

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS



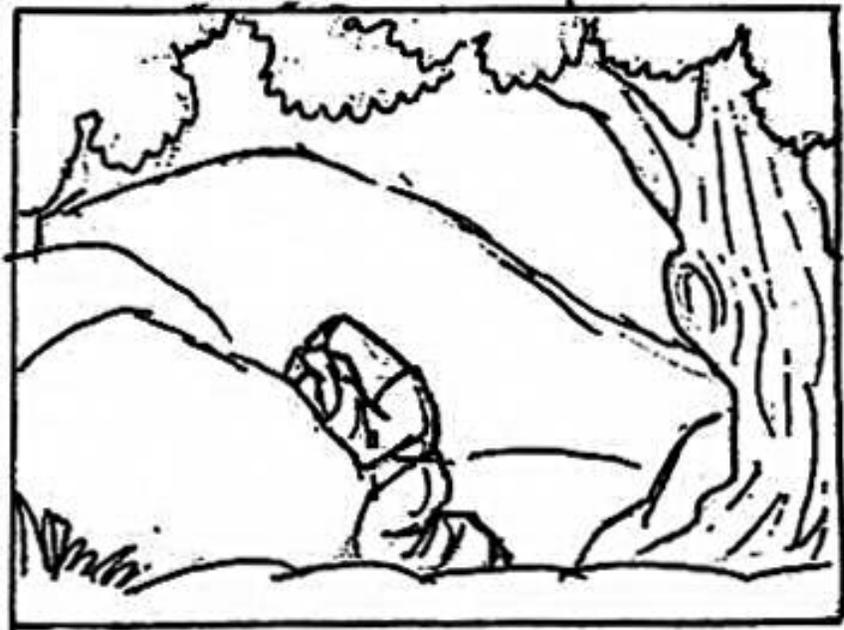
By and based on the books of **ROBERT J. CORMIER** www.thefaithkit.org

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With illustrations by **ROSA ROSADO**

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PROLOG



The stations of the cross depict fourteen things that happened to Jesus on the last day of his life—a Friday in Jerusalem. As with everything else reported to us about the life of Jesus, each of these moments contains a message.

THE FIRST STATION



Jesus is condemned to death. The first station is a bridge between Good Friday and the rest of Jesus' life. Being born poor, losing his human father, being misunderstood, opposed, etc., Jesus was asked to bear anything his followers might have to go through, so they would get the strength to do so. In the case of the first station, Jesus is condemned unjustly, because people lied about him, out of envy, because he spoke the truth. If any such thing should happen to us, let us know that Jesus bore this also, and that he conquered it by accepting it.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, if we are condemned unjustly, and especially if it is because we speak the truth and live our faith, give us the faith to accept and conquer it. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE SECOND STATION



Jesus is made to carry the cross. In the language of faith, a “cross” is a problem, especially a big one, whose end is not in sight. But faith teaches that our problems have a purpose. In bearing them because God sent them, we become stronger spiritually, and we are preparing to share God’s life more richly forever.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, it is hard for us to thank You for our crosses, but we ask You to help us carry them so that we will become stronger spiritually. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE THIRD STATION



Jesus falls the first time. In everyone's tradition, "fall" is synonymous with failure. And failure seems like the worst thing that can happen. But we are here to grow, and this means that we will have to do many things for the very first time. If this very first time, we happen to get it right, we were probably just lucky. The work of life is to learn from our mistakes, and to try again.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, when we have made a mistake, help us to learn from it, get up, and try again. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE FOURTH STATION



Jesus meets his mother. Possibly, of all the things he suffered, the most difficult thing for Jesus was to see his mother seeing him. Those who love us suffer with us. Sometimes, because they feel helpless, they suffer worse than we do. We need to know this. We need to know that when we make troubles for ourselves, it is not just us we hurt.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, we thank You for the people who love us. We ask You to help us not make to them suffer because they love us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE FIFTH STATION



Simon helps Jesus to carry the cross. Simon did not know Jesus. He was just a man willing to help. Then he went on his way. As far as we know, he never knew what he had actually done—until he got to heaven. Then he found out that he had helped God to give the world the sign of the cross. What a surprise. And who knows what surprises await us when we get to heaven, if we do good where we can, and we help someone, who helps someone...? It is sure to be something wonderful. After all, God does not waste our good work. Indeed, what He brings out of it is always worth more than what we put into it.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to do what we can, because you never know what will come from it. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE SIXTH STATION



