

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR FAMILIES

BACKGROUND FOR PARENTS

THE HISTORY OF THE STATIONS

Since the earliest centuries of the Church, Christians have made pilgrimages to Jerusalem in order to retrace the steps of Jesus during his suffering and death (the *Via Dolorosa* or “Way of Sorrow”).

Around the fifteenth century, Christians began the practice of prayerfully meditating on the Passion of Christ by reproducing that pilgrimage in miniature. It eventually became known as the Stations of the Cross. (For a more detailed history of the Stations of the Cross, see the [Way of the Cross page](#) at the Vatican website.)

THE STATIONS WITH YOUR FAMILY

It’s an excellent way to introduce them to the story of Jesus’ Passion (his suffering, death and resurrection), breaking it down into steps that kids can more easily memorize. But the Stations are more than the re-telling of a story: it is a prayerful participation in the event that lies at the heart of Christianity. It gives an opportunity of self-examination for all to participate in.

Wiggly, distracted kids? Here are a few strategies to engage them:

- **Invite a friend.** There may be someone you know who is alone, who could join you via their phone on Zoom or other social media.
- **Follow a video** to give children an understanding of the story beforehand.
- **Involve children in preparation** A ‘scene’ could be prepared with simple props for each station. It could be a set of lego people, or a series of candles to follow.
- **Procession** You may like to organise a household procession to pray these stations. You could have numbers 1 - 14 laid out in different places, in the garden and leading to a prepared sacred space. Or it could even be a set of tea candles along a table-top and a children’s book to follow.
- **Give younger children something to do** - holding up the illustration of each station, or holding the cross at the head of your procession. (Use one they have prepared earlier.)
- **Readers.** If they’re old enough to read, let children take on part of the prayer service at each station.
- **Singing**
[Were you there when they crucified my Lord?](#)
[The Servant King](#)

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR FAMILIES



ARTWORK AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF

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<http://www.sacredart.co.nz/>

STATION PRAYERS COURTESY OF THE LITURGY CENTRE, AUCKLAND DIOCESE.

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER

Reader

Lord Jesus.

You came on earth, suffered and died for love of us,
being punished for the sins we committed.

You took the punishment we deserved.

We are sorry for this and ask for pardon.

You love us. You want us to love you.

You want us to love every other human being, because you love them too.
Help us to be like you.

FIRST STATION – JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



Reader **The First Station; Jesus is condemned to death!**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

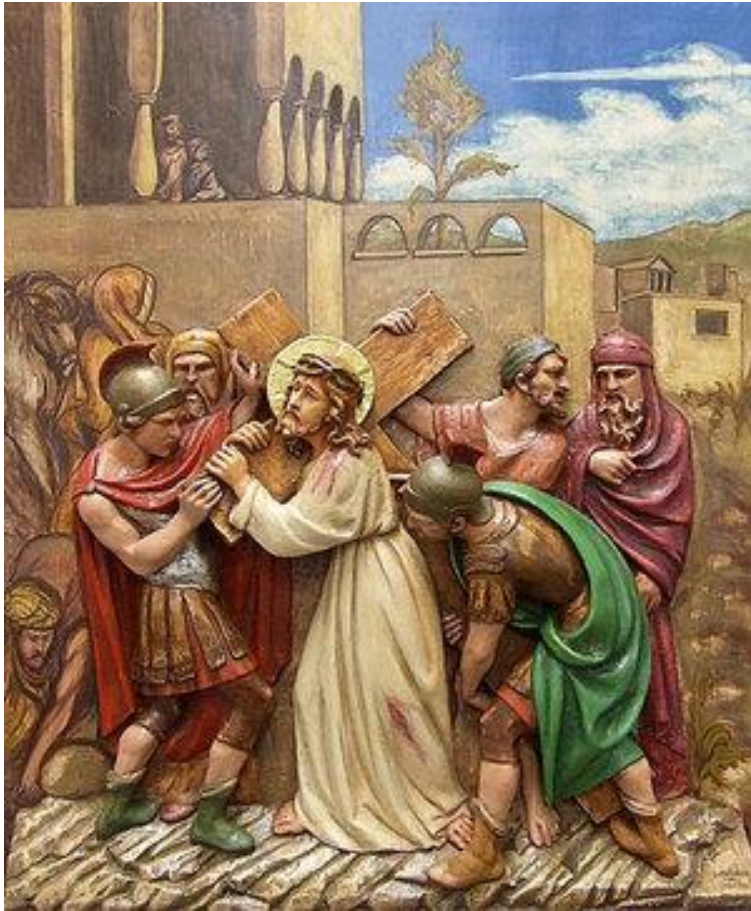
All By your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader As you stood before Pilate the people shouted “crucify him!” and Pilate said “let him be crucified!” That noise must have been frightening. So many people joined together to condemn you. They ganged up against you. Sometimes we gang up against each other. *(pause)*

