



## What is the Stations of the Cross?

The **Stations of the Cross**, (also called Via Crucis, Via Dolorosa or the Way of the Cross), is a devotion to the passion of Christ consisting of prayers and meditations on fourteen occurrences experienced by Christ on His way to the crucifixion and burial.

Note: *Some of the stations are non-scriptural, owing their existence to Catholic tradition (e.g. the three falls).*

From *the Catholic Encyclopedia*:

1. Christ condemned to death;
2. the cross is laid upon him;
3. His first fall;
4. He meets His Blessed Mother;
5. Simon of Cyrene is made to bear the cross;
6. [Christ's](#) face is wiped by Veronica;
7. His second fall;
8. He meets the women of Jerusalem;
9. His third fall;
10. He is stripped of His garments;
11. His crucifixion;
12. His death on the cross;
13. His body is taken down from the cross; and
14. laid in the tomb.

**Variations on the stations** - In recent years some variations have been introduced in the traditional devotion. One of these is the addition of a 15th station - the Resurrection of Jesus (c.1960). Another is a series of scriptural stations, which portray only incidents related in the gospels.

## What are its origins?

4<sup>th</sup> Century Jerusalem



Tower Antonia



Via Dolorosa

- During the time of the crusades (1095-1270), it became popular for pilgrims in the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of Jesus to Calvary
- It is speculated that the Stations of the Cross became a popular substitute pilgrimage throughout Europe after the Moslems recaptured the Holy Land (making pilgrimages there too dangerous). Devotional manuals about the Stations date from the 16th century although the actual origin of the devotion is uncertain. The popularity of the Stations of the Cross was fostered by the Franciscians, who obtained a special indulgence from Pope Innocent XI, in 1686, for those who performed the devotion. The Stations represented critical events from Scripture or tradition of Jesus' journey to Calvary. Originally done only outdoors, the Stations were allowed inside churches in the mid-18th century. Eventually fixed at fourteen, (By Pope Clement XII in 1731) the Stations soon became a familiar feature in all Catholic churches.

### **What is its purpose and benefits?**

It is a powerful way to help people contemplate the journey of Jesus to the cross and its significance for our lives. The stations of the cross ...

- is a mini-pilgrimage
- allow us to engage all the senses, heart, mind and body.
- is Christ-centred
- it connects us to our common Christian heritage

### **How we tried it in BLC the last two years?**

1. The ELCA Version <http://www.prayinchurch.org/stations.html>
2. Assigned one station or two stations to one small group
3. Turning the church premises into a venue for the stations of the cross
4. Integrated it into the Good Friday Worship Service (in fact it was central!)

### **Interesting Adaptations:**

Living Stations of the Cross by Youth Specialties

<http://youthspecialties.com/free/programming/activities/pmym/stations.php>

Journey to the Cross by Faith Bosland

<http://www.youthspecialties.com/free/programming/stations/>

### **For more information:**

Way of the cross <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15569a.htm>

Internet Version <http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/stations.html>

ACCA- Stations of the Cross by Geoff Todd

<http://asianchristianart.org/profile/GeoffTodd/gf-stations/gf-stations.htm>