

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:59-61):

Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

MEDITATION

At the very moment of his burial, Jesus' words were fulfilled: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). Jesus is the grain of wheat which dies. From that lifeless grain of wheat comes forth the great multiplication of bread until the end of the world. Through his Cross and Resurrection, the eternal Word of God became flesh and bread for us. The mystery of the Eucharist already shines forth in the burial of Jesus.

PRAYERS

Lord, Jesus Christ, in your burial, you have become the lifeless grain of wheat which produces abundant fruit for every age and for all eternity. You give us yourself, so that we too can dare to lose our life in order to find it. Help us grow in love and veneration for our Eucharistic mystery. You have risen, and have made a place for our transfigured flesh in the very heart of God. Help us to rejoice in this hope and bring it joyfully to the world. Help us to become witnesses of your resurrection.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

While my body here decays,
May my soul your goodness praise,
Safe in paradise with you.





OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, as we walk with you on the Way of the Cross, you lead us along the way of the grain of wheat, the way of a fruitfulness that leads to eternity. The cross – our self-offering— weighs heavily upon us. Along your own Way of the Cross you also carried my cross. Today you carry that cross with me and for me, and, amazingly, you want me, like Simon of Cyrene, to join you in carrying your Cross; you want me to walk at your side and place myself with you at the service of the world's redemption.

Grant that my Way of the Cross may not be just a moment of passing piety. Help all of us to accompany you not only with noble thoughts, but with all our hearts and in every step we take each day of our lives. Help us resolutely to set out on the Way of the Cross and to persevere on your path. Free us from the fear of the cross. Help us to unmask all those temptations that promise life, but whose enticements in the end leave us only empty and deluded. Help us not to take life, but to give it. As you accompany us on the path of the grain of wheat, help us to discover in 'losing our lives', the path of love, the path that gives us true life, and life in abundance. Amen.

THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the Cross and given to his Mother

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:54-55):

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.

MEDITATION

Jesus is dead. From his heart, pierced by the lance of the Roman soldier, flow blood and water: a mysterious image of the stream of the sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist. At the end of his sufferings, there are faithful ones who remain with him: Mary, his Mother, the sister of his Mother, Mary Magdalen and the disciple whom he loved. Joseph of Arimathea, who buries Jesus in his own empty tomb. Even in the Sanhedrin, which decreed his death, there is a believer: Nicodemus. Even in this hour of immense grief, of darkness and despair, the light of hope is mysteriously present.

PRAYER

Lord, you descended into the darkness of death. But your body is placed in good hands; faith has not completely died. Help us to know that you are still there. Give us the fidelity to withstand moments of confusion. Help us, the poor and rich, simple and learned, to look beyond all our fears and prejudices, and to offer you our abilities, our hearts and our time, and thus to prepare a garden for the Resurrection.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

For the sins of his own nation
She saw him hang in desolation
Till his spirit forth he sent

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to John (19:19-20).

Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the Cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

MEDITATION

A sign stood above the Cross of Jesus, indicating who he was: the King of the Jews, the promised son of David. Pilate, the unjust judge, became a prophet despite himself. The kingship of Jesus was proclaimed before all the world. In sinking to the depths he rose to the heights. Now he has radically fulfilled the commandment of love, he has completed the offering of himself, and in this way he is now the revelation of the true God, the God who is love.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, at the hour of your death the sun was darkened. Ever anew you are being nailed to the Cross. At this present hour of history we are living in God's darkness. Through your great sufferings and the wickedness of humanity, the face of God, your face, seems obscured, unrecognizable. And yet, on the Cross, you have revealed yourself. Precisely by being the one who suffers and loves, you are exalted. Help us to recognize your face at this hour of darkness and tribulation.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Let me mingle tears with you
Mourning him who mourned for me
All the days that I may live.

FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the holy Gospel according to Matthew (27:22-23,26):

Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

MEDITATION

Pilate is not utterly evil. He knows that the condemned man is innocent, and looks for a way to free him. Nor are the men who are shouting and demanding the death of Jesus utterly evil. But at the moment they are caught up in the crowd. They are shouting because everyone else is shouting. And in this way, justice is trampled underfoot. Evil draws its power from indecision and concern for what other people think.

PRAYER

Lord, you were condemned to death because fear of what other people may think, suppressed the voice of conscience. So too, throughout history, the innocent have always been maltreated, condemned and killed. How many times have we ourselves preferred success to the truth, our reputation to justice? Strengthen the quiet voice of our conscience, your own voice, in our lives. Grant us, ever anew, the grace of conversion.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

At the Cross her station keeping.
Stood the mournful Mother weeping.
Close to Jesus to the last.