Forgive us when we criticise other people.

All O Lord forgive us.

SECOND STATION OF THE CROSS – JESUS IS MADE TO CARRY HIS CROSS



Reader **The Second Station; Jesus is made to carry his cross**

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

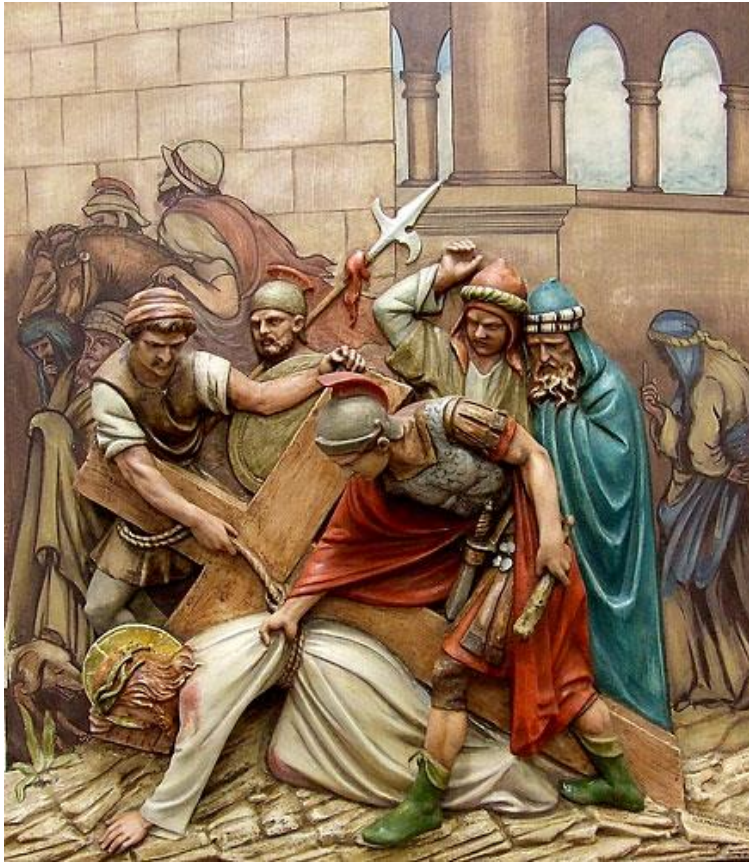
All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Jesus, you let them put the heavy cross on your shoulders and you never complained. We complain too much. We complain because it's easier than being kind. *(pause)*

For the times we complain about unimportant things.

All O Lord forgive us.

