

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Meditations prepared by Amanda Livermore

FIRST STATION

The first station: Jesus is condemned to die.

There he stood, my innocent son, once again misjudged although he was free from sin. No one defended him. No one spoke up for him as he stood there. Even his own followers abandoned him as he stood before Pilate condemned to die.

I'll never forget the blood he shed and all the pain he experienced at the hands of the Roman guards. In that, he is in solidarity with any who have ever been beaten, tortured, or imprisoned.

His "yes", surrendering to God's will, ultimately destroyed the power of sin and death. While he was growing up, I told him how I had been graced to say, "Let it be done unto me." I could have never imagined that this would be the sword that would ultimately pierce my heart: to watch my Son say yes to God so completely and fully, for the salvation of the world.

The same crowd who shouted Hosanna now shouts crucify him. Have you ever felt misjudged or unfairly punished? Can you think of a time you were too quick to judge someone else? Write a name or word that reflects these times and offer them as a prayer to God.

SECOND STATION

The second station: Jesus carries his cross

My dear son was forced to carry the cross on which he would be nailed, ridiculed, and executed. Remember what it represents: For this journey he takes carries the weight of all our crosses. He carries our suffering, all the sin in the world - past, present, and future.

Each step he takes, this cross cuts deeply into his already battered shoulders. I can't believe he could even manage a few steps. I was so proud of my son for his strength to carry these burdens, yet each step pierced my heart a little more.

This is for all of us. For each of us. What suffering or sin is he carrying for you today? Write down a word or phrase that reflects what Jesus is carrying for you, and trust that he takes up your cross willingly out of love for you.

THIRD STATION

The third station: Jesus falls for the first time

I can barely express to you what it was like to see my Son fall under the weight of that cross. Everything within me wanted to stop his suffering, but there was nothing I could do. I watched as he crumbled to the ground.

I know now that if he was to enter completely into our lives, he would have to surrender to the crushing weight of the burdens of the world. There are so many people who are overcome by unfair burdens placed upon them. Laying there on the ground, Jesus was one with them, understanding exhaustion.

Where do you find the strength to carry what is sometimes too much to bear? Write a word or phrase that represents a person, place, or activity in which you find strength and encouragement. If you can't think of any, write a request to God asking for a source of strength on your own journey.

FOURTH STATION

The fourth station: Jesus meets his mother

I was desperate to be closer to my son as I weaved my way through the crowd. He saw me, and as our eyes met, I prayed that he could know my thoughts. "I love you son, and I wouldn't change a thing no matter how it hurts me now. I still say yes to you."

I didn't want him to see my tears or feel my pain, because the burdens he was carrying were heavy enough. The love from my heart poured out in the only embrace I could give him as he kept walking.

I understand the pain of any parent who has watched a child suffer. Sometimes, even though it can be so hard, we have to watch our children continue on their own path. Our heavenly Father has a plan for each of them, and we are each called to encourage them along the way.

Write down names of people you are encouraging on the journey. Ask God to give you the graces needed to walk alongside them.

FIFTH STATION

The fifth station: Simon helps Jesus

My son is getting weaker, finding it impossible to carry the weight of the world alone on his human shoulders. I felt helpless as I watched Jesus struggle with the desperate desire to carry this cross for us. My heart wept in gratitude when a man joined Jesus to help him. I wonder how Simon would feel if he understood his part in salvation history.

Jesus shows us that it's ok to ask for help, and he shows us the power of our offering to help others. All of this a part of a greater plan we may not understand. We aren't merely bystanders in the story of salvation, we each have an opportunity to say yes...even when it hurts.

What's your part? Do you find it difficult to ask for help from others? Who has God put in your life as a source of help? Write their names and ask God for the humility to be able to ask others for help.

SIXTH STATION

The sixth station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

It pains me to describe my son's face covered in bruises and swelling from the beatings. As a mother, I felt his humiliation as I saw his blood and sweat dripping from his face. It was a face in solidarity with anyone who has been abused by someone they love. Contemplate the loving face of my son. He still chooses to move forward, empowered by his love for you.

Then a woman came forth from the crowd with such courage. She pushed past the soldiers and wiped his face with her veil. Of how I love her for that simple act of love. In this moment, Jesus recognized that he wasn't abandoned by all who he loved. Someone had reached out and shown compassion to him.

Is there a face in your life that needs extra compassion shown to them? Ask God who it is that needs your love and write their name down as a commitment to reach out to them.

SEVENTH STATION

The seventh station: Jesus falls a second time

When my son fell for a second time, my heart sank. The way he fell to the ground on those hard stones, pain jolted through his entire body. I looked on, wondering if he would be able to make it.

