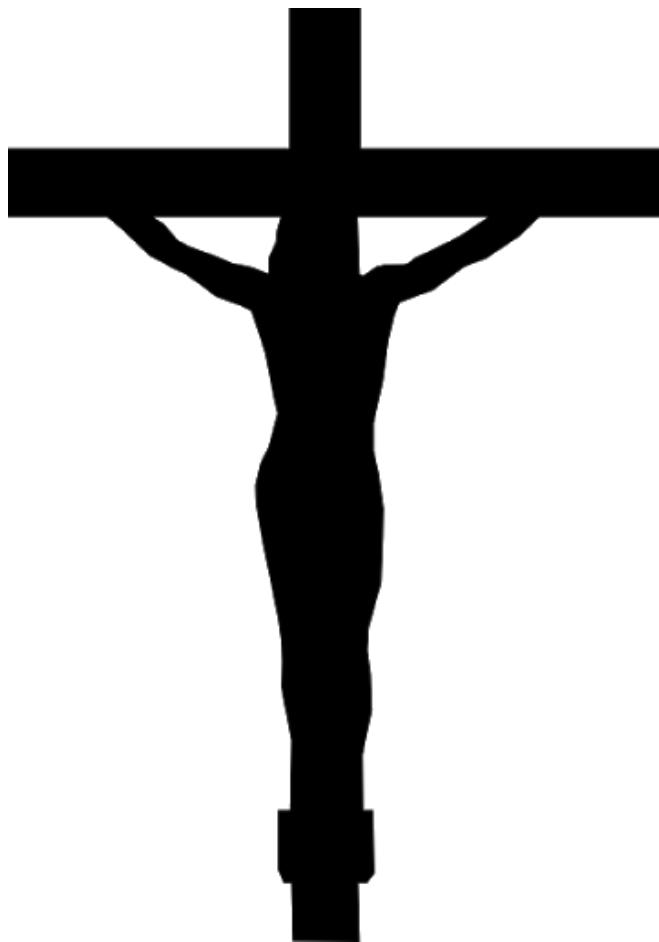


Stations of the Cross
Reflections and Prayers in response to the
Covid 19 Pandemic



St. Maximilian Kolbe Church
Liberty Township, Ohio
(with pictures from our outdoor stations of the cross)

INTRODUCTION

The Stations of the Cross are a beautiful expression of our faith. In praying the Stations we accompany the Lord on His journey to Calvary. We watch Him closely: how He suffers, falls, agonizes and perseveres, is strong in spirit even as His body weakens. We observe His valiant heart, loving eyes, beaten body. He is the Lord rejected and scorned. We accompany Him all the way to Calvary. Why? Because we are drawn to Him; made for Him; because He loved us first. We see how He willingly suffers for love of us. Yes, we were there when they crucified Our Lord. He saw us in His infinite gaze, and He loved us.

Today, Christ accompanies us on the path of human suffering. He identifies with His people who are bewildered, sad, insecure and isolated. A cross has been placed across our lives. Overnight our lives have changed. The Lord draws nearer to us because He loves us, and He wants to strengthen our resolve to imitate Him in the way of sacrificial love. All of humanity is now on the way of the Cross.

Our leaders in the government, church, medical professions, priests, the sick, elderly, and vulnerable people are in great need of many resources. We each have something very valuable to offer them—resources material and spiritual; the gift of intercessory prayer and fasting, and almsgiving. While we are at home—which is a good place to be—let us pray more, be resourceful, and creative with our time and talents. God will do His part. And He counts on us to do ours—to respond like fearless, courageous disciples of Christ.

Perhaps this pandemic will bring out the best in us. Times of trial and testing make or break the human spirit. We journey as brothers and sisters on our way to the mysterious place where this will lead us. Physical closeness is not possible but spiritual closeness is necessary. On the Way of the Cross, we walk in solidarity.

Let us prayerfully reflect on the Stations of the Cross.

All sing...