THE THIRD STATION – JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



Reader **The Third Station; Jesus falls for the first time.**

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

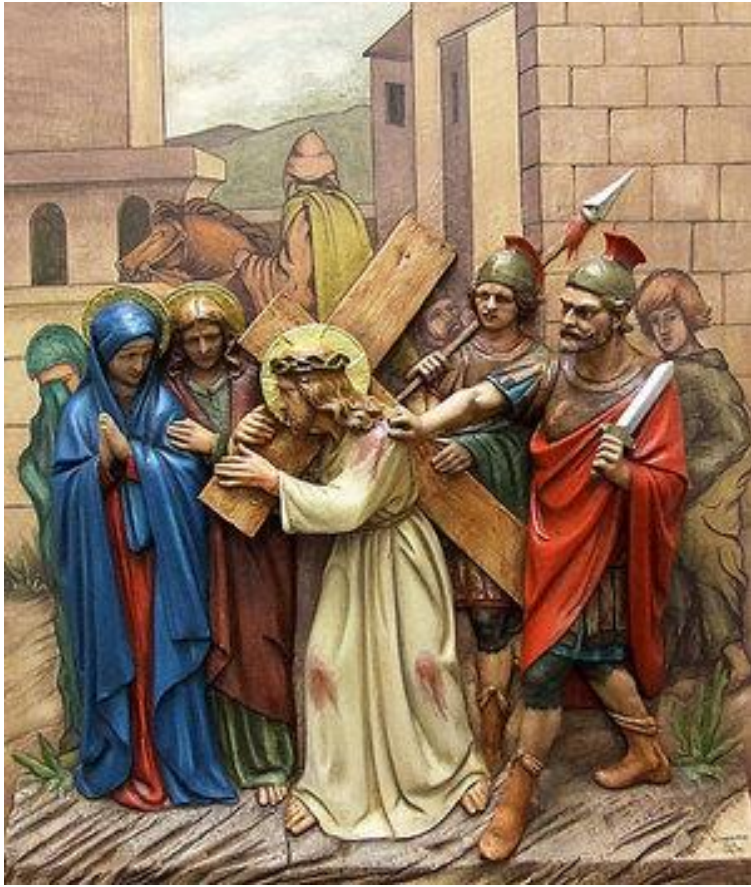
All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, you were so weak and tired, hurting all over from the whipping and crowning with thorns, that you fell down.
You spent your life helping people and died to help me.
Now every time I help someone, I am helping you. *(pause)*

For the times we look down on less fortunate people.

All O Lord forgive us.

THE FOURTH STATION – JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER



Reader - **The Fourth Station; Jesus meets his blessed mother**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, when you saw your mother watching,
you could see how much she was suffering.
You were always good to your mother and never made her suffer.
You couldn't help be the cause of her suffering now.
I am not always as good to my mother as I might be.
I may even cause her to suffer. *(pause)*
For the times we have not appreciated those who care for us.

All O Lord forgive us.

THE FIFTH STATION – SIMON IS MADE TO HELP JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS



Reader **The Fifth Station; Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

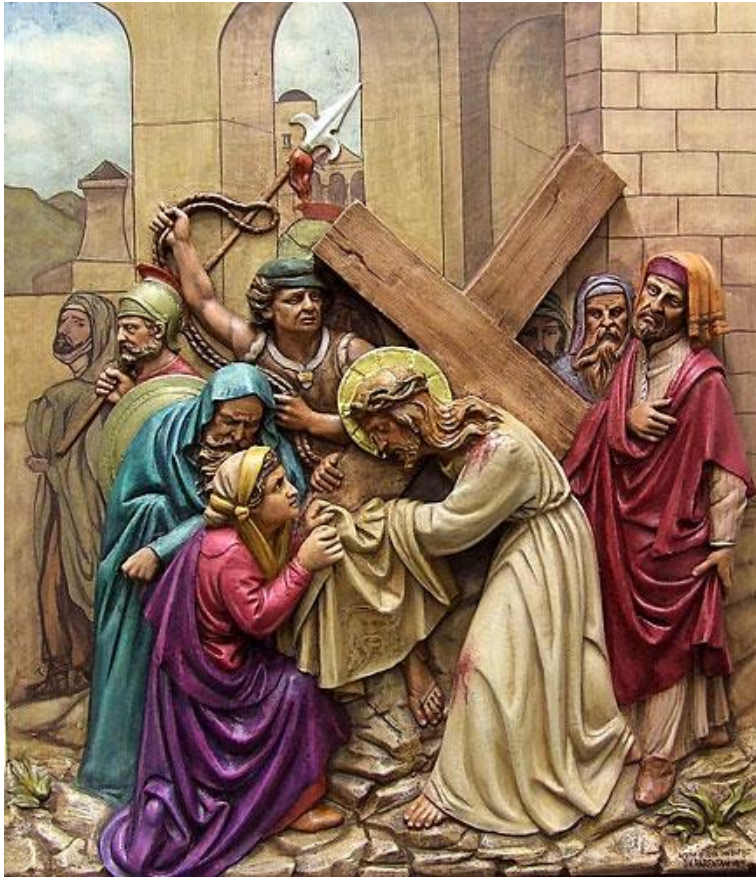
All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Jesus, they made a stranger called Simon help you carry your cross to
keep you from dying under its weight.
He didn't realise that he was helping God.
Every time we help people in trouble, even strangers,
we are really helping you. *(pause)*

