



THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Holy Week, 2023

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR

Use this guide to find the stations of the cross “written into nature” in your own yard and neighborhood.

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"Every piece of timber which is fixed in the ground in an erect position is a part of a cross...even our own body assumes as its natural position the latent and concealed outline of a cross."

Tertullian, The Charge of Worshipping a Cross, 3rd Century



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

As early Christian theologian Tertullian wrote in the third century, the world is patterned in the shape of the cross. As Christians, we are called to live a cruciform (“cross-shaped”) life. As we look toward making the journey of Holy Week with, we can be reminded of the solitude Jesus faced in his own journey toward the cross. We can find the shape of his moments of suffering and consolation on Good Friday written into the world around us. Each station has a scripture passage, prayer from the Book of Common Prayer, and questions to reflect on.

Use this guide to find stations in your own neighborhood, local park, or yard. Please observe local guidelines for masking, social distancing, and dog leashing.

Find the stations in nature...

I. First Station – Jesus is condemned to die

Find a spout or flowing water.

II. Second Station – Jesus takes up his cross

Find a heavy log.

III. Third Station – Jesus falls for the first time

Find a place to sit and rest in silence.

IV. Fourth Station – Jesus meets his mother

Find a flower.

V. Fifth Station – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

Find a tree leaning against another.

VI. Sixth Station – Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Find a stained tree or rock.

VII. Seventh Station – Jesus falls the second time

Find a place to sit and rest in silence.

VIII. Eighth Station – Jesus meet the women of Jerusalem

Find a bush or group of flowers.

IX. Ninth Station – Jesus falls for the third time

Find a place to sit and rest in silence.

X. Tenth Station – Jesus is stripped of his garments

Find a tree whose bark is stripped.

XI. Eleventh Station – Jesus is nailed to the cross

Find a wounded tree.

XII. Twelfth Station – Jesus dies on the cross

Find a stump.

XIII. Thirteenth Station – Jesus is taken down from the cross

Find a fallen tree.

XIV. Fourteenth Station – Jesus is laid in the tomb

Find a large stone.

Mark each station with a piece of red yarn so that you can find each as you pray along it. Trust that God will reveal each station to you as you need it!

I. First Station – Jesus is condemned to die



IN NATURE

Find a spout or flowing water

Reflection Question:

What crimes or societal sins do we regularly "wash our hands of"? What brokenness do we need to bear more responsibility for?

Matthew 27: 20-24

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.'

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Second Station – Jesus takes up his cross



IN NATURE

Find a heavy log

Reflection Question:

What heavy things have you been carrying lately? Why have those burdens been placed on you? Why have you taken them up willingly? What is worth carrying right now and what is worth letting go of?

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross of our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Mark 15: 16-20

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. 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. 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.

III. Third Station – Jesus falls for the first time



Sit and rest in silence.

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the
earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

IV. Fourth Station – Jesus meets his mother



IN NATURE

Find a flower

Reflection Question:

Who has been there for you at the most difficult moments of your life? Have you shared your gratitude for them with them and God?

Luke 8:28-35

Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Fifth Station – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross



IN NATURE

Find a tree leaning against another

Reflection Question:

What burdens have you been asked to carry for others?
What kept you from feeling resentment? When have you taken up another's cross out of compassion? When has another person taken up yours?

Luke 23:26

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Heavenly Father, whose most dear Son, as He walked the way of The Cross, accepted the service of Simon of Cyrene to carry his physical burden for him: grant us each the grace gladly to bear one another's burdens, for the love of him who said, "As you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me," your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

VI. Sixth Station – Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Isaiah 53: 2-5

For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with
your most gracious favor, and further us
with your continual help; that in all our
works begun, continued, and ended in
you, we may obtain everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Reflection Question:

In the time before cameras, instantly capturing the image of another was an outlandish miracle. How does photography shape your life and memory? How has the explosion of image-based media affected your prayer, worship, and faith life in positive and negative ways?



IN NATURE

Find a stained tree or rock

VII. Seventh Station – Jesus falls for the second time



Isaiah 53: 6,7

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its
shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

Sit and rest in silence.

