

I – Christ is Condemned to Death



The first Station is one of bold contrast: Jesus, who has come to this moment out of love for us, stands tall, calm, and obedient to His fate. He has no resentment or fear. Pilate, however, almost cringes over the dread decision he has made. He tries in vain to cleanse his conscience with water. Between these two is the holy Cross – an eternal sign of hope and judgment.

II – Jesus Takes the Cross



As Jesus takes His first step towards Golgotha, He sets before us an unforgettable example of humility. He, who created the heavens and the earth, gives a Roman soldier power to debase and torment Him. Our Lord will not lift a finger to save Himself – caring only about saving us.

III – Jesus Falls the First Time



To see the Lord of Hosts stumble and fall at the hands of a created being is unnerving. If God falters, how can we exist? This first fall of Christ is an intense reminder that it was in sacrifice, not power, that God's greatest love was given.

IV – Jesus Meets His Mother



Jesus turns to meet his mother. It is a moment of strength in the midst of sorrow, as Mary, her heart breaking to see her Son suffer, gives Him courage to go on. She may have said to Jesus the same words He says to us: "Do not be afraid, I am with you."

V – Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross



To me, Simon is one of the most overlooked of all saints. We assume that he just happened to be there to be conscripted by the Romans into aiding Jesus. But it was God, not the Romans, who chose Simon! If the Apostles were watching from the crowd, what must they have thought to see this 'stranger' helping their beloved friend and Lord?

Long before that terrible day, God had prepared Simon to be the one to help His Son bear the heavy and sacred wood. I hope that as we look at this Station, we will want to be like Simon, and come to Jesus' aid.

VI – Veronica Wipes the Lord's Face



In this Station, there is a quiet moment when Veronica reaches out to help Jesus and He looks into her eyes. What strength and graces did He impart to her, along with His image on her veil? Veronica was designed as a young person, hoping she will inspire our youth to reach out to Jesus and hear His voice over voices that would draw them away from Him.

VII – Jesus Falls the Second Time



Jesus staggers again, yet rises again, determined to fulfill His mission no matter how painful. By His example we are encouraged to persevere in our vocations and our prayers.

VIII – Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem



Jesus said, "Do not weep for me, but for yourselves and your children." In this Station the Lord, even in His anguish, turns to comfort the women. His words seem to echo over the centuries to this day when we so need to pray for a return of the dignity of women and of motherhood.

IX – Jesus Falls the Third Time



In this His last fall, the Lord of all creation collapses to the ground under the true weight of our sins. Simon is helpless to alleviate Jesus' suffering, but can only wait, patiently bearing the weight of the Cross until Jesus can rise and go on.



X – Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

In this scene, I aimed for simplicity, and a remembrance of Pilate's words "Ecce Homo" ("Behold the Man"). Jesus, being publicly stripped and utterly humiliated, still stands calm and obedient to God's will. Facing us with His tormentor behind Him, Jesus reminds us that He always stands between us and evil.



XI – Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

This scene is full of angles, drama and tension. As one soldier pulls against the weight of the Cross, another hammers nails into the Lord's feet. Jesus is stretched taut against the wood and looks with sorrow at one of His own children participating in His execution. This Station reminds us never to be comfortable with sin – but to see how it pierces Our Lord.



XII – Jesus Dies on the Cross

Jesus' head is slumped on His chest, as the last bit of life leaves Him. But immediately a new life begins for mankind. To symbolize this new life, there is a wind encompassing the scene, billowing the clothes of Mary, of Jesus and of John. Mary prays at the Cross, just as she does for us even today. Mary Magdalene kneels in repentance at Jesus' pierced feet, as each of us must do to receive His life; and John

opens his arms as the full meaning of the Scriptures becomes clear to him. Before He dies, Jesus says, "It is finished." But we can almost hear the Father saying, "Now we begin!"



XIII – Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

In perhaps the most poignant moment of the Stations, Jesus' body is placed in the arms of His mother. She who saw this coming from the day of Simeon's prophecy over Her infant, now clings to the broken body of Her beloved Son. In this Station, we see that Her tenderness, Her compassion, Her strength and Her union with Jesus are everlasting.



XIV – Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

In this last Station, two unexpected characters enter the scene: Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. For most of the journey, Jesus has been in the hands of the Romans; but now the two devout Jewish men care for His burial with kindness and reverence. It is a fitting symbol of the new union which merges all that went before in the Old Covenant, to all that now unfolds for mankind in the New Covenant.

After a number of years of praying, pondering and seeking, this parish now has the Stations of the Cross. The meditations in your hand are from the soul of the sculptor of these beautiful works, Sondra Jonson. We are indebted to her for her deep love of our Lord and for what she has produced. It was the generosity of a number of donors that financed these blessed works that will bring many blessings far into the future.

*~ Father Gerald J. Harr, Pastor
August 18, 2013*



Stations of the Cross

Meditations and sketches by Sondra Jonson from Cambridge, Nebraska, sculptor of the Stations for Christ the King Church in Gering, Nebraska.