



Stations of the Cross
For the Healing of Japan

Opening Song

“For the Healing” words by Fred Kaan
Music: Tantum Ergo

For the healing of the nations,
Lord we pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love and action
Help us rise and pledge our word.



Lead us now, Lord, into freedom
From despair your world release;
That redeemed from war and hatred,
All may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
Fear will die and hope increase.



You, creator God, have written
Your great name on humankind;
For our growing in your likeness
Bring the life of Christ to mind:
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, Suffering Servant, you carried the sins and sorrows of the human family on the wood of the cross. Redeemed by your precious blood, we your people still walk in the valley of darkness and death, in a world teetering on the brink of destruction. We cry out to you to remind us of your nearness to us when the challenges that lie before us seem insurmountable and the pain and suffering too deep for words. When we are helpless and afraid, without hope and exhausted from the struggle, accompany us on our own way of the Cross. Breathe into us your compassion and courage so that we may advance along our way. As we go, open our ears to the cries of our brothers and sisters in need and our eyes to the life that blossoms even in the throes of death and destruction. Take the pain that we experience and use it to expand the walls of our hearts to encompass our world and to love as You have first loved us. And when all is said and done, bring us, with you, to the healing garden of Easter morn, where there will be no more tears, no more suffering, only eternal joy with you and all the family of heaven.

All: Amen!

On the morning of March 11, 2011, the people of Japan began what would be a triduum of suffering and catastrophic loss as earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster overcame them without warning. In moments, lives were changed forever and human suffering and loss overtook not only the country, but the entire world, as we watched with hearts broken and sorrowful. What better way can we show our solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters than by joining them on their own Way of the Cross.

The First Station

“Condemned to Death”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Lord Jesus, by the life you lead, you knew that suffering and death would come. So great was your love for us that you would give up everything so that we could live. The workers at the disabled Fukushima nuclear plant know that every minute that they remain in that toxic place, they, too, are receiving a death sentence. For the sake of their country and loved ones, they labor without rest and nourishment so that others may live.



All: “I seek the Lord and He answers me, and delivers me from all my fears. I look to Him and I am radiant with joy, my face does not blush with shame. In my affliction I call out to God. He hears me and saves me from distress.” (from Psalm 34: 6-7)

The Second Station

“Accepting The Cross”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Gentle Jesus, when the cross was thrust upon you, we would have understood if you had rebelled at the unfairness of it all. Your betrayal, interrogation and torture were more than anyone should have to suffer. And yet, you accepted your cross with no flare of anger or outburst of rage. So, too, the victims of Japan’s disaster, stand in line hoping for a bit of food or a cool drink of water. They wait, tired, hungry and exhausted, but do not try to take more than their share or do more violence when they are told that there is nothing left for them. Teach us, Lord, by the example of these kind and gentle people.



All: “Blessed are you who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for you shall be satisfied.”
(Matthew 5:6)

The Third Station

“The First Fall”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Bruised and Broken Jesus, as you walked toward Calvary hill, the very ground beneath you became an obstacle and you fell under the weight of the wood. Unsteady and disoriented, you rose and continued the journey. Deep under the ground of Japan, the earth’s foundations clashed and the mountains and hills, cities and buildings began to tremble. Chaos was on the horizon, yet Japan’s sons and daughters tried to remain calm. They were well prepared for days like these, yet this was only the beginning of their trials.



All: “Though the mountains may fall and the hills be shaken, my love for you will never leave you and my covenant of peace with you will never be shaken says the Lord who takes pity on you.” (Isaiah 54:10)

The Fourth Station

“Jesus Meets His Mother”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: A mother’s love and devotion never cease. Mary, mother of Jesus, what utter helplessness you must have felt as your only son’s eyes met yours along the way to His crucifixion. There are no words at times like these, only the deep assurance that love will speak where mere words fail. Dear mothers of Japan, be strong! Your passion and unrelenting spirit of care and endurance will heal your nation, now broken and ravaged. You are hope, you are peace, you are love.



All: “I have waited, waited for the Lord, and He stooped toward me and heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God. Though I am afflicted and poor, the Lord thinks of me. Blessed be the Lord, my help and my deliverer.” (Psalm 40)

The Fifth Station

“Simon Helps Jesus”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: **Jesus**, exhausted and parched from the grueling journey, a stranger came to your aid. Regardless of the motivation, Simon answered the call of duty. When your friends and followers fled and hid in fear, this faithful one took the burden from your shoulders and walked with you. Surely the men and women who are putting their lives on the line to aid in the massive rescue efforts also have fears and worries about the safety and security of their own loved ones, yet they are responding to duty’s call. With total abandon, they lift their people out of the mire and carry them to safety.



All: “The Lord is faithful in all his words and loving in all his deeds. The Lord supports all who fall and raises those who are bowed down. He is close to all who call to Him, who call on Him from their hearts.” (from Psalm 145)

The Sixth Station

“Veronica Wipes The Face of Jesus”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Amid the horror and suffering of that final journey, the smallest act of kindness does not go unnoticed by you, Jesus. A simple gesture from a loving heart makes you forget momentarily the swirling madness taking place within and around you. What is a fleeting moment for some is for you an eternal remembrance. Amid the rubble and devastation marking the landscape of Japan, the rescue of a little child, torn from her mother’s arms as tsunami waves crashed upon their home was like finding a diamond in a field of rocks. The joy of that one rescue was celebrated ’round the world even as the death toll grows with each passing minute. Have faith, you who search the rubble and risk your life so that another might live! The eyes of the Lord are upon you!



