

MY FOURTEEN STATIONS

BY CHARLES RAYBURN

This article was written by a victim of cerebral palsy whose sole means of communication was by means of an electronic typewriter which he struck with a stylus attached to a band around his head.

THE FIRST STATION – Jesus is condemned to death. The first station reminds me of my condemnation to live a life of cerebral palsied invalidism and to die to my self-seeking ambitions. Being unable to walk, talk or use my hands, I feel that I am a vegetable and not achieving anything. Is it condemnation, or is it a gift from God uniting me more closely to His divine love than to worldly pleasures and letting me share in Christ's suffering for mankind?

O Lord, teach me to overcome bitterness toward my handicap and to realise my life is not wasted but the little things I am able to do can be a vital part in Your plan for the universe.

THE SECOND STATION – Jesus accepts his cross. By this station I am reminded of how unworthily I accept my cross of invalidism. There are times when I try every mode of escape that I can imagine. I ask for pills; I cry for sympathy; I withdraw from everyone and everything.

What good are these escapes? I will have to face reality sometime, and my disillusionment will make my condition seem worse. If Jesus accepted His cross with patience and love, I can pick up my cross and show that Christ lives within me.

O Lord, I am such a coward trying to evade my cross. Give me the courage not to quiver or cry out under its weight, and teach

me there is no escape except in the reality of Your Sacred Heart.

THIRD STATION – Jesus falls the first time. At this station I remember my many falls under the physical pain of my cross. Unlike Jesus rising quickly, I lie there. Along with my handicap, I have other ailments. Some days a sharp pain stabs my neck every time I duck my head and strike a typewriter key. Often I think: "Why do I persist in writing when it hurts so much?" But I cannot give up the only work possible for me. Jesus stood up with the heavy cross upon His shoulders with blood streaming down His body and continued His mission of salvation.

O Lord, help me to bear my pains and not fall in despair, but if I do fall, grant that I may get up swiftly and go on with the work You permit me to do.

FOURTH STATION – Jesus meets his mother. This station reminds me that Jesus gave us His mother. This is such a comfort now that I am away from my own mother. Why do I think Mary intercedes for me with Jesus? He performed His first earthly miracle of her request because He loved her; it is that simple.

O my Heavenly Mother, stay with me on this journey of life and help me toward your son's kingdom. O Lord Jesus, hear Your mother's prayers and mercifully grant the favours she asks to help me love You more.

FIFTH STATION – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross. By this station I compare the Cyrenian to the nurses in this home helping me to carry my cross. They take care of my every physical need. Sensing my mental and emotional needs, they are quick to listen and to console me.

O Lord, at times I feel neglected by the nurses, but make me realise these feelings are only my depressed moods, and let me remember Your hurt in seeing the Cyrenian's reluctance to pick up Your cross, so that I may be ever grateful for my willing crossbearers.

SIXTH STATION – Veronica offers her veil to Jesus. By this station I call to mind my many friends who share their love with me. They give their time and effort in order that I may have a rich life. There are periods when I expect more of them than I should. Why can't I behave as Jesus did when Veronica offered her veil to Him? He accepted it graciously, wiped His face, and gave something to comfort her – the imprint of His adorable countenance.

O Lord, let me be thankful for my many friends, and teach me to do my part in reflecting Your gift of love into their lives.

SEVENTH STATION – Jesus falls the second time. This station reminds me of my many falls into the frustration of not being able to go wherever I please, whenever I wish. Like Jesus carrying His cross on the narrow road to Calvary, I bear mine on the narrow path of my wheel chair. At times I ache to run down the highway screaming at the top of my lungs. Jesus must have

wanted to escape that Jerusalem street with the wall of His commitment closing in, but He stood up and went steadily on His way. Surely I can do the same.

O Lord, strengthen me so that I will not fall into this "Slough of Despond," but if I do, help me to climb up and look beyond myself to see the infinite splendor of Your universe.

