The Twelfth Station:  
Jesus Dies On The Cross.

Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary and John and Mary Magdalene to support him. Jesus surrenders his last breath: “Into your hands I commend my spirit.”

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

I behold this scene at the foot of the cross. I contemplate touching, caressing his body. I remember all his hands have touched, all who have been blessed by his warm embrace. I pause to let it soak in. He knows the mystery of death. He has fallen into God’s hands.

For me. That I might love as I have been loved. I pour out my heart to the God of all mercies.

The Fourteenth Station:  
Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb.

They take the body of Jesus to its resting place. The huge stone over the tomb is the final sign of the permanence of death. In this final act of surrender, who would have imagined this tomb would soon be empty or that Jesus would show himself alive to his disciples, or that they would recognize him in the breaking of bread? Oh, that our hearts might burn within us, as we realize how he had to suffer and die so as to enter into his glory, for us.

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

I pause to contemplate this act of closure on his life. In solidarity with all humanity, his body is taken to its grave.

I stand there, at the foot of the cross, side by side with all of humanity, and behold our salvation. I carefully watch and listen to all that is said. And then, I experience the one who gives life pass from life to death, for me. I console Mary and John and Mary. And let them console me.

This is the hour to express the deepest feelings within me.

The Thirteenth Station:  
Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross.

What tender mourning! Jesus’ lifeless body lays in his mother’s arms. He has truly died. A profound sacrifice, complete.

This is for me.
Nailed to a cross to forever proclaim liberty to captives.

What sorrow and gratitude fill my heart!

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THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A Ministry of the Collaborative Ministry Office, CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

The First Station:  
Jesus is condemned to die.

Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced profound solidarity with so many on this earth, by being beaten and tortured. Now he is wrongfully condemned to punishment by death. His commitment to entering our lives completely begins its final steps. He has said “yes” to God and placed his life in God’s hands. We follow him in this final surrender, and contemplate with reverence each place along the way, as he is broken and given for us.

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

As I view the scene, I become moved by both outrage and gratitude. I look at Jesus. His face. The crown of thorns. The blood. His clothes stuck to the wounds on his back. Pilate washes his hands of the whole affair. Jesus’ hands are tied behind his back.

This is for me. That I might be free. That I might have eternal life. As the journey begins I ask to be with Jesus. To follow his journey. I express my love and thanks.

The Second Station:  
Jesus Carries His Cross.

Jesus is made to carry the cross on which he will die. It represents the weight of all our crosses. What he must have felt as he first took it upon his shoulders! With each step he enters more deeply into our human experience. He walks in the path of human misery and suffering, and experiences its crushing weight.

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

I ask to be with Jesus. To follow his journey. I express my love and thanks.

The Third Station:  
Jesus Falls The First Time.

The weight is unbearable. Jesus falls under it. How could he enter our lives completely without surrendering to the crushing weight of the life of so many on this earth? He lays on the ground and knows the experience of weakness beneath unfair burdens. He feels the powerlessness of wondering if he will ever be able to continue. He is pulled up and made to continue.

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

I stare at the weakness in his eyes. I can look at his whole body and see the exhaustion. As I behold him there on the ground, being roughly pulled up, I know forever how profoundly he understands my fatigue and my defeats.

This is for me. In grief and gratitude I want to let him remain there. As I watch him stand again and gain an inner strength, I accept his love and express my thanks.

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The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother.
Jesus' path takes him to a powerful source of his strength to continue. All his life, his mother had taught him the meaning of the words, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord." Now they look into each other’s eyes. How pierced-through her heart must be! How pained he must be to see her tears? Now, her grace-filled smile blesses his mission and stirs his heart to its depth. Love and trust in God bind them together.

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

As I watch them in this place along the way, I contemplate the mystery of love’s power to give strength. She knows the sorrow in every mother’s heart, who has lost a child to tragedy or violence. I look at the two of them very carefully, and long for such love and such peace.

This is for me. Such incredible freedom. The availability of a servant. I find the words to express what is in my heart.

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross.
Jesus even experiences our struggle to receive help. He is made to experience the poverty of not being able to carry his burden alone. He enters into the experience of all who must depend upon others to survive. He is deprived of the satisfaction of carrying this burden on his own.

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

I look into his face and contemplate his struggle. His weariness and fragility. His impotence. I see how he looks at Simon, with utmost humility and gratitude.

This is for me. So I feel anguish and gratitude. I express my thanks that he can continue this journey. That he has help. That he knows my inability to carry my burden alone.

I say what is in my heart, with deep feeling.

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