

Scriptural Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion for many centuries because they enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.



The selection of stations here all have their root in the biblical story of Jesus.

As we keep Holy Week and Easter this year, unable to gather together or use our church buildings, we are inviting all those who join us this year through our online worship resources to travel back spiritually with us to the time of Jesus. As we do so, we contemplate how Jesus who walked on this earth 2000 years ago continues to walk with us today. We also pray that he will bring his love and transforming grace to us and all those we pray for.

The Greeting

In the name of the Father, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Matthew 16.24,25

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

Ephesians 2.13,14

Opening Prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Station: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Matthew 26:36-41

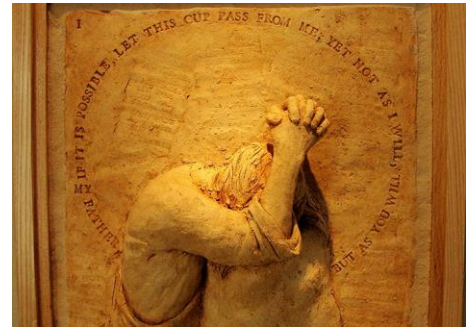
A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

At this station we are given a glimpse of the fear and distress which Jesus endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. His loneliness and isolation speak powerfully to us. We are reminded that the Lord Jesus, who was born into this world, faced the same agonies, fears and questions that we do. At this station we pray for all who are afraid and who feel at their wits-end. For all who are searching for answers and are seeking the right way forward. For all who feel alone and afraid at this time.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you entered the garden of fear
and faced the agony of your impending death:
be with those who share that agony
and face death unwillingly this day.
You shared our fear and knew the weakness of our humanity:
give strength and hope to the dispirited and despairing.
To you, Jesus, who sweated blood,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Second Station: Jesus, Betrayed by Judas, is Arrested

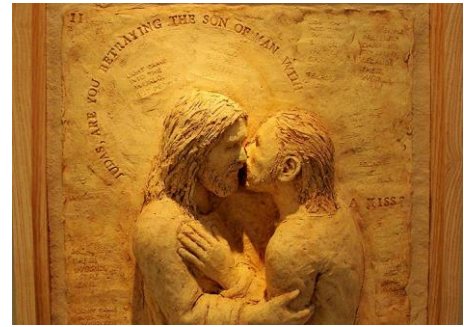
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Immediately, while he (Jesus) was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

Mark 14.43-46



A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Here we face the devastation that betrayal brings. As the crowd draw close to Jesus, how many of those eyes in the crowd had witnessed the healing and forgiveness that Jesus brought to so many. How many ears had listened to his parables and teaching. Here we also contemplate the hatred of those who had been planning to destroy Jesus because he failed to say the things they wanted to hear. He refused to condone the way they lived their lives and the human rules and traditions they hid behind. But worst of all, Judas, a friend and follower steps forward and kisses Jesus. He uses the sign of love and peace to betray. And so we pray here for all who feel they have been betrayed and let down by those they love and those they feel close to. For all who feel their love, support and compassion has been rejected.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed by the kiss of a friend:
be with those who are betrayed and slandered and falsely accused.
You knew the experience of having your love
thrown back in your face for mere silver:
be with families which are torn apart by mistrust or temptation.
To you, Jesus, who offered your face to your betrayer,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Third Station: Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin.

They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

Luke 22: 66-71

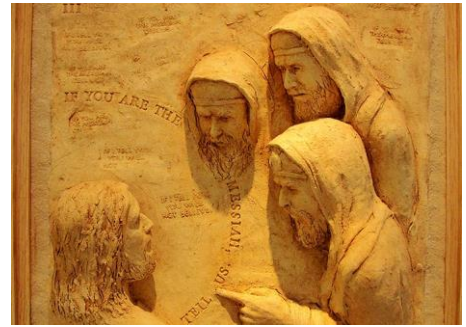
A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

We live in a country where law and order is respected and upheld. We believe and trust that the judicial system here is fair and works for the good of all, that it is based on good and right principles which allow us to live in freedom and safety. But the meeting of the Sanhedrin, the governing council for the Jewish faith at the time, itself is breaking the rules. Night-time gatherings like this were not permitted under Roman law. Jesus is brought to a 'show trial', the questions asked are not there to find the truth, they are offered to find ways to get Jesus to condemn himself. We pray for all who live in places where the law and justice system is used to ensnare and trap, to prop up barbaric or intolerant regimes. We pray for all who are held unjustly or illegally. We pray blessings on all who seek to make justice a reality in every land and all who work hard to bring an end to intolerance and corruption.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were the victim of religious bigotry:
be with those who are persecuted by small-minded authority.
You faced the condemnation of fearful hearts:
deepen the understanding of those who shut themselves off from the
experience and wisdom of others.
To you, Jesus, unjustly judged victim,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Fourth Station: Jesus is Denied by Peter

