

**Stations of the Cross**  
**With Ven. Catherine McAuley as our guide**



This institute was founded on Calvary, there to serve a crucified redeemer."

Catherine McAuley

**Opening Prayer**

**Leader:**

God of power and mercy, in love you sent to us all your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live with you forever. Bless us as we gather to reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus. We ask that we remain open to the guidance of Catherine McAuley as we follow the way of Jesus. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** (Suscipe by Catherine McAuley)

My God, I am yours for time and eternity. Teach me to cast myself entirely into the arms of your loving providence, with the most lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate, tender pity. Grant me, O most merciful Redeemer, that whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me. Take from my heart all painful anxiety; suffer nothing to sadden me but sin, nothing to delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of you, my God and my all, in your everlasting kingdom. Amen.

**First Station: Jesus is condemned to death.**

**Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.**

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

**Reader 1 (Matthew 26:36-41, 45)**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he

returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners."

**Leader:**

Oh Lord, what an injustice that you were taken to be killed. You fed, you healed, you taught, you accepted all, you welcomed, you forgave, you encouraged. And in return you were condemned to die and no one tried to stop the injustice. We, too, have found ourselves "asleep" or our spirit was willing but our flesh was weak. Some challenges seem to be too much to bear. We ask for your strength to do your work and to accept your will. Help us to act to prevent the injustice all around us. For guidance we reflect on the words of Catherine McAuley: "While we place all our confidence in God, we must act as if all depended on ourselves. I ask that you grant me acceptance of your will, loving God. The proof of love is deed. "

**All:** Lord Jesus, help us walk in your steps with Catherine as our guide.

### **Second Station: Jesus carries his cross.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 2 (John 19: 6, 15-17)**

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

**Leader:**

Catherine McAuley tells us, "The reward always comes after a well-received cross." Listening to these words of Catherine McAuley, I hear a confidence in her voice, she said, "the reward ALWAYS comes." It is often hard to bear a cross

with such a confidence, optimism and trust in God. Let us think of one cross we have received and ask for the confidence, optimism and faith in God that was Catherine's.

**All:** Lord Jesus, grant us strength of purpose that we may receive our cross well and faithfully bear our cross each day.

### **Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 3: (Isaiah 53:4-6)**

Surely he has born our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

**Leader:**

Lord, sometimes the weight of our grief and our sorrows is too much for us to bear. We are misled by our pride, fear or insecurities into thinking we are alone to carry our cross. Catherine McAuley tells us, "We have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about, our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God; for in God alone we go forward or stay back." Let us reflect on an area in our life where we are tripping.

**All:** Lord, help us to remain centered in God and to find comfort in you amidst our little "tripping about."

### **Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 4: (John 19: 25-27)**

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the

disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

**Leader:**

Lord, even at your time of great sorrow you were concerned for those you loved. Even then you gave comfort to your mother and your disciple. We at times forget that You were speaking those words to us, too, "Behold, your mother." Catherine McAuley tells us, "We should implore the assistance of the Blessed Virgin in all our actions. We must cultivate the most tender devotion to the mother of our redeemer." Let us from this hour take the Blessed Mother into our home.

**All:** Lord, help us to accept the gift of the Blessed Virgin as Catherine did, with tender devotion.

### **Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 5: (Matthew. 27:32; 16:24)**

As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

**Leader:**

Lord, I am not sure where Simon of Cyrene was going at the time when he crossed the path of the Roman Soldiers and Jesus. Perhaps on his way home after a hard day's work; perhaps on his way to Synagogue; no doubt he was busy attending to his own "stuff" when he was forced to carry the cross of a man arrested and condemned to death. This "unwelcomed" chance encounter gave him the opportunity to be in the presence of grace and the Lord. Catherine McAuley tells us, "Try to meet all with peace and ease; be mild and sweet in all your ways." We all aspire to perform acts of mercy; tonight we ask for the gentleness of Catherine that we might approach each chance encounter as an invitation from God.

**All:** Lord, help us to welcome each chance encounter we have with your suffering

people as Catherine would, with peace and ease.

### **Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 6: (Matthew. 25:34-40)**

'The king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by God. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least ones of mine, you did for me.'

**Leader:**

How did Veronica recognize Jesus as her Lord when he was on the way to Calvary? Jesus did not "look" like God; being led to his death. Yet Veronica looked beyond the surface and she saw the face of God. Catherine McCauley prays to God for that kind of understanding: "I consecrate to Thee my understanding. I shall no longer judge of anything but according to thy divine light. I shall despise all thou hast despised and esteem what though hast esteemed."

**All:** Lord, give us the courage and purity of heart of Veronica and Catherine, to recognize your presence in the world; and your face in the face of others.

### **Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 7: (Psalm 119: 25-28)**

I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life in accord with your word, I disclosed my ways and you answered me; teach me your laws. Make me understand the way of your precepts; I will ponder your wondrous deeds. I weep in bitter pain; in accord with your word to strengthen me.

**Leader:**

Jesus, as we reflect on the times you fell from the weight of your wooden cross we also reflect on the times we have experienced an affliction. Catherine McAuley, in her letter to Sister Mary Francis Warde says, "How deeply, how sincerely, I feel this second trial which it has pleased almighty God to visit you with, not in His anger, but to purify and render the foundation solid and according to His own heart, established on the cross.

