

# **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

## **FIRST STATION**

Jesus is condemned to death

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

## MEDITATION

Jesus Christ is the King of the Universe and the Judge of the living and the dead; yet, he offers himself as the Innocent Lamb and submits to the criminal "justice" of Pilate and the condemnation of his own people. But let us not forget that Jesus died for all our sins (1 Cor 15:3) -- we are all implicated in his condemnation! Today in our society, criminal judges still condemn the innocent to death. We live in a culture of court-sanctioned murder of thousands of innocent children in their mothers' wombs. Have we modern Christians, like the first disciples, stood by in silence or fled the scene in fear, leaving the Innocent One to be condemned to death again and again?

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, forgive us for our failure to defend you whenever we see the poor forgotten, the weak despised, the innocent condemned to die. Help us to fight for justice! And let us never be discouraged by the success of wicked people or the power of unjust judges (Psalm 58, 82). Following your example, may we "hand ourselves over to the one who judges justly," (2 Pet 2:23) trusting in our heavenly Father's plan and the ultimate triumph of goodness, truth and justice.

## OUR FATHER

*Now the Cross as Jesus bore it,/ Has become for us who share it,/ The jeweled Cross of victory*

## **SECOND STATION**

Jesus takes up his Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

## MEDITATION

St. Louis de Montfort writes that Jesus espoused the Cross in his Incarnation, that he received it from the hands of his heavenly Father in the womb of his Virgin Mother, that his life was one continual Cross, for it was a continual sacrifice of love (*The Love of Eternal Wisdom*, 89-90). Jesus lived out on earth the inner life of the Trinity, in which

the Son continually offers himself to the Father in total trust, obedience, and self-abandonment.

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, for love of us, and in solidarity with our human nature, you accepted hunger, thirst, fatigue, physical pain; weakness, frustration, temptation; being misunderstood, hated, persecuted, rejected; sadness, loneliness, abandonment, death. Lord, by your embracing of your Cross, remind us that no suffering can ever separate us from your love (Rom 8:35-39), and give us courage to embrace our little daily crosses for love of you.

#### OUR FATHER

*Weakened, prodded, cursed, and fallen,/ His whole Body bruised and swollen,/ Jesus tripped and lay in pain.*

#### **THIRD STATION**

Jesus falls for the first time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

#### MEDITATION

“Falling beneath the weight of the cross, Jesus reminds us that sin is a heavy burden, sin lowers us and destroys us, sin punishes us and brings us evil: in a word, sin is evil! Yet God still loves us and desires what is good for us; his love drives him to cry out to the deaf, to us, who are unwilling to hear: 'Abandon sin, because it hurts you. It takes away your peace, your joy; it cuts you off from life, and dries up within you the very source of your freedom and dignity.' Abandon it! Abandon it!”  
(Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Benedict XVI’s Way of the Cross, Good Friday 2006)

#### PRAYER

Jesus, whenever we have the misfortune of falling into sin, inspire us always to get up again immediately, and run to your mercy, always available in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remind us always that “with God, every moment is the moment of beginning again” (Catherine Doherty). Let not our sins ever discourage us, but lead us to a greater trust in your patience and your infinite mercy.

#### OUR FATHER

*Jesus met his grieving Mother,/ She who made the Lord, our Brother;/ Now the sword her heart has pierced.*

## **FOURTH STATION**

Jesus meets his Mother

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

From the moment Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary were one heart, sharing in the same joys and sorrows. How many times in the past did her motherly heart embrace and console her Son? But now she is helpless, in such agony! She cannot save her Son. The Mother of Jesus is a model of com-passion, of “suffering-with” since she opened her heart to share so intimately in the Passion of her Son. Her heart is pierced with a sword of sorrow in the death of her Son. Yet she is also our Mother (Jn 19:27), weeping over our sins and the sins of the world.