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

Matthew 26: 69-75

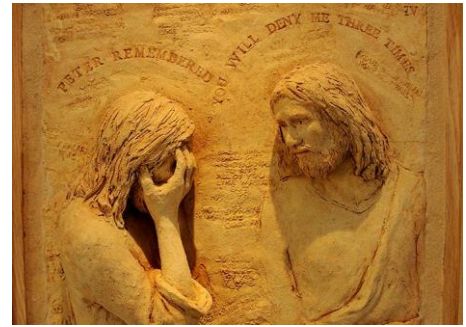
A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

We consider at this station the times when people are let down by friends and family, by those we trust and depend on. We also think about times when we have not been honest with ourselves and with others, when like Peter we have made rash promises or said things we cannot stick to. We also remember those times when outwardly we say that we will commit and do something, but then are unable or unwilling to keep that promise. We think here of the burden of guilt which Peter carried because of the mistake he made due to his fear and weakness, and we pray for all who are burdened by a sense of shame or feelings of failure. At this station we pray that the Lord will forgive us our weaknesses and by so doing heal and restore us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as Peter betrayed you,
you experienced the double agony of love rejected and friendship denied:
be with those who know no friends and are rejected by society.
You understood the fear within Peter:
help us to understand the anxieties of those who fear for their future.
To you, Jesus, who gazed with sadness at your lost friend,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Fifth Station: Jesus is Judged by Pilate

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified.

Mark 15: 1-5, 15

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Lord it is easy for us to criticise and condemn those who exercise great power and who are able to make life changing decisions. But having power means having great responsibility and a commitment to seek justice and to do what is right. It is easy for us to forget that we too join our voices with those who shouted for your death when we make gods of money, celebrity and the media; when we carry on making choices which leads to the felling of forests and pollution of the oceans and air we breathe. It's easy for us to forget those who have little or no voice in the world, or when we fail to speak or act for the poor nations which are so often manipulated by the rich and powerful. Give us the strength to seek what is right and the courage to speak out for the truth.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were condemned to death for political expediency:
be with those who are imprisoned for the convenience of the powerful.
You were the victim of unbridled injustice:
change the minds and motivations of oppressors and exploiters to your way of peace.
To you, Jesus, innocent though condemned,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Sixth Station: Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.



John 19: 1-3

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Here we contemplate and reflect up on those who have been falsely accused, those who have done nothing wrong and are held against their will. For across our world who are held in concentration camps and in detention centres, we remember those who suffer from torture for those who endure inhumane treatment at this time. For those who are being condemned because of their cultural background or for what they believe. We ask blessings on all who seek to bring an end to all inhumanity across the world.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you faced the torment of barbaric punishment and mocking tongue:
be with those who cry out in physical agony and emotional distress.
You endured unbearable abuse:
be with those who face torture and mockery in our world today.
To you, Jesus, the King crowned with thorns,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Seventh Station: Jesus Bears the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

John 19: 6, 15-17



A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Here we consider who in our world today is overburdened and almost crushed by all that oppresses them. We consider those who are burdened by debt, all who are trapped in the sex-industry or people trafficking. All who are enslaved and those who are paid less than they need to live good, healthy lives. We consider those who are made to work long hours and all who work in dangerous places, for all whose lives are in danger.

Let us also consider the heavy burden our life-styles lay upon our beautiful world – the abuse of land, forest and oceans. How much more before we all start to realise that we are crushing the very life out of our planet and so many people?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you carried the cross through the rough streets of Jerusalem:
be with those who are loaded with burdens beyond their strength.
You bore the weight of our sins when you carried the cross:
help us to realize the extent and the cost of your love for us.
To you, Jesus, bearing a cross not your own,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Eighth Station: Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

Mark 15: 21



A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

It is easy at this station to fall into the trap of seeing Simon as someone who steps forward willingly to help Jesus. But the scripture tells us that he was 'pressed' into this service. He was made to help Jesus. He did not want to be there. He would have been full of fear and trepidation. The Roman Soldiers had a job to do and they had to ensure Jesus arrived at Calvary alive. There is no point in crucifying a dead man. We give thanks for all those who are willing to give of themselves to help others. For those who offer their time and abilities for the good and well-being of others. Let us pray that the Lord will help us to offer our time, gifts and abilities for the benefit and good of others without ever considering the personal cost.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were worn down by fatigue:
be with those from whom life drains all energy.
You needed the help of a passing stranger:
give us the humility to receive aid from others.
To you, Jesus, weighed down with exhaustion and in need of help,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Ninth 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.

