

Welcome to the spiritual journey that is the Way of the Cross (Via Crucis). During these reflections we aim to retell the key moments which Jesus went through and understand better his suffering and sacrifice. We will walk to each 'station' and at each one of the 14 places we will take some time to stop, reflect and pray. The route is marked on the map with numbers correlating to the reflections. Please be mindful of other pedestrians, be careful crossing roads and remember to social distance.



We start at the entrance to Jephson Gardens. Your directions are written in blue and at each picture you can stop and reflect on the station of the cross.

Introduction

We begin in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus spends many hours in prayer. He knows what is to come and is burdened by the knowledge of the pain and suffering he is to endure. He asks if this burden may pass him by, that he could be spared but ultimately, he knows it cannot. It is the burden of our sin which will hold him on this path as he seeks to free us from its power and restore our relationship with God.

Judas kisses Jesus on the cheek. The ultimate act of betrayal leads to his arrest by the Temple guards. Peter is angered and lashes out. Afraid, the disciples flee. The passion of Christ begins.



Enter Jephson Gardens and walk straight into the park past the lake. When you reach the war memorial fountain pause and think about when Jesus was brought before Pilate.

I. Jesus meets Pilate

Jesus' first stop on the way of the cross is the governor's palace. Many Jewish leaders want Jesus out of the way. "Crucify him" they insist. They influence Pilate the governor to condemn Jesus to death. Pilate is often depicted washing his hands as he doesn't want to be responsible for the death of Jesus.

Jesus is condemned to die like a criminal even though he is a good man. He is sad that people reject him and do not appreciate his teachings about loving God and our neighbour. When he is condemned, he doesn't get angry or fight back. He accepts his fate.

Let us pray:

If I can help others by sharing their troubles, make me kind enough to reach out to them as you did.
Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue walking along the path towards the clock tower before exiting the park through the gate and turning left along Newbold Terrace.
We walk past the Warwickshire justice centre and remember how Jesus was condemned to death and took up his cross.

II. Jesus takes the cross

The Roman soldiers bring a large wooden cross for Jesus to carry. It is very heavy and rough. Though Jesus is tired, he reaches out and accepts the cross.

For Jesus, the cross stands for all the world's evil, hatred and cruelty. By his love he transforms this cross into a symbol of hope and salvation for us. When we make the sign of the cross, we should remember this cross which Jesus carried out of love for us.

Let us pray:

Help me to be truly sorry when I have done wrong. Show me how to behave in a way that follows your example of peace and love.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



At the end of the road turn right and walk past the estate agents on Euston Place.
As we walk up the hill at Euston Place we think about the long walk faced by Jesus and how He stumbled on the way

III. Jesus falls

Jesus falls. He is exhausted and the cross is very heavy.

When we have difficult things to bear, such as worries or fears or sadness, think of Jesus. He falls under the burden of his cross but then he gets up and begins again.

When we are able to get over our troubles and go on, we are like Jesus.

Let us pray:

Help us to follow you by making a fresh start each day. Help me to begin each day in a cheerful and caring way which will bring happiness to others.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue up The Parade towards the Town Hall. When you see Queen Victoria's statue pause and think about how Mary was watching Jesus during His difficult journey.

IV. Jesus meets his mother

On the narrow roadway, Jesus turns the corner and looks ahead to see his mother. She reaches out to touch him.

Jesus knows how sad his mother is but he is comforted to know that she is there.

Sometimes we don't want our parents to see us in trouble, but we like to know that they are there to support us.

Let us pray:

Help us to appreciate the love of our parents and carers. May we be loving members of our families and support each other through sad and happy times. We pray for those growing up without a secure home life. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue walking up The Parade. Simon of Cyrene was a foreigner in Jerusalem visiting for Passover. When you reach the Regent hotel think about his part in this journey.

V. Simon helps Jesus

The soldiers notice that Jesus is very weak. He is staggering under the load. They pull a man from the crowd - a stranger called Simon of Cyrene - and force him to help Jesus carry the cross.

Simon didn't want to help at first. He just wanted to see what was going on. However, he did his best and soon was very glad to be helping Jesus.

Let us pray:

When we have to do things we do not like, help us to accept the tasks and do our best. Help us to be especially kind and give aid to those who are disabled, sick or elderly.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Turn right and walk through the pedestrian area, Regent's Court, on Livery Street. As you exit Regent's Court you are faced with a white building. Think about the white cloth that was used to wipe the face of Jesus.

VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

A woman named veronica steps out from the crowd with a cloth. She wipes the face of Jesus.

When veronica wipes the face of Jesus she risks being told off and pushed by the soldiers or being laughed at by the crowd. Her love and kindness overcome her fears.

Let us pray:

Help us not to be selfish. May we be friends to people who are unpopular or people who are in trouble. May we stand up for them.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Turn right onto Regent Street and immediately left onto Park Street. Pause at the base of the hill and remember the long journey faced by Jesus.

VII. Jesus falls again

The walk is only half over. Even with Simon's help Jesus falls again under the weight of the heavy cross but he gets up and moves on.

Jesus is burdened with our sins and the sins of the world, but he wants to overcome these sins and forgive us all.

Let us pray:

Jesus, help us to persevere to help you overcome the sins of the world. We are your hands and feet on earth doing good for others around us.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



As you walk up Park Street look out for the wedding dress shops and remember how Jesus greeted the women on His journey.

