



Lenten Prayer Service

Reflection

LEADER / PRESIDER:

Today we gather in prayer to thank God for the gift of Jesus and for His great love for us. Jesus wants all children to hear when He speaks to our hearts about believing in Him, loving one another and sharing our blessings. And yet, there are children today who have never heard the “Good News” of Jesus. What do you think Jesus calls you to do for them? (short pause)

LEADER / PRESIDER:

Let us turn our hearts and our minds to Him in prayer and call to mind children in the Missions who suffer from poverty, neglect, violence or hunger, and ask God’s special blessing upon them. May we always respond with joy to Your Good News, Lord, live by Your example, and love others as You love us. Amen

READING: Colossians 3:12-14

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13,14 and 17

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;

In the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

A clean heart create for me, O God,

And a steadfast spirit renew within me.

Cast me not out from your presence,

And your Holy Spirit take not from me.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.

O, Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

All: Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned

Leader / Presider: Lord Jesus, You stretched out Your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross so that everyone could be saved. Send us Your Spirit so that we may reach out our arms in love to bring the Good News of You and Your salvation to children everywhere.

All: Amen.



Stations of the Cross

The road which Jesus walked from Jerusalem to Calvary is called “The Way of the Cross,” Via Crucis. It is a privilege to follow the steps of Jesus Who has given His life for the world. In praying the Way of the Cross, we see and experience the suffering of Christ and reflect upon the suffering in our own world, especially among the most vulnerable – our brothers and sisters in the Missions.

Leader: Jesus, unite our Lenten prayers and sacrifices with Your suffering along the Way of the Cross. Be present to us as we think about the meaning of each Station of the Cross for us and for children in the Missions.

FIRST STATION

Leader: Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Many children live in war-torn areas and are condemned to live with violence and death all around them. These children are innocent, just as Jesus was innocent.

All: Forgive us Lord, for those times we have not spoken out to show our concern for human life and all of God’s creation. We pray for children in the Missions who are condemned to die because of war, poverty, hunger and sickness.

SECOND STATION

Leader: Jesus Carries the Cross

Children suffer from many things in our country and in countries far from us. Jesus loves all children and wants all children to love each other. He wants us to learn about others, so we can love and help them when they suffer and “carry heavy crosses.” Jesus suffers with them, too.

All: Jesus, show us how to help lift the heavy burdens placed on children in the Missions so that they do not have to carry their crosses alone. We pray especially for

children in the Missions who are forced to work – the brick makers, the shoe shiners, the garbage pickers and the rug weavers. May they experience the Love of Jesus and may His love ease their suffering.

THIRD STATION

Leader: Jesus Falls the First Time

Sometimes children in mission countries cannot bear their suffering. They cry because they are hungry, cold or lonely. Many children do not have medicine to heal them when they are sick. They cannot care for themselves. They often have no one to help them to “get up when they fall.”

All: Lord, please help suffering children, some so small they cannot speak and have no one to care for them. Please help us to share the “Good News” of Jesus and His message of peace in our families, among our friends and to *the ends of the earth*.

FOURTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

Some children have lost mothers or fathers, sometimes both parents. They have no one to show them how to live like Jesus wants us too. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is every child’s mother and teacher. She is the best example of what it means to be truly Christian.

All: Forgive us, Mary, when we think too much of ourselves. May our prayers and offerings help families in the Missions and their suffering children.

FIFTH STATION

Leader: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

When children are tired, hungry, sick or confused, they need friends to help them. Jesus was grateful when His friends reached out to help Him.

All: Jesus, help us to be more generous and helpful to others, and forgive us when we are lazy or selfish. And, help us also to be generous in sharing our faith with others. We pray in a special way for all the missionaries of the world who help the poorest of the poor to carry their crosses, offering them the love and hope of Jesus.

SIXTH STATION

Leader: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Sometimes we are frightened when we see a person who is suffering. Jesus must have looked frightening to Veronica, His face covered in blood and dirt. But Veronica was not afraid. She understood that in His pain, Jesus needed to know that someone loved and cared for Him.

All: We pray that each day more and more people come to see the “Face of Christ” in the love and service of missionaries.

SEVENTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Millions of children are cold and hungry. Many of them cannot run or even walk because they are so weak. Many cannot play or learn. These children have many problems and often need all kinds of care, even medicine, food, and a chance to go to school.

All: Lord, help us when we “fall” into sin and turn away from You and the teachings of Your only Son, Jesus. Feed our spirits with Your love. Teach us to be generous, so that we can send our prayers and loving help to children in other countries who need so much.

EIGHTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem

Jesus told the women to care more for their own children than for Him. Many mothers in the world worry about their children's future. Will there be enough food? Can they go to school? Will there be a war soon? They care deeply about their children's lives now – and for the future.

All: Jesus, we pray in a special way for mothers in mission countries and for the Sisters who often become the only mothers for so many children who find themselves orphaned and alone.

NINTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Falls the Third Time

There are many homeless children in our world. Many have no place to sleep at night. Sometimes when Jesus taught people about God, He was far from shelter and had no place to sleep.

All: Loving Jesus, when we fall down and get hurt, help us to remember Your pain and the pain of children in the Missions who are homeless.

TENTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

When Jesus was stripped of His clothes, He may have felt like refugee children in warring countries who are stripped of everything they need: family, home, food and clothing.

All: Lord, forgive us when we complain that we do not have enough, without thinking of our brothers and sisters in the Missions who lack basic needs like food, water and shelter.

ELEVENTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

On the Cross, Jesus had no freedom to move. Many children today live in countries where they are not free to learn about Jesus and His love for them.

All: Jesus, we pray for the children who are not free to praise and proclaim You as their loving Savior, not free to live healthy, whole lives. May all children one day know these same freedoms that we enjoy.

TWELFTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Jesus was obedient to God, His Father, even when it meant that He had to die on the Cross. We are called to follow Him, as His disciples, by helping everyone to know and love God.

(All kneel and pause for a moment of silence.)

All: Jesus, may Your death on the Cross bring new life and hope to children in the Missions.

(All stand/sit.)

THIRTEENTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Is Taken Down From the Cross

Many children do not know that Jesus is reaching out to hold and embrace them just like Mary held Jesus when the soldiers took Him down from the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, who sent Jesus to us, and of the Son, who dies for us, and of the Holy Spirit, who fills us with love, let us say a special prayer of thanksgiving for all the love that God has given to us to share with others. (Pause briefly in silence.)

FOURTEENTH STATION

Leader: Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

Many children suffer silently. Sometimes we do not see how much they are in pain. Jesus was silent in the tomb. His friends could not see Him.

All: Jesus, silent and hidden in the tomb, we want to help children who suffer silently. Please make us generous during Lent so suffering children will know we hear their cries.

Closing prayer:

Leader:

You gave us everything so that we may have eternal life.

Please help me to especially pray for and give to our brothers and sisters in the Missions this Lent.

When I am tempted to complain,
please remind me to ask Your help in prayer,
to thank You
to love You
to listen for Your voice
each and every day in Lent.
Amen.