Opening Prayer

(All rise as the ministers enter and process to stand in front of the crucifix while facing it.)

All: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,

Leader: Lord Jesus, you came to teach us how to live
with great love and compassion.
In the end, you were crucified
for your faithfulness to your Father
and his laws of love.

All: We gather to commemorate your suffering
on that last day in Jerusalem
so that it will not have been in vain.
You faced your death with great courage and acceptance
and we want to learn from that.

Leader: We, too, have crosses to carry in our own lives.
Teach us how to carry them
with dignity and endurance
as you did.

All: Amen.
Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Leader 1: Pontius Pilate sensed that there was something unusual about this prisoner who had been brought before him (Mt 27:11-26). Pilate was reluctant to condemn Jesus, realizing that he had been handed over “out of jealousy,” and warned by his wife that Jesus was innocent. Yet in the face of a crowd that threatened to become violent, Pilate literally washed his hands of the situation and declared himself not responsible for Jesus’ death, even as he ordered Jesus to be flogged and then crucified.

All: Christ Jesus, give us the strength and courage to speak out and act against injustice.

Leader 2: Pontius Pilate did not have the strength to stand up to evil and so he became an accomplice to it. He took the easy way out and gave in to what the crowd wanted rather than rendering justice. He could have set Jesus free. Instead, he condemned him to a torturous death.

Two thousand years later, we must ask ourselves: have we sometimes been an accomplice to evil because we did not stand up to it? Have we remained silent or reacted out of fear rather than standing up with courage when popular opinion condones intolerance, hatred, or violence? Have we condemned Jesus all over again, by condemning others?

All: Jesus, help us to stand firm for peace and compassion when fear, hatred, or rage threatens to sweep us away.
The Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus never asks us to do anything that he wouldn’t do himself. He forgave those who crucified him. He welcomed the outcasts, and he did not pass judgment on the woman caught in adultery. He even took up his own cross, a heavy load of wood for someone who has already been beaten, mocked, and spit upon, and he begins to carry it himself.

All: Christ Jesus, forgive us for laying crosses on the shoulders of other people.

Leader 2: Jesus said “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it” (Lk 9:23-24). We worship a God who became human and did not attempt to escape any of the physical pain or mental anguish that humans experience. We all have our own crosses to bear: injury or illness, the loss of a loved one, unemployment, a housing crisis, a major move, worry for a parent or a child. We can bear them knowing that Jesus knows what it is like.

All: Lord Jesus, give us the strength to bear our own crosses. Help us to know your presence with us in our pain.
Leader: The Third Station: Jesus falls for the first time. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Leader 1: For Jesus’ friends and followers who had seen him teaching and working miracles with such authority, watching him fall under the weight of his cross must have been terribly distressing. A man in the prime of his life just a day earlier is now so frail and weak that he crashes to the ground. He had fed 5,000 hungry people, cured paralytics, and raised Lazarus from the dead, but now he falls, unable to muster the strength to stay on his feet. This is a very, very human Jesus.

All: Christ Jesus, we, too, sometimes falter under the weight of the crosses we must bear. When we do fall, give us the strength to rise up again.

Leader 2: God the Father doesn’t send angels to bear Jesus up. No, God allows him to fall without coming to his rescue. If we couldn’t believe in Jesus’ humanity before this, we are able to see it now. Like anyone else in that situation, Jesus was crushed under the weight of something no human could bear.

All: Jesus, help us to know that you never abandon us, even when we fall under the weight of the crosses we must bear.
Opening Prayer

We gather to commemorate your suffering on that last day in Jerusalem so that it will not have been in vain. You faced your death with great courage and acceptance and we want to learn from that.

Station Introduction

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

1 Jesus is Condemned to Death

1: Christ Jesus, give us the strength and courage to speak out and act against injustice.

2: Jesus, help us to stand firm for peace and compassion when fear, hatred, or rage threatens to sweep us away.

2 Jesus Takes Up His Cross

1: Christ Jesus, forgive us for laying crosses on the shoulders of other people.

