

Question 258

What are the Stations or Way of the Cross and where did they come from?

Stations of the Cross (also called the *Via Crucis*, Latin for Way of the Cross) are fourteen beautiful meditations about our Lord's journey toward Calvary, which took place on the Jerusalem road called the *Via Dolorosa* (Latin for Way of Sorrow). It winds its way through the markets, businesses, and homes of the city. The stations that form the Way of the Cross mark the various points of Our Lord's Passion. The Stations of the Cross can be biblically traced, though they may not be in chronological order. Also, references are taken from the Old Testament as they prefigure our Lord's Passion. This path taken by Jesus on Good Friday, the day he was crucified and died, is memorialized in many Western Catholic Churches since the time of Saint Francis of Assisi (thirteenth century AD), who is credited with bringing this devotion from the Holy Land to Europe. Normally, seven stations are on one wall of the church and the other seven on the opposite wall. Some shrines have an outdoor Way of the Cross as well as the fourteen stations on the inside walls of the church, chapel, or oratory.

1. **Jesus is condemned to death.** Luke 23:24-25, "So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will."
2. **Jesus takes up His cross.** Luke 9:23, "And He said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"
3. **Jesus falls the first time.** Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
4. **Jesus meets His sorrowful mother.** John 19:25, "So the soldiers did this. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."
5. **Simon the Cyrene helps carry the cross.** Matthew 27:32, "As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross."
6. **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.** John 14:9, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."
7. **Jesus falls a second time.** Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."
8. **Jesus meets the holy women of Jerusalem.** Luke 23:28, "But Jesus turning to them said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'"
9. **Jesus falls the third time.** Luke 14:11, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
10. **Jesus is stripped of His garments.** John 19:23, "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took His garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also His tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom."
11. **Jesus is nailed to the cross.** Mark 15:24, "And they crucified Him, and divided His garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take."
12. **Jesus dies on the cross.** Mark 15:37, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last."
13. **Jesus is taken down from the cross.** Luke 23:53, "Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid."
14. **Jesus is placed in the tomb.** Matthew 27:60, "And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed."

• From "The Catholicism Answer Book - The 300 Most Frequently Asked Questions"