



A WAY OF THE CROSS FOR ADULTS

By Elaine D'Souza

Opening Hymn: Walk with me, O my Lord

FIRST STATION: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, when I see You standing silently before those who condemn You, I recognize moments in my own life where I feel exposed, evaluated, or unfairly judged. Sometimes the harshest judgments come not from others but from within me my own inner critic that measures my worth against impossible standards.

Help me look honestly at these places within myself: the fear of disappointing others, the desire to control outcomes, the stress of balancing responsibilities, and the quiet worry of not being “enough.” Teach me, Jesus, to meet these inner voices the way You met Your accusers with steadiness, truth, and a dignity rooted not in what others say, but in who I am in Your eyes.

As I navigate expectations at work, in relationships, and in my own heart remind me that my value does not shift with success or failure, praise or blame. Help me notice when I begin to carry judgments that are not mine to carry, and give me the humility to let go, trusting that You see me with compassion even when I struggle to see myself that way.

Prayer: Jesus, strengthen me when I feel misunderstood or overwhelmed by judgement. Teach me to respond with patience, clarity, and grace. Let Your quiet courage become my own. Amen.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

SECOND STATION: Jesus Accepts His Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, when I see You take up Your cross, I think of the many “crosses” I quietly pick up each day; my responsibilities, expectations from others, unspoken worries, and the weight of wanting to be strong for people around me. Sometimes these burdens feel scattered and overwhelming, and I wonder how much I can really carry. Help me look within and acknowledge the pressures I often ignore: the fear of letting someone down, the habit of pushing through even when I’m tired, the tendency to hide my struggles because I want to seem capable. Teach me to be honest with myself and with You about what truly weighs on my heart.

As You embraced Your cross without running away, show me how to carry my own with courage, but also with gentleness toward myself. Let me recognize when I’m carrying more than I need to, or when I need to pause and breathe. Remind me that You walk beside me not as someone watching from afar, but as someone who knows what burden feels like, someone who steadies my steps when I falter.

Prayer: Lord, help me carry today’s burdens with patience and trust. Give me the humility to ask for Your strength when mine runs low. Stay with me, Lord.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

THIRD STATION: Jesus Falls the First Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, your first fall reminds me of the moments when the weight of everything I’m carrying finally presses me down those times when exhaustion catches up with me faster than I expected, or when discouragement quietly settles into my heart. I often try to keep moving, pretending I’m fine, until suddenly I’m not.

Help me look honestly at the reasons I fall perhaps because I push myself too hard, or because I ignore my own limits, or because I carry worries I’ve never spoken aloud. Sometimes I fall because I’m afraid to admit that I’m struggling, even to myself.

In your fall, Jesus, I see that weakness is not failure it’s human. You, the Son of God, allowed Yourself to collapse under the weight of the cross. You didn’t hide it; You didn’t pretend to be stronger than You felt. In that moment, you teach me humility, honesty, and the courage to accept my own fragility.

When I stumble emotionally, spiritually, or in my responsibilities remind me that falling does not erase my worth or my progress. Help me to be kinder to myself, to pause instead

of criticizing myself, to breathe instead of panic. Teach me to rise not with perfection, but with trust.

Prayer: Jesus, lift me gently when I fall. Quiet my fears, soften my self-judgment, and give me the courage to rise again. Lord, help me rise again.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

FOURTH STATION: Jesus Meets His Mother

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, in this moment where You meet Your mother, I'm struck by how much strength can be found in simply being seen by someone who loves us. Mary couldn't take away Your suffering, but her presence gave You courage. When I think of my mother who stood by me, who checked in, who encouraged me, and the one who truly understood me, I realize how often I take the quiet support of my mother for granted. Help me notice the gift of her presence, not just in crises but in the ordinary rhythms of my days.

Teach me, Lord, to let myself be supported to allow others to walk with me, even when I'm tempted to carry everything alone. And at the same time, help me become a comforting presence for others, someone who notices when another is hurting, someone who shows up with gentleness and sincerity.

Mary's gaze held both pain and unwavering love. Help me receive that kind of love in the relationships You've placed in my life, and help me offer it freely, without fear or hesitation.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who support me with their presence and kindness. Give me a grateful heart and the humility to accept help when I need it. Mary, walk with me, guide my heart, and teach me how to love with your quiet strength.

Hymn: Be with us Mary (2 verses)

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, when Simon stepped in to help You, I'm reminded of how often I resist letting others step into my own struggles. There is a part of me that believes I should be capable on my own that needing help somehow means I'm weak or failing. I carry so much quietly because I worry that asking for support will burden someone else or make me look like I'm not managing well.

