

**The Stations of the Cross, St. James Cathedral, Seattle WA, with reflections on the addiction journey**

**Note: The reflections below “We adore you...” at the start of each Station are from <https://www.stjames-cathedral.org/Prayer/jkblstations/stations.htm>. I have written the addiction-related reflections in italics which appear after each Station-by-Station reflection and before the verse from Psalm 31.**

**-MW**

**First Station: Jesus is condemned to death**

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

It is finished.

We have judged God and we have condemned him to death

Pilate sits in state in the place called Gabbatha

Have you nothing to say? Says Pilate

and Jesus does not respond

The sentence is given in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek

nothing is omitted

And you can see the crowd that yells

and the judge who washes his hands.

*The diagnosis of addiction can feel like a death sentence. Perhaps we have felt for years like something wasn't right with our loved one. And then we know. He or she may have been struggling for years with this disease that “is physical, mental, and spiritual” and affects every area of life. Many in society yell that the addicted one is at fault. Too many “systems” have washed their hands of the addicted. Jesus, help us to understand addiction as a disease and treat those suffering with compassion*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

**THE SECOND STATION. Jesus receives his cross**

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

They give him back his clothing and the cross is brought to him.

"Hail," says Jesus, "O Cross that I have so long desired!"

Ah, what a solemn moment--

that in which Christ for the first time

accepts the eternal cross!

Are you going to carry it all by yourself, Lord Jesus?

Make me patient in my turn

with the cross you want me to carry.

Because we must carry the cross

before the cross carries us.

*Nobody grows up thinking “I want to be addicted when I grow up.” No parent imagines that future for their child. Yet the cross of this disease is a heavy burden for all. And acceptance is the first step in coping. As we look at the artwork in this station, it's as if those working against us are on the left: dealers, dismissive professionals, those who would condemn. Yet they too may have been victimized into their role. One the right we see Mary, representing those who love this person and feel powerless. Jesus, help me to be patient with my loved one and myself as we carry the cross of this disease that too often carries us.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

### **THE THIRD STATION. Jesus falls the first time**

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

On the way!  
Victims and executioners together set off towards Calvary.  
God, whom they drag by the neck,  
suddenly stumbles and falls to the ground.  
What do you say, Lord, of this first fall?  
How do you find this earth which you made?  
Ah! it is not only the good way that is hard.  
The way of evil is also treacherous and steep!  
You do not enter it straight on;  
you must learn it stone by stone,  
and your foot often stumbles,  
though your heart perseveres.

*We have all fallen. Those who have addiction probably remember their first fall, be it an overdose, or a lapse, relapse, or collapse. So many with this disease stumble, even though their heart perseveres. They may have chosen to try a substance, but nobody chooses this disease. Jesus, as you learned this road stone by stone, let us learn our road through this disease one day at a time –and sometimes one hour, or one minute at a time. Give us the strength that you mustered on the way to Calvary to not lose heart.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

### **THE FOURTH STATION. Jesus meets his mother**

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

The fourth station is Mary, who has accepted everything.  
The mother looks at her Son, the Church at her Redeemer.  
She is silent before God and offers him her soul to read.  
There is nothing in her heart that refuses or holds back,  
not a fiber in her pierced heart  
that does not accept and consent.  
She accepts and she looks at this Son she conceived in her womb.

She says not a word  
and she gazes on the Holy of Holies.

*So often the addicted loved one cannot face their family. And when a mother or father looks at their addicted son or daughter, or a spouse at their addicted partner, or a child at their addicted parent, the pain in Mary's face tells it all. Jesus, help us to offer to our heavenly parent our soul to read, to be open to the comfort that only God can provide.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

### **THE FIFTH STATION. Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene**

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

The moment comes when they cannot go on,  
when they can no longer advance.  
It is here that we find our place, when you permit  
that we, too, might be of use,  
even if by force, for your Cross.  
Thus Simon of Cyrene,  
who was summoned to this piece of wood.  
He takes it up firmly and walks behind Jesus,  
so that nothing of the Cross drag on the ground,  
and be lost.

