



"COMPASSION"

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

O P E N I N G P R A Y E R

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

Mt 20:18-19: "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and
the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief
priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to
death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles
to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the
third day he will be raised."

1ST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

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

*R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed
the world.*

Mt 27:1: "When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord Jesus Christ, for You — who brought the Good News to the world — this morning brought no good news. You were condemned to death on the Cross. You, who came to save the world, experienced its cruelty and heartlessness.

Lord, You continue to be condemned to death in every innocent person killed. Where Your light is missing, people who have not experienced Your love commit acts that mortally wound Your heart. Innocent children are killed, their parents bereaved — people whose peaceful dawn was torn apart by the harsh sound of a ballistic missile. Broken lives, scattered children's clothes, family portraits — fragments that only yesterday formed the harmonious wholeness of life gifted by You — have today been ruthlessly taken in this horrific war.

Knowing You awaited judgment and death, You understand this painful human suffering most deeply. The blood dripping from Your brow in Gethsemane is the blood on the brows of all who suffer innocently. You are with them. Your heart holds all their pain and sorrow.

We bow before You, O Savior condemned to death. Our hearts are pressed against Your suffering heart. We wish to walk this path with You.

Let us pray for all the innocent victims of war who today share the fate of Christ, condemned to death.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

A wooden Church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Zhytomyr region was destroyed in 2022 due to Russian shelling. © Viacheslav Ratynskyi.



2ND STATION

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS



Viktor Openko lost his leg while helping evacuate civilians during a deadly Russian shelling attack in the Sumy Region in 2024.

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jn 19:17: "... and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You lift up the cross. The wood of the cross is the weight of all suffering, sin, and human frailty. In this cross, all our crosses are united — for You take them upon Yourself.

You take upon Yourself the crosses imposed by war. How heavy they are! You know this, Lord, for You carry them alongside everyone who bears a burden. To orphaned children who have lost their parents during the war — You are their Father and Provider. To the wives of fallen defenders — You are their Support. To the defenders facing death — You are their Guardian and Shield. To the families waiting for their loved ones — You care for their every worry. To people who have lost their homes because of shelling — You are their Home. To all who carry the crushing weight of war — You carry their cross.

What is it like to walk with the yoke of the cross, the burden of the Cross? To be misunderstood by others. To feel loneliness in the midst of a crowd. To tremble with pain. To weep more often than to laugh. To feel a desperate need for support — yet lack the strength even to ask for it ...

Lord, You take upon Yourself the cross of everyone who suffers. We thank You!

Let us pray for all whose crosses are united today with the Cross of Christ through the suffering of war.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

3RD STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME UNDER THE CROSS

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Isa 53:5: "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."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You fall for the first time under the weight of the Cross. Your fall is witnessed with pain by all those who love You. In the crowd are many for whom You have done boundless good – bringing salvation, healing, casting out unclean spirits. Many in the crowd love You dearly. But Your love is greater, for You loved first. That is why You endure this burden of the cross, even as You fall beneath it.

In the same way, the mother with young children falls – exhausted after weeks without a word from her husband, collapsing from fear, uncertainty, and fatigue. So falls the family of the fallen, dropping to their knees in prayer for the one they love and have lost. So falls the rescuer, spent after a night spent clearing rubble under threat of shelling in search of survivors. You know these moments of falling; You felt it, as the God-man, falling for the very first time under the weight of the Cross.

What is it like to fall under the weight of the Cross? To tremble under the burden. To feel pain. To be utterly defenseless. To be mortally sorrowful. To feel as though one cannot rise again under the immensity of suffering.

You know every human fall, Lord – and You suffer with us. Glory to You!

Let us pray for all who fall from exhaustion, fear, and pain while carrying the cross of war.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

A boy in the town of Zolochiv looking at the Charity Convoy that brought care packages to their parish in May 2022.



4TH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



Mother and son at Dinner for Widows in Ivano-Frankivsk pray with other orphaned families at the Memorial Service for fallen defenders in January 2024.

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jn 19:26: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You meet Your Mother. Whose heart breaks more than hers? What faith one must have to endure this moment of ultimate suffering. Who understands the depths of human pain better than she – especially the suffering of a mother's heart?

Mothers experience their own Calvary when they receive the terrible news of their sons' deaths. Those who lose a child or a loved one are left with a vast void in their hearts that nothing earthly can fill...