EIGHTH STATION – Jesus meets the weeping women of Jerusalem. This station makes me think of my duty to other people's needs. In the nursing home I can present a smiling face and listen to all who need a sympathetic audience. Sometimes I let an opportunity go by because I do not feel like being friendly. I must strive to do as Jesus did. Ignoring His own suffering, He thought only of the weeping women and of their children.

O Lord, grant that I may take advantage of every opportunity to cheer and comfort these patients and that I may forget myself and think only of their welfare.

NINTH STATION – Jesus falls the third time. By this station I recall my countless falls into black depression when I become lonely. Jesus' strength was depleted by his final fall. So my mental and emotional strength are consumed by loneliness; unlike Him, I wallow in self-pity. Just as Jesus struggled to regain His feet, I must struggle to regain my balance of living.

O Lord, help me to know that You walk beside me in my loneliness and to summon all of my strength to stand upright and go on with my life.

TENTH STATION – Jesus is stripped of his garments. This station reminds me to strip off delusions of self and see what my soul is really like. Often my conceit overcomes my judgements, and I think I am so very good and cannot sin. What sins can I commit sitting in this wheel chair, I rationalise. I must strip my soul of all its mortal coverings as brutally as the guards stripped Jesus.

O Lord, help me to strip delusions of grandeur off my soul and see my naked self, so I may sponge away the blemishes.

ELEVENTH STATION – Jesus is nailed to the cross. By this station I recall my responsibility to place my thoughts, my words and my deeds on the cross in union with Christ's love. My existence is as nothing unless it is nailed beside Him to help people. I can offer my sufferings to help my three co-missioners, I can pray for people, I can write articles to help spread the love of God. That I often fail in these duties is no reason to desert my suffering God.

O Lord, You know my weaknesses and my failures, help me in my dedication that through You I may better love and serve mankind.

TWELFTH STATION – Jesus dies on the cross. By this station I remember to forgive and love the few people who are impatient with my infirmities and seem to believe I have no mind. Why can't I practice forbearance? I must imprint on my soul the picture of my Saviour forgiving His persecutors as He hung on the cross.

O Lord, teach me to have more patience and understanding with

those who are unkind, and let me realise that by the merits of Your suffering I can love them as my brothers.

THIRTEENTH STATION – Jesus is taken down from the cross. This station reminds me I am a fool to worry about my future. I worry over paying the nursing home, buying my special equipment and such things. I know the money my parents saved will not last a lifetime and my writing goes so slowly that my income is small. I must stop being concerned over this material life that I can do nothing about, and care more for something I can do everything about – my eternal life.

O Lord, make me mindful that this transient life and its possessions decay and turn into dust, and that my earthly needs are only irritating grains of sand compared to my needs for eternity.

FOURTEENTH STATION – Jesus is laid in the sepulchre. By this station I delight in thinking of my glorious future with Jesus in His Kingdom. When I am laid in my grave, I will be released from my infirmities, spiritual as well as physical. I will be a spirit capable of seeing my Heavenly Father's splendor and my Lord's loving face. Then, on the last day, my spirit will be reunited with my body and I will be a whole person like all others in God's kingdom.

O Lord, help me to know and to do Your holy will on earth, so that I may live in Your promised land and love You throughout eternity. Amen.

(Since writing this, Charles has died. Ed.)

FIFTH STATION – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross. By this station I compare the Cyrenian to the nurses in this home helping me to carry my cross. They take care of my every physical need. Sensing my mental and emotional needs, they are quick to listen and to console me.

O Lord, at times I feel neglected by the nurses, but make me realise these feelings are only my depressed moods, and let me remember Your hurt in seeing the Cyrenian's reluctance to pick up Your cross, so that I may be ever grateful for my willing crossbearers.

SIXTH STATION – Veronica offers her veil to Jesus. By this station I call to mind my many friends who share their love with me. They give their time and effort in order that I may have a rich life. There are periods when I expect more of them than I should. Why can't I behave as Jesus did when Veronica offered her veil to Him? He accepted it graciously, wiped His face, and gave something to comfort her – the imprint of His adorable countenance.

