



*Behold!*

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

## The Way Of The Cross

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** The journey we are about to make is a special one. It is a journey that has already been made for us by Jesus. However, this is not simply a journey that Jesus made, but rather a journey that we all continue to make each day of our lives. Every step, every stumble and every victory that we experience each day, has already been experienced by Jesus himself. Together with Jesus, we shall walk the steps that lead to a death, for we all face little deaths each day. But even more, together with Jesus, we will rejoice in the resurrection that follows these deaths, because the cross is not a sign of defeat. It is a sign of victory. Together, let us deny our very selves, take up our crosses and follow in the way of Jesus. May we always glory in the cross of Christ, assured of the victory found in his glorious resurrection.

**All:** Lord Jesus, I have many difficulties and fears to face each day, and I don't know what to do or who to turn to in my times of need. So often, I feel alone on my journey through life, and at times feel that even you are not with me when I need you most. Open my mind and heart now, as I spend these moments praying and meditating on your immense love for me. Help me to see that I am not alone, that you are with me, and that all my brothers and sisters have problems, needs and dreams that await your action. Keep me from all harm, and guide me in your everlasting ways.

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

FIRST STATION

## JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: Try to imagine what Jesus had already suffered prior to coming before Pilate. He was betrayed by a friend, arrested and taken into custody, even though he was innocent and committed no crime. He was mocked, scourged and spat upon and even crowned with a wreath of thorns that pressed into his head, causing great pain and loss of blood. Now, he receives an unjust sentence of death from Pontius Pilate, who knows that Jesus is an innocent man and does not deserve to die. In perfect obedience to his Father, Jesus accepts the death sentence, is seized by the soldiers, and led out to begin the agonizing journey to Calvary.

All: My Lord, how small my problems seem to be in comparison to the devastation you must have felt. Your death sentence is unjust, yet Pilate approves it to please all those who were around him. I see so much injustice in the world today, and I feel powerless to bring relief to those who are most in need. Stir my heart, Lord, that I might not give in to fear. Strengthen me to turn wrong into right, bad into good and conflict to resolution. Fill me with your grace and protect me as I do your will to bring justice to all people.

*Through her heart, His sorrow sharing  
All His bitter anguish bearing  
Now at length the sword has passed.*

SECOND STATION

## JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: The cross is a large and heavy one, not simply because of its physical composition, but because all of our sins are attached to it. Every heartache and pain, every injustice and illness, every oppression and poverty, every human misery is attached to this cross. Jesus gladly receives all of these crosses in his own cross, and carries them out of his perfect love for each of us. When he reaches his destination on Calvary, our sins and hardships will be there with him. When he is nailed to the wood of the cross that will be transformed into the tree of life for all who believe, the Lord will destroy the lasting effects of sin and death.

All: My Lord, how can I ever repay you for making my crosses your own? What can I do to show my gratitude for this faithful love that you so willingly bestow on me? Help me to show my gratitude by the way I live. Help me to avoid sin and evil. Help me to repent from my sinful ways, and to accept your forgiveness, for no sin is too great for your loving mercy. Help me to show similar courage in accepting my own crosses so that through my hardships, I may experience your saving power and divine assistance.

*O, how sad and sore distressed  
Was that Mother highly blessed  
Of the sole Begotten One.*



THIRD STATION

## Jesus Falls the First Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise  
You. (*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: Already, Jesus falls under the awful weight of the cross. He has just begun the journey, and Golgotha is still so far away. He is weak from the blows he has received, and the soldiers continue to strike him and insult him. They force him up quickly so that he will not experience any relief or any opportunity to lie in the dirt to rest for a moment. The crowd insults him and enjoys the spectacle unfolding before them. Finally, Jesus gets up and continues on his way, because his work is not yet finished.

All: My Lord, this fall clearly shows that the weight of my sins is truly heavy. Forgive me, Lord, I beg you! Forgive my own falls from grace and turn my heart to feel sorrow for the injury I have caused you, myself and others. Restore me with your holy and purifying grace. Help me to be more like you, so that I, too, may rise up and continue on my way.

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

FOURTH STATION

## JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: The meeting of Jesus and his mother Mary was brief, but intense. Mary stood before her Son helplessly, recalling the words that Simeon foretold long ago: "A sword will pierce your heart." Jesus gazes into Mary's eyes, and without speaking a word, assures his mother that the Lord God will not let this suffering be in vain. Jesus feels his mother's anguish and gives her the silent assurance that the giving of his life for all was the Father's means to give salvation and eternal life to all those who believe. Silently communicating her love for Jesus, Mary returns to her place in the crowd.