For the times we ignore people who need our help.

All O Lord forgive us.

THE SIXTH STATION – VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



Reader **The Sixth Station; Veronica wiped the face of Jesus.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, the lady named Veronica was very kind to you when she wiped your face with her veil. There wasn't much she could do for you, but you accepted the simple kindness she offered.

It is good to be kind, even in very small ways. *(pause)*

For the times we have been unkind,

All O Lord, forgive us.

THE SEVENTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



Reader - **The Seventh Station; Jesus falls the second time.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, it hurt you very much when you fell. It hurts to fall over.
Sometimes I fall over, and all I can think about is how much I hurt.
Sometimes I make a big fuss about my hurts and try to make people feel
sorry for me. You just carried on. *(pause)*

For the times we try to make people feel sorry for us,

All O Lord, forgive us.

THE EIGHTH STATION – JESUS SPEAKS TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM



Reader **The Eighth Station; Jesus speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

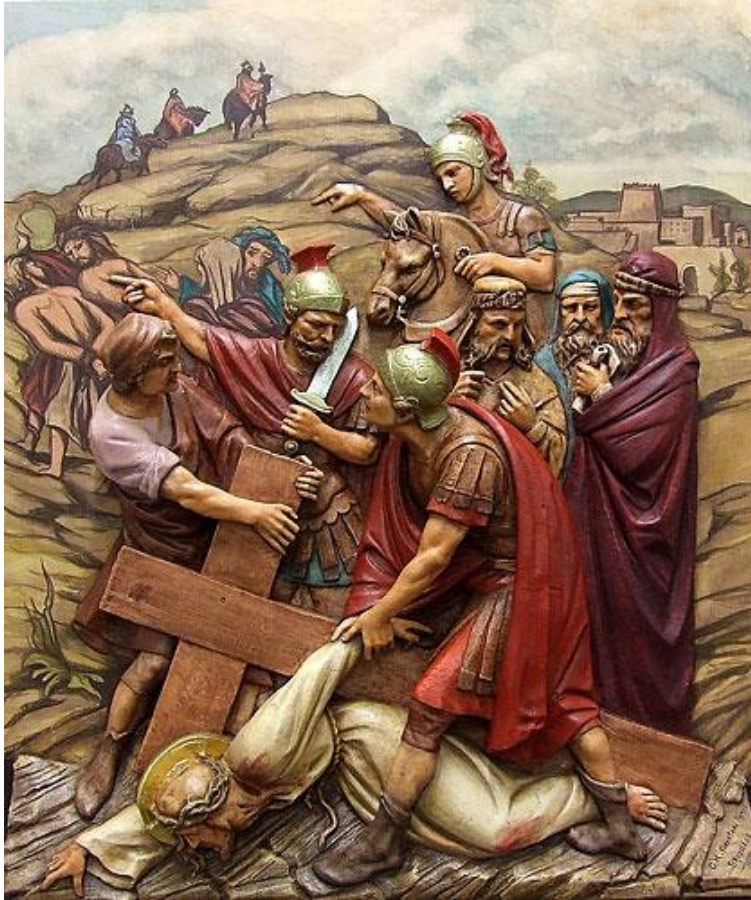
All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, no matter how bad you felt, you did not think about yourself.
You were sorry for the women you met, and their children.
I am often thinking of myself and not thinking of others. *(pause)*

For wanting our own way all the time,

All O Lord forgive us.