Ukrainian cemeteries, especially in large cities, have become places filled with life – with longing for loved ones. The presence of relatives, the gifts brought to the graves, the ever-burning candles, candies from children, toys, letters from beloveds – and above all, the smiling faces of young people on the gravestone photographs. The smiles of those who desperately wanted to live, who desperately did not want to fight. There is a saying in Ukraine: "Every flag in the cemetery also wanted to see its children grow." You, Mary, understand the pain of those who have lost their protectors.

What is it like to close one's eyes in the moment of greatest suffering? When there is no way to help those you love, the heart constricts with pain. It feels as though it is tearing apart, and only faith in eternal life – and the presence of You, God, and Your Mother, who suffer alongside us – provides help.

Lord and Mother of God, You know suffering more than anyone. Give strength to those who suffer.

Let us pray for mothers who have lost their children.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

5TH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Lk 23:27: "A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, on the way, You meet Simon of Cyrene, who is ordered to carry Your cross. At first, he does so reluctantly, under compulsion. He has received a grace he has not yet discovered for himself — the grace to help bear the burden of the Innocent One who suffers unbearably. He does not yet understand that within this compassion there is a hidden gift, given to him not through coercion, but as an act of divine love.

Is this not how those who only yesterday had no plans to help anyone now encounter the needs of refugees and displaced persons? Busy with their own affairs, attending to the most urgent matters, caring for their own — yet the suffering nearby becomes a call to help carry the Cross. Through someone's tearful and tired eyes, through someone who has lost a home or loved ones, through someone who suffers in silence — how does the call for empathy knock on your heart?

Do you remember that it is none other than Christ Himself who suffers? It is from His brow that the drops of blood flow. It is He who is thirsty. It is He who is hungry. It is He who needs clothing. He is fleeing from war. He is sick. He is in captivity. He gives His life for His friends. One day, by this, He will recognize us.

Lord, You who suffer from war in my neighbor, grant me the grace to help You carry the Cross.

Let us pray for all who today help carry the cross of the suffering.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.



Brother Knights unload care packages with Charity Convoy in Kherson in January 2023.

6TH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF CHRIST



A Sister from the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy distributes rosaries to refugees at the Hrebenne Mercy Center in March 2022.

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Ps 69:20: "Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, on Your way, You meet Veronica. She wished to wipe Your face, and in return she received Your image, which You left for her. Her courage — to approach You despite all threats — was driven by great love.

Merciful love — *agape* — gives one the courage to forget oneself. To step out before the crowd. To perform a gesture of mercy when everything around is filled with violence. To express love to one who is persecuted. It takes great courage, in the moment of an innocent person's suffering, to come before His face — not to flee, not to hide, but to look into His eyes and stretch out a helping hand.

What is it like, Lord, to find the courage to forget oneself and to love with a merciful and pure love? To practice long-suffering. To reject envy and pride. Never to expect evil. Not to be quick to anger, and not to seek only one's own. To do no wrong and to rejoice in the truth. To never stop loving.

Lord, show me the face of my suffering neighbor, before whom I must forget myself.

Let us pray for those who step out of the crowd for the sake of love.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

7TH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Ps 35:15-16: "But at my stumbling they gathered in glee, they gathered together against me; ruffians whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing; they impiously mocked more and more, gnashing at me with their teeth..."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You fall a second time under the weight of the cross. Your second fall, Lord, reminds us that strength leaves even those who courageously follow their mission. Even those who fight bravely. The weight of the cross relentlessly presses You to the ground...

In the struggle against the threats of war, when you did not choose war, your only mission is to fight and to have hope. Volunteers, all people of good will, defenders who every day choose to actively protect the weakest, medical workers, chaplains, priests — everyone on the first line of aid, and the second, and the third... When you fall from exhaustion, pain, and from the burdens that lie like a heavy cross upon your shoulders, in the first moment it seems as though you will never be able to rise again.

But Your second fall, Lord, paradoxically helps us to stand up. On the path to fulfilling one's calling. When looking death in the eye. When you have no certainty that your strength will be enough. On a road that seems to have no end.

Lord, I believe that You are present in this journey along the path of suffering, walking with everyone who faithfully carries the cross of their mission to a saving end.

Let us pray for all who are exhausted by war, yet remain faithful to their calling.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

A resident of Chernihiv looks at a destroyed house as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in July 2022.



8TH STATION

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



Mother and child at Dinner for Widows in Ivano-Frankivsk pray at the Memorial Service for fallen defenders in January 2024.

