

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

I. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DIE

Prayer to Jesus: Lord Jesus, in your vocation as our Savior, you were called to give your whole self, dying to your own will, so as to accomplish your Father's. We praise you, Lord for accepting humbly what you were called to do. Though innocent, you were condemned to die –for our sins—that we might live forever!

Intercession: Merciful Lord, we ask you to show those called to priestly ministry how to courageously respond. Though the world cannot see this sublime gift—some even condemn it as a “waste” —you always call men to follow you as a priest. Be their light and show them how to die to self. Let your perfect love cast out fear.

II. JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS

Prayer to Jesus: Christ our Great High Priest, the altar of your eternal sacrifice was the wood to which you would be nailed. We are in awe of the strength you had to embrace your cross. As you call each of your disciples to “take up your cross and follow me,” let us offer our sacrifices for the intention of priestly vocations.

Intercession: King of the Cross, sweet Jesus, we glorify your name for all time. We pray now for the priests who bear heavy crosses in their ministry. For the pastors who are overwhelmed with their responsibilities; for bishops facing a decreased number of clergy, for sick and retired priests who suffer. Accept their sincere prayers and renew the grace of their vocations.

III. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Prayer to Jesus: O, Christ Jesus, falling under the weight of your cross, as your knees buckle, we magnify your glorious Passion, undertaken for us. Scripture tells us, at your name “every knee shall bend on the earth and under the earth...” Whenever we bow our head or genuflect in your presence, may we grow in awe of your supreme sacrifice.

Intercession: Falling Lord, may we see in your bloody, scourged body a reminder of the sins of impurity which wound you still. By your holy wounds, may your Church pray for those called to priesthood, applicants and seminarians, for a pure love lived in chastity, in reparation through your saving wounds.

IV. JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Prayer to Jesus: Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, what tender eyes of grief met yours on that road to Calvary: Our Blessed Lady. As the mother of the perfect priest, how anguished was her Immaculate Heart. No words can describe the sorrow, where your Passion met her compassion.

Intercession: O Savior, we intercede for the mothers of our priests, living and deceased. Only you know the influence a mother’s faith and support mean in discernment of a vocation and life of a priest. Jesus, stir up deep reservoirs of hope for the mothers of those who have yet to discern the call to priesthood. Show them how to imitate Our Lady in her holy motherhood.

**V. SIMON HELPS JESUS
CARRY HIS CROSS**

Prayer to Jesus: O Suffering Servant of God, fulfillment of all prophecy and law, you gave your back to those who beat you, your face to those who plucked your beard. Then, with Divine dignity you accepted the assistance of Simon who was pressed into service. We praise you that none of your disciples have ever borne a cross alone, and pray that priests will be courageous in reaching out in love to assist their people in carrying the cross.

Intercession: Lord we pray with all our hearts for those who work to support priestly vocations. For those who serve as spiritual directors, for the brother priests and bishops who offer fraternal guidance. We pray also for the ministry of vocation directors and seminary spiritual formation teams. Let every opportunity to be another Simon give glory to Christ Our King!

**VI. VERONICA WIPES THE
FACE OF JESUS**

Prayer to Jesus: O Jesus, with a simple yet profound gesture, Veronica became a true icon of holy friendship as well as humble service. Amid all the cries of mockery and jeering surrounding you, your Father sent a moment of relief. Ever since that day, millions have seen your face in the suffering, and heard your call to serve them.

Intercession: Prince of Peace, we intercede also for the many lay ministers who serve the Church alongside our priests. For the married disciples whose vocation complements the priests' in building Church family. For single, divorced and widowed members of the Church who are generous stewards of their gifts. May they intercede, too, that men being called to be "Father" will respond with "Yes, Lord, I come to do your will!"

VII. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Prayer to Jesus: Lord of all creation, your Body's weakness under the cross takes you to the ground again. Your falling constitutes the effect of sin's burden. But you were sinless, so that as sinners who recall your Calvary journey we are reminded of our share in the guilt you bore. Lord, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world!

Intercession: Jesus, we ask you to pour out an abundance of your Mercy through our priests as they celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. As we ponder your Cross and the sacrifice that won our redemption, we pray for the healing ministry of those you use as your own voice, offering forgiveness. Send us more workers for the vineyard, we pray!