**All:** Help us to accept our trials as Catherine McAuley did; as opportunities to purify and render ourselves solid.

### **Eighth Station: Jesus meets the weeping women.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 8: (Joel 2: 12-18)**

Even now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. For gracious and merciful is God, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment.

**Leader:**

Catherine McAuley understood that sorrow was a part of the human condition, and she went even further to recognize the healing power of the cross and our sorrow, "We have just now indeed more than an ordinary portion of the Cross in this one particular, but may it not be the Cross of Christ which we so often pray to "be about us"? This is your life, joys and sorrows mingled, one succeeding the other."

**All:** We pray for the wisdom of Catherine McAuley that we, too, will accept our

sorrow as a way to return to the Lord. With Catherine McAuley as our guide, we pray that the Cross of Christ be about us.

### **Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

#### **Reader 9: (Psalm 103: 6,7-12)**

The LORD does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed. Merciful and gracious is the LORD, slow to anger, abounding in kindness. God has not dealt with us as our sins merit, nor requited us as our deeds deserve. As the heavens tower over the earth, so God's love towers over the faithful. As far as the east is from the west, so far have our sins been removed from us.

**Leader:**

Catherine McAuley tells us, "Mercy bestows benefits, receives us anew, and pardons again and again, even the ungrateful." When we "fall" we take great comfort in knowing that our loving God forgives us yet we struggle with offering forgiveness to others. Let us bring into our prayer and to our mind that person in need of our forgiveness that we have been holding back.

**All:** Help us to forgive others not as their sins merit; but with the Mercy that pardons again and again.

### **Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

#### **Reader 10: (Ephesians 6:10-11,13-20)**

Brothers and sisters: Draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil... hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in

truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the Gospel of peace.

**Leader:**

As believers, we are citizens, not of this world and yet our day is full of earthy things that distract and tempt. Catherine McAuley instructs us to study Jesus, "In order to study Jesus Christ, you must render yourself familiar with His meekness, patience, forbearance, charity in word and work, contempt of all earthly distinction, sincerity, obedience, love of prayer, and humility.

**All:** We pray to our Lord to strip all those earthly things that keep us from a full relationship with God and others.

### **Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 11: (Luke 24: 36-40, 44-45)**

He stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." But they were startled and terrified, then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

**Leader:**

Lord, we ask you to open our minds to understand the scripture. In this reading Jesus offers himself and the scriptures as a comfort when we are startled, troubled, and have questions in our hearts. We have Catherine McAuley to teach us how to open our minds to scripture. She tells us "...above all things, constant, fervent prayer. Let us pray well and never grow weary."

**All:** Help us to take the time to open our minds to understand the scriptures and to pray a constant fervent prayer.



## Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross.

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 12: (Romans 12: 1-2)**

I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

**Leader:**

Lord when you died on the cross you then passed the responsibility and opportunity for us to continue your work. You and Catherine McAuley have left us an inheritance. Catherine instructs us , “Be always striving to make yourself like Him—you should try to resemble Him in some one thing at least, so that any person who sees you, or speaks with you, may be reminded of His Blessed life on earth.”

**All:** Reveal to us that “one thing at least” that will remind others of Jesus' Blessed life on earth and help us to resemble Jesus and Catherine.

## Thirteenth Station: The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross.

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

**Reader 13: (Zechariah 12: 10)**

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication; and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and they shall weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

**Leader:**

What sorrow must have been at the foot of the cross as the body of Jesus was taken down. The pain of the Blessed Mother to hold her life-less son, her messiah and the grief of those who followed Him to such a painful death. It is easier to focus on the life and resurrection of Christ rather than his death. And yet Catherine McAuley says, "Let us fly to the foot of the Cross and repose in the wounds of Jesus. He has written us on His hands. Shall not we then write His wounds in our minds and in our hearts?"

**All:** Lord, help us to write Your wounds in our minds and in our hearts, as Catherine did.

### **Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb.**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

#### **Reader 14: (Matthew 27: 57-60)**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

**Leader:**

Joseph from Arimathea was a generous man– he gave his new tomb, linens, his time and used his power and position as a wealthy man to request the body of Jesus. We can imagine the feelings he must have had after the one he thought was his messiah had been killed. And yet he went about doing the "right" thing for another. Catherine McAuley tells us, "Nothing will draw greater blessings on us than strict attention to every branch of charity. Let charity then be our badge of honor...so that it may truly be said, there is in us but one heart and one soul in God."

**All:** Lord, we accept this badge of honor Catherine passes on to us. Give us the strength and compassion to extend a strict attention to every branch of charity.

## Closing: The Resurrection of Jesus.

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You.

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

### **Reader 15: (Mark 16: 1-6)**

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.

**Leader:**

We as Sisters of Mercy and Associates have followed in Catherine's footsteps, to bring the Good News and the Mercy of God to others, especially the forgotten, wounded and vulnerable.

**All:** Lord keep us faithful companions of Catherine as we follow your way into our families, communities and throughout the world.

<p>This Way of the Cross was developed by Gisele Ferretto, Mercy Associate. The quotes from Catherine McAuley are from the following: Mercy Throughout the Years Calendar by the Mercy International Center, Letters of Catherine McAuley 1827-1841 Edited by Sister Mary Ignatia Neumann, RSM and The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin compiled by Don Mullan.</p>
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