*V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Lk 23:28: "But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You meet the women of Jerusalem. Tears that cloud their vision. Compassion that prevents them from remaining indifferent. Despair that cries out to Heaven. But You, Lord, turn their gaze toward the state of their own hearts. You call them to a deep inner conversion, and to tears of repentance.

It is so difficult not to slide into despondency when there is nothing but trials and suffering all around. The war allows no breath to be drawn. The countless duties of everyone involved. A multi-day, seemingly endless fatigue. Working on the edge, where strength has long since run out — yet strength remains, for it must remain as long as life continues and must be protected. The incessant chains of life-support: aiding the victims, supporting the orphaned, trying to keep up with everything. And the tears of all who suffer — tears beyond numbering.

What is it like, Lord, to weep for ourselves? You call us to a deep inner conversion. To a transformation of the heart. So that deep within the most secret reservoir of the human conscience, we may stand before You and ask for the strength to endure the trial.

Lord, grant that we may cooperate with Your grace, so that our tears may be a repentance for our sins.

Let us pray for those who, in the midst of war, are called to an inner conversion of heart.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

9TH STATION

JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Ps 143:3-4: "For the enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground, making me sit in darkness like those long dead. Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You fall under the cross a third time. This third fall is the hardest. You are exhausted; Your strength is gone. What a desperate effort You must have endured at this moment. A struggle at the very edge of what is possible...

This fall of Yours, Lord, reminds us of the suffering of all those held captive and imprisoned under occupation. You understand them, for You Yourself had to pass through this senseless cruelty. You bear within Yourself all the pain of those who suffer. You know this without words; You understand everything.

What is it like to be with You in this third fall? When the pain becomes more than one can bear. When suffering exhausts the soul. Meditating upon Your fall and Your path to Calvary ignites hope somewhere deep in the heart – for we know that ahead lies the Resurrection.

Lord, grant faith, strength, and endurance to all those suffering in captivity and under occupation.

Let us pray for all who suffer in captivity and under occupation.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

Ukraine State Deputy lays flowers in Ternopil where a Russian missile killed 38 people on November 19, 2025.



10TH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



A woman with children walks through the deoccupied city of Irpin in 2022.

*V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.
R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jn 19:24: "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 fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, the soldiers divide Your garments. The prophecy is fulfilled; they cast lots for Your clothes. This mockery took nothing from Your glory; rather, it was their own humiliation and dishonor. Of course, it seemed different to them – in their arrogance or thoughtlessness, they ridiculed You, not yet knowing that before them stood the Lord Himself.

War mocks and humiliates through its destruction. It has no meaning. It is the absence of love. It comes from the hands of those who perhaps do not know God or who have not recognized Him. That is why prayer for the conversion of sinners is so necessary, for only God can change the hearts of those who commit iniquity.

You know, Lord, what it is like to be despised and mocked. Grant us the strength to endure in the face of a war that ruthlessly kills and tramples upon human dignity. When others despise the robes of human dignity, grant us the gift of persistent prayer for those who have not known You.

Lord, through baptism, You have given us the finest garment; grant that through faith and prayer for the conversion of those who commit iniquity, we may guard it as our greatest treasure, so that we may be like You.

Let us pray for the conversion of hearts – especially of those who commit evil.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

11TH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Mt 27:37-40: "Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, Your hands and feet are nailed to the cross. These are the hands that healed, blessed, and raised all who were in need. Those feet that traveled long distances to preach the Gospel and call all to salvation.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Your suffering, Lord, is caused by our sins. There is an ancient church hymn in Ukraine with the words: "It was not the nails, but my sin that nailed You." Understanding this evokes deep humility. Understanding this becomes a call to profound inner conversion.

Priests and military chaplains often speak of the defenders who every day give their lives to protect the country using these very words: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." They choose not to see their families for long months, and not to see how their children grow, so that they might be protected. To give all one's skills, talents, abilities, time, and strength so that life may continue. They give their lives literally, shielding others with themselves to save them from evil and destruction. Your love makes the hearts of people like unto Yours, even to this point of radical sacrifice.

Lord, You loved us even unto death on the Cross; by Your grace, grant us the strength to love as You do, despite everything.

Let us pray for all defenders who, out of love, give themselves so others may live.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.



12TH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



A Bible burned after the Russian shelling of the Caritas warehouse in Lviv in the fall of 2023.