O Lord, let me be thankful for my many friends, and teach me to do my part in reflecting Your gift of love into their lives.

SEVENTH STATION – Jesus falls the second time. This station reminds me of my many falls into the frustration of not being able to go wherever I please, whenever I wish. Like Jesus carrying His cross on the narrow road to Calvary, I bear mine on the narrow path of my wheel chair. At times I ache to run down the highway screaming at the top of my lungs. Jesus must have

wanted to escape that Jerusalem street with the wall of His commitment closing in, but He stood up and went steadily on His way. Surely I can do the same.

O Lord, strengthen me so that I will not fall into this "Slough of Despond," but if I do, help me to climb up and look beyond myself to see the infinite splendor of Your universe.

EIGHTH STATION – Jesus meets the weeping women of Jerusalem. This station makes me think of my duty to other people's needs. In the nursing home I can present a smiling face and listen to all who need a sympathetic audience. Sometimes I let an opportunity go by because I do not feel like being friendly. I must strive to do as Jesus did. Ignoring His own suffering, He thought only of the weeping women and of their children.

O Lord, grant that I may take advantage of every opportunity to cheer and comfort these patients and that I may forget myself and think only of their welfare.

NINTH STATION – Jesus falls the third time. By this station I recall my countless falls into black depression when I become lonely. Jesus' strength was depleted by his final fall. So my mental and emotional strength are consumed by loneliness; unlike Him, I wallow in self-pity. Just as Jesus struggled to regain His feet, I must struggle to regain my balance of living.

O Lord, help me to know that You walk beside me in my loneliness and to summon all of my strength to stand upright and go on with my life.

TENTH STATION – Jesus is stripped of his garments. This station reminds me to strip off delusions of self and see what my soul is really like. Often my conceit overcomes my judgements, and I think I am so very good and cannot sin. What sins can I commit sitting in this wheel chair, I rationalise. I must strip my soul of all its mortal coverings as brutally as the guards stripped Jesus.

O Lord, help me to strip delusions of grandeur off my soul and see my naked self, so I may sponge away the blemishes.

ELEVENTH STATION – Jesus is nailed to the cross. By this station I recall my responsibility to place my thoughts, my words and my deeds on the cross in union with Christ's love. My existence is as nothing unless it is nailed beside Him to help people. I can offer my sufferings to help my three co-missioners, I can pray for people, I can write articles to help spread the love of God. That I often fail in these duties is no reason to desert my suffering God.

O Lord, You know my weaknesses and my failures, help me in my dedication that through You I may better love and serve mankind.

TWELFTH STATION – Jesus dies on the cross. By this station I remember to forgive and love the few people who are impatient with my infirmities and seem to believe I have no mind. Why can't I practice forbearance? I must imprint on my soul the picture of my Saviour forgiving His persecutors as He hung on the cross.

O Lord, teach me to have more patience and understanding with

those who are unkind, and let me realise that by the merits of Your suffering I can love them as my brothers.

THIRTEENTH STATION – Jesus is taken down from the cross. This station reminds me I am a fool to worry about my future. I worry over paying the nursing home, buying my special equipment and such things. I know the money my parents saved will not last a lifetime and my writing goes so slowly that my income is small. I must stop being concerned over this material life that I can do nothing about, and care more for something I can do everything about – my eternal life.

O Lord, make me mindful that this transient life and its possessions decay and turn into dust, and that my earthly needs are only irritating grains of sand compared to my needs for eternity.

FOURTEENTH STATION – Jesus is laid in the sepulchre. By this station I delight in thinking of my glorious future with Jesus in His Kingdom. When I am laid in my grave, I will be released from my infirmities, spiritual as well as physical. I will be a spirit capable of seeing my Heavenly Father's splendor and my Lord's loving face. Then, on the last day, my spirit will be reunited with my body and I will be a whole person like all others in God's kingdom.

O Lord, help me to know and to do Your holy will on earth, so that I may live in Your promised land and love You throughout eternity. Amen.

(Since writing this, Charles has died. Ed.)