



Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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The Scriptural Stations of the Cross



Praying the Stations of the Cross is a Lenten tradition in which we use our senses and imagination to reflect on Jesus' Passion and Death. But how do we do that? We can learn from St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Long before he was named a saint, Ignatius used his imagination and Scripture to encounter Christ. For him, this experience was the turning point in his relationship with God. For children, having their own imagination sparked by Scripture can help connect their lives with Jesus' actions in the Gospels.

This newsletter is a guide to help you and your family pray a scriptural Stations of the Cross, inspired by those celebrated by Saint John Paul II. These stations are an alternative to the traditional Stations of the Cross.

To get started, plan to pray all 14 stations over the course of Lent. Block out a few days each week during Lent to meditate on one of the stations. Plan to spend a maximum of 5–10 minutes

for each meditation. Stay committed, but understand there is not a right or wrong way to do this.

Begin each station with the prayer and then read the Scripture passage slowly. As you read the Scripture, place yourself in the scene. Which person do you most identify with? What does this reveal about your relationship with Jesus and others?

Hopefully, this newsletter will help you make this Lent a fruitful season of prayer. Let the Holy Spirit lead as you pray these Stations of the Cross. †



THE FIRST STATION:

Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

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

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 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?"



(MATTHEW 26:36,39–40)

What is it like to be with Jesus when he is clearly troubled? How can I be present to others when they are troubled?

SECOND STATION:

Jesus Is Betrayed by Judas and Arrested

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

Then, while [Jesus] was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

(MARK 14:43,45–46)

How do I react when I see the crowd come to arrest Jesus? How might I defend those who are oppressed?

THE THIRD STATION:

Jesus Is Condemned by the Sanhedrin

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

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am."

(LUKE 22:66-68,70)

What is it like to see Jesus questioned? Do I defend him? Do I keep silent? How do I respond when people question my motives?

THE FOURTH STATION:

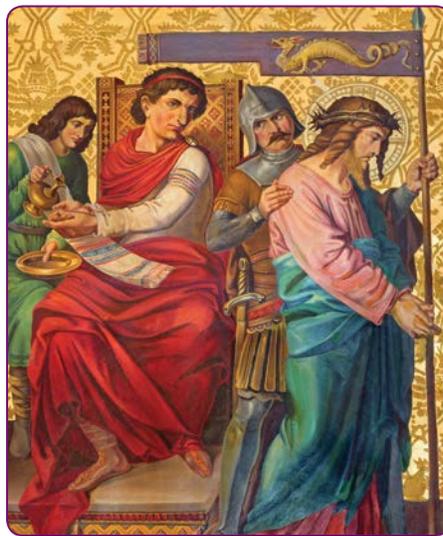
Jesus Is Denied by Peter

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

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!" 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.

(MATTHEW 26:69-70,75)

Do I fear being judged for living my faith? Am I sorry for the times I hide my faith?



THE FIFTH STATION:

Jesus Is Judged by Pontius Pilate

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

They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

(MARK 15:1-5)

How would I answer Pilate's question? How would I respond to those who say I've done something wrong?

THE SIXTH STATION:

Jesus Is Scourged at the Pillar and Crowned with Thorns

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

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

(JOHN 19:1-3)

What is it like to see Jesus beaten and mocked by the soldiers? How is Jesus able to remain meek and humble?



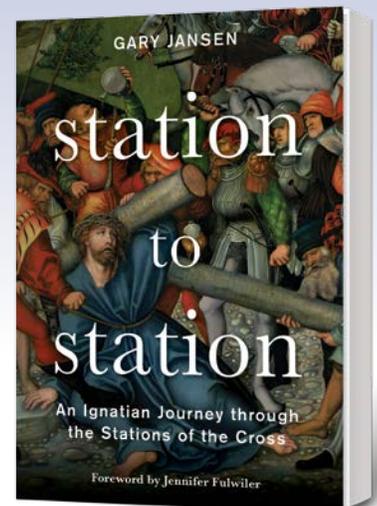
Prayer Tip

Wave off distractions. If you find that your mind wanders during these meditations, that's OK. Simply take a breath and return your attention to the Scripture passage and your place in the scene. ■

Pray the Stations

Throughout the centuries, Christians have asked, "Why is there suffering?" Gary Jansen believes that answer can be found by looking closely at the Passion of Jesus. In *Station to Station*, Jansen encourages us to place ourselves in the scene when we reflect on the Stations of the Cross, when we are weighed down by life's burdens. ■

Station to Station: An Ignatian Journey through the Stations of the Cross by Gary Jansen (Loyola Press, 2017)



Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts

A newsletter for parents and families by Loyola Press

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Art Credits: Thinkstock, pages 1-4, Sterling Hundley page 1.

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The newsletter is published seven times a year (including issues for Advent and Lent) by Loyola Press.

