**The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to death**

There you stand before the crowd after being beaten. You never deny yourself, yet humbly accept the punishment given to you by those who had witnessed your miracles.

It’s easy to look at this scene now and think, ‘How could they have accused you and condemned you to death? All you did was love every person you met.’

Yet they are not alone in their condemnation of you.

*Pause*

Jesus, forgive me for the ways in which I condemn and pierce others with my words and actions.

Help me to love like you and to learn from your example.

**The Second Station: Jesus carries the Cross**

By now you have endured a sleepless night, betrayal by your friends, and a beating that is too horrible to fully imagine. You’ve been whipped, stripped, and spit on by countless faces, some of whom last week treated you as royalty as you entered the city.

And now, they hand you a cross to carry. The weight of it is far more than any number of kilos we can carry. For in carrying the cross, you carry the weight of our sins.

*Pause*

Jesus, help me not to forget the load that you carried for me.

Give me the strength and the courage to let go of those things that separate me from you.

**The Third Station: Jesus falls for the First time**

As you walk through the narrow streets, every movement, every jolt burns and reopens your wounds. The pain, along with the weight of the cross becomes too much and you fall.

In boxing, when a fighter falls and is too beaten to continue, the fight is stopped by the referee. Yet, there is no one there to stop the battle that you fight for us.

Even though you know what still lies ahead, you do not stop and somehow find the strength to continue.

*Pause*

Jesus, help me to remember your courage and perseverance when you fell.

Give me the courage to get back up when I fall.

**The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother**

Amid all the shouts and jeers from the crowd that move like a wave in your mind as you struggle to remain conscious, one voice stands out. At first it is so faint that you wonder if it is real, but then as your eyes meet and you see her face, you are not surprised that she is there for you. She has always been there for you.

Her ‘Yes’ to God has been a light in the darkness. And now, here in your darkest hour, she is there.

*Pause*

Jesus, help me to remember that I am never alone in my struggles.

Help me to see my parents as you saw yours and to know their love for me even when things are hard between us.

**The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his Cross**

The soldiers who had beaten you all day have what appears to be a moment of compassion. You are so beaten that they decide to grab Simon from Cyrene out of the crowd to help you carry the cross. He follows behind you, walking in your steps, helping you move forward.

You press on, knowing that the worst is yet to come.

*Pause*

Jesus, show me the ways that you call me to serve.

Help me follow Simon’s example of helping others and to know what it means to be a true and faithful servant.

**The Sixth Station: Jesus falls the second time.**

The soldiers are enraged at you for falling this time. They can’t understand how Simon’s help is not enough. In their anger they hit you again and again before they remember that you have to be alive to be crucified. The beating stops, but the shouts and taunts become louder and harsher.

At this moment you can stop this! You are the Messiah and have the power to reveal yourself to everyone there. But you know that it would not fulfil all the prophecies that were written about you in the torah. You know that you must be faithful to all of God’s promises to His people.

Remembering your love and your faithfulness you get up, and now with your wounds full of dirt, you keep going.

*Pause*

Jesus, help me to believe in your faithfulness and love for me.

Give me the grace to follow through on my word to others and to be a person of integrity.

**The Seventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross.**

Lying down on wood is not foreign to you. The first place you were laid when you came into this world was a wooden manger. There you were laid in love and now it is out of love that you lay here on this wooden cross.

The soldiers pull your right arm out beside you and then horrific pain flows through your entire body. The nail pierces not only your hands but also your whole body. Pain shoots up your legs as they nail your feet.

*Pause*

Jesus, it is as if **I** am nailing you to the cross with my own sin.

Help me to seek your forgiveness and mercy for the times that I sin.

**The Eighth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross.**

Above your head is the inscription, ‘King of the Jews’. As you use every last ounce of life left to lift your body so that you can speak, you do not look the part of “King”. Yet, every word out of your mouth is one of love, truly from another kingdom.

The faces of all humanity must flash before your eyes as one by one you recount whom you are doing this for. And finally you say, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...it is finished.’

You breathe your last and it looks as though this is the end.

*Long Pause*

Jesus, help me never forget your love for me and to know that you died for me.

Fill me with comfort in knowing that I never suffer anything you don’t understand.

**The Nineth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross.**

The first arms that held you in this world are also the last. Now as your mother holds your body that is mangled beyond recognition, she sees not only the man she now holds, but also the child she held - and her heart is pierced.

Your comfort to her will come, but in this moment she has only God to be with her in her sorrow and pain. All hope seems gone.

*Pause*

Jesus, I want to trust in you.

Help me to place all of my hope in you and give me peace in knowing that you are Lord over all things.

**The Tenth Station: Jesus is placed in the tomb.**

You are laid to rest by Joseph of Arimethea, Mary Magdalene, Mary your mother and a few other women.

As your body is anointed, Mary Magdalene remembers your eyes penetrating her heart. Tears stream down her face and the face of the others who are there, as they too remember your love.

They wrap your body in clean linens and lay it in a new tomb. The stone is rolled over the entrance and now it surely is the end, death is final.

While those you have lived with, laughed with and cried with are in their heightened sorrow believing all is over, you are conquering sin and death.

*Pause*

Give me the strength to say the words, ‘I love you’ to those people in my life that I do love.

Show me how to love every person not just in words but also with my actions.

Jesus, help me always remember that death is not the end.

Amen.