All: “They are happy whose strength is in you, O God., in whose hearts re the roads to Zion. As they go through the Bitter Valley, they make it a place of springs. They walk with ever growing strength, they will see the God of Gods in Zion.” (from Psalm 84)

The Seventh Station

“A Second Fall”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: As you neared journey’s end, Lord Jesus, beaten, scourged, and humiliated, waves of abandonment surged in your heart. Where was your God, your Father, your Beloved? Where were your friends and followers? The pain of it was even greater than the thorns that bruised your forehead or the splinters that pierced your skin. It took you to the ground, where the thought of rising up was almost impossible, and yet you set your feet once again on Calvary’s road. As if the earth trembling under foot was not enough, the swiftly moving waters of the tsunami paralyzed thousands of unsuspecting victims, washing them from their cars and homes, pulling them from the arms of their loved ones. Two devastating blows in the course of a single day. You will rise again, people of Japan, you are not alone.



All: “ So let every good man pray to you in the time of need. The floods of water may reach high, but him they shall not reach. You are my hiding place, O Lord; You save me from distress and surround me cries of deliverance.” (from Psalm 42)

The Eighth Station

“Jesus Meets the Women and Children”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Christ Jesus, when you saw the women and children weeping at the side of the road, you knew that the tears they shed for you were only a foretaste of the sorrows they would face as they learned what it would mean to become your disciples and your true witnesses. Women of Jerusalem, you could not know the joy that would be yours at journey’s end, and so God gave you one another and the strength that comes from standing together in faith, comforting one another even as you mourned. So it is with you, women and children of Japan. Stand together, even in your mourning and weeping and embrace this cross in solidarity with each other. You cannot see your future glory today. For now, simply hold one another in the peace of Christ.



All: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:5, 10)

The Ninth Station

“The Third Fall”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: O wounded Jesus, as you tumbled to the ground a third time, you looked up to see your world from its lowest point. The very people you came to save and transform turned on you and were about to murder you. Defenseless and vulnerable, you could only be with them in their unknowing. Nature first unleashed her fury on you, Japan, and now, the energy that fuels you threatens to annihilate you. The consequences may come now or years from now when your children suffer the devastating effects of this nuclear disaster. Vulnerable and at risk, we wait with you and we pray.



All: “ O Lord, you have burdened me with bitter troubles, but you will give me back my life. You will raise me from the depths of the earth; you will exalt me and console me once again, and all the day long, my tongue shall tell the tale of your justice.” (from Psalm 71)

The Tenth Station

“Jesus is Stripped”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: O dying Jesus, you stood alone and naked as even the shreds of cloth that covered your body were stripped away. All around you, death screamed: “I have won the victory!” You could no longer change the course, but you would stand firm, hoping and believing that this was not the end. Brothers and sisters of Japan, as you sit stunned and vulnerable amid the rubble, stripped of life as you knew it, do not despair. We hear you, we see you, you are not alone!



All: “ In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge. Let me never be put to shame. In your justice set me free, hear me and speedily rescue me. Be a rock of refuge for me, a mighty stronghold to save me. For your name’s sake, lead me and guide me.” (from Psalm 31)

The Eleventh Station

“Nailed To The Cross”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: You stretched out your arms, Jesus, and embraced your final agony. No spiteful words or harsh condemnations fell from your lips. You, the innocent one, hung between life and death, still saving souls as the repentant thief gained paradise in your last act of mercy. The children of Japan must wonder what has befallen them. They show an almost impossible resilience. That’s what children do. Everything around them is crumbling, yet their innocence lights up the lives around them. Truly, a child shall lead them on.



All: “O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty. I have not gone after things too great, nor marvels beyond me. Truly, I have set my soul in silence and peace. Like a weaned child in its mother’s arms, so my soul lies in you, my God.” (from Psalm 131)

The Twelfth Station

“Jesus Dies on the Cross”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, you spoke your final word—a word of total surrender. *“Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit.”* Your life was not taken away from you, you handed it over. Give to your dying brothers and sisters in Japan that same strong faith that will move the mountains of death and welcome them into your heavenly home.



All: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Trial or distress or persecution or the sword? Yet, in all this, we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us. Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord!” (Romans 8:36-39)

The Thirteenth Station

“Taken Down From the Cross”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Jesus, your struggle is over. Now, we who remain must take up the baton and run the race. We now carry the cross in our hearts, living for you and being your emissaries in the world. We remove your body from the cross, and you permit it. You ask us to be your hands and feet, your voice and your compassion. Our mission has just begun. As the rescue efforts in Japan continue, strengthen the weary and the disheartened as they take the bodies of their slain brothers and sisters and continue to seek those who are still among the living.



All: “ Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading. My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.” (from Psalm 131)

The Fourteenth Station

“Placed in the Tomb”

Leader: We adore You, O Christ and we bless You.

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

Leader: Those who carried you to your place of burial, Lord Jesus, thought that it was the final act. In good faith they lovingly cleaned and covered your body and then rolled the stone to cover the entrance way. The people of Japan continue to hold out hope that their loved ones might still be found. Their walls and windows testify to the hope that remains alive, even in the midst of death.



All: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there, we hung up our harps. For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. Sing to us, they said, one of Zion’s songs.”
(from Psalm 137)

Closing Prayer:

O Jesus, your suffering and death were only the beginning of your Paschal Mystery. As the people of Japan gather together, united in their pain and suffering, remind them to keep the light of faith alive in their hearts. Be with them in the waiting, in the time of their greatest need. Keep them united in you and with the whole communion of saints of which they are a part. You who live and reign forever with the Father and the Holy Spirit, bless your people, now and forever. Amen.