All: My Lord, how sad it must have been for you to see your mother in such anguish. Even in the midst of your own dreadful state, you focused your attention on the suffering of your mother Mary. Give me the strength and courage that Mary had at that moment, so that I too can return to my place in the world as your witness to all. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Sorrows, may I always be shielded from evils and temptations of every kind.

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

FIFTH STATION

## SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: The cross now becomes too much for Jesus to bear, so the soldiers grab a bystander, Simon, to help Jesus carry his cross. While Jesus carries the more significant burden, Simon plays an important part in the Passion of our Lord. In helping Jesus carry this wood, Simon serves as an example for all who contemplate this awkward scene. We, too, are called to be Simon, to help our brothers and sisters carry the weight of their hardships and difficulties. Simon was transformed by this unexpected experience. We, too, will be transformed by our acts of good will to all who are in need of our assistance.

All: My Lord, help me to be another Simon in the world today. Show me your grace and blessing for the efforts I make each day to help people in their needs. Help me not only assist those who call upon me for help, but also give me the courage to seek out those who might be in need. Give me a strong desire to pray, fast and give alms for those who are most in need. Through my self-denial, restore dignity to those who are in desperate need of human kindness. May I give all of these things freely, expecting nothing in return.

*Can the human heart refrain  
From partaking in her pain  
In that Mother's pain untold?*

SIXTH STATION

## VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

*(genuflect)*

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

*(rise)*

Leader: Once again, someone steps out of the crowd to bring Jesus some relief from his agonizing walk. Veronica, another bystander, takes her veil and begins to wipe the spittle and blood from the face of Jesus. While it isn't much relief from his horrible pain, Jesus accepts this gesture of kindness. In return, he leaves the perfect imprint of his holy face on Veronica's veil, stunning those who witnessed this blessed miracle. In this brief encounter, the Lord increased the faith of those who saw for themselves that he was indeed the Son of God. In the midst of all the chaos and shouting, healing and truth flowed out to those who saw the glory of God displayed before their very eyes.

All: My Lord, what joy it will be to gaze upon your holy face when I am at last with you in heaven! Help me in difficult times to be a faithful and loving servant. Help me to leave your imprint on all those whom I meet. Let others see your face in mine. Help me both to give and to accept relief when it is called for. Remind me that there are people who care for me, as much as I care for them. May the example of Veronica come to mind each time I am faced with a situation that calls for immediate attention. May I never shrink from such a grace-filled opportunity.

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled  
She beheld her tender Child,  
All with bloody scourges rent.*



SEVENTH STATION

## Jesus Falls The Second Time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise  
You. (*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have re-  
deemed the world. (*rise*)

Leader: Jesus falls beneath the heavy weight of the cross a second time. It is difficult to see Jesus struggling in the condition he is in. Very tired and in excruciating pain, Jesus has lost a tremendous amount of blood already. It is a miracle in itself that he has not already died from his physical ordeal. Again the soldiers show no mercy, quickly forcing him up out of the dirt and onto his feet. How much more can Jesus take? The soldiers whip him with their cords, and the sting jolts Jesus as he once more begins to move slowly to Golgotha, now visible before him.

All: My Lord, I fall so often, over and over again, wondering how much more I can take. When evil surrounds me and seems to be prevailing over your goodness and truth, it is so hard to be strong. Help me to see that even though I repeatedly fall, you are there to pick me up so that I can go forward refreshed. When I feel that I am alone, bring peace to my heart so that I can prevail over my fears. Never permit me to be a victim of my own fears.

*For the sins of His own nation  
Saw Him hang in desolation  
Till His spirit forth He sent.*

EIGHTH STATION

## JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: As Jesus drew nearer to the place where he was to be crucified, a group of women stepped out from the crowd to express their sorrow for him. Motivated by good intentions, they wanted Jesus to know that there were people who believed in his innocence. Jesus once again accepted the gesture of kindness, but also said to them, "Weep not for me, but rather for your children." This statement reminds us that Jesus was not suffering this agony for himself. He was doing this for all those who were bound by sin and suffering. This suffering Jesus had to conquer by his death, so that we could all be free children of God.

