

“Marian” Stations 2009

First Station

Jesus is condemned to death

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus our Redeemer begins His way of the Cross. As Jesus himself prophesied, “it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things, to be rejected, to be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Mk 8:31). For us to find ourselves and become fully human, it is necessary for us, disciples who have been baptized into His death (Rom 6:3), to follow Jesus on this Way, to be conformed to His death, so that “we may attain the Resurrection of the dead (Phil 3:10-11).

With Mary the Immaculate Conception and Co-redemptrix hidden in the background, let us strive to accompany Him with love on this journey. Let us keep “our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before Him, He endured the Cross, despising its shame, and has taken His seat at the right of the throne of God” (Heb12:2).

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin R. *Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Second Station

Jesus picks up His Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

“The Son of man came to not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). Jesus did not shrink back from the Cross; He went out to meet it, to reach out and lay hold of it, with a love that desires to give of itself, a heart that seeks to serve. The Cross is not something we avoid with fear and loathing, and only grudgingly accept when we have no other choice. Jesus has loved us and called us as his disciples to carry our cross in his footsteps, to deny ourselves and to serve others. To *voluntarily* deny ourselves: to “cut out” a lustful eye (Mt 5:29), to “cut off” a greedy hand (Mt 5:30), to fast on Fridays and give alms, to “train our bodies” (1 Cor 9:27).

Let us ask Mary, “the servant of the Lord” (Lk 1:38) to teach us the secret of self-denial and humble and joyful service to others: to reach out to someone who is lonely, to smile even when we are tired, to anticipate the needs of those with whom we live and do little favours without being asked, in all things to say: “I will serve!” (Cf. Jer 2:20).

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

“He was crucified out of weakness” (2 Cor 13:4). But God’s weakness redeems the world: “the weakness of God is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor 1:25). Jesus is not ashamed of the weakness of his human nature, and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters (Heb 2:11). We must never be ashamed of our weakness, of our need for a Saviour!

Mary first witnessed the weakness of Jesus as a child in the manger; now she sees him nearly too weak to walk, fallen on the way to His death. She will teach us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus on the way of the Cross, on our way through life, through humble awareness of our human weakness, and our total dependence on the grace and strength of God, “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10).

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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 Mary

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus meets His Mother Mary. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary suffer together in silence. Jesus himself testified that the Son of man had nowhere on earth to lay His head (Mt 8:20). But Jesus did find one place on earth to rest His Heart: in the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In her heart alone did Jesus find consolation in the midst of His Passion: perfect gratitude and perfect love, in response to the sacrifice of His life.

In our conformation to Christ, in all our sorrows, we too can find refuge and consolation in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who will comfort us with her words: “Hear and let it penetrate into your heart, my dear little son, my dear little daughter; let nothing discourage you, nothing depress you. Let nothing alter your heart or your countenance. Also, do not fear any illness or anxiety, vexation or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else that you need?” (Our Lady to St. Juan Diego, December 9th, 1531)

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Fifth Station

Simon helps Jesus carry His Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Simon helped Jesus carry His Cross and carry out His work of redemption. Here it is – our call to be co-redeemers! To fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His body, the Church (Col 1:24). Are you suffering? God is treating you as a son, a daughter. “Suffer patiently for the sake of your training” (Heb 12:7) as a son or daughter of God conformed to Christ the Son.

Through my baptism, Christ lives *in me!* Christ suffers *in me!* Christ is tempted *in me!* The angel at Fatima told the children that the best sacrifice is to accept and bear with submission the sufferings God would send them. Then let us repeat to ourselves: “No more wasted sufferings!” From now on I will stop complaining, and live my baptismal vocation to be a co-redeemer – to accept my sufferings and temptations, and offer them through Mary to Jesus, through Jesus to the Father, for the good of my family and friends, for the redemption of the world.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

This was Veronica's face-to-face meeting with Jesus. What about ours? This is the goal of all our prayers and devotions, of our Way of the Cross: a personal meeting with Jesus. We repeat with the others: "by your holy Cross you have redeemed the *world*," but Christ has also redeemed each one of us individually. He tells each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer 1:5); in my Passion, I thought of you." Christ suffered with you in mind, so that you can say: "The Son of God loved *me*, and gave himself up for *me*" (Gal 2:20).

From the shroud of Turin, and the tradition of icons, we know what the face of the Son of God looked like. Let us constantly seek His face in prayer and contemplation. Even cloistered contemplatives who do no "work" are co-redeemers! Following the example of Mary, let us learn to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17) and season all our activities with the spirit of prayer.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin R. *Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Seventh Station

Jesus falls for the second time

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus falls again on his Way of the Cross, carrying out the work of our redemption. This work spanned his whole life, from the altar of the cradle in Bethlehem to the altar of the workbench in Nazareth to the altar of the Cross on Golgotha. "I have glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

Jesus also redeemed us by late nights healing people and early mornings at prayer, by long journeys on foot from Galilee to Jerusalem and back, by hunger, thirst and fatigue.

We are co-redeemers by all our work and fatigue, offered to God: little things done exceedingly well for love of Him, in the spirit of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. "Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being" (Col 3:23) – at home, the office, shop, school, hospital. Let us begin each task with the sign of the Cross, and as we work, glance at the Cross on our desk or on the wall and say, "This too is for love of you."

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin R. *Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

ii.

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

The daughters of Jerusalem weep over Jesus (Lk 23:27), but Jesus had first wept over the sons and daughters of Jerusalem who had refused His love (Lk 19:41-42). In His earthly life, Jesus offered up constant prayers and supplications to God, with loud cries and tears (Heb 5:7). “Oh, that my head were a spring of water, my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over . . . my people” (Jer 8:23). The tears in the eyes of Jesus, the tears of a God who is defenseless before the ingratitude of His children, reveal to us His Heart. And by telling us to weep over ourselves and our children (Lk 23:28), Jesus is inviting us to have a heart like His: a pure, open, sensitive and forgiving heart.