THE NINTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME



Reader - **The Ninth Station; Jesus falls the third time.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

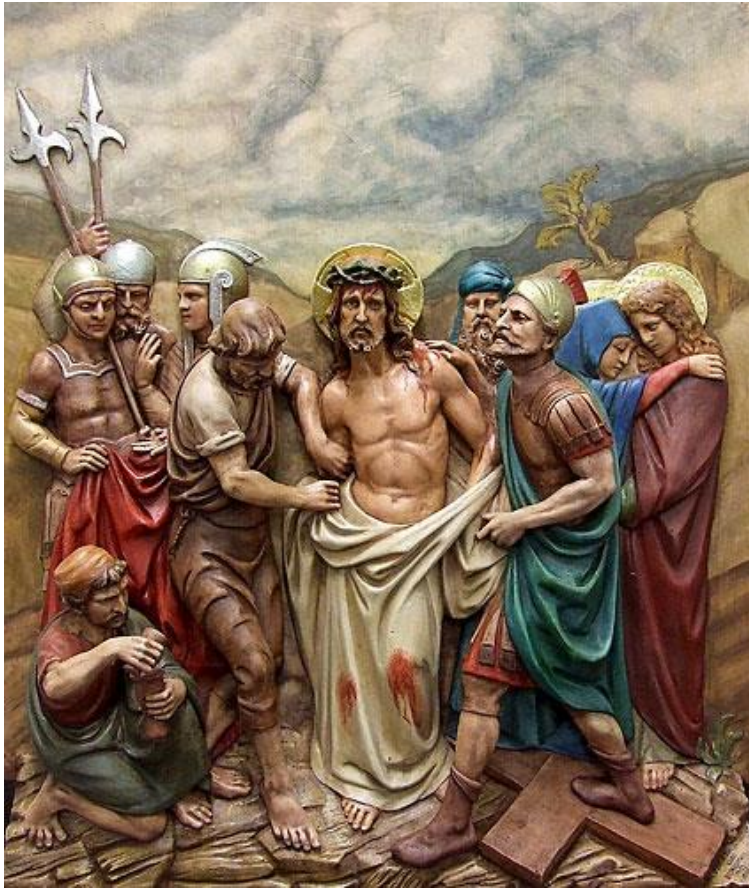
All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader Jesus, when you fell again you offered up the suffering to your Father for
us and for everybody. Sooner or later I will have to suffer.
I won't want to offer it up. I will just want the suffering to go away.
But I can offer it up to the Father with your suffering. *(pause)*

For causing others to suffer because of our selfishness,

All O Lord forgive us.

THE TENTH STATION – JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



Reader

The Tenth Station; Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader

Jesus, you gave everything away, then, just before you died they even took away your clothes. You gave up everything, even your life for us. I find it hard to give up the smallest things; my time, to help others, my possessions, to share with others. *(pause)*

For holding too tightly onto the gifts you have given us,

All

O Lord forgive us.

THE ELEVENTH STATION – JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



Reader - **The Eleventh Station; Jesus is nailed to the cross.**

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, what terrible pain must have gone through your hands and your feet when they drove the nails through them. I cannot imagine what you went through, yet you did it to show how much you love us. *(pause)*

For making feelings of happiness more important than being kind.

All O Lord forgive us.