But in this moment, You-God made human allow someone to help You. You don't push Simon away. You accept the assistance with humility and openness. This challenges the part of me that clings to self-reliance more tightly than I should.

Help me look honestly at why I hesitate:

- Is it pride?
- Is it fear of being misunderstood?
- Is it the pressure I place on myself to be strong, dependable, always in control?
- Is it the worry that others might think less of me if they see my limits?

Teach me to recognize that asking for help is not a sign of incompetence but an act of trust a recognition that I am human, that I have limits, and that You often send people into my life as an answer to prayers I haven't even spoken aloud.

Let Simon's unexpected act of compassion remind me that support often comes through ordinary, imperfect people and sometimes through the ones I least expect.

Prayer: Jesus, open my heart to accept help with humility and gratitude. Remove any pride or fear that keeps me isolated. Make me generous in offering support to others, just as Simon was generous with You.

Hymn: *What a friend we have in Jesus*

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

SIXTH STATION: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection Lord, Veronica stepped forward with nothing extraordinary just a cloth, a moment of courage, and a heart moved by compassion. Her gesture didn't change the course of events, but it changed the experience of suffering, even if only for a brief moment.

When I reflect on this, I'm reminded that small acts of kindness often feel insignificant to me. I sometimes wonder if they matter, if they make any difference at all, or if they even register amid everything happening around me. But Veronica's act teaches me that

kindness is never wasted. A gentle word, a sincere smile, a patient response, a moment of listening these things can touch someone far more deeply than I realize.

- Help me look honestly at my own tendencies:
- How often do I hold back kindness because I feel too busy or too preoccupied?
- How often do I forget the power of simple gentleness because I'm focused on the next task or the next worry?
- How often do I underestimate the healing presence I can offer, even in brief encounters?

And, Lord, help me also notice the "Veronicas" in my own life the people who have quietly offered me comfort, understanding, or a moment of unexpected grace.

Sometimes I overlook their kindness because I'm rushing, or because I've grown used to carrying things alone. Let me be more attentive and grateful for these small gifts that lighten my day, soften my heart, and remind me that I'm not alone.

Prayer: Lord, let my actions no matter how simple reflect Your love. Make my heart attentive to those who need a moment of kindness. Jesus, help me reveal Your compassion through small, sincere acts of care.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

SEVENTH STATION: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, your second fall touches something deep within me the part of me that knows what it feels like to stumble not once, but again and again. There is a particular heaviness that comes with repeated struggles: the fatigue that returns even when I thought I had overcome it, the old fears that resurface just when I feel stronger, the work pressures that circle back before I've fully regained my balance.

Sometimes these repeated falls shake my confidence more than the first one ever did. I start to question myself: Why am I still struggling with this? Shouldn't I be past this by now? Am I failing somehow?

Your second fall reminds me that the path to growth is rarely smooth or linear. Even You, carrying the weight of the world, fell more than once not because You were weak, but because the burden was real. My own burdens are real too.

Teach me to be patient with myself when I fall again. Teach me to honour the progress I have made instead of only noticing what still feels unfinished. And remind me that You walk beside me not only when I am strong, but especially when I collapse under the weight of everything.

Prayer: Jesus, when I fall again, help me rise again. Strengthen me when discouragement begins to dim my hope. Keep my heart steady, and do not let me lose faith in the slow, sacred work You are doing within me.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

EIGHTH STATION: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, even in the heaviness of Your own suffering, you paused to notice the women who were grieving for You. You saw their pain, even while carrying Your own. This moment challenges me, because when I'm overwhelmed or tired, my vision often narrows. I become so focused on what I'm going through; work pressures, emotional fatigue, personal worries that I forget others are carrying their own crosses too.

Help me look honestly at myself:

- How often do I withdraw into my own struggles and fail to notice someone else quietly hurting?
- How often do I rush through interactions, missing the subtle signs that someone needs patience, a listening ear, or simple kindness?
- How often do I assume that others are okay just because they don't say anything?

Sometimes it's not that I don't care it's that I feel too drained or stretched thin to offer anything more. But Your encounter with the women reminds me that compassion is not always grand or dramatic. Sometimes it is simply presence: meeting someone's sadness with understanding, acknowledging their pain, or offering a moment of sincere connection even when I feel tired myself.

And, Lord, help me also recognize my own need for compassion. Sometimes I long for others to see my pain too, to notice the moments when I am barely holding things together. Teach me to be honest about that, to allow myself to be seen not just as strong, but as human.

