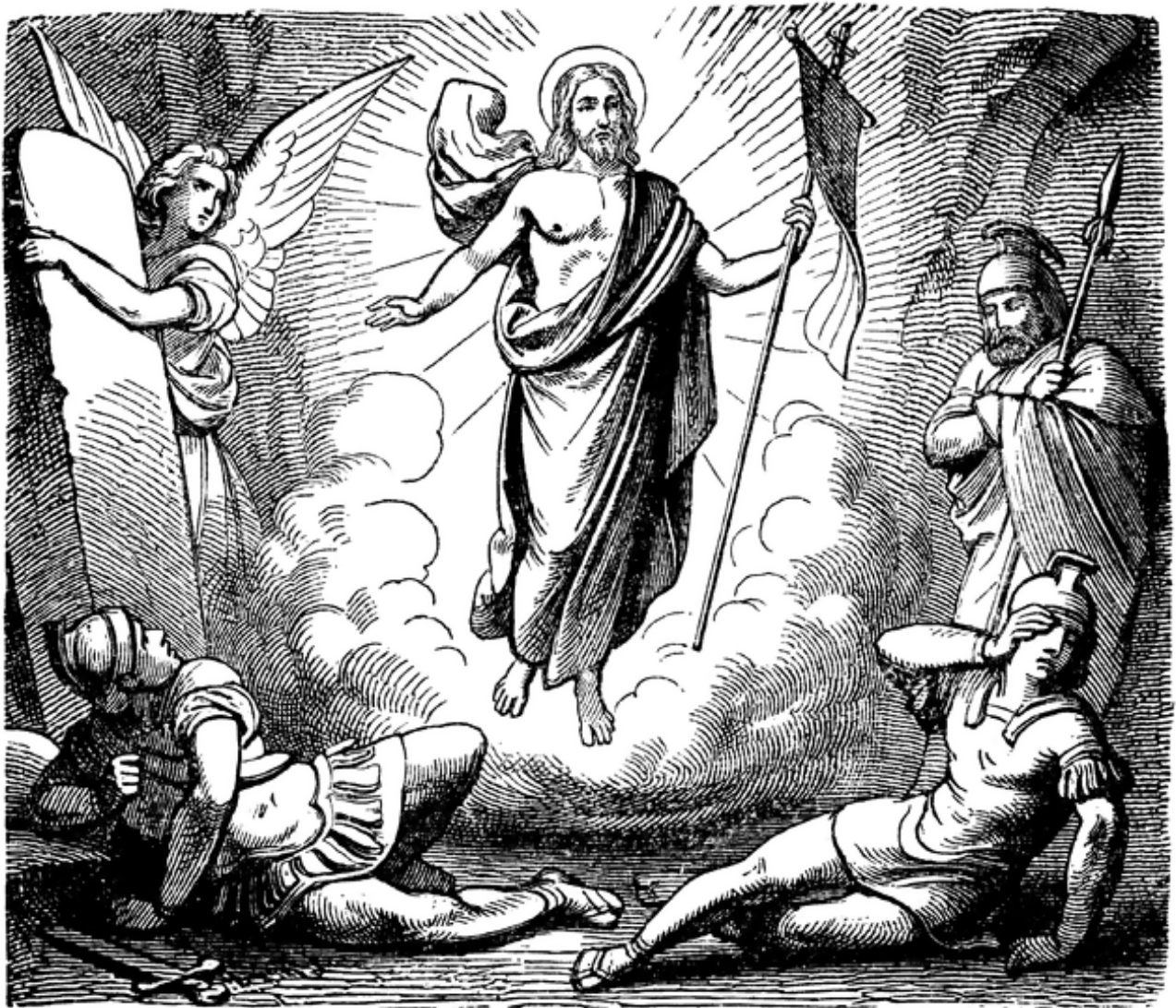


Stations of the Resurrection

*A resource for those praying at home
as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic*



THE CHURCH UNION



The Society
under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda

Introduction

Many of us will be familiar with the Stations of The Cross devotion, as we follow Jesus through those hours from his condemnation to death to his body being placed in the tomb as we reflect on 14 incidents from those final hours. We follow him as he falls, as he meets his mother and the women of Jerusalem, as Veronica and Simon of Cyrene provide help and comfort and then as he is nailed to the cross and dies. It can sometimes feel so final as we finish the devotion with the body of Jesus lying in the tomb.