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jn 19:28-30: "After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You die on the Cross. *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* — You pray for those who crucified You. *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* — You cry out, even as You Yourself feel utterly forsaken. Lord, it is finished!

Humanly, it is impossible to fathom Your sacrifice. Even the most faithful disciples suffered a trial of faith, sorrow, a paralysis of their entire being, flight, and fear... Your death shook the whole world, even causing the sun to darken. But the promises of God are certain; His faithfulness is forever. And Your passing is only the beginning.

When death seems omnipresent and when mourning is constant. When you hear the sound of a missile and know that it carries a threat to life... You speak the quiet words of prayer differently: *"I believe in the resurrection of the dead!"* Perhaps very slowly, with great heartache and the suffering of separation, you look toward Heaven, awaiting the resurrection of the dead and Your second and glorious coming.

Lord, grant that in the face of death, we may bow in prayer, to surrender our hearts in trust into the embrace of Your sacrificial love.

Let us pray for all who today stand before the face of death, that they may not lose hope in the resurrection.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

13TH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Mt 27:57-58: "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."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You are taken down from the Cross and given to Your Mother. The Mother of God, who once said "Yes!", now receives the body of her beloved Son into her arms. What profound pain must have pierced her motherly heart. It was a moment when it was hardest of all to comprehend everything that was happening.

O Virgin Mother of God, You kept all these things in Your heart. Even now, did You steadfastly believe that this was not yet the end? Even now, when it seemed — when it truly looked — as if everything was over, could You still hold everything in Your heart, from the very beginning?

When it feels as though the world has collapsed. When it has collapsed. Help us, Lord, by Your grace, to be like Mary — to help all those whose world collapses daily to endure. Amid the ruins, death, endless suffering, and struggle, grant us to be faithful like the Mother of God. Even when tears cloud our vision and pain rends the heart, grant us to be like the Mother of God, who kept everything in her heart with great love and trust.

Lord, in moments of suffering at the limit of our strength, grant us to remember that this is not the end of the story, but only the beginning.

Let us pray for all mothers who have suffered the pain of losing a child.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

A girl at a ceremony awarding McGivney Scholarships at Zviahel to children who lost their parents as a result of the war in September 2025.



14TH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



Archbishop William Lori prays at the memorial in Bucha in October 2024, on the site of the mass grave of Ukrainians tortured by Russians.

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

R/. Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Lk 23:50-53: "Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid."

Brief pause for silence.

Lord, You are laid in the tomb. The tomb in which You were placed was prepared by Joseph of Arimathea. It was an expression of deep reverence for Your holy body at a moment when it seemed that all was over. Sorrow and dejection tore at the disciples' hearts. Yet there was also a great love that gave them no rest. Prayer and vigil were mingled with fear and anxiety, but also with trust. Somewhere, the seeds of faith that You had sown in their hearts were beginning to sprout.

At this time, when death seems to reign, and only war and hopelessness surround us, grant us, Lord, to see that You are the One who has conquered death by death. You have overcome death, and Your Good News paves the way for us, through You, to eternal life.

Today, the disciples do not yet know of Your Resurrection. The women have not yet gone to the tomb. They have not yet run to tell the others that You are not there. There has been no Mary, no John, no Thomas asking to see the wounds, no road to Emmaus. Today is still the trial of faith.

When the sky darkens over the heads of those who only yesterday had homes and cities. When the flashes of explosions pierce the night horizon. When relatives weep over the fallen. The struggle demands superhuman effort, and fear and despondency knock at the hearts of the suffering. Strength leaves the exhausted, and it seems that only hopelessness lies ahead. Injustice clouds vision, and breathing becomes difficult.

Lord, let them remember Your Resurrection.

Let them remember that You are the Just Judge and that You do not abandon those who suffer innocently. Let them remember that You are near — that in You are victory and salvation.

Lift up, Lord, by the power of Your grace, the hearts of those who today are still pained, today still mortally sorrowful, today still...

So that tomorrow they may meet You, the Risen One, and that You may resurrect within us faith, love, and hope.

Lord, we thank You. Be glorified in Your death and Your glorious Resurrection.

Let us pray for all who today live in the silence between death and the hope of resurrection.

Our Father...

Stabat Mater...

O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered for us, have mercy on us.

R E S U R R E C T I O N P R A Y E R

V/. Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, we thank You for the gift of salvation through the suffering and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to carry our own crosses daily and follow Him with faith, hope, and love.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.