### PRAYER

“O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!” Mary our Mother, pray for us that we will open our hearts to others and not fear pain, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (Rom 12:15). Whenever we are tempted by anxiety or fear, remind us of the words of your Son, "Do not be afraid" (Lk 5:10). Obtain for us a share in your courage and trust in God, so that we can say in union with you, “Be it done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

### OUR FATHER

*Simon stopped in hesitation,/ Not foreseeing his proud station,/ Called to bear the Cross of Christ.*

## **FIFTH STATION**

Jesus is helped by Simon the Cyrene to carry his Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

Simon was “pressed into service” (Mk 15:21) to help carry the Cross of Christ; he did not want to share in the Cross of Christ; he was forced to carry it! He is so much like ourselves. And yet, he came to know Jesus and was converted by helping to carry that Cross. Like Simon, we are called to bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2). A perceived “burden” could be welcoming another child into our family, a husband tending his sick wife, adult children caring for their aging parents, or simply listening with love and attention to the troubles of our neighbour.

## PRAYER

Lord, help us to see that the only heavy burdens in life come from our own sins. The yoke of serving you is easy, and the burden of your commandments is light (Mt 11:30). And the other person, created in your image, is never a burden but a gift! As you yourself have taught us, whatever we do for the other person, we do for you (Mt 25:40); the other person is you, Jesus.

## OUR FATHER

*Brave but trembling came the woman,/ None but she would flaunt the Roman,/ Moved by love beyond her fear.*

## **SIXTH STATION**

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

## MEDITATION

This holy woman thinks nothing of herself. She sees only this condemned criminal whom she knew to be a good and holy man, and perhaps by faith she knew that he truly was the Messiah. She runs to Jesus, risking her safety in the face of the brutality of the Roman soldiers. She does what she can to help him, offering him her veil to wipe the blood from his face.

## PRAYER

Lord, help us to follow the example of Veronica who sought your face (Psalm 27:8, 42:3) and thought only of you, not herself. Remind us that “we become truly ourselves only when we stop thinking about ourselves” (Comastri cf. Lk 9:24). Your love frees us from selfishness for service. Because you care for us, we can care for others; because you are always thinking of us, we can think of others. Veronica did what she could to help you. In our service of others, inspire us to “do little things exceedingly well for love of God” (Catherine Doherty).

## OUR FATHER

*Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,/ Flogged in Body he resembled/ All our brothers poor and scorned.*

## **SEVENTH STATION**

(By Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Benedict XVI's Way of the Cross, Good Friday 2006)  
Jesus falls for the second time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

“What is it that today, in particular, strikes at Christ’s holy body? Surely God is deeply pained by the attack on the family. Today we seem to be witnessing a kind of anti-Genesis, a counter-plan, a diabolical pride aimed at eliminating the family. There is a move to reinvent mankind, to modify the very grammar of life as planned and willed by God. But, to take God’s place, without being God, is insane arrogance, a risky and dangerous venture. May Christ’s fall open our eyes to see once more the beautiful face, the true face, the holy face of the family. The face of the family which all of us need.

### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the family is one of God’s dreams entrusted to humanity; the family is a spark from Heaven shared with all mankind: the family is the cradle where we were born and are constantly reborn in love. Lord Jesus, enter our homes and lead us in the song of life. Rekindle the lamp of love and make us feel the beauty of being bound to one another in an embrace of life: a life warmed by God’s own breath, the breath of the God who is Love. Lord Jesus, save the family, and save life itself! Lord Jesus, save my own family, save our families!"

### OUR FATHER

*May our sympathy for Jesus/ Turn to those who here now need us,/ May we see Christ bruised in them.*

## **EIGHTH STATION**

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

These women wept with compassion at the suffering of Jesus. On the way to his own horrible death, Jesus is thinking of others, telling them, "do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’” (Luke 23:28-29). How well did he prophesy about our culture of death that

exclaims, "Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, for children are a burden!" But we proclaim instead, "Blessed is the fruit of the womb, for children are a blessing and life is your greatest gift!"

#### PRAYER

Lord, grant us cleansing tears of contrition for our contempt for life, for our sins and the sins of the world. The martyrs and all the holy Innocents murdered throughout history cry out, "how long, O Lord?" (cf. Rev 6:10). How long will the wicked triumph? When will you come to save us from our sins? As we wait in joyful hope for your coming, we pray for the healing, conversion, and salvation of all victims of abortion - the child, the mother, the father, and our society. Lord, "Do not consider what we truly deserve, but grant us your forgiveness" (First Eucharistic Prayer).