All: My Lord, so many times my intentions are good ones. So many times I have tried to give kindness, love and encouragement to my brothers and sisters in Christ. Help me to continue trying to give these gifts in your name, and never let my pride get in the way of receiving these gifts myself. For the times I have failed to offer these gifts, pardon me. May I always be attentive to those who need my charity, given in your name, my God.

*O sweet Mother! Fount of Love,  
Touch my spirit from above  
Make my heart with yours accord.*

## NINTH STATION

# JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

*(genuflect)*

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

*(rise)*

Leader: The weight of the cross causes Jesus to fall a third and final time. Jesus has lost so much blood that he has hardly any strength left. The time has come for the moment of crucifixion, and the soldiers prepare for the task of carrying out the execution. They help Jesus to his feet while the crowd continues to taunt Jesus. They hurl insults at him, but Jesus utters not a word in return. The hour has come, and with trust in his father, Jesus enters into silent prayer.

All: My Lord, your third fall teaches me that the road to salvation is a difficult one. So often, I am insulted and treated unfairly. Sometimes, I insult people and treat them unfairly. Help me feel sorrow for my behavior, do penance and make amends for not respecting human dignity as your Gospel calls me to do. Let me see you in every person, believer or nonbeliever, and give me the gift of your holy grace to “do unto others as I would want done unto me.”

*Make me feel as You have felt  
Make my soul to glow and melt  
With the love of Christ, my Lord.*

TENTH STATION

## JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: After his painful journey, Jesus finally reaches Golgotha, where his execution will now be carried out. The soldiers strip Jesus of his garments, continuing to taunt and humiliate him. Some of the soldiers began to roll dice to see who would get the cloak of Jesus. After enduring this public humiliation, Jesus was ordered to lay down on the cross, and he was prepared for the awful agony of what was about to be done to him.

All: My Lord, the stripping of your garments was not just about removing your clothing. It was about insulting your dignity. So many times, I have participated in insulting someone's dignity by saying things about them that were unkind or even untrue. I have been guilty of harming reputations by passing along gossip that I should have ignored. Help me to be ever vigilant about this type of sin and strengthen me when I am faced with the choice of building someone up or bringing them down by slander. Let me always exercise charity and prudence, as I would want others to do.

*Holy Mother, pierce me through  
In my heart each wound renew  
Of my Savior crucified.*



ELEVENTH STATION

## JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise  
You. (*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have re-  
deemed the world. (*rise*)

Leader: Imagine what being crucified must have been like. The agony of nails being pounded through your hands and feet, pain shooting through every part of your body. The crown of thorns was left in place, and the wounds from the scourgings were open and bleeding. As the soldiers completed their grizzly task, they left Jesus to die. Let this scene burn in our hearts and minds when we question God's love for us. As scripture tells us: "There is no greater love than this, than to lay down one's life for a friend."

All: My Lord, I do believe in your love for me. There was no need to use nails to hold you to that cross; your love for me would have been enough. When I gaze on you nailed to the cross, stir my heart to always respond to your call of service to my family and friends. You may not ask me to lay down my life for them, but you do call me to defend, serve and pray for all people. Help me forgive my enemies who treat me unjustly, and bless me for the times that I do empty myself for others.

*Let me share with you His pain,  
Who for all our sins was slain,  
Who for me in torments died.*

## TWELFTH STATION

# JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. (*rise*)

Leader: After hanging on the cross for about three hours, Jesus finally delivered his spirit, bowed his head and died. His mother Mary was present along with a few others, keeping vigil with Jesus. His death brought with it a sense of relief that his horrible agony was at last finished. A soldier pierced the side of Jesus with a lance, and blood and water flowed. A centurion in the crowd cried out: "Surely this man was the Son of God." The news spread quickly throughout the surrounding towns, and some of the chief priests and soldiers became very much afraid.

All: My Lord, your death put an end to all the consequences of sin, suffering and death. You died an unjust, painful and horrible death, but you opened the way to the resurrection and new life. Help me through my daily dying to self so that I may discover new and better ways to be more like you. Bless those who are near death, that they may be assured of your resurrection and promise of eternal life. Help me to persevere with courage in life, so that when you call me to my eternal home, I may receive the grace of a holy and peaceful death.