Let this station remind me that suffering does not close the door to empathy. Instead, it can soften my heart and draw me closer to others who walk their own difficult paths.

Prayer: Lord, teach me compassion, especially when I am tired or overwhelmed. Make my heart attentive to the pain, hopes, and needs of those around me. Help me bring understanding where there is sorrow and gentleness where there is heaviness.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

NINTH STATION: Jesus Falls the Third Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, your third fall is the one that touches the tenderest places within me the moments when I feel completely depleted, when the weight, I'm carrying feels impossible, and when even the effort to rise again feels beyond me. This fall speaks to the experience of reaching my limit, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, and wondering if I have anything left to give.

There are times when I push myself for too long, ignore my exhaustion, or keep moving out of obligation rather than strength. Eventually, everything catches up with me burnout, frustration, sadness I've been carrying quietly. In these moments, I feel not just tired, but discouraged, as though I've failed because I couldn't keep going endlessly.

Help me look honestly at these patterns within myself:

- the pressure I put on myself to stay strong for others,
- the silent expectation that I should endure without pause,
- the habit of dismissing my own limits,
- the fear that stopping means disappointing someone.

But your third fall reminds me that even You the Son of God, carrying the weight of the world reached a point where Your strength gave way. And yet, that moment was not failure; it was the fullest expression of Your humanity. Let me feel Your steady hand, reminding me that You are closest to me not when I am strong, but when I am unable to stand at all.

Prayer: Lord, renew my strength when I reach my limits. Be my courage when I feel completely worn down. Jesus, be my strength when I have none left of my own.

Hymn: *I surrender all*

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

TENTH STATION: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, when You were stripped of Your garments, you faced a moment of profound vulnerability a moment where everything familiar and protective was taken

from You. In this scene, I recognize the experiences in my own life when I feel exposed, unprotected, or emotionally bare. These are the moments when my confidence wavers, when insecurities surface unexpectedly, or when the roles and strengths I usually rely on no longer feel steady.

There are times when circumstances at work, in relationships, or within my own heart pull away the “layers” I hide behind: my competence, my composure, my prepared answers, my sense of control. Without these coverings, I sometimes feel uncertain, self-conscious, or afraid that others might see my weaknesses more clearly than I want to show.

In Your stripping, Lord, you embraced vulnerability with dignity. You did not resist or lash out; You simply stood in truth. Teach me to accept my own moments of nakedness those times when my humanity shows without shame or panic. Help me remember that my worth is not in how perfectly I present myself but, in the identity, you have given me.

When life strips away my confidence, my certainty, or my plans, help me discover the deeper strength that comes from standing in Your presence, covered by Your love.

Prayer: Jesus, cover me with grace in moments when I feel vulnerable or exposed. Remind me of the dignity You place within me. Clothe me not in fear or pretence, but in Your peace and Your love.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, as I contemplate the moment when You were nailed to the cross, I am confronted with the reality of pain that goes beyond the surface—pain that pierces deeply and stays. There are wounds in my own life that feel like nails: harsh words that left marks, memories I wish I could forget, disappointments that still echo, and experiences that shaped me in ways I did not choose. These are the hurts I sometimes carry quietly, the ones that settle into my heart and affect how I trust, love, or move through the world.

Help me look honestly at the places within me that still ache:

- the unresolved hurts I avoid thinking about,
- the insecurities rooted in past wounds,
- the fear of being hurt again,
- the heaviness of forgiveness I haven't yet been able to give or receive.

Sometimes I hold on to pain because I don't know how to let it go, or because part of me believes I should just be strong enough to handle it alone. But Your suffering reminds me that You understand pain from the inside not just physical pain, but emotional and spiritual agony. You know what it means to be wounded unjustly, misunderstood, betrayed, and left vulnerable.

As the nails pierced Your hands and feet, you accepted the pain without letting it turn Your heart bitter. Give me the courage to name what hurts, instead of burying it. Help me trust that nothing I bring to You is too small, too old, too complicated, or too broken to be restored. Let this moment on Calvary be not only a reminder of Your sacrifice but an invitation for me to believe that You can transform even the deepest wounds into places of grace.

Prayer: Lord, I place my wounds at Your feet; every hurt, every memory, every fear. Heal what is hurting within me. Heal my heart, O Lord, and teach me to trust in Your restoring love.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

TWELFTH STATION: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, in Your final breath on the cross, I see the depth of what it means to face an ending; an ending that feels absolute, unsettling, and filled with silence. There are moments in my own life when something within me seems to come to an end: when relationships shift in ways I didn't expect, when plans unravel despite my best efforts, or when dreams I held onto for years no longer fit who I am becoming. These moments can feel like little deaths, leaving me unsure of what comes next.