#### OUR FATHER

*Jesus fell again in weakness,/ Stumbling as we do, to lead us/ Through our sorrow and our pain.*

#### **NINTH STATION**

(By Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Benedict XVI's Way of the Cross, Good Friday 2006)  
Jesus falls for the third time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

#### MEDITATION

"As Pascal insightfully observed: 'Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world; and we cannot sleep during this time.' Where is Jesus in agony in our own time? In the division of our world into belts of prosperity and belts of poverty ... this is Christ's agony today. Our world is made of two rooms: in one room, things go to waste, in the other, people are wasting away; in one room, people die from surfeit, in the other, they die from indigence; in one room, they are concerned about obesity, in the other, they are begging for charity. Why don't we open a door? Who don't we sit at one table? Why don't we realize that the poor can help the rich? Why? Why? Why are we so blind?"

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, those who live to hoard riches are the very ones you have called fools! (Lk 12:20) Yes, those who think they own anything are really fools, since there is but one Owner of the world. Lord Jesus, the world is yours and yours alone. Yet you have given it to everyone so that the earth can become a home where all find nourishment and shelter. So hoarding riches is robbery, if their useless accumulation prevents others from

living. Lord Jesus, put an end to the scandal that divides the world into castles and slums. Lord, teach us once more the meaning of brotherhood!”

#### OUR FATHER

*Stripped and jeered by his own nation,/ Jesus stood in desolation,/ Giving all he had to give.*

#### **TENTH STATION**

(By Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Benedict XVI's Way of the Cross, Good Friday 2006)

Jesus is stripped of his garments

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

#### MEDITATION

“The soldiers take Jesus' tunic from him with the brutality of thieves; they also try to rob him of his modesty and his dignity. But Jesus is the modesty, Jesus is the dignity that belongs to man and the human body. And the scorned body of Christ becomes the indictment of all the scorn ever shown to the human body, which God created as the mirror of the soul and the language to speak of love. Today bodies are constantly bought and sold on the streets of our cities, on the streets of our televisions, in homes that have become like streets. When will we realize that we are killing love? When will we realize that, without purity, the body can neither be alive nor life-giving?”

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, purity has everywhere fallen victim to a calculated conspiracy of silence: an impure silence! People have even come to believe a complete lie: that purity is somehow the enemy of love. But the opposite is true, O Lord! Purity is necessary as a condition for love: a love that is true, a love that is faithful. In any event, Lord, if we cannot be the master of ourselves, how can we give ourselves to others? Only the pure are capable of love; only the pure can love without cheapening love. Lord Jesus, by the power of your blood poured out in love, grant us pure hearts, so that our world may see a rebirth of love, that love for which our hearts so deeply yearn.”

#### OUR FATHER

*Pierced the hands that blessed and cured us,/ Pierced the feet that walked to free us,/ Walked the hill of Calvary.*

## **ELEVENTH STATION**

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross. There is no possible relief for his agony; he will accept no wine mixed with myrrh to lessen his pain (Mk 15:23). Only death will put an end to his suffering and bring him down from the Cross. Two thieves are crucified with him (Lk 23:39-43). Their deaths reveal the two possible responses to suffering in this life: one is pride, anger, rebellion against God and despair; the other is confession of guilt, acceptance, patience, faith and hope that leads to the promise of Paradise.

### PRAYER

At this Station, we pray for all those who feel that their souls are nailed to the Cross of their bodies - for all the sick, the crippled, blind or deaf, for the dying who cannot rise from their bed of pain. Lord, it is so hard for us to rejoice to share in your Passion! The saints remind us that suffering humbles and purifies us, unites us to you and prepares us for heaven. But our faith is weak, and so often we do not see the value or purpose of suffering. Lord, increase our faith! (Lk 17:5).