SECOND STATION

Jesus takes up his Cross

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:27-31):

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. They then led him away to crucify him.

MEDITATION

Jesus, condemned as an imposter King, is mocked, but this very mockery lays bare a painful truth. How often are the symbols of power, borne by the great ones of this world, an affront to truth, to justice and to the dignity of man! The price of justice in this world is suffering: Jesus, the true King, does not reign through violence, but through a love which suffers for us and with us. He takes up the Cross and points out to us the way which leads to true life.

PRAYER

Lord, you willingly subjected yourself to mockery and scorn. Help us not to ally ourselves with those who look down on the weak and suffering. Help us to acknowledge your face in the lowly and the outcast. May we never lose heart when faced with the contempt of this world.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Through her heart his sorrow sharing.
All his bitter anguish hearing.
Now at length the sword had passed.

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:37-42):

And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews". Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross". So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the Cross and we will believe in him".

MEDITATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross. Jesus does not drink the numbing gall offered to him: he deliberately takes upon himself all the pain of the Crucifixion. Let us look upon him at times of pleasure, in order to see the superficiality of all merely material goods. Let us look upon him at times of trial and tribulation, and realize that it is then that we are closest to God. Let us nail ourselves to him, resisting the temptation to stand apart, or to join others in mocking him.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you let yourself be nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of your body and your dignity. Help us to remain faithful to you. Help us to unmask the false freedom which would distance us from you, and to accept your "binding" freedom.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Holy Mother, pierce me through,
in my heart each wound renew
of my Saviour crucified.

TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:33-36):

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

MEDITATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments. Clothing gives a man his social position; it gives him his place in society, it makes him someone. His public stripping means that Jesus is no longer anything at all, he is simply an outcast, despised by all alike. Stripped of his garments, he reminds us that we have all lost the “first garment” that is God’s splendour. The Lord passes through all the stages and steps of man’s fall from grace, yet each of these steps, for all its bitterness, becomes a step towards redemption.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you were stripped of your garments, exposed to shame, cast out of society. You took upon yourself the shame of Adam, and you healed it. You also take upon yourself the sufferings and the needs of the poor, the outcasts of our world. This is how you bring meaning into apparent meaninglessness. Give us a profound respect for man at every stage of his existence, and in all situations in which we encounter him. Clothe us in the light of your grace.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Make me feel as you have felt
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ our Lord.

THIRD STATION

Jesus falls for the first time

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (53:4-6):

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

MEDITATION

Man has fallen, and he continues to fall: often he becomes a caricature of himself, no longer the image of God, but a mockery of the Creator. Jesus’ fall beneath the Cross is not just a fall of the man Jesus, exhausted from his scourging. But the meaning of his whole life is seen: his voluntary abasement, which lifts us up from the depths of our pride.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the weight of the cross made you fall to the ground. The weight of our sin, the weight of our pride, brought you down. But your fall is not a tragedy, or mere human weakness. You came to us when, in our pride, we were laid low. The arrogance that makes us think that we ourselves can create human beings has turned man into a kind of merchandise, to be brought and sold. Lord, help us to abandon our destructive pride and, by learning from your humility, to rise again.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
Was that mother highly blessed
Of the sole-begotten one

FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his Mother

V/. We adore you O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Luke (2:34-35, 51):

Simon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed". And his mother kept all these things in her heart.

MEDITATION

On Jesus' Way of the Cross, we also find Mary, his Mother. During his public life she had to step aside, to make place for the birth of Jesus' new family, the family of his disciples. Now we see her as the Mother of Jesus, not only physically, but also in her heart. The disciples fled, yet she did not flee. She stayed there, with a Mother's courage, a Mother's fidelity, a Mother's goodness, and a faith which did not waver in the hour of darkness.

PRAYER

Holy Mary, Mother of the Lord, you remained faithful when the disciples fled. Just as you believed the angels incredible message – that you would become the Mother of the Most High, so too you believed at the hour of his greatest abasement. In this way, at the hour of the Cross, at the hour of the world's darkest night, you became the Mother of all believers, the Mother of the Church. We beg you: teach us to believe, and grant that our faith may bear fruit in courageous service and be the sign of a love ever ready to share suffering.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Christ above in torment hangs,
She beneath beholds the pangs,
Of her dying, glorious Son.