*At the cross her station keeping
Stood the mournful Mother weeping
Close to Jesus to the last.*

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death (John 19:14-16)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, You stand all alone before Pilate. Nobody speaks up for You. Nobody helps defend You. You devoted Your entire life to helping others, listening to the smallest ones, caring for those who were ignored by others. They don't seem to remember that, as they prepare to put You to death.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, the one thing of which we are sure, is that one day our life in this world will come to an end. We know the date of our births. But we do not know on which day we shall die. If we keep in mind that we are going to die someday, then we will live every day as precious and unrepeatable, with the gifts and graces given us today, and every day, until we die. Help us to live well. Please grant us, through the intercession of St. Joseph, a holy death. Please impart Your divine wisdom that a cure for the COVID-19 virus is soon discovered. Amen.



All sing...
*Through her heart, His sorrow sharing
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had passed.*

The Second Station: Jesus Receives the Cross (Mark 15:20)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, as You accepted Your cross, You knew You would carry it to Your death on Calvary. You knew it wouldn't be easy, but You accepted it and carried it just the same.

Prayer: Lord, You take upon Yourself the burden of the cross and all that weighs us down. Give us the strength to walk onward, uncrushed by whatever is placed on our shoulders. May we help others to endure in the trials and sufferings of their lives, with joy undefeated. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Oh how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blessed
Of the sole-begotten One!*

The Third Station: Jesus Fall for the First Time (Isa 53:5)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, the cross You have been carrying is very heavy. You are becoming weak and almost ready to faint, and You fall down. Nobody seems to want to help You. The soldiers are interested in getting home, so they yell at You and try to get You up and moving again.

Prayer: Jesus, when we fall and feel discouraged, may we know that You are especially close to us then, bearing our guilt and giving us the strength to stand up on our feet and begin to walk again. Make our hearts tender toward all those who fall under the weight of this cross. Grant us renewed charity and unity. May the desire for holiness burn within us. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Christ above in torment hangs
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying, glorious Son.*

The Fourth Station: Jesus Is Met by His Blessed Mother (Isa 66:13)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: My dear Jesus, by the sorrow You experienced in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Your most Holy Mother. And may Mary, who was overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by her intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of her Son. I love you, Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended You. Never allow me to offend You again. Grant that I may love You always, and then do with me what You will.

Prayer: All suffering is embraced by God when Jesus and His mother meet on the way of the Cross. Jesus is every child lost prematurely; Mary is every parent grieving for his or her child. Lord, be close to all who lose or become distant from people they love. During this pandemic, draw families closer together; let barriers fall down and closer relationships form. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Is there one who would not weep
Whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross (Luke 23:26)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, the soldiers are becoming impatient. This is taking longer than they wanted it to. They are afraid You won't make it to the hill where You will be crucified. As You grow weaker, they grab a man out of the crowd and make him help carry Your Cross. He was just watching what was happening, but all of a sudden he is helping You carry your Cross.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may I be unashamed to accept help when I need it, and may I be eager to offer it when others have needs. May our mutual dependence be a source of joy and an occasion of grace, knitting us together in the community of Your love. We pray for our government leaders, medical personnel, priests and religious, armed services, first responders, and all who need extraordinary grace at this moment. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain
In that Mother's pain untold?*

The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus (Mark 14:6-9)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, suddenly a woman came out of the crowd. Her name is Veronica. You can see how she cares for You as she takes a cloth and begins to wipe the Blood and sweat from Your face. She can't do much, but she offers what little help she can.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may I see with Your compassion and smile with Your radiance, so that Your unfailing tenderness is made flesh and blood in me. May I always be alert to those who feel invisible and despised. May I help them to recognize that they are Your brothers and sisters sharing in Your dignity. We implore special graces for families, children, elderly and the sick. We ask You to provide for the employed and the unemployed and for the economic needs of all people.

We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled
She beheld her tender Child
All with bloody scourges rent*

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls for the Second Time (Heb. 2:17-18)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: This is the second time You have fallen on the road. As the Cross grows heavier and heavier it becomes more difficult to get up. But You continue to struggle and try until You're up and walking again. You don't give up.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, lift me to my feet when I feel that I can go no further. When I feel battered by the storms of life, with neither the energy or strength to carry on, then may I know that You, the strong Son of God, will bear me onward until I arrive at home in God. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...