2: Lord Jesus, give us the strength to bear our own crosses. Help us to know your presence with us in our pain.

3 Jesus Falls for the First Time

1: Christ Jesus, we, too, sometimes falter under the weight of the crosses we must bear. When we do fall, give us the strength to rise up again.

2: Jesus, help us to know that you never abandon us, even when we fall under the weight of the crosses we must bear.

4 Jesus Meets His Mother

1: Mary, teach us to stand as a witness to the suffering of others, so that they know they are not alone.

2: Mary, Mother of Sorrows, teach us your compassion and love for all those who are suffering.

5 Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

1: Everyone in this world has a cross to bear, visible or invisible. Help us to be more aware of those carrying heavy burdens so that we may help them on their road.

2: Jesus, may we be witnesses of compassion and mercy as we share the burdens of others.

6 Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

1: Thank you, Lord, for all the people who have not been afraid to be near me in my times of suffering and have helped to ease my pain.

2: Help me, Lord, to recognize your face in the faces of all those who are suffering and in anguish. Grant me the courage to reach out to them.

7 Jesus Falls for the Second Time

1: Jesus, you know the pain of people who are still being tortured today. May we do everything in our power to intervene.

2: Jesus, help us to see and respond to those experiencing great suffering so that in responding to them we respond to you.
8 Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

1: Give us the courage, Lord, to speak out against injustice and to stand by the suffering victims.

2: Lord, let us never become so hardened that we are not moved in the face of another person’s pain.

9 Jesus Falls for the Third Time

1: Jesus, grant that we may provide strength for others who have fallen.

2: Jesus, grant us the strength to rise up and continue on our paths when we have fallen.

10 Jesus is Stripped of his Garments

1: Jesus, open our eyes to how you are being stripped of your dignity even now when the least of your brothers and sisters are stripped of theirs.

2: Lord Jesus, help us to see how we contribute to your passion by causing others to suffer. Grant us the courage and the integrity to change our ways.

11 Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

1: Jesus, grant that we may never grow callous to your suffering in this world today.

2: Jesus, give us the strength to stand with those who are in pain so that they may know at least the comfort of our presence.

12 Jesus Dies on the Cross

1: God, help us to know your presence with us, even in our times of deepest darkness.

2: Jesus, give us the strength to go on, even in our times of deepest despair.

13 Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

1: Mary, Mother of Sorrows, thank you for your faithfulness.

2: Mary, Mother of Sorrows, give us courage and fortitude in the face of unspeakable pain.

14 Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

1: God of life and God of death, let us know your presence when we feel that life will never be able to come out of death.

2: God of life and God of death, give us hope and trust in the resurrection, even in our darkest moments.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, help us to see your face in the lives of those who are struggling.

May we always look to you for strength as we endure our own trials.

We ask that you grant us trust that suffering and death will not have the last word because of your death and resurrection.

We pray this all in your name.

Amen.
We gather to commemorate your suffering on that last day in Jerusalem so that it will not have been in vain.

You faced your death with great courage and acceptance and we want to learn from that.

The First Station

Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

Christ Jesus, give us the strength and courage to speak out and act against injustice.

Jesus, help us to stand firm for peace and compassion when fear, hatred, or rage threatens to sweep us away.
The Second Station

Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

Christ Jesus, forgive us for laying crosses on the shoulders of other people.

Lord Jesus, give us the strength to bear our own crosses. Help us to know your presence with us in our pain.

The Third Station

Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

Jesus, help us to know that you never abandon us, even when we fall under the weight of the crosses we must bear.

Christ Jesus, we, too, sometimes falter under the weight of the crosses we must bear. When we do fall, give us the strength to rise up again.
Bearing the Cross
TODAY

We gather to commemorate your suffering on that last day in Jerusalem so that it will not have been in vain.

You faced your death with great courage and acceptance and we want to learn from that.

The First Station
Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

Christ Jesus, give us the strength and courage to speak out and act against injustice.

Jesus, help us to stand firm for peace and compassion when fear, hatred, or rage threatens to sweep us away.
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