

Come,  
Lay down your burdens



Stations of the Cross  
Church of the Holy Family  
Rathcoole Parish

## Stations of the Cross – Rathcoole Parish

**Welcome:** Life may be compared to a journey and along the way we learn from others who have gone ahead of us and whose experience can speak to us. It reminds us that we also learn from those who walk with us, sharing the road. As people of faith, we trust that we are not alone on this journey and that, in fact, our closest companion is Jesus who has not only gone ahead of us but also still walks with us. Our stations of the Cross are journeying with Jesus to His death and Resurrection. We come as we are, and we gather from where we are as pilgrims. There could be a variety of reasons for us to pray the Stations – from needing God’s help to opening ourselves up to get to know God more.



*A suggestion.* As you come to pray these new Stations we invite you to bring a small pebble in your pocket and, as we journey through the stations, you can move the pebble through your fingers and reflect on any burdens, concerns and, indeed, crosses that are in your heart. As we make our way through the Stations become aware of Christ’s suffering, His pain, His love for us. This act of love shows us that we are not alone – Jesus is right here with us, strengthening us, comforting us and sharing our sufferings with us. Along the way if you feel the freedom to leave down your pebble then we encourage you to do so.

We hope that these stations will bring you on a pilgrim journey, walking quietly and reflectively, mindful of our inner selves, the place where our God dwells.

### I Jesus is Condemned to Death

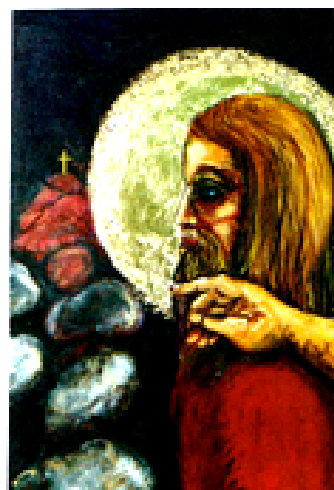
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you  
Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

*‘A third time Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has Jesus done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” But they kept shouting that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So, Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted, and he handed Jesus over to be crucified.*

*(Luke 23:22-24)*

I sometimes wonder is it ever good when the mob has its way? But it is very hard to resist when everybody seems to be going the one way, it is difficult to set yourself apart, to do the thing you know to be right.

Jesus, I often get angry at injustice, at the hypocrisy around me, at the failure of leaders to be honest and fair. But I also know that there are other times when I just do what suits me and I don’t think too much about the consequences. I need Your help to be true to myself. Please let me follow Your way and not the way of Pilate or the mob.



### II Jesus takes up his Cross

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*‘Then Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus who carried the cross by himself to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.’* *(John 19:16-17)*

Sometimes life does not make sense, especially when people are asked to carry burdens that are not of their own making and to live with things over which they have no control. Where is the fairness in that?

Jesus, I don’t understand why life is sometimes so hard. At times it seems as if God just doesn’t care. But You trusted Your Father and never lost faith in His goodness. When I must face my cross, let me know that You carry it with me and help me to trust and believe that somehow good can come from it.



### III Jesus falls the First Time

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*'I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.'* (Ps 118:13-14)

It is not hard to imagine how people can feel completely overwhelmed by the problems that have come their way: no job, family breakdown, ill health. People have experienced many other problems during pandemics - such as loss, isolation, anxiety and fear. We hold in prayer all who may feel overwhelmed.

Jesus, I am concerned about some of my friends and the people I know who find it really hard to go on. In Your love and compassion reach out to them and help them to take each day as it comes.



### IV Jesus meets his Mother

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*"After they had presented their son Jesus in the Temple, Simeon, a just and holy man, blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many and to be a sign that will be opposed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too."* (Luke 2:34-35)

Being a parent is a blessing. Parents and grandparents are wonderful, most of the time! They do so much, they are there for you, and they just get on with the business of treating you as if you are all that matters in the world. It is very easy to take them for granted. We dearly miss those who are no longer with us.

Mary, you loved Jesus with a mother's love and your suffering on His way of the cross is unspeakable. Open our eyes to see your Son as you see Him and give us the courage to share Him with others.



### V Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry his Cross

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*'As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry Jesus' cross.'* (Matthew 27:32)

Opportunities to help others come our way all the time. Often, we do not welcome them and sometimes we would prefer if we could just be left alone. But we all know how good it is to be helped and how grateful we feel when someone is there for us. In our community there are and have been so many un-thanked Simons, we bring them to mind and say thanks.

Simon, we do not know anything about you except that on this one day you found yourself helping a poor, beaten and abused prisoner. There is a lesson here for us about what it means to be a real hero, to be an inspiration, and it has nothing to do with fanfares and admirers. It is just about being there for others. Saint Simon, pray for us that we might follow your example.



