

# Stations of the Cross

FOR PEOPLE OF THE SEA



STELLA MARIS

Hello and welcome to Stations of the Cross, presented by Port Chaplains from Stella Maris around the United Kingdom. I am Julian Wong, the Regional Port Chaplain for the East Anglia ports. Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world, and the official maritime charity of the Catholic Church. Stella Maris helps seafarers in need with our spiritual, emotional and practical support. If you would like to find out more information, on what we do, if you are interested in volunteering, or would like to make a donation, please visit [www.stellamaris.org.uk](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk) Thank you for joining us.

## 1. Jesus is Condemned to Die

We meditate on Jesus being arrested in the dark of night. Jesus is stripped of his garments, he is beaten, spat on, interrogated, tortured and crowned with sharp thorns. Jesus is handed over and condemned to death by Pontius Pilate.

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

There is no justice in Jesus being condemned. He was harshly treated by people who did not understand what he said or did. They were

frightened, maybe that he could make a difference in the world. Many seafarers in the world are still unjustly condemned because of the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs, their gender, because they think differently, and the list goes on. Are we ready to accept all people as equals? Do we forgive? Do we condemn others over and over?

We pray; Jesus, you suffered a terrible injustice. You know how it feels to be alone and rejected. We pray that we always have the grace to see, love and respect all people in you. We pray that you can form our hearts so that we can see with new eyes, those we might normally condemn.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **2. Jesus takes up His Cross**

Jesus sets off carrying the cross by himself. This cross is not simply a piece of wood. This cross represents everything that is difficult in our lives. Jesus never complained about carrying the crosses of his life and remained calm and peaceful while he was attacked by the Jewish authorities and even the lack of understanding of his own followers. This final act of carrying the cross turns it from a symbol of condemnation to one of liberation.

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Each one of us carries some type of burden. Sometimes burdens can be completely obvious, but others can be carefully hidden. Illness, health, disabilities, fear, finances, isolation and loneliness. These are the realities for many seafarers that spend months at sea. Jesus invites us to hand all these burdens over to him.

Let us pray; Lord Jesus, we ask you to be present in all the burdens we carry with us. We ask for the strength to acknowledge the fear and

pain we feel and to also recognize the crosses others carry, and the courage to help alleviate some of their burden.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **3. Jesus Falls for the First Time**

Jesus shows us that falling doesn't mean failure or weakness. The heroic effort is not staying on your feet at all costs but having the determination to get back up and being able to continue the journey. Jesus knew the journey he had to take and made sure to get up, carry the cross and make his way towards our liberation.

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We see that Jesus has fallen. He is on the floor, in the mud with many people looking on with disgust at this criminal, this sinner. Jesus certainly wouldn't have looked like the Son of God to those people. How often do we judge people that may look so far removed from our idea of Jesus? Somebody asleep in a doorway? A fisher living in a van near his boat? We do not know their trials or journeys they have taken. Have we contributed to knocking them over? What can we do to help them?

We pray; Lord Jesus, we have wonderful examples of saints and it is easy to see your presence in them. Help us also to see you in the people we meet each day. Give us compassionate and merciful hearts.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **4. Jesus Meets his Mother**

As Jesus and his mother meet, they simply look at each other – feelings impossible to be transmitted in words. This must be the most

painful part of his journey as he sees the complete pain and despair in the eyes of his mother.

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The separation of the special loving relationship that Jesus had with his mother must have been the heaviest burden he carried that day. The pain and torment that was inflicted on Jesus would have been felt by Mary herself. We see that same pain felt by Mary in the eyes and hearts of seafarers when they are separated by thousands of miles from their families and are helpless when their loved ones back home face difficult times. We also see Mary's pain when a married seafarer is facing a marriage breakdown and the turmoil it can create.

We pray; We know that the look you gave your mother was filled with pain but also with a deep, genuine and enduring love. We pray to you Lord that we can find that same love and bring it into our families, our marriages and to our children, especially where there is some brokenness, hurt and disharmony.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **5. Simon helps Jesus**

A complete stranger was asked to help Jesus. The important point is that Simon was able to lend his shoulders and strength to another person who was struggling and weak. Simon took on the cross which Jesus could not carry at that moment.

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We see human suffering across many faces we meet each day, but especially in those of seafarers that have been victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. Hard working seafarers that are

treated terribly and need help to be free of the awful and tragic situation they find themselves in.

We pray; Lord, we ask for the strength and courage to be Simon in our world. We pray that we will have the compassion and generosity to help those that we see struggling. We also pray for the humility to accept the help and support of any Simon's that we may encounter in our own life struggles.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **6. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

When Veronica sees Jesus, she is so overwhelmed by compassion that she is moved to make her way through the crowd to wipe the blood, sweat and tears from his face. This face was full of suffering, pain and wounds.

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The church now takes responsibility of being the visible face of Christ. We suffer the pain, wounds and wounds of past sins committed by the church. But we must look to Jesus Christ with our pain, our hurt, and ask for forgiveness and healing for all those who have been wronged and hurt.

We pray; Dear Lord, despite our wounds, pain and hurt, we pray that we will have the courage to step out to bring healing to all those that have been scarred by sin of the church. We pray for end to all abuse, betrayal and lies that have caused so much damage to so many around the world. Give us the strength and determination to build your church as a beacon of love, compassion, trust and hope.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **7. Jesus Falls for the Second Time**

Jesus is finding the journey so hard, feeling worn out under the weight of the cross and the burden of loneliness and isolation is becoming too much to handle, and he falls again.