But as Christians, we know that is not the end, that there will be the Resurrection and new life. Sometimes there is a 15th Station – that of the Resurrection to remind us of this. The Resurrection is central to our Christian faith. It is the proof that Jesus was not just a religious teacher or a good man, but the incarnate Son of God, who was true God and true man, and that he overcame death and was raised to glory.

Perhaps you might not be so familiar with the Stations of the Resurrection devotion. In these 14 Stations we follow Jesus and the disciples from Easter morning through to Pentecost. They follow the same pattern as the Stations of the Cross, with a scripture reading, meditation and a prayer. Through these scenes we share in the disciples' doubts, their misunderstandings, their fears, but most of all their joy in the Risen Jesus. It is the Resurrection of Jesus that, in these very strange times, is our strength and hope.

As we worship and pray at home during these days, you might like to make these Stations of the Resurrection part of your celebration of Easter (a season that lasts for 50 days). Perhaps you might like to take a Station each day and reflect on the scripture reading and meditation; to place yourself in that event that the scripture records and ask yourself how you would feel, in what way you would react and maybe what you would say to Jesus. The make the prayer your prayer for that day. You might want to combine this meditation with looking for signs of Resurrection around you; in the new life and growth that is bursting forth in nature, in the bravery of doctors, nurses and careworkers, in the kindness of friends and family, in the hope that we will worship in our churches once again and meet the Risen Jesus in the breaking of bread – just as those disciples did at Emmaus.

We wish you a very holy, happy and blessed Eastertide.

At the start of our meditation on each station we pray:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your glorious resurrection you have given life to the world.

Opening Prayer

+In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity.
Amen

1st Station – The Earthquake

Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. *Matthew 28: 2-4*

The stone was so heavy that no one could move it. They had put a seal on it and a guard watching over it. They thought that this was the end of Jesus. But to God, nothing is impossible. Through his love, he has broken the bonds of death and has broken through the stone and has brought us new life.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for in your resurrection the power of love breaks open the earth
and frees life from death.

As the angel rolled away the stone from the prison of the tomb,
so release those imprisoned by life's misfortunes.

To you, Lord Jesus, whose life brings surprises beyond our wildest expectations,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

2nd Station – Mary Magdalene finds the empty tomb

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’

John 20:1-2

Even though Jesus had told that what would happen; his death and the large stone placed across his tomb, must have felt that all was lost. Imagine the shock that Mary must have felt on that first Easter day when the stone had been rolled away. Her fear that the body of Jesus had been taken away, she could not even grieve for him at his tomb – even that, she felt, had been taken away from her. At that point she did not realise that he had risen as he promised.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for the love which drew Mary Magdalene to your tomb to weep over your death.
As you broke into her grief with your death-shattering life,
so reach into our broken hearts with your promise of hope.
To you, Lord Jesus, reaching into the deepest tombs of our despair,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

3rd Station – The disciples run to the empty tomb

Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. *John 20:3-8*

You can imagine Peter, true to character and as impetuous as ever, barging past the beloved disciple to get into the tomb first. The beloved disciple, perhaps more tentative stands outside and looks on in wonder. Each of them, with their own temperaments, are witnesses to the resurrection. How would we feel and react if we were among those who ran to the tomb and found the linen cloths lying there?

