

SPOUSES ARE THE PERMANENT REMINDER TO THE CHURCH OF WHAT HAPPENED
ON THE CROSS. ~ POPE ST. JOHN PAUL

Stations FOR Spouses



WE ADORE YOU

O Christ,

AND WE PRAISE YOU.

BECAUSE BY YOUR HOLY CROSS YOU
HAVE REDEEMED THE WORLD.



FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death.

Jesus comes before Pilot an innocent man. He has already been beaten, mocked and scourged, and now after a ridiculous trial, he is condemned to a criminal's death. He does not open his mouth.

Jesus, how often does my criticism of my spouse make him/her feel unjustly condemned? When I choose to focus on his/her weaknesses and failures, there is always a wider picture of service, generosity and thoughtful kindness that I am ignoring. Forgive me for condemning the person you gave me to love the most. Show me all of my spouse's wonderful qualities.

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SECOND STATION

Jesus carries his cross

Jesus accepts the wood of the cross out of love for us. Each step caused him severe pain in body and soul, but he takes each one that we may be convinced of his love.

Jesus, when you entrusted me with my spouse, you entrusted me with a sacred mission: to convince him or her that he/she is loved and lovable. When I am tempted to take my spouse for granted, to skimp on affirmation or to hold onto a hurt, help me to remember what lengths you went to for me. Then help me to give myself as generously to my spouse as you gave yourself for me.

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THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

Jesus has not slept or eaten. He has lost a lot of blood. His heart is broken from the betrayal of his friends. Under the weight of the cross he falls, but his mission is not complete, so he gets back up.

Jesus, I start out with such great intentions on ways I plan to show my spouse my love, whether it's conquering a bad habit, or being more grateful, or any number of things. Then things get busy at work or the kids are crazy, and before I know it, I've blown it! Even in your great suffering, you are teaching me.

*My mission isn't done here.
Help me get up and start again.*

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FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his mother

Jesus, the bond between you and your Mother Mary was so strong, yet she understood from the beginning how important your mission was. Though it broke her heart, she comforted you and embraced your cross.

Jesus, thank you for my family of origin and all the ways they loved and cared for me as I was growing up. My parents were not perfect like Mary, but they did the best they could, and I have gained so much from them. Sometimes they don't understand how important my marriage is and they make demands on my time or energy that make it hard to fulfill my own mission to my spouse. Jesus, when this happens, help me to be compassionate, and then to love them with a benevolent love that still allows me to put my spouse first.

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FIFTH STATION

Simon helps Jesus

Roman soldiers were practical people. At this point it is clear that if Jesus doesn't get some help, he will die before he reaches Calvary. They pull a bystander out of the crowd to help Jesus bear his burden. Was Simon a willing participant, or was he forced to help Jesus? We don't know for sure. But the fact that his name is recorded in Scripture suggests that he was known to the early Christians. His encounter with Jesus had a profound effect on him.

Jesus, I am ashamed to say that I am not always a willing participant in my spouse's crosses. I get impatient at sickness, angry at weaknesses and annoyed at inconveniences. And yet, I promised I would be true in good times and bad! Whether I have started off willing or not, help me to really embrace my spouse's sufferings, that I might bear some of their load. I know that if I allow you to help me do this, my spouse and I will both be changed by the experience.

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SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes Jesus' face

Beatings, a crown of thorns, sweat and dirt must have made Jesus' face unrecognizable and horrific. With his arms strapped to the cross beam he could not even perform the smallest act of personal dignity: wiping sweat and blood from his own eyes.

Veronica was a brave woman, moved by compassion for Jesus. What a powerful comfort her act of kindness must have been to Jesus in his suffering!

Jesus, everyday I am offered opportunities to offer you comfort when I see the precious face of my beloved spouse, marred by worry, stress, physical pain, emotional wounds or sorrow. Fill me with the compassion and bravery of Veronica, that I may be a comfort to my spouse when they need me the most.

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SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls the second time

Even with the help of Simon, the encouragement of his mother and the kindness of Veronica, Jesus falls again under the weight of his cross. The soldiers beat him and berate him with insults, but it's his own resolution to complete this mission which causes him to get up and carry on.

Jesus, I can get so frustrated with my spouse's weakness and sin. Sometimes I feel like I have offered all the help and encouragement that I can, and she/he still falls! When this happens, help me not to become angry and critical like the soldiers, but to lavishly forgive, realizing that I, too am a sinner who falls frequently. Help me remember that it is not my job to yell, criticize or nag my spouse, but to convince him/her of my love. Give my spouse the grace that he/she needs to get up and carry on.

