



NO GREATER LOVE

Stations of the Cross
for Young People

Amy Welborn

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Love is important to all of us. We spend our time on earth engaged in so many activities, but in the end, it all comes down to love. We are seeking a place in life where we can safely love and be loved. We were made for love, and we all hope for a love that never ends and that accepts us just as we are.

What is love, though? The wrong idea of love can take us down sad or even dangerous paths. The Stations of the Cross are, above everything else, about love. When we journey with Jesus on the Way of the Cross, we learn what real love is, what it requires of us and how it gives us hope for the future.

The Gospel of John tells us that at the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples that they were no longer servants but friends of his—which means friends of God. “No one has greater love than this,” he said, “To lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” In this Way of the Cross, we see what this “laying down” means for Jesus—and for us.

— Amy Welborn

Prayer Before the Altar

Jesus, love has brought me here today. I am alive because of love. I can stand here in hope and courage because of the love I know you have for me. I'm here because I love you and want to be more like you.

I try hard to follow your voice in my heart and share your love with others. Sometimes I don't, though. Sometimes I take the gift of my life for granted. Sometimes I forget that everyone I meet is your beloved child too. I cut myself off from others and from you. I cut myself off from life.

But even then, you don't stop loving me. You want me to return to you. You reach out like a shepherd, like a father waiting for his prodigal son. When I look at your image here on the Cross, I see that love. I see love poured out for your friends. Help me to rejoice in your friendship and accept the love and forgiveness that you share with all your friends. Teach me to love as you love, as I walk with you on that way of great love, the Way of the Cross. Amen.



FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Die



Meditation

Jesus stands before those who hold his earthly life in their hands. He knows suffering lies ahead. He could lie about himself and escape that suffering. He tells the truth, though, because he loves us, and love stands for truth.

Prayer

Jesus, so many times trying to be truthful seems just too hard. If I'm completely truthful about my sins, I will have to suffer consequences for my wrongdoing. If I'm completely honest about my plans, I may face restrictions that will keep me from doing what I want. If I'm really open about who I am and what I think, some people might change the way they think of me. They might decide I'm not very good or something.

In this first station, I see you stand before your accusers in truth, out of love. Help me be led by love too. May knowing that you love me as I am strengthen me to be honest about myself. May my love for others help me see that they deserve the truth from me. Amen.

**No one has greater love
than this, to lay down
one's life for one's friends.**

—John 15:13

SECOND STATION

Jesus Carries His Cross



Meditation

Jesus has been beaten and mocked by the Roman guards. Now a huge, heavy beam is laid brutally on his shoulders. Jesus carries the great weight of sin as he begins his journey to Golgotha, where they would crucify him. He bears it willingly, for love bears all things.

Prayer

Jesus, I may be young, but I've already learned that life brings many challenges and burdens. In a way, these burdens are our own crosses that all people must carry through life.

Sometimes I condemn myself to carry a cross. I get myself into tough situations that have tough consequences. But at other times, life just lays a heavy cross on my shoulders. I didn't ask for it. I don't want it. But it's there, and it's hard to bear—especially because I don't understand why it's there.

I see you carry your Cross out of love. Help me see a purpose in the cross I'm carrying today. Help me find a loving way to bring good out of this cross. Amen.

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THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time



Meditation

The streets of Jerusalem are narrow and winding. Crowds have gathered to watch Jesus make his way to the place of crucifixion. Under the weight of the Cross and pressed by the crowds, Jesus stumbles and falls.

Prayer

Jesus, the Cross you carry is not just made of wood. It is made of the sadness of the world's sin and all its consequences in human suffering. That is a heavy burden to carry, and under its weight, you fall.

Sin brings me down to the ground too. I may think I can handle it at first, but after a while, I find that my lies or my casual cruelty or my closed heart is making it hard for me to walk upright. I fall.

I see you fall under all the weight, but I also see that you refuse to let the heaviness of the world's sin keep you down. You rise and keep walking out of love. Help me to rise, too, and find the path of love once again. Amen.

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Closing Prayer

Jesus, on this Way of the Cross, I have seen the way of love. I have seen that love is brave, compassionate and truthful. I have seen, through your journey, that the mystery of genuine love involves sacrifice and suffering.

It is a way of sadness, but amid the sadness, I remember your words. I remember that throughout your ministry, you constantly spoke of eternal life. You said that when we were reborn, we would live forever; that when we eat the Bread of Life, we would never hunger again. You promised the thief beside you that he would live with you forever in paradise.

May this Way of the Cross strengthen that same hope in me. I know that you are with me at all times, walking with me, as I have walked with you here. Your way has taught me that there is no greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. Help me be your friend, now and forever. Amen.



No Greater Love was written by Amy Welborn.
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