Sometimes I resist endings because they feel like failure or abandonment. Other times, I fear the emptiness that follows the uncertainty, the waiting, the not knowing how life will reshape itself. Your death shows me that even in the most painful ending, God is not absent. In the stillness of the cross, you were accomplishing a redemption unseen by the world.

Help me believe that You are quietly at work in the spaces that feel barren or broken. Remind me that endings are not signs of Your distance but invitations to deeper surrender, to place in Your hands what I cannot fix, hold, or change.

There are parts of my life I cling to because I am afraid to release them. Give me the courage to let go with honesty and faith, trusting that what dies in You is never

wasted. You transform endings into beginnings, but often in ways I cannot see until much later.

Let this moment at the foot of the cross soften my fear of loss. Teach me to grieve with hope, to surrender without despair, and to believe that even in the darkest endings, your love remains steady, patient, and near.

Prayer: Jesus, I surrender what I cannot control. Stay close to me in every loss, every ending, every letting-go. When I face moments that feel final or overwhelming, remind me that Your love never ends. Jesus, stay with me.

Hymn: *Into your hands*

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

THIRTEENTH STATION: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, as Your lifeless body is taken down from the cross, I am drawn into the quiet weight of this moment a moment filled with love, sorrow, and the ache of letting go. Mary holds You with a tenderness shaped by grief, yet her sorrow does not harden into bitterness. Instead, she cradles the unimaginable with strength that is gentle, not crushing.

There are places in my own life where letting go feels just as heavy. Letting go of expectations I clung to. Letting go of old hurts that shaped how I see myself. Letting go of what I hoped would be but never became. These moments often leave me feeling fragile caught between acceptance and longing, between sadness and the hope of healing.

Mary's arms remind me that grief can be tender. That I can hold my sorrow gently, without rushing myself to "be okay," and without believing that sorrow means the end of hope. There is a sacredness in acknowledging pain honestly, without collapsing into despair.

Lord, help me to soften in the places where I am tempted to harden. Help me to breathe through losses instead of resisting them. Teach me to surrender what I cannot keep and to trust that You remain present in every emptiness, every closing chapter, every quiet release.

Just as Mary held You with reverence, help me hold my own wounds and endings with compassion. And help me trust that You are already preparing resurrection, even when all I can see is the stillness of this moment.

Prayer: Lord, comfort me in moments of release when I must let go of what I cannot change. Wrap me in Your peace, especially when my heart feels tender and tired. Mary, hold me in your tenderness, and teach me how to face sorrow with grace.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Reflection: Lord, as Your body is laid in the tomb, the world enters a profound silence the kind of silence that feels heavy, uncertain, and unresolved. This moment holds the weight of grief, the confusion of what feels like an ending, and the stillness of waiting without clarity. I recognize this silence in my own life, in the seasons where nothing seems to move, where prayers feel unanswered, and where I'm unsure what comes next.

Help me look gently at the places where I feel entombed by uncertainty or fatigue. Remind me that the tomb was not a place of abandonment, but a sacred space where transformation began quietly, invisibly, beyond human understanding. Your silence in the tomb teaches me that waiting is not emptiness; it is preparation.

Lord, I often wrestle with impatience in these waiting seasons. I want answers. I want movement. I want signs that everything will be all right. But Your time in the tomb shows me that some of Your greatest works unfold where I cannot see, in the hidden places of the heart, in the slow healing of wounds, in the quiet reshaping of my life.

Let this tomb not symbolize despair, but hope. Let it remind me that You bring new life not only from victory but from stillness, surrender, and waiting. And when I feel buried beneath responsibilities, grief, or uncertainty, help me remember that resurrection always begins in hidden places.

Prayer: Lord, plant hope in my heart even when I cannot see the path ahead. In my moments of uncertainty, waiting, and quiet struggle, hold me close and prepare my spirit for renewal. Jesus, bring new life.

Leader: *Have mercy on us O Lord*

All: *Have mercy on us.*

FIFTEENTH STATION: The Resurrection

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, our Saviour, when our steps grow weary, help us to follow You with renewed purpose, embracing the crosses we carry with courage and compassion. Amen.

Hymn: We hail thee

For the intentions of our Holy Father.....

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory be to the Father...

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