

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
With poems by FR ROBBIE LOW

THE FIRST STATION—PILATE JUDGES JESUS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Who holds the sword of Rome, the Empire's sway,
Determines puppet kingdoms, who shall rule,
Which gods to worship, where and how to pray,
What lives to cast adrift this 'Ship of Fools'

Seated upon this Pavement, judgement waits
About to etch his name in history
'You're King?' he asks the object of their hate,
Unsettled by this silent mystery.

This is the truth. But 'What is Truth?' he cries
And hides behind the Relativist fraud -
The war between objective truth and lies,
Pagan deceivers and the One True God.

Buck passed, hands washed, to Calvary he brings
The final Judge of All and King of Kings.

***We pray for those unjustly imprisoned and for
victims of the states of terror.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***O sacred head sore wounded
Despised and put to scorn
O kingly head surrounded
With mocking crown of thorn.
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?
Can death thy bloom de-flower?
O countenance whose splendour
The hosts of heaven adore.***

THE SECOND STATION—JESUS TAKES US HIS CROSS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

How light it hangs around your neck
And sparkles in the noon day sun
This engine of Man's cruelty
Death Row's own sacred jewellery
The crossroads of Eternity
The shadow over Calvary
Where victory was won.

No silver in His hands he bears
But heavy, splintered, rough-hewn wood
Into His shoulder carves the groove
No resurrection can remove
The wounded corpus that will prove
The sacrifice that is God's love
This Friday we call Good.

***We pray for the witness of the Church.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***Thy beauty, long-desired
Hast vanished from our sight
Thy power is all expired
And quenched the Light of Light.
Ah me! For whom thou diest
Hide not so far thy grace
Show me, O love most highest,
The brightness of thy face.***

**THE THIRD STATION—JESUS FALLS FOR THE
FIRST TIME**

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

We, the sin-sick, sorry heirs of Adam's fall
Watch this Man of Sorrows go the way He must
Look down from rooftops on this chequerboard of
fate
This boiling cauldron of Satanic hate
This poisoned tide of evil in full spate
Where history's pawns reduce its King to 'mate'
This beaten Saviour, toppled in the dust.

Sprawled in the street, this second Adam fallen
Flung earthward by God's love and Mankind's sin,
Whose weight upon the gallows He will bear.
This dust, that made all dust, returning there
Moriah, where the Son of Man was spared
This thicket where the sacrifice is snared
Beyond the gates of death to victory win

***We pray for all those who carry the weight.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***I pray thee, Jesus, own me,
Me, shepherd good, for thine
Who to thy fold has won me
And fed with truth divine.
Me guilty, me refuse not
Incline thy face to me
This comfort that I lose not
On earth to comfort thee.***

THE FOURTH STATION—JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

And has it come to this, blest Mother of the Manger child
That we should meet upon this road of death?
And you should dare to hold me in your arms
As once, so long ago, you did in flight
Sought refuge from these self-same swords now drawn
To hunt me down and pierce your very heart
As Simeon foretold in Temple years gone by.

This is the long road home on Sorrow Street.
You brought me here, now you will see me hence
To scaffolds foot and, from despite of Hell,
(The rusted bolts of Heaven's gates, blood-loosed,)
Hold me again. And I shall lift you high,
As, down all ages yet to come, you will
Present me still to worlds as yet unborn

***We pray for our mothers, for mother Church, for the Mother of us all.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***In thy most bitter passion
My heart to share doth cry
With thee for my salvation
Upon the cross to die.
Ah! Keep my heart thus movèd
To stand thy cross beneath
To mourn thee, well-belovèd
Yet thank thee for thy death.***

THE FIFTH STATION—SIMON OF CYRENE

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

'We beat him senseless, half the night, thorn-crowned
him at the break of day.
The Jew has staggered, stumbled, fallen. Now we
need a strongish bloke.
Grab that big Jew to bear his weight and walk with
him his lonely way.
Libyan? Perfect! A black-arsed Jew !' – a last imperial
racist joke.

And so from out the crowd I took my place,
shouldered the fallen beam.
Each step an agony for Him, I saw the faces of
mankind
That lined death row and wept or jeered or silent
stood as if in dream
He staggered still, the loss of blood, parched, torn,
delirious and blind.

I saw the world as only He could see - loves – hates -
indifference.
I walked with Him where no-one else has walked to
pay sin's bloody price
On summit bleak where scorching sun and racking
pain brook no pretence
And watched Him hang and rock and gasp and bleed -
and promise Paradise

Now, in my dotage, with my sons at Mass in Faith's
Community
I bear the Cross and walk once more beside the Lamb
of Calvary.

***We pray for all those who come to the aid of the suffering
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***My days are few, O fail not
With thine immortal power
To hold me that I quail not
In death's most fearful hour
That I may fight befriended
And see in my last strife
To me thine arms extended
Upon the cross of life.***

THE SIXTH STATION—VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

Risking the spear points, sharp swords' jeopardy,
Breaches the crowd wall, stops the procession,
Heart of compassion for this dying man
Fearless, she kneels to wipe the face of God.

Down all the ages, image imprinted,
Sister of Mercy to brother of Man,
The very ikon, by which name we know her,
Hands on the cloth to all who will follow

This Way of Sorrows, paved with injustice,
Tortures the righteous at Satan's cruel whim.
Crack in the faultline of merciless Man,
Ikona of pity, Veronica kneels.

Seeking no glory nor this world's reward
Mercy is wiping the face of her Lord.