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

We are surrounded in life by those who have the burdens of life upon their shoulders. They struggle and can sometimes find that they fall. Many seafarers are still working in contracts that should have finished, others are fearful of not getting another contract and may be still stranded far from home not knowing when they will return to loved ones. When we fall, Jesus is right there with us and chooses to love us.

We pray; Jesus, you fell for a second time but found the strength to get up and continue the journey. We pray that we will find that inner strength that comes from your love for us, to be able to get up again and keep going even when things seem dark and dim.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **8. Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

When the women saw how much Jesus was suffering, they began to weep. Jesus was so moved by this that he spoke to them and said “Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children.”

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Let us listen to this powerful message from Jesus today. Let us weep for women who are victimized and abused. Let us weep for those female seafarers that may not be treated equally as their male

colleagues. Let us weep for all women that are struggling to find a job or a way in life.

We pray; Lord, open our eyes and hearts to all people in the world that are suffering, but we especially pray for our sisters in Christ with special attention to mothers and their children.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **9. Jesus Falls for a Third Time**

Jesus is now physically, emotionally and mentally exhausted. A broken man. Jesus now must decide to give up and stay where he is, or to get up once more and carry on. We see Jesus rise again with all the strength he can muster. Jesus shows that we can go on even when others feel we cannot.

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So many in the world feel that they simply cannot continue with life as it is, and the burden is simply too much. Many people struggling, including seafarers may turn to some type of addiction for relief, others may choose suicide as an escape. Encouragement, strength and hope is found in Jesus Christ. This fall shows us that we can get up again even when we are at our weakest.

We pray; Lord, when all in our life looks lost and hopeless, we place all our trust in you. We also pray that we may bring a moment of hope to others in their time of desperation.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **10 Jesus is Stripped of His Clothing**

The rest of Jesus' clothes are ripped from him and he is left stripped of his dignity. Jesus is giving everything of himself in this sacrifice and holding nothing back of himself. Jesus is willing to give everything so that we may be free.

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Jesus has such indignity inflicted upon him by society as they abuse him. Today, maybe we are guilty of being judge and jury, on others that we read about in the news or see on TV, maybe even our neighbours or work colleagues. We see Jesus stripped once again, as women, children and men are portrayed, merely as objects in a pornographic manner in magazines, in DVD's or on the internet.

We pray; We ask for your forgiveness Lord for wanting to pry into the private lives of others. We are sorry for the times we have been spreaders of gossip. May we always remember to be respectful of others and leave judgement only to God. Teach us to see good in the people around us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **11. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

Iron through human flesh as the nails go through his wrists and ankles. The hands that were able to cure lepers, take away blindness and open ears from deafness are now unable to move. The carpenter's hand is now joined to wood once more. Now a blood-stained sacrifice of love hanging on the cross.

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We still crucify Jesus today. He is crucified in all those that die of hunger in our world. He is crucified in all those that are abused. He is

crucified in all those that are marginalised by society. He is crucified by all those that are trafficked or victims of modern slavery. He is crucified as we exploit the resources of the earth.

We pray; Lord, we pray for all those people in the world that may not have a voice. We pray for the most vulnerable members of our communities especially children and the elderly. We pray for all who suffer from oppression and cruelty and that they may always feel your presence.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

## **12.Jesus Dies on The Cross**

Even as Jesus is slowly dying on the cross, the words that he speaks are not of anger or pity for himself, instead he asks the Father to forgive those who have tormented him and put him to death. “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This is a true example of love in forgiving those who have hurt us the most.

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The world today has an almost endless list of wrongs that we need to ask forgiveness for. In the maritime industry we need to ask forgiveness for corruption, for poor pay, exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, abuse, addictions, racism and each of us praying the stations can add our own issues to the list. We are challenged to forgive our enemies, those that wronged us and to let go of the hurt.

We pray; May your love for us be transmitted to all those we know or meet in our daily routines. We pray that we will always remember this ultimate sacrifice and act of love you made for us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **13. Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

Jesus is taken down from the cross and Mary takes Jesus into her arms. No doubt she had thoughts of when Jesus was just a newly born baby worshipped by the shepherds and kings. The days when crowds followed Jesus wanting to hear and see what he would do. And now she will be reminded of his words “this is my body, broken for you...this is my blood, poured out for you.”

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Mary is grieving for her son and now offering him back to his father. Mary grieves with all parents, children, siblings, other family members and friends who have lost someone close to them. Mary feels the sorrow of those who have lost a child: through sudden illness, suicide or from acts of violence. Mary stands in grief with us all.

We pray; Lord, please help us to find hope in the face of despair when the parting of loved one comes. That we can follow Mary's example in offering them back to you, Lord of the living and of the dead.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

### **14. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

All those who loved and followed Jesus are now empty, lost and exhausted. They are feeling confused with no purpose or direction and nothing makes sense. They also would have felt some relief that Jesus was now in peace and would be left alone.

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Death is a sad part of life that we have all dealt with. Seafarers will have seen other crew members, work mates, friends lost in a variety of ways. Accidents onboard the vessel, illness, acts of violence and even suicide. We know that Jesus did not die in vain. We have the hope in his rising from the dead for all our loved ones that have died.

We pray; Lord Jesus, we offer prayers for all those people we know that have died, and for those that have nobody to pray for them. We pray that will always see your light in the darkest of times.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.



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