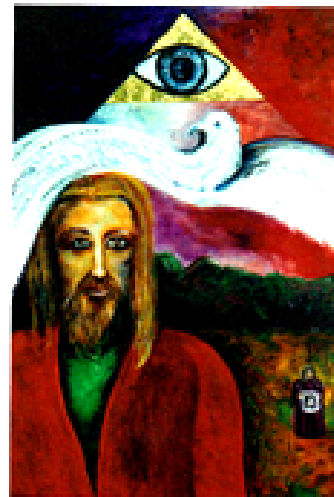
## VI Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

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*"And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*  
(Matthew 25:38-40)

Veronica is not mentioned in the Scriptures, but her story is one of the many that appear in the tradition of the Church. It is a story of tender-hearted love and compassion, and it is repeated because we need to know that in the face of human cruelty, suffering and violence, there are brave, good people to remind us that one simple gesture of love means that God is always present to us.

Veronica, thank you for being there and for having the heart to do something rather than nothing when faced with this scene of sadness and sorrow. Pray for us to the Lord that we too will always have the generosity and courage to do what we can to show our concern for those who suffer.



## VII Jesus falls the Second Time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you  
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*"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes waste away from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away."*  
(Ps 31:10-11)

The prayers in the Book of Psalms are helpful because they show us how Jesus prayed and they remind us that even if things are going well for us there are many for whom the struggle seems too much. As we imagine Jesus falling again, we remember that we are all children of God and that it is good to pray for and with all those who are in need.

Jesus, I to fall on my journey. Lots of things seem to trip me up. At times it is my pride, other times it is self-doubt and lack of trust in You. The worst is when I feel I have been pushed and I am overcome with anger. Help me when I am down to get back up, to leave aside my hurt and anxiety and to move ahead, knowing You will always hear me when I call.



## VIII Jesus comforts the Women of Jerusalem

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*'My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for." The thought of my affliction brings me down! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'*  
(Lamentations 3:17-23)

When Jesus meets the women who are weeping for Him, He speaks words of comfort to them. He reminds them that their grief must not distract them from paying attention to what matters in their own lives.

Jesus, it is extremely easy to lose my way; there is so much going on, so many people wanting me to go different paths, to try different things. There is so much anxiety and concern that I am



tempted to let it overpower me. When I become confused or uncertain and am troubled by doubts or worry remind me that You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

## IX Jesus Falls the Third Time

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*"The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* (Isaiah 40:28-31)

As Jesus draws near to the end it seems that he simply cannot continue. We think; *Why should he go on? What's the point? What good can come of this?*

Jesus, there are times when I just want to run away, when I cannot be bothered any more. I feel hassled and want to give up. I can feel that hope is a distant and unwelcome commodity. At those times I need you to speak quietly to me about the value of seeing things through to the end and trusting, that even when my efforts appear to fail, You are always supporting me, even at the lowest of times and always there to lift me up.



## X Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

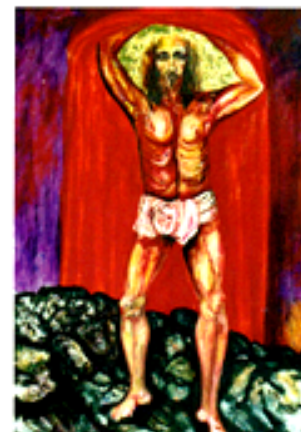
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*"Then the Lord said to me 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness'. So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."* (2 Cor 12:9-10)

The people who want to kill Jesus think that having the ability to humiliate another human being means they are powerful. They are wrong. It simply means they are foolish and blind. Jesus in His life of loving service to the weak and the needy, shows that the power of God is at work, in ways we do not expect.

Jesus, every day all over the world there are people who suffer humiliation, torture, false imprisonment and even death, simply because of their beliefs, their gender, their race or religion. There are those in our own community who may feel isolated or forgotten. As Your followers, may we always work to uphold the dignity of every person, and may we never abuse positions of power.



## XI Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

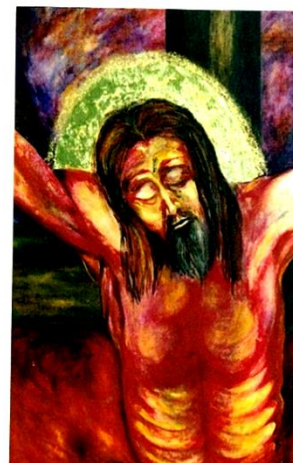
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*"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'" (Luke 23:33-34)*

John Lennon wrote a great song called Imagine. Maybe we could add a verse: 'Imagine a world where people forgive each other and never seek revenge.' For many that is just wishful thinking. For Jesus it was how He lived and died.

Jesus, forgiveness is challenging work and at times it seems impossible. So, we need You to help us understand that it is, in the first place, not something we



do but something we receive; it is a gift from God who loves us totally. Maybe then we will be able to forgive others, as You have forgiven us.

## **XII Jesus Dies on the Cross**

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

**Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world**

*"When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?..." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that he had died in this way, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:33-39)*

Why was it dark when Jesus died? After all it was only three in the afternoon. And what does it mean that the temple curtain was torn in two? The events around the death of Jesus, help us to think about it, not just as an episode in history, but as something that spells the end of darkness, as Jesus, the light of the world, returns to His Father and opens the way to God for everyone.

Jesus, You know what it is to feel abandoned, You have been through the deepest darkness we can imagine. When we are feeling lost and alone, let Your light shine upon us so that we can find our way back to You. Help us to be bearers of Your light to others.