Close by her Son, our Lady of Sorrows also weeps as her heart is slowly pierced with sorrow. She reminds us that none of our tears fall to the ground unnoticed. God has kept a record of all our tears in His book (Psalm 56:9). We offer them, along with our hearts, through Mary to Jesus.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin R. *Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Ninth Station

Jesus falls for the third time

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. *Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus loved us to the end (John 13:1), to the last ounce of strength left in His Body, the Bridegroom who gave up His Body for His Bride, the Church: this is my Body, given up for you (Lk 22:19). Mary also loved us to the end. She would have gladly departed this life to be with Christ (cf Phil 1:23) but she chose to remain to help the Church, faithful until death to her vocation. We are co-redeemers by keeping our commitments, by loving without counting the cost, by giving everything and expecting nothing in return (cf Lk 6:35), by being faithful to our vocation until death. Only in this way can we be united with Jesus, to live and die and rise with Him.

Our Father

(a)V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of His clothing.

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8). In the bruised, broken, and bloodied body of Christ, they shall see God. In the white host at Mass, they shall see God. In the unformed body of the baby in the womb, they shall see God. In the old and wrinkled body, in the sick or handicapped body, in the body of the beloved or their own body, they shall see God. “It is sown (a)corruptible (body), but it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable, it is raised glorious. It is sown weak, it is raised powerful” (1 Cor 15:42-43). God has destined us, the baptized called to be co-redeemers, to be holy and immaculate (Eph 1:4), to keep ourselves pure, as He is pure (1 John 3:3), to glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor 6:20),

Our Immaculate Mother, conceived without sin and assumed body and soul into heaven, will guide us on the path of purification, so that God will dwell within us as a temple (1 Cor 3:16), and raise our mortal bodies through His Spirit dwelling in us (Rom 8:11).

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

It is a second original sin – *deicide*, the killing of God. “If these things are done when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” Jesus Himself asks us (Lk 23:31). If the greatest crime in history is committed when civilization is still full of sap and vigour (as in the early Roman empire) what will happen will civilization is exhausted and dried up into a culture of death? *Deicide* is followed by the *genocide* of the holocaust, and by the *suicide* of a society that murders its own children and destroys its future.

But remember that all the horrors that humanity perpetrates – past, present and future – all are redeemed by Christ nailed to the Cross. Nothing is lost. Objectively, all of humanity, all of history, is redeemed. Subjectively, the rest depends on you and I, co-redeemers called to stand with Mary, the co-redemptrix, at the foot of the Cross, in solidarity with all the innocent victims of our culture of death.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Jesus' death gives life to the world. He gives up His Spirit (Jn 19:30) and from his pierced Heart, blood and water flow (Jn 19:34), the source of the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. The Church is born from his pierced Heart. I too am born from this Heart, from the broken Heart of Christ, this Heart that loved me before I was born, this Heart that has loved me to the end. “This is love: not that we have loved God, but that He has loved us, and sent us His Son” (1 John 4:10). “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son” (Jn 3:16). “Open your whole being to the love of God with which God first loved you . . . (this) is the first duty of your consecration” (in baptism, as a co-redeemer) (Pierre-Marie Delfieux)

Mary responded to this love with her life, and a continual hymn of praise (Lk 1:46-55) “How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me?” (Ps 116:12). Love demands love in return.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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 Mary.

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

“Behold your mother” (Jn 19:27) holding the body of her dead Son, the same Son she once held in her arms when he was a new-born baby on Christmas day. Jesus called her “woman” (Jn 19:26) because she is also the “woman” of Genesis, the New Eve, the mother of all the baptized, the brothers and sisters of Jesus. “Behold your mother” who continues to hold the living Jesus in her arms, the graces that come from God in her hands, the light streaming from her hands on the Miraculous Medal. The Immaculate Conception and Co-Redemptrix with the pierced heart has become the Mediatrix of all graces and the Advocate who prays for us. We the baptized are also called to be mediators of grace and intercessors for others – family and friends, neighbours and co-workers, unbelievers -- to carry on the work of Redemption.

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R. Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

After the death of Jesus, Mary, her heart torn with grief, persevered in prayer, hoping in the promised Resurrection. She was the wise Virgin who kept her lamp lit (cf Mt 25:1-13), who kept her faith when it seemed that the world was plunged in darkness and the other disciples had lost hope. After her Son rose and ascended, Mary continued in prayer with the apostles, praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit. She teaches us, in our dark nights of the soul, when it feels as if Jesus is still dead in the tomb and God does not exist, to keep the faith – our faith is being purified!

With Mary, co-redeemers persevere in prayer, through the dark nights of anxiety, doubt, depression, or temptations to despair. Our good Mother consoles us, telling us, “Jesus will come to you again, your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you!” (cf Jn 16:22).

Our Father

V. O Mary, conceived without sin *R. Pray for us who have recourse to thee.*

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

Prayer for the moment of death

O Lord, my God,/ from this moment on I accept with a good will,/ as something coming from your hand,/ whatever kind of death you want to send me,/ with all its anguish, pain and sorrow.

V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
R. I give you my heart and my soul.
V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
R. Assist me in my last agony.
V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
R. May I sleep and take my rest in peace with you.

Acceptance of death

We, too, O God,/ will descend into the grave whenever it shall please you,/ as it shall please you,/ and wheresoever it shall please you./ Let your just decrees be fulfilled;/ let our sinful bodies return to their parent dust,/ but in your great mercy,/ receive our immortal souls,/ and when our bodies have risen again,/ place them likewise in your kingdom/ that we may love and bless you for ever and ever. Amen.