



**Mennonite
Church**
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

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Stations of the Cross

A Modern Portrayal

Explanation

The Stations of the Cross are a series of pictures that represent certain scenes in the Passion of Christ. The object is to make a spiritual pilgrimage to the chief scenes of Christ's suffering and death.

I've seen portrayals of the Stations on the walls of some churches, This particular portrayal uses black and white photography, The setting is in a modern day city, where Christ is forced to carry the Cross down the boulevard of a busy street. As in Jerusalem, the crowd is hostile and the guards and police are armed, but in this modern day city, the guards have guns, not swords and spears.

The Stations of the Cross are designed to separate Christ's journey into small "phases" or "stations". We are to stop and reflect on each station individually, to feel more of a part of the journey. So often people pass by the Stations, just as many Christians pass by Christ's involvement in their lives.

- HWB 242 – “Alone thou goest forth” (sung to CRIMOND, HWB 578)

Station 1 – Christ takes up His Cross

- Luke 9:23-24 (Jesus)

It pains us to see Christ carrying the cross, the instrument of his death. But the cross must be carried. To follow Christ, we must also carry our own cross. So often we fight against it instead of bearing it.

GOD, we pray that you will give us strength and patience to take up our cross and follow you.

- HWB 240, stanza 2 – “Go to Dark Gethsemane”

Station 2 – Christ Falls Under the Weight of the Cross

Christ staggered and then he fell. So often we find that the weight of our own cross is too heavy. We are tired or distracted and we want to leave our cross behind. But to follow Christ, we must get up and keep steadily on.

GOD, we pray that you will give us the strength to get up after we've fallen so that we may continue to follow you.

- HWB 348 – *“O Lord, Hear Our Prayer”*

Station 3 – Christ Sees His Mother

- Song of Songs 8:6 (Mary)

Christ's mother, Mary, feels so helpless. To see her son suffering and to not be able to help feels like a sword piercing her soul. Though it is so painful to watch, she can't leave because she loves him so much.

GOD, you have always and will always love us. We pray that we will never close our hearts to love. Help us to use our compassion and love to help others as they are struggling with their cross.

- “Alleluia, he is coming” – (a-loving...loving me)

Station 4 – A Woman Wipes the Face of Jesus

- Psalm 27:8-9 (Veronica)

Jesus was struggling with bearing the cross, and she felt his pain. Unable to stand it any longer, she ran out of the crowd to wipe his face. To follow Christ, we must seek his face.

GOD, we pray that you will grant us compassion to look for the little ways to help you. We pray that when we are looking to see your face, you will be there.

Station 5 – Simon of Cyrene is Forced to Carry the Cross

- Matthew 11:28-30 (Jesus)
- Galatians 6:2 (Simon)

Simon, a stranger to this city, was just an innocent bystander. Seeing that he is a strong man, he is forced to carry the cross. Christ accepts his help. In turn, God will never leave us. There will always be help from friends and strangers.

GOD, we pray that you give us the grace to accept help from others. Give us the strength to carry one another's burdens.

Station 6 – Christ Falls Again

Christ fell again, this time from exhaustion. His body is weak from the torture, and the cross was so heavy. Suffering numbs the will.

GOD, we pray that we are given renewed strength to press forward in our journey.

- O Lord, hear our prayer

Station 7 – Christ Speaks to Those Who are Mourning

- Luke 6:41-42 (Jesus)

Christ sees some that are weeping for him and his suffering. He stops to speak to them. “Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children,” he says. It is easier to show pity and mourn for the sins of others, but we must first address our own sins.

GOD, we pray that you grant us courage to accept the fact that we are sinners. Help us to accept your challenge to work for your coming reign.

Station 8 – Christ Falls a Third Time

- Psalm 22:14-15 (Jesus)

Christ is so physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted that he would rather die right there than keep going. But the soldiers beat him and force him to keep going. He’s suffered so much that he can feel them hit him. Often we experience so much pain and suffering that we want to give up. Often we collapse from exhaustion when we are so close to the end.

GOD, we pray that you renew our bodies and spirits in this long and tiresome journey.

- O Lord, hear our prayer

Station 9 – Christ is Stripped of His Garments

- Psalm 22:17-18 (Jesus)

They shame him even more by taking his clothes and dividing them among themselves. The last of his possessions has been taken away. It is only Christ and the Cross that are left now.

GOD, help us to let go of all our earthly possessions so that we are united with you and the Cross. We need to learn from Jesus Christ to die and receive true life.

Station 10 – Christ is Nailed to the Cross

- 1 Peter 2:23-24 (Guard)

The pain is almost unbearable. It seems like the earth shakes with the shock of the nail penetrating through his flesh. It even hurts us to see Christ's body being destroyed. But this is God's plan. This is where we are to meet God. Christ waits for us here.

- HWB 251 – *"How shallow former shadows"* – st. 1, 2 (sung to KINGSFOLD, HWB 493)

GOD, give us strength to withstand the pain. We pray that you have the patience while we try to find our way to the Cross.

Station 11 – Death on the Cross

- Philippians 2:8; 1 John 3:16 (Bystander)
- Mark 15:33-34; Luke 23:46 (Jesus)

Christ feels abandoned on the Cross. But he was obedient, and he humbled himself to the point of death on the cross. How painful! Even the earth cried out in anguish at his death. We are afraid of death, even though death means going home to God. Christ died for us and by following him, we must die for others.

- HWB 240 – st. 3

GOD, we pray that you will give us understanding of death. Grant us a humble heart to follow you to death, and grant us love to die for others.

Station 12 – Christ's Body is Taken Down and Laid in the Arms of His Mother

It is so hard to believe that he's dead – he's gone. But his lifeless body is there to prove it. The feeling of hopelessness and helplessness is so strong, especially to the ones who loved him the most. Mary feels her heart breaking at the loss of her son. Christ rests in peace in his mother's arms.

GOD, we pray that we learn from Christ. We need to learn how to die.

Station 13 – Christ is Laid in the Tomb

Discouragement has set in as we see the lifeless body of Christ taken to the tomb. Surely all hope is lost for those present at the crucifixion. But we know there is more to come.

- HWB 251 – st. 3

Benediction

- Romans 6:5 (narrator)

Christ has died, but hope is not lost. We know that Christ was resurrected to be with us. Today, we live in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

Time of Reflection and/or Sharing

- Song – “Alleluia, he is coming” (a-rising...from the grave)

Go now with renewed strength and live in the hope of Christ's return.