VIII. Eighth Station – Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



IN NATURE

Find a bush or group of flowers

Reflection Question:

What groups of people or communities are especially suffering right now? How does our compassion shift when we think of communities in addition to individuals?

Luke 23:27-31

A great number of the people followed him, and among them 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.” For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

IX. Ninth Station – Jesus falls for the third time



Sit and rest in silence.

Lamentations 3:1, 2, 5-8, 16, 19

I am one who has seen affliction
under the rod of God's wrath;
he has driven and brought me
into darkness without any light;
he has besieged and enveloped me
with bitterness and tribulation;
he has made me sit in darkness
like the dead of long ago.

He has walled me about so that I cannot
escape;

he has put heavy chains on me;
though I call and cry for help,

he shuts out my prayer;

He has made my teeth grind on gravel,
and made me cower in ashes;

The thought of my affliction and my
homelessness

is wormwood and gall!

X. Tenth Station – Jesus is stripped of his garments



IN NATURE

Find a tree whose bark is stripped.

Reflection Question:

What good things has life stripped of you? What things do you need to strip from your own life? What would it feel like to pray to God naked? How are our hearts spiritually naked before God?

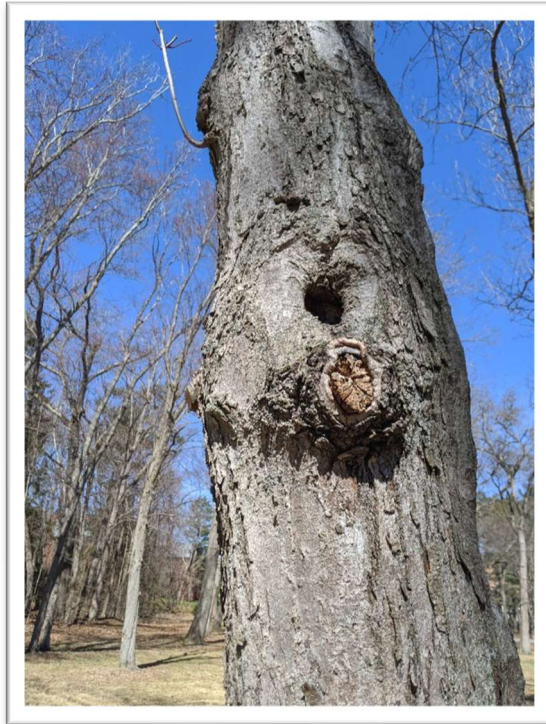
John 19:23-24

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XI. Eleventh Station – Jesus is nailed to the cross



IN NATURE

Find a wounded tree.

Reflection Question:

What wounds do you carry? Why do Jesus' nail wounds stay on his resurrected body? What might your wounds and scars do for you?

Mark 15:22-28

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.

O God our Father, whose Son forgave his enemies while he was suffering shame and death: Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience; when they are accused, save them from speaking in hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; when they are imprisoned, save them from despair; and to us your servants, give grace to respect their witness and to discern the truth, that our society may be cleansed and strengthened. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, our merciful and righteous Judge. Amen

XII. Twelfth Station – Jesus dies on the cross



IN NATURE

Find a stump.

Reflection Question:

What moments of your life have you felt true despair? What got you through those moments when all felt lost?

Mark 15:33-37

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock 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.

Almighty and everloving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

XIII. Thirteenth Station – Jesus is taken down from the cross



IN NATURE

Find a fallen tree.

Reflection Question:

Who has taken care of you when you have been unable to care for yourself? When have you felt most helpless and powerless to help others?

Lamentations 2:11-12

My eyes are spent with weeping;
my stomach churns;
my bile is poured out on the ground
because of the destruction of my people,
because infants and babes faint
in the streets of the city.
They cry to their mothers,
'Where is bread and wine?'
as they faint like the wounded
in the streets of the city,
as their life is poured out
on their mothers' bosom.

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.

XIV. Fourteenth Station – Jesus laid in the tomb



IN NATURE

Find a large stone.

Reflection Question:

As we move into Holy Saturday, we take on waiting in the dark and locked room with the disciples. What are you waiting for? What has you holding your breath?

Matthew 25:57-60

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.