THE TWELTH STATION – JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



Reader - **The Twelfth Station; Jesus dies on the cross.**

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, once you said, "greater love has no man then this,
that he lay down his life for his friends."
You not only said it you did it, while your mother watched.
By laying down your life, you showed the greatest possible love for us.
(pause)

For wanting things, more than wanting to love others,

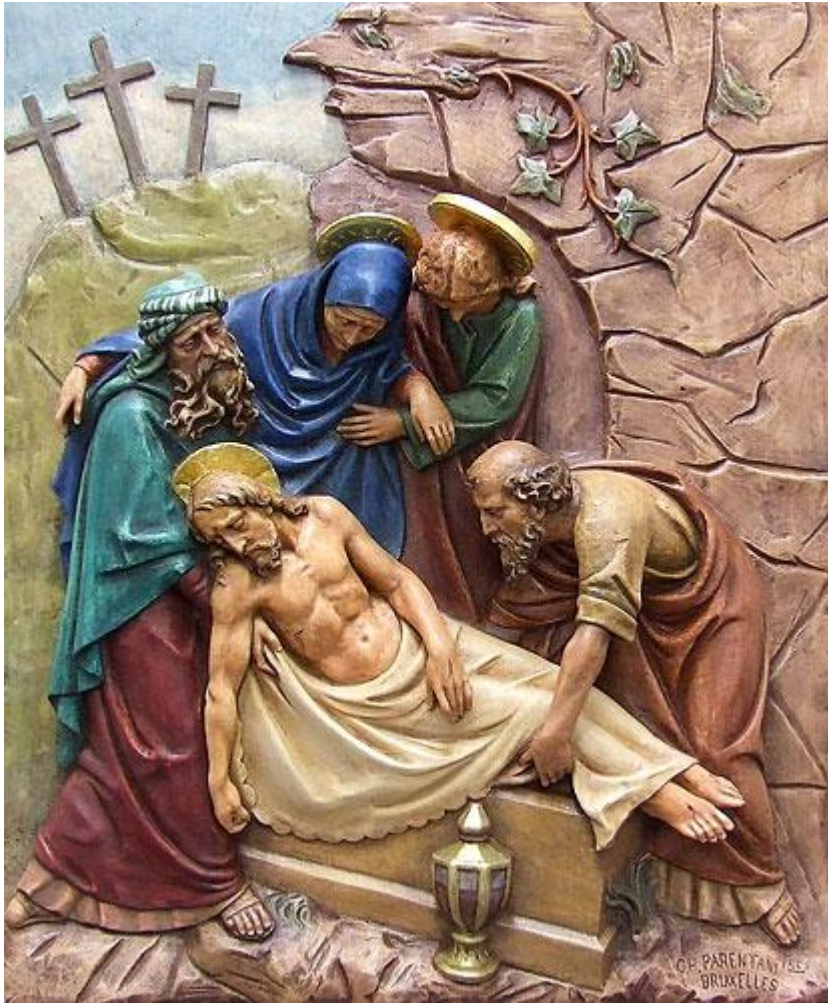
All O Lord, forgive us.

THE THIRTEETH STATION – JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



- Reader** - **The Thirteenth Station; Jesus is taken down from the cross.**
We adore you Jesus and we bless you.
- All** By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.
- Reader** - I cannot imagine how sad your mother felt when you were taken down
from the cross and laid in her arms. A few hours earlier, you had both
walked about the streets in town.
Now her heart was crushed with grief for the loss of you, her son. *(pause)*
- For the times we have not cared about other people's sadness,
- All** O Lord forgive us.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION – JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



Reader - **The Fourteenth Station; Jesus is laid in the tomb.**

We adore you Jesus and we bless you.

All By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader - Jesus, your body was placed in a tomb.
A large stone was rolled in front.
They took your life, then they closed you away from the world and all
hope seemed gone. *(pause)*

For the times we have stopped hoping and praying for an end to sorrow.

All O Lord forgive us.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

All

Jesus, we have walked the way of the cross.

I am saddened by the things I do wrong.
Help me not dwell on these things but instead,
remember how eagerly you forgive us all.

Help me to remember you are with me always.
Be with me in all I do.

Guide me to be kind and loving towards people today and always.
And when I fail, help me trust in your merciful and eternal love for me.

Amen