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. What Veronica did was no big deal. After all, if you are bloody and sweaty, and someone wipes your face, you are bloody and sweaty again within seconds. Nonetheless, treated terribly until now, this one woman's kindness must have meant a lot to Jesus. This is often how it is when we are having a bad day, and everyone seems against us. Someone's small act of kindness, one kind word, even a smile, can change our day completely. This is the power that all of us have to encourage each other on our way, doing things we can so easily do.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to recognize that the littlest things can make the biggest difference. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE SEVENTH STATION



Jesus falls the second time. At the third station, we said that we need to learn from our mistakes, get up, and try again. Sometimes we get up, try again, and fall back down. There is no guarantee that we will learn from a mistake the very first time. Indeed, most of the best things we can do were the product of many mistakes. The idea is to keep on trying until we get it.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to keep on trying until we get it. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE EIGHTH STATION



Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem. They were crying at the sight of him. He said to them “...do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children” (Lk.23:28). In other words, at this moment, when Jesus had every reason to feel sorry for himself, instead he was concerned for others. This was love. It was also smart. When we are concerned about other’s troubles, our own troubles seem smaller. Whereas, when we dwell on our own troubles, they always seem bigger.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to care about others even though we have problems of our own. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE NINTH STATION



Jesus falls the third time. At the seventh station, we said that we have to keep on trying until we get it. Sometimes we keep on trying and never get it. Indeed, the best thing we try for, holiness, we never get completely. But this does not mean that we have failed. Life is about growing. And every time we try we grow. The only people who fail in life are those who give up.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to never give up. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE TENTH STATION



Jesus is stripped of his clothes. And it can happen to you. You can be stripped of your clothes. Someone can steal your car. Someone can rob your money. Someone can destroy your house, your career, or even your marriage. Someone can even take your life. Everything you have can be taken, except for the best thing you have—God's love and His guidance of your life. To think of this gives us peace.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to remember that no one can take, and we cannot lose, Your love or our place in Your plan. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE ELEVENTH STATION



Jesus is nailed to the cross. Then the cross was mounted. Now, as those who had put him there were mocking him, Jesus uttered the holiest words in the whole Bible: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Lk.23:34). In other words, “if they knew who I was, they would never have done this. If they had learned better they would not have wanted to do it to anyone.” This is forgiveness at its best. Seeing that people do the best they can with what they were given even when they have hurt us. It is not easy. But this is how God looks at us, and if we want to be like God, we have to try and do the same.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, we ask You to help us to forgive even those who have hurt us because they did not know what they were doing. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

THE TWELFTH STATION



Jesus dies. Jesus died. Then he went to heaven. He gave his life back to God and God gave it back to him in a glorified form. This is Christian life. We discover we got our life from God. Then we give it back, all at once as is sometimes necessary, or day by day as in a life of service. In either case, we return our life to God and He will give it back to us in glory.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to know that death is not the end; it is the beginning of the life that we were made for. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