*In the journey of addiction, moments come when we feel we cannot go on, can no longer advance. Yet sometimes, seemingly out of nowhere, someone arrives on the scene who provides just that respite, just those words of comfort, just those glimmers of hope. We need to drop our preconceptions of who these angels might be and stay open to the goodness around us. Jesus, help us to accept with grace those who can support us, unlikely as they may be. And keep in prayer those hesitant to offer support, as Simon first was.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE SIXTH STATION. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

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

Let us look once more, Veronica,  
at the cloth you gathered up,  
at the face of the Holy Viaticum,  
that holy linen veil  
where Veronica hid the face of the Harvester,  
so that his image would cling to it eternally,  
that image which is made of his blood, his tears,  
and our spittle!

*Hiding goes part and parcel with the disease of addiction. A “veil of secrecy” may attempt to hide substance use, financial ruin, living space turned chaotic. Our loved one may start to look like a ghost of their healthy self. Jesus, help us to remember how healthy our loved one can look and be, for we are all made in the image of God. Let us be grateful for our Veronicas, who may have taken and shared precious photos of our loved one.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE SEVENTH STATION. Jesus falls the second time

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

It is not the stone beneath the foot,  
nor the rope that pulls too sharply,  
it is the soul that suddenly stumbles.  
O middle of our lives!  
O voluntary fall!  
When love no longer has a center,  
faith no longer a foundation,  
because the road is long  
and the end is far away;  
because you are alone  
and there is no consolation.

*Another fall under the cross of addiction -- lapse-relapse-collapse or overdose. Because the disease has broken the mind, body and spirit, compulsive use has taken priority over love at the center of a life. The crown of thorns seems a symbol of addiction as a brain held hostage. Jesus, when the road feels so long, bestow your love, your strength, your consolation so we can rise up and continue our journey toward resurrection.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE EIGHTH STATION. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

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

Before he climbs the mountain for the last time,  
Jesus raises his finger  
and turns towards the people who accompany him,  
a few poor women with their babies in their arms.  
It is not a man who lifts his finger in the midst of the crowd.  
It is God who suffered for our salvation.  
This man was God almighty; it is true, then!  
There really was a day  
when God suffered this for us!

*The suffering of the addicted ripples throughout a family, the network of friends, and community. Whether or not we realize it, we all feel the toll on public health and public safety. So much talent goes undeveloped, so much potential interrupted. We especially remember those little ones yet unborn or newly born but already impacted by this disease. Jesus, you suffered for us. So many who are hurting in addiction's wake seem faceless, but they have names, and families. Jesus, meet them, embrace them, and help them along the way.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## **THE NINTH STATION. Jesus falls the third time**

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

I have fallen again, and this time, it is the end.  
I would lift myself up, but there is no way.  
I have done with the wood, but the iron remains.

Jesus falls a third time,  
but it is at the summit of Calvary.

*Fallen again. Recovery is hardly a straight line – it is steps forward, and steps back.  
Whether it's the third or thirtieth fall, it may feel like there is no way to get up.  
Jesus, those soldiers behind you look oblivious to your pain. Help us to empathize  
with those in pain, especially when it feels like there is no more to give. Help us to  
rise, knowing those lines of recovery CAN become less jagged over time.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my  
distress.(Psalm 31)

## **THE TENTH STATION. Jesus is stripped of his garments**

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

Now that they have taken the tunic  
and the robe without seam,  
we raise our eyes and dare to look at Jesus in his nakedness.  
They have left you nothing, Lord, they have taken all.  
God is hidden.  
But the Man of Sorrows remains.