### OUR FATHER

*Life eternal, death defiant,/ Bowed his head, the world was silent,/ Through his death came life anew.*

## **TWELFTH STATION**

Jesus dies on the Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

### MEDITATION

The Son of God dies on the Cross. We are so accustomed to seeing crucifixes in churches, this dead man hanging from beams of wood, that we seem insensible to its shocking novelty and its deepest meaning. It was said of Blessed Fra Angelico that he wept every time he painted a crucifixion scene. How cold, hardened, and darkened are our hearts by comparison! If we listen, can we not hear the gentle complaint of our Lord, "Oh you passing by, is there any sorrow like my sorrow, any pain like mine? Do you even remember what I have suffered for love of you? Oh, my people, what have I done to you that you should treat me so? Answer me!"

## PRAYER

Lord, help me to rediscover the meaning of the Cross in my life. It is a mirror revealing to me who I really am, and a window into the secret depths of your Heart. Whenever I am tempted by pride, let me look at you on the Cross and say, "I have done this - my sins! Lord, be merciful to me a sinner! (Lk 18:13). And whenever am tempted to discouragement or to doubt your love, let me look at you on the Cross, at your Heart pierced by a spear, and say, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me" (cf. Gal 2:20). The Cross is proof of how much you love me!

## OUR FATHER

*Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother/ In your arms was placed our Brother,/ "Full of grace" now filled with grief.*

## **THIRTEENTH STATION**

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

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

## MEDITATION

"Behold your mother" (Jn 19:27). Behold the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, the Queen of Martyrs, how she suffers as the sword of sorrow pierces her heart (Lk 2:35). How can we imagine how she felt? Who has stood by a hospital bed, holding the hand of a beloved Mother, spouse, or child, helplessly watching a loved one die? Mary suffered not only in the death and loss of the physical presence of her divine Son, but her heart is also broken by the spiritual death of all her beloved children - by our ingratitude toward God, our obstinate pride, our slavery to sin, our lack of trust, our refusal of mercy, and our preference for our own self-destruction!

## PRAYER

Once more we call out, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." Help us to repent of our sins, to change our lives today! Teach us forgiveness, for even in your agony you repeated the words of your divine Son, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they have done" (cf. Lk 23:34). Obtain for us a share in your great faith that pierced the darkness that covered the earth (Mk 15:33) the darkness that threatened to descend upon your soul. Even as you held your dead Son, you trusted in his promise that the Son of Man would rise again on the third day (Mk 8:31). "Blessed is she who believed that the promise made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45).

## OUR FATHER

*Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted,/ In three days You resurrected,/ You did first what we shall do.*

#### **FOURTEENTH STATION**

Jesus is laid in the tomb

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

#### MEDITATION

"He suffered, died, and was buried" (Apostles Creed). Jesus was bound with burial cloths along with spices, and buried according to the Jewish burial custom (Jn 19:40). Burial reminds us of the reality of death! Death came into the world through sin. Without sin, there would not be death as we know it. If Jesus had not been cruelly tortured and murdered, he may have simply ascended into heaven after his earthly mission was complete, like Enoch who was taken up (Gen 5:24), or Elijah who was carried up to heaven in a flaming chariot (2 Kings 2:11). But he has shared completely in our human life, including the bitterness of death. The leader, pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2) has passed through the veil of death into the heavenly kingdom. Let us cling to him and follow him through death into the Resurrection.

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as true God and true man, you suffered, died and were buried. As a mortal human being, I too will suffer, die and be buried according to the customs of our culture. Family and friends will gather for my funeral, and people will mourn my loss -- perhaps even speak well of me! But "vanity of vanities" (Eccl 1:2), in a generation or two, everyone on earth will forget about me! But you, who have kept me in mind for all eternity, will remember me. Therefore, Lord, help us to live for you, our Creator who fashioned us from the dust and breathed into us the breath of life, our Risen Lord who will raise us up on the last day, our beloved Saviour who has prepared a place for us in heaven, our true home.

#### OUR FATHER

*Jesus, Risen, be our lover/ In your Food and in our brother./ Lead us home to heav'n with you.*