*For the sins of His own nation
Saw Him hang in desolation
Til His spirit forth He sent*

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-29)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, as You carry Your cross You see a group of women along the road. As You pass by You see they are sad. You stop to spend a moment with them, to offer them some encouragement. Although You have been abandoned by Your friends and are in pain, You stop and try to help them.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give me a new heart of flesh so I may rejoice with those who rejoice and share sorrow with those who are saddened. Peel away the shell of my selfishness that holds others at a distance, so I may be one with their lives, free to act with Your own spontaneous generosity. Dress us in the armor of Your protection. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*O Thou Mother! Fount of love,
touch my spirit from above.
Make my heart with thine accord.*

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Third Time (2 Cor 12:8-9)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, Your journey has been long. You fall again, beneath your Cross. You know Your journey is coming to an end. You struggle and struggle. You get up and keep going.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, after so many falls, let me not lose hope for happiness and holiness. If You are with me, then I am not doomed to be stuck in the endless repetition of my failures. May Your grace arise in the wilderness of my heart. Grant a new beginning even today. Help Your people to arise beyond what is physical to see the spiritual dynamic at work in our midst.

We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...

*Make me feel as you have felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ, my Lord.*

The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments (Ps 22:19-19)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to His torn flesh and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I fear to be seen as I am, with my foolish fears and hidden failures. I would be ashamed and wish to hide, like Adam and Eve. But for us, You have been stripped naked and borne the jeers of the world. Comfort those who feel despised. Clothe me with Your love, please. Clothe humanity in Your garment of love. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Holy Mother! Pierce me through.
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.*

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross (Luke 23:33)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: You are stretched out on the Cross You have carried so far. The soldiers take big nails and drive them into Your hands and feet. You feel abandoned by the people You loved so much. People seem to have gone mad. You have done nothing but good, yet they drive nails through Your hands and feet.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Your life had seemed so full of promise, and yet it ended in the disgrace of the Cross. Embrace all those who seem to be utter failures. And just as You are close to us in these dark moments, so may we share with You in the radiance of Your Resurrection. As we journey our way of the cross now, help us to focus on the light at the end of the tunnel—resurrection.

We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...

*Let me share with you His pain,
Who for all our sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.*

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: As Jesus hung on the Cross, He forgave the soldiers who had crucified Him, and prayed for His mother and friends. Jesus wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so He gave all He had for us.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, be with us in the hour of our death. May those who feel abandoned by God know that He is closer than we can imagine. May those who feel that there is no God at all discover His intimate Presence. Before our death, inspire us to offer reparation for our sins that we may be well prepared for our particular judgment. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*Let me mingle tears with you,
Mourning Him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live.*

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross (John 19:31)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, how brutally You were put to death. How gently You are taken from the Cross. Your suffering and pain are ended, and You are put in the lap of Your Mother. The dirt and Blood are wiped away. You are treated with love, at last.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, now You are lowered from the Cross into the hands of those who loved You and who stayed by Your side to the end. May we have the courage to remain faithful to You when it is costly. Grant, us to be faithful to all those whom we love, even when we receive nothing in return.

We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
*By the cross with you to stay,
There with you to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of you to give.*

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb (Matt 27:59-60)

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You

All (genuflect): because by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, Your Body is prepared for burial. Joseph gave You his own tomb. The disciples carried Your Body to bury it, accompanied by Your holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulchre with her own hands. They then closed the tomb and all withdrew.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, now You are laid to rest in the tomb. May we rest in Your love, confident that even when the future is obscure, we nestle in Your Father's care. Grant us patient endurance until we hear Your final summons to the fullness of life. Graciously calm our fears, and increase faith, hope, and love. We pray for a swift end to this pandemic. Amen.



All sing...
Virgin of all virgins best!
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief divine.

CLOSING PRAYERS

ALL: My Jesus, we have traveled Your Way of the Cross. You saw beauty in the Cross and embraced it as a desired treasure. Help us to trust the Father and to realize that there is something great behind even the most insignificant suffering. There is someone lifting my cross to fit my shoulders – there is divine wisdom in all the petty annoyances that irk my soul every day. Teach me the lessons contained in my cross, the wisdom of its necessity, the beauty of my cross, and the fortitude that accompanies even the smallest crosses.

Amen.