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for in you our God reveals the awesome power of love that is stronger even than death.
As in your dying you destroyed death,
so in your rising may we be raised above the trials and torments of this world's woe.
To you, Lord Jesus, the fullness of your life revealed in an empty tomb,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

4th Station – The angel appears to the women

The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. *Matthew 28: 5-8*

During these past few weeks with Coronavirus, there will have been times when we have been scared and afraid and bewildered – just like those women who stood by the tomb. They, like us, were seeking words of comfort and guidance. They, like us, received those words from the Angel – do not be afraid, Jesus is Risen. We need those words of hope and comfort more than ever at this time.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for your resurrection overturns our expectations of life
and even your closest friends could not see truth before them.
As the angel helped them to grasp your triumph and overcome their fear,
so help us to see your hand at work through the events that overtake us.
To you, Lord Jesus, whose ways astonish beyond our imagining,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

5th Station – Jesus meets the women

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.' *Matthew 28:9-10*

We hear those words again, this time from Jesus, do not be afraid. This phrase occurs in the Bible 365 times. It shows the hope that God gives us, which is made manifest in the Resurrection. Despite the darkness of the world, we should hope in the light of Jesus and not be afraid.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for your simple word of greeting made the hearts of the women leap with joy.
Speak your word of love to those whose hearts are broken,
that they too may hear your loving, beckoning call.
To you, Lord Jesus, whose call summons us to life in all its fullness,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

6th Station – The road to Emmaus

‘As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. *Luke 24:28-35*

Jesus sat at table with them. This fellowship with friends, family and our church family is one of the things that we long for during this time of social distancing. The disciples were full of dejection as they left Jerusalem. We too know those feelings at the moment. But the risen Jesus always accompanies us on our journey through life, even when the road seems tough. We pray for the day when we can once again be with friends and family and can gather round the altar and celebrate the Eucharist together.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you are with us,
even when our eyes are closed to your companionship.
Walk this day alongside the disconsolate and the despairing,
open their eyes to your gentle illumination,
and let their hearts burn within them at your invisible presence.
To you, Lord Jesus,
walking by our side,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

7th Station - Jesus appears to the disciples

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. *Luke 24: 36-43*

At times we all have doubts about our faith. When we do this, we are in good company, as this Gospel reading tells us that the disciples had their doubts; and throughout history some of the greatest of the saints have had their doubts about faith. Jesus shows them his wounds, wounds that he bore for us. It is by his wounds that our lives are healed. Jesus then invites us to be 'wounded healers', as he calls us to be ambassadors of his love and reconciliation, while we ourselves are being forgiven and healed.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for in your birth you were proclaimed the Prince of Peace,
and in your resurrection you breathe into your people peace beyond this world's
understanding.

Be present, Lord, this day
with those whose lives are disfigured by conflict
and those whose hearts know no peace.

To you, Lord Jesus, true bringer of the peace of heaven,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

8th Station - Jesus breathes the Spirit on the disciples

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' *John 20:21-23*

The doors of the room where the disciples were meeting were bolted shut, they were locked away in fear. Despite the locked doors, Jesus comes to them and gives the disciples his peace – that peace which the world cannot give. It is this deep inner peace which Jesus alone can give us. At this time, we must not close our hearts to the love of

God, and allow ourselves to be prisoners of fear and doubt. We must keep our hearts open to God to allow the gust of the Holy Spirit to be breathed on us.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you breathed new life into your astonished disciples.
As you turned unutterable grief into unshakeable joy,
so renew and refresh your turbulent world
and establish now your reign of peace.
To you, Lord Jesus,
transforming the pain of death into the fullness of life,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

9th Station - Jesus reveals himself to Thomas

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' *John 20:24-29*

The story of Thomas is important because it is through Thomas' example that we realize that doubt can be a part of faith. Too easily we call him "Doubting Thomas," and forgetting that after examining the nail marks, he fully embraced Jesus as his Lord and Saving God. Thomas' doubt was transformed into a lively faith. We too, are called to believe, knowing full well that our faith may be tested by doubt and fear. As disciples who desire an ever-deeper faith, we are patient and understanding with those who are struggling, searching and seeking like Thomas.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you come to us even in our doubting.
Through the sovereign work of your Spirit,
and the loving hands of your people,
continue to reveal yourself where doubt is stronger than faith.