*Addiction can seem to take it all, leaving the vulnerable with wounds exposed to the  
world, inflicted with indignities. Sometimes God seems not only hidden, but silent?  
To paraphrase Pope Francis, those who are suffering are the wounds of Christ. But  
Jesus, you suffer with us. Help us to find God in the doctors and nurses and  
counselors and family who are helping, and in the person and in the family who are  
suffering.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my  
distress.(Psalm 31)

## **THE ELEVENTH STATION. Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

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

They have tied the Lamb by the feet,  
they have bound the Omnipresent.  
It is difficult for a God to fit himself to our measure.  
They pull, and the half-dislocated body  
cracks and cries.  
You are taken, Lord, and you can no longer escape.  
You are nailed to the cross by your hands and your feet.  
I will no longer look to the skies with the heretic and the fool.  
This God is enough for me,  
who is held by four nails.

*The physical and mental ravages of addiction can make the body and the brain  
crack and cry. Yet the suffering experienced is connected to the suffering of Christ.  
How can the soldiers in this station do what they do? Jesus, they cannot know you  
are with them on this cross. Help us pray for those who have lost their humanity,  
whether nailing you to a cross or poisoning our loved ones.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my  
distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE TWELFTH STATION. Jesus dies on the Cross

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

In the night, the great cross trembles  
with the breath of God.  
Our host is weighed down  
and his head droops little by little.  
He no longer sees his Mother  
and his Father forsakes him.  
Have you not had enough of that bitter wine,  
mingled with water, that you raise your head suddenly,  
and cry, "I thirst!"  
You are thirsty, Lord? Are you speaking to me?  
Do you still have need of me, with my sins?  
Am I what is lacking  
before all things can be fulfilled?

*How to wrap our heads and hearts around this station? The woman on the left looks numb, the one on the right in utter anguish. The path of addiction can be many deaths, not just the dying of the body from overdose. It can be the death of dreams, estrangement, incarceration, or gone missing. Jesus, please comfort those who are numb or in utter anguish from seeing their loved one succumb to the tragic outcomes of addiction. Through the paschal mystery, help us see that even those who feel an end coming can find hope in resurrection, rebirth, and renewal. And that death is not the end, rather from death can come new life.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE THIRTEENTH STATION. Jesus is taken down from the Cross

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

Here the Passion ends  
and the Compassion continues.  
The Christ is no longer on the Cross,  
he is with Mary who has received him.  
The Christ who suffered in the sight of all

is once more hidden on the breast of his mother.  
The Church takes her beloved in her arms.  
Here the Cross is finished  
and the Tabernacle begins.

*In this station, we see action, and we see prayer. We need both in coping with the losses wrought by addiction. Jesus, help us to take compassionate action, grounded in prayer.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE FOURTEENTH STATION. Jesus is laid in the tomb

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

The tomb where the dead Christ, having suffered, is placed,  
the hole, opened up in haste,  
that he might sleep his night there,  
before the pierced one is resurrected  
and ascends to the Father.  
Now that his heart is open and his hands pierced,  
there is no cross among us  
to which His body is not accustomed,  
There is no sin in us  
without its corresponding wound in Him.

*This scene is dark. But amid the moonlight and the light from Jesus' halo, the light which is to come, we see many colors and textures. Jesus, in our times of deepest darkness, help us pray for those who are there to help us, and how in the quiet we might soak in the colors and textures that surround us in our sorrows that might bring us shards of peace, the Shalom that integrates all joys and sufferings.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Through the curtainless window, for a while now,  
I have seen a little star shining at me.  
I do not sleep.  
But the night between Holy Saturday and Easter  
was not made for sleeping.  
O happy night, you alone know  
the hour when Jesus was raised!  
You women, what are you looking for in the tomb?  
Jesus lives, he is no longer here!  
And my soul, too, tears itself from the tomb  
with a wild laugh!  
I, too, have conquered death  
and I believe in Jesus, my Savior!

*The resurrection reminds us that recovery is always possible, and that a guardian angel and the angels around us can help. Jesus, by your cross and resurrection, let us pray for all those entering, re-entering, and sustaining their recoveries, whether it is days, weeks, months, years, or decades. The paschal mystery teaches us that from darkness comes light; from suffering, wholeness; from death, resurrection.*

I will rejoice and be glad in your love, once you have seen my misery, observed my distress.(Psalm 31)

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- **Melissa Weiksnar February 2018**