jesus offered for our redemption. Grant us the grace to thank and praise Him every day of our life. Amen.



STATION 14: CHRIST IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All: Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world

Mark 15:44-46

Pilate, astonished that he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he had been dead for some time. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph who bought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in the shroud and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.

Meditation

When Jesus was placed in the tomb, the disciples did not yet realize that He would really be resurrected.

How they must have suffered and mourned the death of their beloved friend and teacher. On the morning of the Resurrection, their tears would become tears of joy.

Do we mourn not only the death but also the rejection and persecution Jesus



STATION 14: CHRIST IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

endured for our sins? We can never repay Jesus for His love, but we can at least acknowledge His love and repay Him by loving each other. For many, the tomb represents the end, but for Christians, the tomb is merely a portal to heaven.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Prayer

Father, let us not see death as the end, but only the pathway to eternal salvation. Let us not fear death, but rather embrace it when it comes. Amen.