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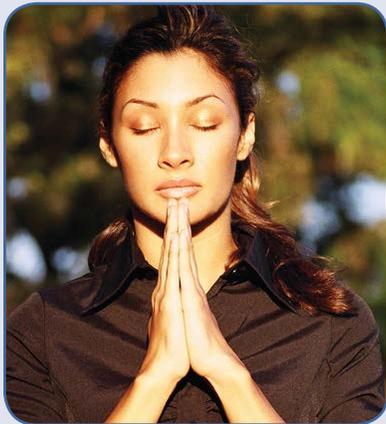
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For activities, quick tips, and other resources to encourage faith-filled family living, visit www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family.

Web Number: W1525

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Prayer Tip

Let go of the outcome. Remember that your job is to create space, so others may reflect on their relationship to God. God is the one who initiates encounters with us. Let the children meditate on their own relationship with Jesus without intrusion. ■

THE SEVENTH STATION: Jesus Bears the Cross

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

Then [Pilate] handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

(JOHN 19:16-17)

What do I think when I see Jesus carry the Cross? Am I amazed by his strength? Am I afraid and sorry for him?

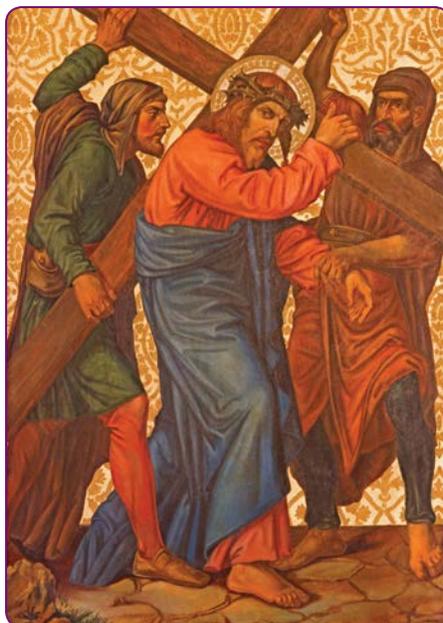
THE EIGHTH STATION: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

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

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

(MARK 15:21)

Am I like Simon? Am I willing to help Jesus carry the Cross? Do I carry it out of love?



THE 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.

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."

(LUKE 23:27-28)

How does Jesus console me? What is it like to have Jesus comfort me?



THE TENTH STATION: Jesus Is Crucified

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

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."]

(LUKE 23:33-34)

Do I hear Jesus' words of forgiveness? How can I accept forgiveness for wrongs I have done? Can I forgive others who have injured me in some way?

THE ELEVENTH STATION:

Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

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

The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

(LUKE 23:39-42)

Am I like this good thief who trusts in God's mercy? How ready am I to accept Jesus' promise of salvation?



THE TWELFTH STATION:

Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

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

Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

(JOHN 19:26-27)

When Jesus asks me to take his mother into my house, he asks me to accept her into my heart. Do I accept her grief and her sorrow as my own?

THE 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.

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last. When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; but all his acquaintances stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events.



(LUKE 23:46,48-49)

What is it like to witness Jesus breathe his last breath? How do I console the women? How do they console me?

THE FOURTEENTH STATION:

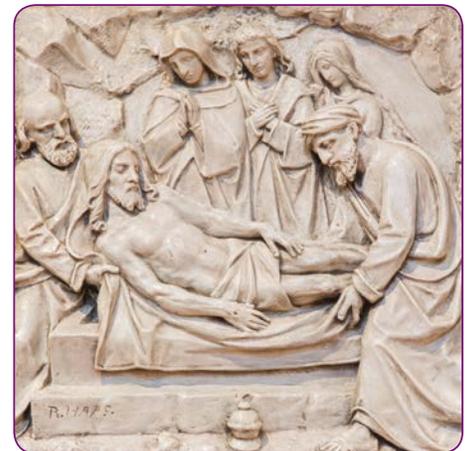
Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

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

Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

(MATTHEW 27:59-60)

As I watch Joseph lay Jesus' lifeless body in the tomb, how might I show compassion for those who mourn?



Conclusion

Pope Francis encourages us to ask one final question: "Who am I? Who am I, before my Lord? Who am I, before Jesus who enters Jerusalem amid the enthusiasm of the crowd? Am I ready to express my joy, to praise him? Or do I stand back?"

"Who am I, before the suffering Jesus?"

By using your imagination to walk with Jesus during his Passion, you might be able to better answer this question. May you discover that, just as the journey to his Resurrection

began with Jesus' death on Good Friday, the great and hopeful things that God wants to do in our lives often begin with something difficult. How might God be inviting you to a closer relationship with him in times of difficulty? Jesus Christ is alive today; his love is your source of hope amid your challenges.

This is the hope that leads us to Easter and will help us connect with the Resurrection throughout the entire year. ■