## **XIII Jesus is taken down from the Cross**

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*"Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, went boldly to Pilate and asked permission for the body of Jesus to be taken down from the cross. When Pilate learned from the centurion that Jesus was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph brought a linen cloth and took the body down." (Mark 15:42-46)*

Joseph of Arimathea, was a highly respected man who risked his good reputation by asking for permission to bury Jesus. Everyday ordinary people show extraordinary courage and kindness in ways that never make the headlines. When have I shown or felt this kindness?

Joseph, you appear suddenly in the story and we find out that you are a person of great goodness who is brave enough to do the decent thing. Sometimes we know what we should do but we don't do it because we "don't have the time", we worry what others may think or we fear it may ask too much of us. Joseph, pray to the Lord for us that we will always have the courage of our convictions and be courageous witnesses to the faith we profess.



## **XIV Jesus is Buried in the Tomb**

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

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*"They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there." (John 19:40-42)*

Now the broken and bruised body of Jesus who gave hope to everyone with whom He dealt, is being buried quickly in a borrowed tomb by the few friends He has left. Our faith tells us that death is not the end. The one who came that we might have life is Risen!

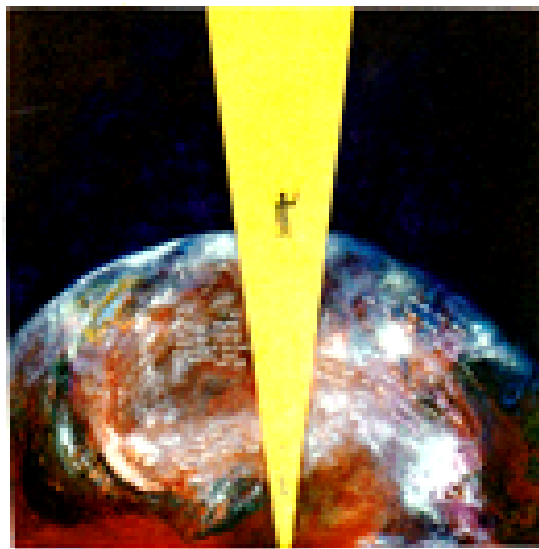


Jesus, as we come to the end of this journey make us understand that it is really only the beginning. Your rising from the dead on Easter Sunday teaches us that love never ends. You give us hope and joy through the power of Your Holy Spirit that lives in us. By that same Spirit deepen our faith in You so that we may become the people You want us to be.

**Thank You for sharing this short journey with us.**

**We end our Stations of the Cross knowing that we continue our journey together – never alone. Our loving brother Jesus walks always with us. We end our pilgrimage laying down our burdens before the One who loves us unconditionally.**

**May we always journey as one family of faith, with courage and commitment, love and compassion, generosity, and hope, and in the sureness that love conquers all.**



## **Through the Easter Triduum we journey towards our 15<sup>th</sup> Station – The Resurrection**

**In 2000, Pope St. John Paul II urged Catholics to add a 15th station, Christ's Resurrection, to the Stations of the Cross.**

**Many parishes that have a 15th Station omit it on Good Friday.**

Lord, Jesus, we look to tomorrow with hope in Your Resurrection. We know that the tomb will be empty. You have won the victory over death.

Worthy are You to receive honour and glory. We give thanks for the seeds of resurrection which are being sown in hearts today. For the food and help sent to the war-torn areas. We thank You for the peacemakers - keep them safe. We thank you for the people of goodwill everywhere, who long for Your justice and look for it daily with hope.

We believe You will make a new heaven and a new earth.

We know You dwell with and within us. Please wipe away every tear and bring new life to our world.

We pray in Your holy name. Amen.

### **A note about these Stations of the Cross**

These stations of the Cross were painted by Ula Retzlaff O'Carroll. She is a working Visual Artist and has been exhibiting for many years. There are fifteen paintings on canvas stretched on board and framed. The fourteen pieces are 64cmx94cm and one piece (the 15<sup>th</sup>) which is 125 cm x 125cm. The 15th station is the "Resurrection", which depicts Christ's triumph over death. Commissioned in 1991, these Stations were welcomed by the then Archbishop of Dublin, Desmond Connell.

These beautiful, striking and challenging pieces are one of the artworks which Ula was commissioned to do with the assistance of the Arts Council of Ireland award, as an Artist in Residence in St. Peter's Boys National School, Limekiln Rd, Greenhills, Dublin 12. During that time, she conducted workshops for the senior boys bringing them closer to the medium of painting.



St. Peter's BNS amalgamated with St. Paul's to create a co-educational school – *Holy Spirit School, Greenhills, Dublin 12*. The building houses a growing Educate Together school called Riverview, and accommodates special units for pupils with Autism. As a result, these beautiful Stations of the cross, which were in the school in the hall (*that was also a local chapel for Sunday mass*), were put into storage for a number of years. Ula was very happy to donate them to our recently painted Rathcoole parish church where she hopes the parishioners and visitors will find them meaningful, reflective and thought-provoking.

Thanks to Ula and all involved in their acquisition and installation.

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