***We pray for those who minister to the persecuted
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.***

***There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.***

THE SEVENTH STATION—JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

The stumbling wreck of humankind
The airless press, the gaining sun,
The narrow street, the pulsing crowd
To see the execution done.

Blood blind, shaking, legs gone, wobbles,
He's parched and broken, down again
Clown – like, flailing on the cobbles
A beaten fighter hooked on pain

The soldiers wait for Him to rise
For this political charade.
On battlefields they'd end it now
Death, their familiar stock in trade.

To rise, to fall, to rise for men
Who shall not pass this way again.

***We pray for those broken by cruelty
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison***

***We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains he had to bear
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.***

THE EIGHTH STATION—THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Howl, as the siege engine of Titus
Breaches the ancient city wall
Puts to the sword your precious children.
Scream as the sacred Temple falls.

Weep at the coming devastation.
Mourn for the life beyond recall.
In these stone clefts press prayers of exile
This solitary remnant wall.

Sob as another Son of David
Falls to the Empire of the sword
The cry for freedom and salvation
Has reaped its regular reward.

Hearts in the cradle, wake begun,
Keen the death of each mother's son

***We pray for those who are victims of war
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison***

***He died that we might be forgiven
He died to make us good
That we might go at last to heaven
Saved by his precious blood.***

THE NINTH STATION—JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

'Dust thou art and unto dust...'
So runs the Lenten roundelay
We are the debris of dead stars
So long ago, so far away.

Yet, animated by the Word
And Spirit breathed and then, by Christ,
Allowed the husbandry and fruit
Of all but one in Paradise

In dust the Lord kneels, as before,
Him who, alone, should be adored,
Upon unyielding earthen floor
And Cherubim put up their sword

The Cross in view, the hill awaits

Who holds the key to Eden's gates.

***We pray for those who kneel in the dust with Jesus
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison***

***There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin
He only could unlock the gates
Of heaven and let us in.***

THE TENTH STATION—JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Strip down the altar !
Strip the sacrifice !
Death's not enough, we needs humiliate.
Naked you came here.
Naked you return.
What holds you now is not your mother's arms.

Dice for the seamless
Signal of unity
The beauty we see, your faithful will rend.
Rags of poverty
Robes of majesty
All, at the last, will hail the Son of Man.

Spear of Longinus
Piercing God's heart.

***We pray for those whose dignity is distressed
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison***

***O dearly, dearly he has loved
And we must love him too
And trust in his redeeming blood
And try his works to do.***

THE ELEVENTH STATION—JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Kind of Pilate to flog Him
And have Him nailed up too
They both increase the blood loss
And leave death less to do

The shattered wrists won't haul him
Up for another breath
To gasp some words of comfort
From suffocating death

The ankles, bust and bleeding,
On which no man can stand
To look across the valley
And see the Promised Land

Here on Mount Moriah
They slew the Son of Man.

***We thank God for the sacrifice of his love.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison***

***When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.***

THE TWELFTH STATION—JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

The demons squeal in ecstasy at this dark triumph of
their rebel lord
Into the hands of death surrendered is the sovereign
heir and God's own Son,
Who gambled all upon this hilltop sacrifice to save the
son of Man.
Fell halls of Hell re-echo to the jeers at love and mercy
now undone.

Beneath the broken Corpus weep the faithful few,
hopes dashed and future fled,
Courtiers of this their Sovereign Lord, so cruelly
crowned and Kingdom never come.
King Shepherd, scattered flock, abandoned God,
passes the portal of the dead.
The Light of light extinguished and the Word that
spoke Creation now struck dumb

The noontide sun wears widow's weeds, caparisoned
in midnight's deepest black.
The freedom Lamb, God's only Son, is sacrificed, this
blood-stained Paschal moon
The Temple's curtain ripped, the sanctuary exposed,
the Presence self-removed.
Across the ancient valleys and Mount Olivet deep
stirring in the tombs.

All bleak on earth, whilst fools stand stunned in
Satan's rotten maw of death and sin
By Cross condemned. God's life, invincible in Christ,
begins the Harrowing.

We pray for the bereaved
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

See from his head, his hands, his feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e're such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

THIRTEENTH STATION—JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Was it for this the Angel overtook me
And bade me bear this last of David's line?
Was it for this the shepherds came rejoicing,
The star-led chieftains knelt before His sign?

Was it for this the old man in the Temple
Cradled Him close and spoke of my hearts grief?
We fled the swords of Herod into Egypt,
Long years of exile, struggle for belief?

Was it for this, obscurity returning,
The long and weary way. The Gospel road?
Dark sorrows' path, this sacrificial hilltop,
Pierced side from which salvation's blood has flowed?

Serene pieta? Nought but keening wild.
The Mother holds the body of her only child.

We pray for the bereaved
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison

See from his head, his hands, his feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e're such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

THE FOURTEENTH STATION—JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

***We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because
by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.***

Into a stranger's grave, a borrowed tomb,
The remnant of salvation's hope is laid,
Wrapped in a linen shroud, the head bound tight,
The agony ends here. The price is paid.

Relaxed in death, the mortal man lays down
Defeat and dereliction hold the ring
In darkest night which never has a dawn
Bleak Winter which will never welcome Spring.

Here the place where time has ceased to matter
Matter degrades, resolving into dust.
Decay, triumphant in death's lonely realm,
Corrodes eternity with time's cruel rust

This vault yet changed the destiny of Man,
For, where it seemed to end, it all began.

We pray for the gift of faith, of hope and of love
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.