VIII. CHRIST MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Prayer to Jesus: Compassionate Christ, thank you for the gift of the holy women in our lives and in your Church. When your eyes met theirs on the way of the Cross, your sisters wept for their deep love of you. Many of them would follow you all the way to Golgotha—how inspiring is their faithful witness.

Intercession: Lord, as your family we now pray for the women religious, consecrated virgins, the sisters in Christ who collaborate with our priests. Help them rejoice in the ways their vocations interact with priestly ministry. May their mutual respect and common quest for holiness be a beacon of joy to those who today will hear the call to ordained priesthood.

**IX. JESUS FALLS THE
THIRD TIME**

Prayer to Jesus: O, Suffering Savior, as you dragged your cross closer to the place of crucifixion, you must have strained to climb the hill where you would die. Yet your powerful Love, after a third fall, would carry on. Lord, help us resemble you in perseverance, as we daily listen to your call to take up our cross and follow you.

Intercession: Lord Jesus, there are some who first heard your call to priesthood early in life, perhaps as children. For whatever reasons, they may not as yet have shared that with anyone. Lord, we trust that your call is permanent and we believe that your grace is sufficient. May our prayers of intercession help those discerning a vocation recognize your voice and appreciate the awesome gift you offer!

**X. JESUS IS STRIPPED
OF HIS GARMENTS**

Prayer to Jesus: O, Emmanuel, you revealed by your suffering and death the fathomless love of the Father. As the guards stripped you of your clothing, their efforts to humiliate you backfired. What was revealed were the ‘stripes’ you took for our salvation. At your birth, you were wrapped in swaddling clothes. Now, your garments are torn away—preparation for the greatest act of selfless love ever seen: your saving death and resurrection.

Intercession: Christ, we adore you and praise you for offering yourself on Calvary. We ask you to reveal each person’s true vocation by stripping away the layers of excuses we sometimes use to avoid your call. Yet, unlike the way you were stripped, you gently un-veil the plan for your own with respect for our free will. Jesus, show those called to priesthood the fullness of grace you bestow when they respond in trust.

XI. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Prayer to Jesus: O Lamb of God, who submitted to this cruel way of dying, the nails that pierced your hands and feet were unwitting tools of the executioners. Your crown mocked your majesty, and the sign over your head calling you “King of the Jews” pointed to the depth of human blindness to your true identity.

Intercession: Crucified Jesus, on this hill, the hands and feet that healed are pierced for our transgressions. Yet how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who walk in your footsteps, the hands that are anointed with Sacred Chrism for priestly ministry. Let the profound significance of ordained service affirm those called; your priest-brothers who answer your call.

XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Prayer to Jesus: Obedient one, love incarnate, your agony and pain conclude with a surrender of your very soul. One of your last words, “it is finished,” *could* have been the end. In the temple, the sanctuary curtain was torn in two, as if your Father tore his own garment in grief. No life...or death...would ever be the same....

Intercession: With your Mother and beloved disciple at the foot of your cross, Jesus, you died. As they prayed, they heard your surrender. May the prayers of the Mother of God and St. John bring about many more loving surrenders to your call to holy priesthood in our day. Only Christ-like surrender can enter his eternal priesthood and share in its grace. Lord, hear our prayer!

XIII. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Prayer to Jesus: Lord of all, as your body was removed in silence, tradition holds that you were placed in Our Lady's arms. The body that would soon be raised in Glory appears broken and defeated. When we're tempted to lose hope for future priestly vocations, be a light in our darkest days.

Intercession: Jesus, your priesthood assures the Church of your presence in a very personal way. Without our priests, we would not have the Holy Eucharist. We implore you to draw all hearts to your Real Presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament, May your people feel compelled to pray for priests, to affirm their vocations. And may we encourage our sons, brothers and neighbors who may have this calling to prayerfully listen to your voice.

XIV. JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Prayer to Jesus: O, Christ, your placement in the tomb was a sign of respect from those who loved you. Joseph of Arimathea gave them a place to put your body, but three days later, tombs would never be seen in the same way! We praise, you, Jesus, for the way sorrow turned to glory! Fill us with your hope, now and forever. Amen!

Intercession: Jesus, priest above all others, obedience brought you through your Passion to death. But your saving story goes on until the end of time and your Glorious return. Until that day, put to rest in us any fears that keep us from following your way. Wherever you call us, we trust in your merciful providence. Send us priests, Lord! That we may see the priesthood, your gift of priesthood, renewed by resurrection glory!