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EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women

When other people, like Simon and Veronica, help Jesus he responds with silent gratitude. So why does he seem almost rude to these women weeping for him? "Weep for yourselves and your children," he tells them. Why dedicate those few painful breaths to admonish some women who are expressing sympathy? Because it is not sympathy that Jesus wants from us. Those who truly loved Jesus entered into his suffering: Simon helped carry the cross, Veronica risked punishment to wipe his face and Mary followed in his footsteps, offering her will to the Father along with his.

This is what comforted him.

Jesus, my spouse doesn't need my pity from a safe distance. He/she needs me to enter into the pain, taking it on as my own. Show me how to walk alongside my spouse, offering practical help where I can. But most of all, help me to really understand his or her experience so that he/she does not need to carry their cross alone.

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NINTH STATION

Jesus falls a third time

Jesus, it must have been tempting to just stay down this time. With all you had been through, who could blame you? And what could the soldiers do to you that could make you get up? No. You decided ahead of time that nothing would stop you from completing your mission. So you rise up and continue on.

Jesus, give me a resolute heart like yours. Help me decide now, when times are good, that nothing will deter me from my mission of loving my spouse. Help my spouse and me to set up a good process for reconciling hurts between us so that we become confident that there is no fall from which we cannot recover.

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TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

The image we have of you in your Passion is so sanitized, Jesus. Here we are reminded that you were stripped naked in front of a hostile crowd.

This is a profound vulnerability. You are telling us that you hold absolutely nothing back from us, even though you are aware that your enemies will exchange your gift for scorn.

Jesus, I am so often afraid to be physically, emotionally and spiritually naked in front of my spouse, even though s/he is not a hostile crowd, but my beloved. Let your vulnerability give me courage to reveal myself to the one who loves me the most, and give me the grace to unconditionally accept him or her.

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ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus, your enemies thought it was the nails that made you captive to the wood of the cross. From their point of view, it was the nails which exposed you in agony, the nails that made the simple task of breathing an excruciating ordeal. But they were wrong. It was your love for me which held you there.

Jesus, sometimes the outside world views my marriage vows as nails that limit my freedom. (When I get discouraged, maybe sometimes I do, too.) Give me the same passionate love for my spouse that you have for me, so that when suffering happens to us, I endure it not out of obligation, but out of a deep love.

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TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the cross

"This is my body, given for you."

My Jesus, you shed every last drop of your blood trying to convince me that I am loved and lovable. It was not enough to tell me about your love. You wanted to show me, using your whole body... to the point of sacrificing that body in death on the cross.

Our world tells me that my REAL self is my thoughts, ideas and affections, and that my body is little more than a case to hold it all. But who I am is body-and-soul, therefore what I do with my body matters very much!

The most important place for me to remember this truth is in my marriage. Jesus, help me to remember to give my whole self as gift to my spouse-body, mind and soul, even if that means that I have to "die" to my own comfort, pride or selfishness to do so.



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THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down

Jesus, how can we describe the agony of your dear Mother as she cradles your lifeless body after your passion is complete? She is the person on earth who loved you best, the one who was with you until the end. Without sin she was able to love you so profoundly, which gives her grief a depth and a purity that no one else understands. Though her heart is breaking, she would not want it any other way.

Jesus, although neither of us are perfect, my spouse is the one person you have given me to love above all others. He/she is the one who knows me best, loves me deepest and will be with me until one of us dies.

"Til death do us part" sounded romantic on our wedding day, but the harsh reality that we will be parted by death is unsettling. Help me to face this reality, not in a morbid way, but in a healthy, thoughtful way that makes me appreciate my spouse and live my marriage to the full.

When that day comes, may my grief be deep, pure and free from regret.

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FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

All is quiet as they lay you in the tomb, my Jesus. After the turmoil, the violence, the earthquake and the weeping, your friends return home, utterly spent. But we know that this is not the end. Your earthly life was magnificent, but it was only a small taste of what was to come.

Jesus, help me remember that my marriage is my path to sanctity, my way of getting myself and others (especially my spouse!) to heaven. Let this meditation not get my head trapped in the clouds, but let it direct my efforts toward building the most joyful relationship possible here on earth. The more I cultivate the atmosphere of being "in love" with my spouse, the more in awe I am of your love for me and all you have planned for me in heaven.

TEXT: BRAD & LIBBY DUPON

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