In this fall, we see Jesus as one with all those who suffer from disabilities, weakening and painful illnesses, and aging that is limiting their bodies. Isaiah 63:9 reminds us that "in all their affliction, He was afflicted."

What is something that makes you feel weak? Write down a word or phrase that represents your personal weakness and invite Jesus to be one with you there.

EIGHTH STATION

The eighth station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

This remarkable meeting filled my heart with so much love. Even in all his pain, Jesus takes a moment to console those who are hurting. I had seen him act with such compassion throughout his life, and even now he comforts the women and children of Jerusalem.

Soon, they would understand that his suffering was for them. Know that no matter how bad things seem, God is deeply concerned with your peace. He wants you to be comforted and is reaching out to you to give you his peace.

Where do you need Jesus to bring peace into your life? Write down a word that reflects an area where you need comfort.

NINTH STATION

The ninth station: Jesus falls a third time

I will always remember this final fall. Having endured such a beating, and having lost so much blood, my son simply collapses. I saw him lying there on the ground with his face in the dirt, and worried he was dead. He had nothing left. He knows exactly how it feels to want to give up. Falling over and over can be exhausting, and we may not want to get back up.

The soldiers took no pity on him, yanking him up and demanding his final steps to Calvary. He had to dig deep within his human body to find the strength to go on. When you are feeling overwhelmed by life. Look to my son for perseverance.

Where do you need to persevere in your life? Is there something good that you are tempted to give up because it's too hard? Write down something that you need God's strength for as you persevere.

TENTH STATION

The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped

Hadn't they humiliated him enough? No, they shame him even more by stripping away his clothes before execution. The sword passes through my heart again as I watch my son violated in this way, stripping him of any human dignity he had left. I looked to his body, the wounds exposed for all to see. I wanted to wrap him up the same way I did when he was born, but I couldn't protect him now.

In this moment, Jesus reminds us that he is one with all those who are vulnerable. We cannot be indifferent to their vulnerabilities, but instead reach out and ask God what we can do to help. Where do you feel the most vulnerable? Who else is vulnerable and how can you bring them comfort?

ELEVENTH STATION

The eleventh station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

I remember him lying on the cross with his arms outstretched, the sound of the hammer hitting the nails echoing in the silence. The same precious hands from which I pulled splinters as he worked with his father, now have nails piercing them.

I will never forget one hand, then the other, then his feet...enjoined to the cross of all sin, then lifted high so that you can be freed from the slavery of sin. The pain he felt was incomparable so you could have the hope of an eternity free from all pain and suffering.

Who do you know who is in extreme pain or suffering now? Write their name and ask Jesus to pour his grace out upon them as he joins them in their suffering.

TWELFTH STATION

The twelfth station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

The sword of helplessness pierced my heart in two as I watched my son struggle to breathe, pulling himself up to let air out of his lungs. With incredible courage and compassion, he spoke of mercy and love to those hanging by his side.

There on that cross, he gave me to John, and he gave me to you, to be your mother and help you navigate through the sorrows of your life as you find your way to him. I am one of the many gifts he has given you so that you might know him better.

After he gave himself into the hands of the Father, he took his last breath and died. It is unforgettable to watch life leave the body of someone you love. Join me at the foot of the cross and feel the love of my son pour out from his heart into yours.

THIRTEENTH STATION

The thirteenth station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

We waited what seemed like an eternity before we had permission to take Jesus's lifeless body off that cross. Someone removed that horrible crown of thorns from his head. I pulled his hair back and wiped his face clean as I held him one last time.

My son. My strong, faithful son.. This wasn't fair. How could this be part of God's plan? My grief overtook me as I help the body of the person I loved most in the world. There, at the foot of the cross, my heart was torn with grief. Even then, I was given the grace to trust in God's promise. So there, holding the broken body of my son, I asked only to be God's servant for what was ahead.

Think of a time when all has seemed lost. Even in the darkest times, can we find hope? Where do you need the grace of hope in your life?

FOURTEENTH STATION

The fourteenth station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

No mother should ever have to bury her child. The pain of this unnatural reality is too much to bear. I remember that only a few days earlier, Jesus looked into the tomb of Lazarus, and I wonder how he felt knowing that he would be in his own tomb soon.

Outside the tomb of Lazarus he consoled others saying, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live." These words again brought consolation as I stood outside the tomb.

As the stone was rolled, sealing off the entrance, many wondered how the story could end this way. My son had promised so much more. And in only three days, more than anyone could have imagined was given to us.

Death is not the end, but an invitation to new life. What are the things in my life that I need to die to in order to be reborn in hope and freedom?