NINTH STATION

Jesus falls for the third time

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

From the Book of Lamentations (3:27-32):

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in the silence when he has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust – there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

MEDITATION

How often is the holy sacrament of his Presence abused, how often must he enter empty and evil hearts! How often do we celebrate only ourselves, without even realizing that he is there! What little respect we pay to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where he waits for us, ready to raise us up whenever we fall! All this is present in his Passion. His betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his Body and Blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer.

PRAYER

Lord, your Church often seems like a boat about to sink, a boat taking in water on every side. In your field we see more weeds than wheat. The soiled garments and face of your Church throw us into confusion. Yet it is we who betray you time and time again. When we fall, we drag you down to earth. But you will rise again. You stood up and you can also raise us up. Save and sanctify your Church. Save and sanctify us all.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

O you Mother, fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with yours accord.

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:28-31);

Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

MEDITATION

Hearing Jesus reproach the women of Jerusalem who follow him and weep for him ought to make us reflect. It is no use to lament the sufferings of this world if our life goes on as usual. He shows us both the seriousness of sin and the seriousness of judgement. "How can God be so concerned with our weaknesses?" we say. "We are only human!" Yet as we contemplate the sufferings of the Son, we see more clearly the seriousness of sin, and how it needs to be fully atoned if it is to be overcome.

PRAYER

Lord, to the weeping women you spoke of repentance and the Day of Judgement, when all of us will stand before your face. You call us to leave behind the trivialization of evil. You show us the seriousness of our responsibility. Grant that we may not simply walk at your side, with nothing to offer other than compassionate words. Convert us and give us new life.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Let me share with you his pain
who for all my sin was slain,
who for me in torments died.

FIFTH STATION

The Cyrenian helps Jesus carry the Cross

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew (27:32; 16:24):

As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, this man they compelled to carry his cross. Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

MEDITATION

Simon of Cyrene, is on his way home, returning from work, when he comes upon the sad procession of those condemned. The soldiers force this rugged man from the country to carry the Cross on his own shoulders. The Cyrenian, walking beside Jesus and sharing the burden of the Cross, came to see that it was a grace to be able to accompany him to his crucifixion and to help him. The mystery of Jesus, silent and suffering, touched his heart.

PRAYER

Lord, you opened the eyes and heart of Simon of Cyrene, and you gave him, by his share in your Cross, the grace of faith. Help us to aid our neighbours in need, even when this interferes with our own plans and desires. Help us to realize that it is a grace to be able to share the cross of others. Help us to appreciate with joy that, when we share in your suffering and the sufferings of this world, we become servants of salvation and are able to help build up your Body, the Church.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Is there one who would not weep,
Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

V/. We adore you O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (53:2-3):

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire in him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

MEDITATION

On Jesus' Way of the Cross, though, Veronica at first did nothing more than perform an act of womanly kindness: she held out a facecloth to Jesus. She did not let herself be deterred by the brutality of the soldiers or the fear which gripped the disciples. Yet her act of love impressed the true image of Jesus on her heart. Only with the heart can we see Jesus. Only love purifies us and gives us the ability to see. Only love enables us to recognize the God who is love itself.

PRAYER

Lord, grant us restless hearts, hearts which seek your face. Keep us from the blindness of heart which sees only the surface of things. Give us the simplicity and purity which allow us to recognize your presence in the world. When we are not able to accomplish great things, grant us the courage which is born of humility and goodness. Impress your face on our hearts. May we encounter you along the way and show your image to the world.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
she beheld her tender Child,
all with bloody scourges rent.

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls for the second time

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Book of Lamentations (3:1-2,9,16):

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has blocked my way with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes.

MEDITATION

Throughout history the fall of man constantly takes on new forms. In his First Letter, Saint John speaks of a threefold fall: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. But we can also think, in more recent times, of how a Christianity which has grown weary of faith has abandoned the Lord. The Lord bears this burden and falls, over and over again, in order to meet us. He gazes on us, he touches our hearts; he falls in order to raise us up.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have borne all our burdens and you continue to carry us. Our weight has made you fall. Lift us up, for ourselves we cannot rise from the dust. Free us from the bonds of lust. In place of a heart of stone, give us a heart of flesh, a heart capable of seeing. Do not let the wall of materialism become unsurmountable. Make us aware of your presence. Help us to recognize the spiritual and material needs of others, and to give them the help they need. Lift us up, so that we may lift others up.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold.