

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

HEALING THROUGH THE LIFE, DEATH
AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST



1. Jesus is condemned

Pilate went back to the Praetorium and called Jesus to him. 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord or have others said it to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me; what have you done?' (Jn. 18:33-35)

The Gospel is about learning to live and also to die in and with God.

'God comes to you disguised as your life... Authentic Christianity is not so much a belief system as a life-and-death system that shows you how to give away your life, how to give away your love, and eventually how to give away your death.' (Rohr, *The Universal Christ*, p.212-213)

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

2. Jesus carries the cross

Peter said to him, 'Even if all desert you, I will never desert you.' Jesus answered him, 'In truth, I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times. (Mt. 26: 33-34)

Human love is the necessary school for any encounter with divine love. Human love includes sacrifice, forgiveness and generosity, which all help us access, imagine and experience divine love. When we forgive, we release the offending party from any need for punishment or recrimination. In so doing, we bear witness to the Ever Risen and Always Loving Christ, who is always 'going ahead of you into Galilee.'

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

3. Jesus falls for the first time

Remember, O Lord, how your servant is taunted; how I bear in my bosom the insults of the peoples, with which your enemies taunt, O Lord, with which they taunted the footsteps of your anointed. (Ps. 89:50, 51)

The focus of Christian healing is an invitation to go on a journey into wholeness with God. The essential component of human wellbeing is the healing of our relationship with God. A key part of healing is therefore the ability to recognize and forgive our own shadow side.

14. Jesus is placed in the tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered that it be handed over. (Mt. 27:57-58)

The sharp points on my journey are the growth points. Only great love and great suffering are strong enough to take away our ego's protections and open us to authentic experience of God. Jesus' life, death and resurrection reveal a clear message about universal love and necessary suffering as the divine pattern... Divine perfection is precisely the ability to include what seems like imperfection.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

15. The Resurrection

All I want to know is Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. (Phil. 3: 7-11)

Resurrection is the ultimate healing of our humanity. It restores humanity to its fullness. Salvation might best be described as restoration. Resurrection must be preceded by death. We cannot bypass the death and move straight to the resurrection. Try to picture the resurrection as beams of light extending in all directions – he burst the grave! He destroyed death!

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.



Reflections adapted by Anne O'Connor
9 February 2023
from 'HEALING THROUGH THE LIFE,
DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST'
an essay by Annie O'Connor
15 April 2019

The cross is the measure of Christ's love for us. This love has the power to heal and save. The cross is an act of love, both on the part of the Father who sent his only son to save us, and on Jesus' part, who lays down his life for love.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

12. Jesus dies

The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then the other. When they came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. (Jn. 19:32-37)

God's power is made perfect in the weakness of Jesus crucified. It is through the power of the cross that the Father has chosen to reconcile all things to himself in Christ (Eph 2:16; Col. 1:20). Thus, Paul proclaims the cross (not just the resurrection) as the power of God. The cross has the power to save – and so 'it is finished.'

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

13. Jesus is taken down from the cross

The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said, 'In truth, this man was the Son of God.' (Mk. 15:39)

The fruit of Jesus' suffering is a compassion so great as to be nearly unbelievable. Jesus' first act after his agony in the garden is to heal the ear of the high priest's slave (Lk. 22:51). Nailed to the cross, he forgives (Lk. 23:34).

We can be healed simply by looking at Jesus, by looking on him whom they have pierced, just as the Hebrews looked at the bronze serpent when they were bitten and they were healed (Numbers 21:5-7).

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

The full journey towards wholeness must always include the negative experiences (the cross) that we usually reject.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

4. Jesus comes face to face with his mother

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Look, he is destined for the fall and the rise of many in Israel, destined to be the sign that is opposed – and a sword will pierce your soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.' (Lk. 2:34-35)

As Luke's Gospel opens, it is interesting to observe something that is often lost in translation. The word translated as 'Saviour' in the song of Mary (Lk. 1:47), and in the announcement of the nativity to the shepherds (Lk. 2:11), may also be translated as 'deliverer' or 'healer'.

The cross is the ultimate act of love that destroys death and does away with sin.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

5. Simon of Cyrene helps carry the cross

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene called Simon, and enlisted him to carry his Cross. (Mt. 27:32)

The healing ministry of Jesus is fully understood only in the context of the saving death of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel sees the healings of Jesus' public ministry as fulfilling the Suffering Servant prophecy – 'he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."' (Mt. 8:16-17)

For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor.1:22-24)

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. (Ps. 22:7)

Unforgiveness lives in a repetitive past, which it cannot let go of. But forgiveness is a largeness of soul, without which there is no future or creative action. We see no small-mindedness in the Risen Christ after his own rejection, betrayal and cruel death. So, there is forgiveness in the death and also in the resurrection. And it is impossible to love anyone fully and at the same time to resent someone else. You cannot give total love when your heart is divided – and a bitter heart is a divided heart. Instead of rehearsing hurts over and over, release them.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

7. Jesus falls for the second time

Will no one hear my prayer, will not God himself grant my hope? May it please God to crush me, to give his hand free play and to do away with sin. This insight, at least, would give me comfort – a thrill of joy in unrelenting pain, that I never rebelled against the Holy One's decrees. (Job 6:8-10)

Jesus sets his face to Jerusalem. He disregards the shame of the cross and steadfastly goes through suffering, not around it. Likewise, God seems to send us on the path towards our own wholeness not by eliminating the obstacles, but by making use of them. Going somewhere good means having to go through and with the bad. The best way out is if we have first gone in – into great suffering and great love.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

8. The women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus

Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.' (Lk. 23:27-28)

Jesus foresaw and even predicted his own suffering and death. He accepted it with his eyes open, not denying to himself or to others what the future held.

The Suffering Servant heals. Healing is a consequence of his suffering.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

9. Jesus falls for the third time

He had no form or charm to attract us, no beauty to win our hearts; he was despised, the lowest of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. (Is. 53:2-3)

Suffering, death and resurrection are how Jesus walked humanity back to God. Jesus' death brings reconciliation. [Pilate and Herod were reconciled that same day. The crowd were baying for blood, but they go away beating their breasts].

'The crucified and risen Christ uses the mistakes of the past to create a positive future, a future of redemption instead of retribution. He does not eliminate or punish the mistakes. He uses them for transformative purposes.' (Rohr, *The Universal Christ*, p.72).

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

10. Jesus is stripped of his clothes

When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots. (Mt. 25:35)

Salvation and healing come in the person of Christ – that is, in the life of Christ. Even before Jesus' death and resurrection, Luke uses the language of salvation. The people who encounter Jesus are saved through his healing presence.

Response: Heal us, risen Lord, you are the Saviour of the world.

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross

And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. But we, we thought of him as someone punished, struck by God, and brought low. Yet he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed. (Is. 53: 4-5)