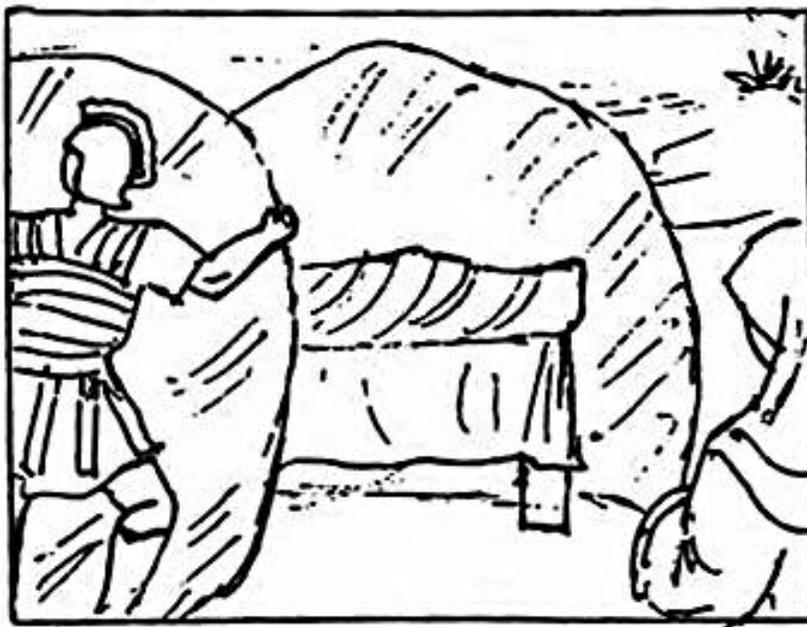
THE THIRTEENTH STATION



Jesus is taken down from the cross. This, surely, was the worst moment in the lives of Jesus' followers. He was their leader, their hero; he was going to change the world. Now he was dead. This, surely, was the worst moment in the lives of his followers. And then came the best moment in their lives. This is often how it goes; our worst moment is followed by our best moment. The reason is simple: Our worst moment is terrible because something has happened and now we know that things are never going to be the same; life here is never going to be all that we had hoped for. But now that the illusion that we can have our heaven here no longer dominates our mind, we are freed to see the truth: Our hope was never here. Where it is, we are still going.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, when all seems lost, help us to understand that nothing has been lost. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

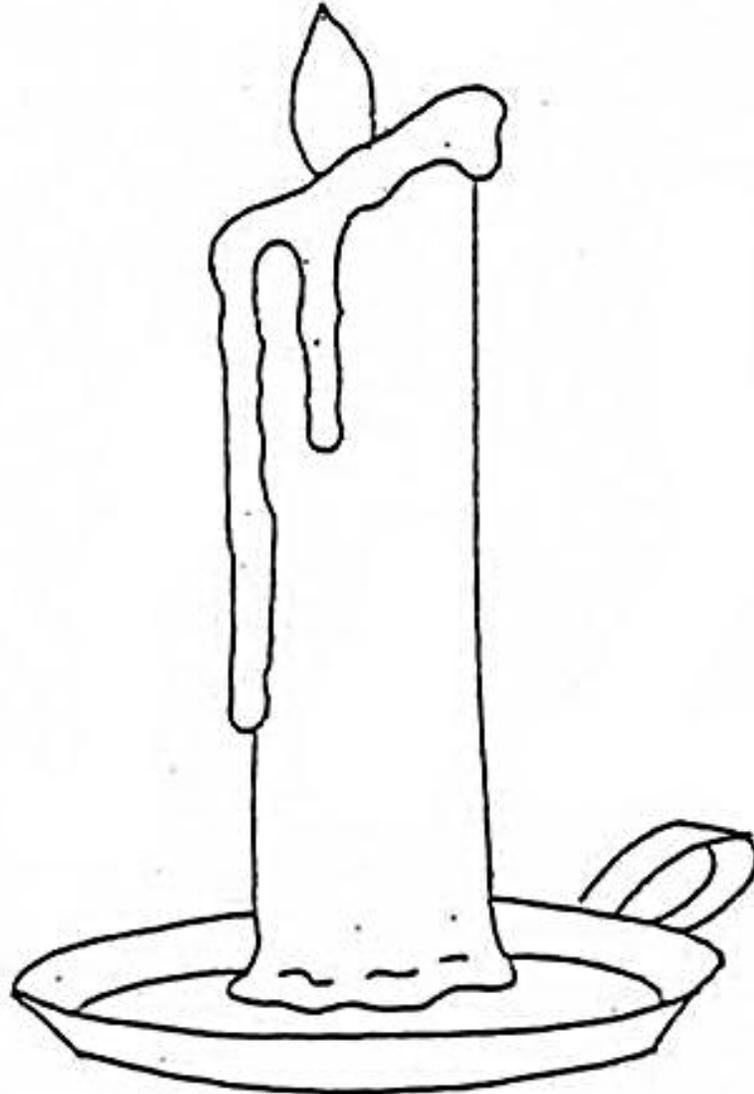
THE FOURTEENTH STATION



Jesus is buried. You meet two kinds of people at burials. Those who run from the grave once the service is over (because they fear death), and those who cannot leave (because they feel that they are leaving their loved one behind). Christians are called to be neither.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, help us to know that we were made for life with You, and to live forever with one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

EPILOG



Jesus' burial may be the last station but it is not the end of the story. Jesus rose. In some places, this is a fifteenth station. But, in all places, *we* are the fifteenth station—the sign that says that Jesus rose, the faith that says that faith is true. And this is our job—to be signs of the truth of faith. And this we are by our holiness and happiness.

LET US PRAY: Almighty God, make us good signs of Jesus' resurrection. In our peace, joy, and love, let others see that faith is true. We ask this through Christ our Lord.