Scripture Reading

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

Luke 23: 27-31

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

At this station, we consider and pray for all those who weep for their children. For those who weep because their children are malnourished, for those who do not have access to clean water or medicine. We remember those who weep for children who are addicted to drugs, alcohol, gambling or deep in debt. We think of those who weep for children who are in prison or being held against their will. For those who suffer as a result of neglect or abuse. We ask for the ability to seek gentle and appropriate ways of caring for children and young people and for a real commitment from all the nations to help create a better world where all can grow and thrive and live happily as the children of God.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you:
move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.
You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the 'city of peace':
bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound peace.
To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept for the city of peace,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."



Luke 23: 33-34

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Lord Jesus, at this point we recall how we continue to strip and crucify you when we strip people of opportunity and dignity, or when we place our desires and greed over the needs of others. Just as the soldiers stripped you and took everything from you, so we continue to take from and strip you when we take an unequal share of earth's goods and when we strip the earth of soil, her life blood, or strip away forests and animals. We pray that we may better understand that we all need to work with the Earth and not against it, so that every person can have at least enough for their basic human needs.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you bled in pain as the nails were driven into your flesh:
transform through the mystery of your love the pain of those who suffer.
To you, Jesus, our crucified Lord,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 23: 39-43

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Here we are asked to consider honestly which of the two criminals are we most like. Would we be the one who abused Jesus and demanded his help, or the penitent thief. Here we acknowledge before the Lord that we abuse him whenever we are jealous of others, when we are quick to blame everyone but ourselves when our grandiose plans fail and our selfish hopes are dashed. We pray for the strength to break cycles of ignorance and hate which too often lead to violence. We pray that the Lord will give us genuine hope that sees suffering as part of a new creation. We pray that we may humbly learn the calmness of wisdom that cares for ourselves, others and the whole world.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, even in your deepest agony you listened to the crucified thief:
hear us as we unburden to you our deepest fears.

You spoke words of love in your hour of death:
help us to speak words of life to a dying world.

To you, Jesus, who offer hope to the hopeless,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Disciple

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.



John 19: 25-27

A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

We consider at this station how many times we see the breakup of families. Those times when people are treated more like animals. When the value of each human being is considered less important than increased production, profits and deadlines. How many times do we think that 'what we have to do' or the 'deadlines we have to meet' are more important than the people around us? How many times do we meet other people, friend or stranger, and fail to see another human being who needs to be loved, cherished and respected? Help us to show at all times our love, care and respect for others. Help us to choose wisely the words we say and the actions we choose to take. Help us to take others into our hearts and homes. Let us serve humbly and take care of those who live lonely, isolated and loveless lives.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother and your dearest friend stayed with you to the bitter end, yet even while racked with pain you ministered to them:

be with all broken families today

and care for those who long for companionship.

You cared for your loved ones even in your death-throes:

give us a love for one another

that is stronger even than the fear of death.

To you, Jesus, loving in the face of death,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

Thirteenth 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.

Scripture Reading

At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Mark 15.34-37

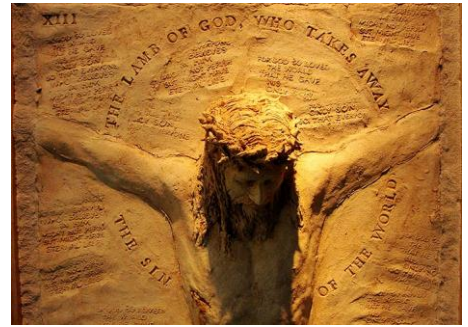
A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

As we consider your lifeless body, hanging on the cross. We can perhaps imagine the cry of anguish from your mother and all those who love you. In this dark moment, let us consider all who experience the dark shadow of death within their lives. We pray for all who are bereaved and have lost loved ones. For those who see the shadow of death creeping towards those who suffer from all kinds of debilitating diseases and conditions. For those who have lost a loved one to suicide, drugs, alcohol. For those who have lost someone through murder, war and acts of terror. All who have lost someone and in so doing have lost something of themselves. Here Lord, we feel the coldness and the dark reality of the grave. The numbness and the fear. The silence and the nothing.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree of shame,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**



Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world..

Scripture Reading

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

Matthew 27: 57-60



A Reflection may now follow

Reflection

Here, Lord, we pray for those surrounded by the silence of nothing. For all who live without hope and feel constantly the coldness of isolation and the loss of hope. As we imagine the lifeless body of Jesus lying in the tomb and the stone being rolled over to seal his grave. So we pray for all who feel overwhelmed at this time. For any who feel there is little to look forward to. To those who dread tomorrow. Just as you prepared to breath the fire of your Spirit into the deadness and the dark, so we pray that the light, power and glory of your Spirit will empower and raise up all those who feel there is no where to go and no help to be found.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us:
be with those who feel worthless and as nothing in the world's eyes.
You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from sight:
be with all who suffer and die in secret,
hidden from the eyes of the world.
To you, Jesus, your rigid body imprisoned in a tomb,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Concluding prayers

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**



Closing prayer

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