*Let me mingle tears with thee  
Mourning Him who mourned for me,  
All the days that I may live.*

### THIRTEENTH STATION

## JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: Because it was the preparation day for the Sabbath, Pilate ordered that the body of Jesus be taken down from the cross. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two of Jesus' followers, removed the body of Jesus and placed it into his mother Mary's arms. Much anguish came over Mary as she held in her arms the dead body of her son. This is the same son she cradled joyously in the manger at Bethlehem. This is the same son she presented in the temple. Mary had shared so many wonderful and happy times with Jesus, and now he was lying dead in her arms. The woman who had laid his small, life-filled body on the hay in the manger now had to lay his dead and wounded corpse on the hard stone in the tomb. Of all the people who were present at Jesus' death, Mary most truly understood these terrible moments.

All: My Lord, thank you for entrusting me to the care and protection of your mother, Mary. Her sorrow during your passion was deep and heartfelt, yet she managed to carry on, trusting in the Lord that this was not the end. Help me to see that when I suffer for any reason, you will not let suffering consume me. Let me have the same trust that Mary had that my future will be brighter, that I will become stronger and that violence, oppression, poverty or any kind of injustice that I may suffer will not prevail. May I always see your hand in any suffering I experience.

*By the cross with you to stay  
There with you to weep and pray  
All I ask of you to give.*

FOURTEENTH STATION

## JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: Mary, Joseph and Nicodemus brought the body of Jesus to the tomb and prepared it for burial. Mary arranged the body with fragrant aloes and spices and wrapped it with cloth and linen. When they completed their work, the stone was rolled in place and the tomb was sealed. Because the chief priests recalled what had been said about Jesus, they demanded that soldiers be assigned to guard the tomb so that it would be impossible for someone to steal the body and claim that Jesus had been raised. Pilate granted their wish, and two guards were placed near the tomb. Now it was getting dark, and the time for waiting was to begin. According to scripture, Jesus was not yet finished with his work.

All: My Lord, your body rested in the tomb while the world waited in painful silence. I have so much trouble waiting. It is so hard for me to be patient, especially in difficult times. Help me to see that waiting for you to act can be a very good thing. You know me so well. You know the thoughts and desires of my heart. Help me to be patient in my waiting, so that you may accomplish your will in my life and I may enjoy the fruits of my patience in the time you have appointed. Give me the grace to wait well, to use my time to make positive contributions to your kingdom with my gifts and talents. Help me to know well that “those who sow in tears will reap rejoicing.”

*Virgin of all virgins blest!  
Listen to my fond request:  
Let me share your grief divine.*



FIFTEENTH STATION

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
(*genuflect*)

All: Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.  
(*rise*)

Leader: Suddenly, there was a burst of light and violent shaking of the ground. The soldiers got up quickly, but an angel appeared to them and made them sleep. The stone was rolled away and Jesus came forth in radiant glory, bearing the wounds of the crucifixion. Early in the morning, some women came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved and Jesus was missing. Another angel appeared and said to them "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He has been raised, just as he said." The women went off in haste and told everyone they met that Jesus was alive and that he was coming back to them. The sadness of all the people turned to great rejoicing, and their distress and sense of hopelessness was no more.

All: My Lord, you are risen indeed, and the power of your resurrection fills all of creation. Your healing power is upon me, and your protection and grace fill me at all times. Let me be constantly aware that I live in the time of the risen Christ, and that you are indeed coming again. Bless me with your Easter glory in the sad and difficult days that I experience at times, and help me to be aware that you walk among us now, just as we are. Hasten to turn my sadness to joy, and let me see your glory displayed before my eyes, so that I may be set free from every trial and tribulation. You are indeed my Savior, the Savior of the world. Praise and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!

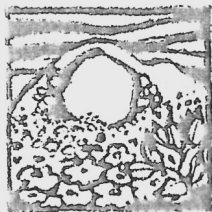
## CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: We have journeyed these steps in a spirit of prayerful hope. When we unite our sufferings and difficulties to those of our Lord Jesus Christ, our sadness and distress will eventually change into joy, vindication, healing and peace. Though we may bear the scars of our hurts, we will no longer be prisoners of fear, for we have triumphed through the victory of the cross and resurrection. Let us always be about our Lord's work. May we accomplish this work patiently and carefully, trusting in the power of the Risen Christ, who dwells among us and will bring us everlasting life forever and ever.

**All: Amen.**

For the intentions of the Holy Father we pray:

*Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be.*



*Imprimatur*

Most Rev. Michael J. Sheridan, V.G. • Archdiocese of St. Louis

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