



LIFELONG  
LEARNING

Virginia Theological Seminary

## *The Way of the Cross: A Reflection Guide*

The devotion known as The Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The liturgy for this devotional multimedia experience comes from the [Book of Occasional Services](#), (p. 46). Artwork is Margaret Adams Parker's [Stations of the Cross Paintings](#) (2019). Music is composed by [Marty Wheeler Burnett](#).

To gain a more embodied experience, speak aloud the words in italics as they appear on the screen, facilitating a call and response feel to the liturgy. You may wish to follow along with the text for the service found in the Book of Occasional Services.

These prompts are meant to facilitate further reflection individually, in a small group online, as a household, or in a socially distanced gathering.

### FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Close your eyes and imagine yourself as a bystander in the place called "the Pavement," bearing witness to the condemnation of Jesus. What sights and sounds catch your attention? Why do you think that is?

### SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

How do you imagine "the place of a skull", Golgotha? What feelings are evoked as you stand on the hill? As Jesus comes into view carrying the cross that will be the method of his capital punishment, what do you want to say?

### THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

How does the crowd respond when Jesus falls?  
Is there laughter, or perhaps an audible gasp by some?  
What is your body doing?

### FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

Watch Jesus' mother as she sees him. What is her affect? What are your own emotions in seeing them together?

Recall a time in your life when you experienced what the reader describes as "a sword of grief."

### FIFTH STATION: THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

Imagine yourself in the place of Simon of Cyrene. How heavy is the physical burden of the cross? What other burdens weigh on you?

#### SIXTH STATION: A WOMAN WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

How does Jesus connect with this woman who wipes his face? Do they make eye contact? Do others make eye contact?

What words, if any, are exchanged?

#### SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

What is your inward and outward response to Jesus' second fall? Do you feel the pull to avert your eyes from his pain?

Recall a time when you felt an inward pull to turn away from suffering.

#### EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Have you heard the cries of women throughout the walk?

How have they changed?

How do the women respond to Jesus' words, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"?

#### NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Repeat either to yourself or as a group, "Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ."

What would it look like for us to gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of our Savior, Jesus Christ?

#### TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

How do you feel as Jesus is stripped down in front of the crowd? Describe what arises in you as you watch others divide the clothes off his back amongst themselves.

Recall a particularly bitter taste like potent vinegar or bile and the sensation created in your mouth, the desperation for a drink.

#### ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Wonder for a moment about those on the crosses at Jesus' left and right.

Imagine the interactions the three of them may have had with one another and with the crowd as they experienced this torture.

#### TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Imagine yourself as either the disciple charged with care of Jesus' mother or as Jesus' mother, whichever feels more authentic to you. How do you respond to Jesus' words to you?

What does it look like for you personally to "die daily to sin"?

#### THIRTEENTH STATION: THE BODY OF JESUS IS PLACED IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

Watch Jesus' mother cradle his body for a moment. What, if any, comfort do you wish to offer to her? If you do offer her comfort, how does she respond?

#### FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Do you follow those who take Jesus' body to the tomb, thus associating yourself with his ministry? Or do you watch from a distance?

Reflect for a moment on the imagery of being buried in the waters and rising to new life in baptism. How are you experiencing death and resurrection in your own life?

Thank you for utilizing *The Way of the Cross*. Visit [Virginia Theological Seminary's website](#) to learn more about the Seminary and its programs including the work of [Lifelong Learning](#).