To you, Lord Jesus, whose resurrection body bears the murderous marks of the cross, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

10th Station - Jesus appears at the lakeside

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. *John 21: 9-13*

After the crucifixion, the disciples returned to their former way of life, fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus appears to them. Even in his Resurrection glory, Jesus shows them the way of service and serves them by cooking breakfast. This reminds us of our call to follow Jesus and serve our brothers and sisters in any way that we can.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for at the lakeside you showed concern for the daily needs of your disciples.
As you guided them to fill their nets with fish,
so guide all who are hungry
till their hunger is satisfied in you.
To you, Lord Jesus, sharing with us the food of faith,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

11th Station – Jesus confronts Peter

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?'... Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, 'Do you love Me?' and he said to Him, 'Lord, You know everything, You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.... Follow Me' " *John 21:15-19*

Jesus turns his attention to Peter whose shameful three-fold denial was still ringing in his heart. The questions posed by Jesus help Peter to find reconciliation and to embrace his new mission to tend and feed the sheep. Their encounter reminds us that forgiveness is always available, even for the most serious of mistakes we can make. This warm embrace of forgiveness strengthens our resolve to be reconcilers and healers in the Spirit of Jesus. Only love can overcome guilt and deception. Only love and forgiveness can make us whole.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for even in the glorious victory of the resurrection
you understood the failure of Peter who denied you.
As you restored him to relationship with you,
remember all who feel downcast and worthless in this world's eyes
and give them a sense of purpose and value.
To you, Lord Jesus, loving us despite our denial,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

12th Station – Jesus send the disciples into the world

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' *John 28: 16-20*

In lockdown it is hard to 'go' in the way that Jesus instructs the disciples. But, despite Coronavirus, we are still called to be apostles, to be sent out to do the work that Jesus has entrusted to us. We are finding new ways of doing this, through using digital media to livestream services and reflections, by helping people to pray at home, to help support the vulnerable. How is Jesus calling you to carry out his mission at this time?

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you took the risk of passing your mission to frail disciples.
As you commissioned them to go into all the world,
so may all the world come to you, the King of nations.
To you, Lord Jesus, with us to the end of the age,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

13th Station – The Ascension

After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days

from now.' So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' *Acts 1: 3-11*

The separation of Jesus and his disciples at Calvary had been a painful one. This separation at the Ascension is not a day of sadness, it is a day of rejoicing and the disciples were full of hope and joy because they knew he was alive forever and that they would see him again. Our separation from each other is a painful one, but there will be joy when we will be reunited once again, and we pray for Jesus' abiding presence with us.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for in your ascension you are crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.

As we worship you on your heavenly throne,
prepare our hearts for the coming of your Spirit.

To you, Lord Jesus, who will come back in the same way you went up into heaven,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

14th Station – The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' *Acts 2:1-11*

Although we celebrate the feast day of Pentecost, the power and coming of the Holy Spirit is not a one-off event. It is something which we need day by day to sustain our Christian lives. We need the Holy Spirit to 'stir up' his gifts in us. For us to pray 'thy kingdom come' and for the face of the earth to be renewed, we need to pray first that the Holy Spirit will renew us.

Pause for silent reflection

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory,
for you promised that your disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit
and now we see the fulfilment of your promise.

Fill us afresh with your Spirit today, revive your Church,
and renew the face of the earth.

To you, Lord Jesus, giving to your people the greatest gift of all,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

Final prayers

Finish the Stations of the Resurrection by saying the Lord's prayer and then the following prayer:

Almighty God,
whose only-begotten Son died on the cross for our salvation
and was raised from the dead to restore us to eternal life,
mercifully grant that as we have followed the way of his Resurrection
we may through grace be dead to sin
and alive to his continual presence with us;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.