VIII. Jesus meets some women

Now Jesus passes by a group of women from Jerusalem. They are weeping for him because he is suffering so much. Jesus tells them to weep for themselves and for their children because the cruel things that happen in the world will surely touch them, just as they are affecting him.

The world can be cruel. Women and children are often the first to suffer because of war and violence in their countries.

Let us pray:

May we always try to help vulnerable people in the world who need things such as food, clean water, safe housing and a peaceful environment. Help us contribute towards making the world less cruel.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Keep walking up the hill, looking ahead to the crossroads. It is only a short distance for us but must have felt much longer for Jesus as He struggled with His burden and fell for the third time.

IX. Jesus falls a third time

Jesus has no more strength left. He has climbed a hill carrying his heavy cross. Again, he falls and struggles to stand up again.

Jesus has chosen the way of the cross out of his love for us. The path of following Jesus is not an easy one. Many people have been killed in the past because they were followers of Jesus and there are martyrs in our own time who are persecuted by those who choose violence instead of the path of love offered by Jesus.

Let us pray:

For all those who have been a faithful witness to the teachings of Jesus. May their lives be an inspiration to us. We pray for those Christians persecuted today in some countries in the world.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



When it is safe, cross the road. At the corner of Chandos Street you may see the dry cleaners. Pause here to think about when Jesus was stripped before the crucifixion.

X. Jesus is stripped

Jesus has reached the top of the hill. He is allowed to put down the cross. While Jesus stands in front of the crowds, the soldiers pull off his clothes.

Jesus is treated as if he were worthless and is left standing embarrassed and humiliated. His clothes were stuck to his wounds and pulling them off caused Jesus a lot of pain.

Let us pray:

Jesus, help us to be brave like you. May we never be spiteful to others who hurt us. Help us always to be peacemakers.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue walking up Chandos Street past the car park. As we pass the Baptist Church on the right look for the cross on the roof and reflect on Jesus crucifixion.

XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross

The soldiers make Jesus lie down on the cross and they nail him to it. He is securely fastened. He cannot escape.

Even in his last moments Jesus thinks of others. He gives us a wonderful example of gentleness and thoughtfulness despite his own suffering. Jesus teaches us how important it is to forgive and be reconciled to one another and to God.

Let us pray:

May we always recognise the presence of god in our lives. Bless especially today those who are dying and those who love them. Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Turn right immediately after the church and walk along Guys Place East, turning right at the end of the road and begin walking down Oxford Street.

As we walk past Sherbourne Medical Centre we are reminded of all the NHS staff and carers and pray for all who are ill and dying. Reflect on Jesus' death here.

XII. Jesus dies

After hours of hanging on the cross, Jesus dies. Although it is daytime the sky turns dark. The earth shakes and a big crack appears in the temple in Jerusalem. Just before he dies, Jesus asks God to forgive those who are killing him. Then he says:

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”.

Whenever we are injured or sick in bed, we remember Jesus who chose to die this way to show how much he loved the world. Jesus understands what it is like to feel trapped and to be in pain.

Let us pray:

We pray for people in our parish and local community, or people we know elsewhere, who are in pain or who are sick. We remember those who are in hospital today. Bring them comfort and relief. We thank you for all carers who try to relieve pain such as doctors and nurses.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue walking down Oxford Street, pause to think about when Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, all hope gone.

XIII. Jesus is placed in the arms of Mary

Jesus now that Jesus is dead, a few friends gently take him down from the cross and place him in the arms of his mother.

Mary held Jesus like this when he was a baby but now there is no life left in him. How terrible she must have felt, remembering all the wonderful days she had spent with him. When we are sad because we have lost a relative or friend, Mary understands our loss and sadness.

Let us pray:

Jesus, we remember all mothers and fathers who have lost their children due to illness or injustice, violence or accident. Let your mother Mary be a consoling influence and help them to cope.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Continue walking down Oxford Street and carefully cross the road to continue down Kenilworth Street.

Several buildings on Kenilworth Street have dark driveway entrances which remind us of the tomb that Jesus was laid in.

XIV. Jesus is buried

The final resting place for Jesus is in a tomb in a nearby garden. He is covered with cloth, placed inside and a stone is rolled across the entrance.

The friends of Jesus feel very discouraged, and they lose hope. They think this is the end of the story of Jesus and his teachings, but we know it isn't the end...

Let us pray:

May we learn to trust in God when things seem to go wrong. May your love be upon us O lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.



Walk down the road towards Jephson Gardens. Cross the roads at the zebra crossings and continue on to Newbold Street. As you approach Jephson Gardens look for the clock tower a reminder of the waiting time that the disciples spent mourning before Jesus was resurrected. You may want to sit on one of the benches in the park and reflect on your journey today.

Conclusion

We conclude with the certain knowledge that, in Jesus, we have the hope of eternal life. Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. He will come again. You might like to say the following act of contrition inspired by the Gospels:

- Father of mercy, like the prodigal son I return to you and say: "**I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be called your child.**"
- Christ Jesus, Saviour of the world, I pray with the repentant thief to whom you promised paradise: "**Lord, remember me in your Kingdom.**"
- Holy spirit, fountain of love, I call on you with trust: "**Purify my heart and help me to walk as a child of light.**"

