

Prayers for Peace
Reflections on the Way of the Cross

Leader Lord as we prepare for Holy Week by reflecting on your passion and death, help us to seek your way of peace for our troubled world. A peace that seeks security through love, justice, co-operation and respect. A peace that follows your example of mercy and selfless giving.

We reflect on each of the Stations in a series of short prayers.

Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Father, Jesus taught us that though you are just, you are merciful. You do not condemn us for our many faults but encourage us to do better. We live in a judgemental society. Help us not to judge others or to condemn them. May we always speak up for those who are judged and seek to spread compassion and understanding in our world.

(Pause)

Jesus accepts his Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Jesus accepted the heavy burden of the cross. Today millions of children, men and women, loaded with burdens far beyond their strength, are forced to labour in ways that bring them no benefit but only enrich the few, among whom we number ourselves. Father open our eyes to injustice. Give us the strength to struggle on behalf of the oppressed and the courage to speak up for them. Like Jesus, they cannot fight for themselves and have no voice but ours. *(Pause)*

Jesus falls the first time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Jesus fell on a road. In our world today it is so easy to fall – into bad or destructive habits or into debt. Father, make us more alert to the precariousness of so many lives. Help us to work to support those who are vulnerable. *(Pause)*

Jesus meets his mother

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Like Mary, mothers suffer today as they see their children become victims of violence, poverty, unemployment, bad company, illness and so many other problems. Father help us to be compassionate, to be more aware of the sufferings of women around the world, to do what we can to lighten their burdens and to work with those who seek to rescue their children. *(Pause)*

Simon helps Jesus carry his Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Father I have so often fallen and stumbled on my way through life – but there has always been someone to help me to my feet and to set me on the right road again. When I see others bowed down by the weight of their cares and the burdens of daily life may I be ready to go to their help. Let it not be out of a sense of obligation or duty but because I see in them the image of Jesus, who loves and cares for them. *(Pause)*

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Veronica's simple gesture of kindness was rewarded with the imprint of Jesus' face. Lord help us to see your bleeding and bruised face - when eyes fill up with tears, when people are upset, when tensions rise – to see it in the hospitals and in the refugee camps, in those pushed to the margins of society. Give us the courage to step forward and wipe away the tears and the hurt. *(Pause)*

Jesus falls the second time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Lord you carried our sorrows. They brought you to the ground but you struggled on. Give us the strength to carry on when things get difficult and we feel overwhelmed by tragedies in our lives, by the sadness of those we love, by the calamities which beset our world. *(Pause)*

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader All too often we are so taken up with our own problems and needs that we fail to notice those of others. Even in his suffering and pain, stumbling on his way to Calvary, Jesus was aware of the women and children who stood on the roadside and spoke to them with compassion. Help us, like Jesus, to put aside our own troubles and to be more aware of the needs of others. Help us to look with your eyes, to listen with your ears and to reach out with your hands – and to help others to do the same. *(Pause)*

Jesus falls the third time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader At this last fall Jesus is at the end of his strength, feeling that he can go no further. Yet still he struggles to his feet and presses on to his death. Father help us never to give up, never to become discouraged by the enormity of the task – for all things are possible with you. Give us strength to persevere, knowing that you are with us and with all your suffering people every step of the way. *(Pause)*

Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Father, Jesus was stripped of all human dignity and exposed to ridicule by

his torturers. They did not see that in this mangled and bloody body your divine presence was hidden in human form. Help us to see and recognise that you are present in every human person but especially in those who are ill-used and dehumanised and deprived of all human dignity. *(Pause)*

Jesus is crucified

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Even in our day countless women, men and children are brutally killed – executed by evil regimes or struck by indiscriminate bombing and destruction. Lord grant your loving mercy to those killed, injured, bereaved, made homeless by such brutality. Help us to cry out against all forms of terrorism and state killing, remembering that each in each victim it is Jesus who is crucified yet again. *(Pause)*

Jesus dies on the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader On the cross Jesus shared our doubts and fears to the bitter end. Lord we remember those who die every day in ways as terrible as the cross. We pray that they may find peace at the end. We pray too that at the end we may have the faith and trust to commend ourselves into your hands. *(Pause)*

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader We can only imagine the desolation and sadness that must have overwhelmed those who took Jesus' body from the cross. We remember those whose bodies lie scattered on battlefields, and in places turned into rubble by bombs and shells or who have died in refugee camps or from famine or disease – in situations where there is often no-one to give them a dignified burial. Father with you we mourn for them and in each of them we see the lifeless body of your Son lifted down from his Cross. *(Pause)*

Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Lord help us to proclaim the truth of your Cross - that by your suffering we are redeemed, a broken world is healed and all men and women are called into your love. Show us the way from the darkness of Good Friday to the light of Easter. Help us and all our suffering brothers and sisters to rise with you into new life where all sorrow and pain will be wiped away.

Closing Prayer

Leader Father we have reflected on Jesus' painful journey to the Cross.

We put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil, and the power of love to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world free from violence, a new world where fear will no longer lead men and women to commit injustice and

selfishness will no longer bring suffering to others.

We pray especially today that the precarious ceasefire in Syria will become a permanent and lasting peace and that the countries of the Middle East, the places where Jesus walked on this earth, will rebuild and welcome back their sons and daughters scattered across the world.

We pray for the refugees fleeing from war and persecution and stranded in camps or on the borders of countries which have closed their frontiers. We pray that our political leaders will find ways to resolve these situations so that the dignity due to our brothers and sisters is restored and they can rebuild their lives which now hang in the balance.

We pray for all those across the world working daily for peace and to alleviate suffering.

We pray for ourselves that we may have the grace to carry the Cross of salvation in our daily lives and to live and work for the heavenly kingdom which God our loving Father has created for us.

We make our prayer through Jesus our crucified and risen Saviour. Amen

We say the closing blessing together

May the blessing of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all and with our troubled world, now and evermore. Amen

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