STATIONS OF THE CROSS
LENT 2017

Thank you for agreeing to lead our community in celebrating the Stations of the Cross. Your commitment to the Lord and this community is deeply appreciated. The Guide has been prepared to give you some background and guidance in celebrating the rite.

The Stations of the Cross are a Catholic devotion that commemorates the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. Christian pilgrims who visited the Holy Land and the sites of Jesus' Passion originally prayed the Stations centuries ago. When the Franciscan order was given custody of the Holy Places in the Holy Land in the 1300's, praying the Stations grew in popularity and soon spread throughout Europe. Originally done only outdoors, the Stations were allowed inside churches in the mid-18th century.

The Stations consist of prayers and meditations on the final events that occurred as Christ made His way to his crucifixion. The devotion may be prayed by the faithful individually, making their way from one station to another, or by an officiating celebrant moving along the Stations accompanied by the congregation who make the responses. **Because the Stations recall Jesus' final journey to his death, it is important to commemorate that journey by actually walking from station to station**.

Today there are 14 traditional stations: Pilate condemns Christ to death; Jesus carries the cross; the first fall; Jesus meets His Blessed Mother; Simon of Cyrene helps to carry the cross; Veronica wipes the face of Jesus; the second fall; Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem; the third fall; Jesus is stripped of His garments; Jesus is nailed to the cross; Jesus dies on the cross; Jesus is taken down from the cross; and Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Our Stations at St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor were hand carved by an unknown artist for the convent at St. John Cantius in Philadelphia. When the convent closed several years ago, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia made them available to other churches. They were restored and reframed locally and have blessed our church since its dedication on May 5, 2013.

Our procedure for the Stations of the Cross is as follows:

- A **Cross Bearer** will lead the procession
- He or she will be followed by the **prayer leaders**
- The Cross Bearer and prayer leaders process up the **center aisle**, bow to the tabernacle then turn and face the people. The first prayer leader then **introduces** the Stations (see below)
- The procession then moves to the **first station** on the font side of the church.
- The leaders will process **from Station to Station** next to the outside wall
- The congregation will **follow along** in the larger side aisle, or sit if walking is difficult
- The Leader **introduces** the Station and prays, "we adore you, O Christ, and we bless you"
- The People **genuflect** or bow, and respond, "Because by your holy…"
- If we have one male and one female prayer leader, the male reads the odd Stations, the female the even. The prayer leader reads the reflection (non-bold text).
- The People read the **bold** text
- Prayer leaders and congregation sing the **refrain** lead by the **cantor** (if available)
- A Prayer Leader reads the **closing prayer.**

- **It is most important that each Station be prayed slowly and meditatively.**
- A Prayer Leader introduces the Stations in the center aisle with the following words:

"Good Evening! Welcome to our celebration of the Stations of the Cross. This is an ancient celebration that originated during pilgrimages to Jerusalem and was popularized by St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century. When we celebrate the Stations, we are asked to meditate on the passion and death of Jesus Christ as he carried his cross to the hill we call Golgotha. In our celebration tonight, we invite you to walk with us as we walk with Jesus. We will process along the wall and invite you to process in the side aisles. If standing is difficult for you, feel free to remain in the pews. We will genuflect at the beginning of each station, but will remain standing for the prayer. And so, let us begin our journey with Jesus."