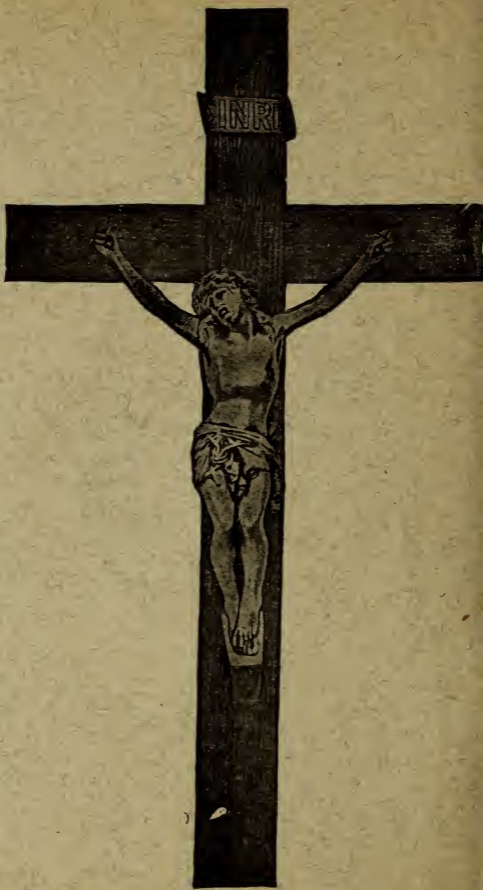


**The Way
of the
Cross**



Scriptural

Devotional



The Way of the Cross



OPENING PRAYER

“Turn away Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”—(Ps. I.)

Oh my God! it is only when I withdraw myself from the world and its cares, that my soul and its needs can receive due consideration. Realizing this, I now turn my thoughts and my heart towards Thee, and beg for the spirit of repentant Magdalen and of converted Peter whilst I follow Thy divine Son along His painful journey to crucifixion, death, and burial. And though I hope to gain all the indulgences attached to this salutary devotion, my more ardent prayer is to be so moved by Thy grace to realize the infinite malice of sin that I shall never more commit it; to be so impressed with the importance of my salvation that I shall subordinate all else to it. Amen.

FIRST STATION.

Jesus is Condemned to Death.

We adore Thee, O Lord, Jesus Christ, and praise Thee.

Because by Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

(Standing)

“Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered Him unto them to be crucified.”—(Matt. xxvii, 26.)

Wishing to liberate Jesus, Pilate places Him before the multitude, lacerated and bleeding from head to foot. But instead of being moved to sympathy by His pitiable condition, the diabolic rabble only gloats over it and clamors for more blood; yea, in its wild frenzy it knows only one answer to Pilate's different questions: “Let Him be crucified.” “Why, what evil hath He done?” “Let Him be crucified.”

(Kneeling)

O Jesus! I have little reason to become indignant at the demon-like people who clamored for Thy death, for they only represented me and other sinners in their cry. I was before Thy vision on that day and my voice was distinctly heard by Thee in the loud clamor for Thy crucifixion. Hence I follow Thee today along the Way of the Cross, not as a protest for what others have done, but in humble repara-

tion for what I myself have done. Pilate, the pagan, wanted to liberate Thee, and I, Thy professed follower, demanded Thy death.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, etc. Jesus crucified! Have mercy on us.

SECOND STATION.

Jesus is Laden with the Cross.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place, which is called Calvary.”—(John xix, 17.)

Pilate is too cowardly to resist the demands of Christ's enemies, even though he knows Jesus to be innocent; “Look you to it,” he says to them, and they do not conceal for a moment their willingness that “His blood be upon them and upon their children.” The heavy cross on which He must die is thrown upon the sore shoulders of our Savior, Who welcomes it with all His heart, because He wishes that “by His bruises we should be healed.”

(Kneeling)

O blessed Lord, why didst Thou not permit Pilate to have his way, when he would dismiss Thee as the “Ecce Homo” after the painful scourging and crowning with thorns? Oh, Thou didst wish to impress on me more deeply the

priceless value of my soul and the unspeakable wickedness of sin, by which it might be lost.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

THIRD STATION.

Jesus Falls the First Time Under His Cross.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“I am a worm and no man.”—(Ps. xxi.)

Weak and exhausted, lacerated and bleeding, still bound by ropes and chains, and pulled along by ferocious men, is it a wonder that Jesus falls? Because His hands are tied, the fall is a most crushing one, opening a thousand wounds, and producing many new bruises on His sacred head. “I looked for one who would grieve together with Me and there was none, and for one who would comfort Me and I found none.”

(Kneeling)

Oh, dear Redeemer! knowing that Thou wouldst rather be crushed beneath Thy cross a thousand times than that I should fall into a single mortal sin, how can I regard my sins so lightly? Should not this fall of Thine, with its revolting circumstances, so impress me with the heinousness of sin, that I could never again wilfully violate any of Thy commandments?

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

FOURTH STATION.

Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.”—
(Luke ii, 35.)

Simeon's prophecy was more than fulfilled when Mary met Jesus mangled and disfigured beyond recognition. Her grief, as unbounded as her love for Jesus, would have killed her had divine assistance not intervened. Could not she, who enjoyed such close companionship with Jesus for thirty years, could not she, His mother, give Him a last loving embrace? She tried it, but was thrust aside. God chose that she should be the “Mother of Sorrows.”

(Kneeling)

O Jesus, since Thy blessed mother was the nearest and dearest to Thy Sacred Heart, and Thou didst permit her to be so afflicted, how conducive to heavenly reward suffering must be! Mary, the most loved of God, is the most afflicted; and I lose heart even under the slightest adversity. Hereafter, with St. Paul, I shall “glory in my tribulations.”

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

FIFTH STATION.

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“They laid hold of Simon and him they forced to take up His cross.”—(Matt. xxvii.)

Not to relieve Jesus of pain or burden was His cross taken from Him momentarily, but to reserve Him for the terrible crucifixion, which His enemies feared He might not live to undergo. Why did He not foil the cruel plans of His executioners and yield His spirit before the place of crucifixion was reached? Oh, to emphasize His love for me, Jesus craved more than His enemies did for the tortures reserved for Him on Calvary.

(Kneeling)

O divine Savior! it is only by studying Thee that I learn to realize how bereft of genuine love I am. If great love will endure great things for the person loved, how scant my love for Thee must be, since I serve Thee only under compulsion. I try to shirk every arduous duty. But henceforth, the better to prove that I love Thee, I shall perform many good works which are not of strict obligation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

SIXTH STATION.

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

"I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me."—
(Is. 1. 6.)

The face of Jesus, hitherto beautiful and attractive, the face which shone brighter than the sun on Thabor, is now so swollen and sore, so covered with blood and spittle, that an unknown woman is moved to brave the meanness of the mob and dry His countenance with a towel. Little did Veronica dream that she would carry away an imprint of her Savior's face and stains of His precious blood which redeemed the whole world.

(Kneeling)

O, what a lesson against cowardice and human respect I have here? Whilst others by their cursing, by their profane and foul language, are incessantly spitting in the face of Jesus, I look on without protest. Yes, and what is more, I myself imitate them. I now promise, O Savior, never again to utter a wilful curse or an immodest word, and in imitation of Veronica, I shall take Thy part in my daily encounter with people who dishonor Thee

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

SEVENTH STATION.

Jesus Falls a Second Time.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“Wounds, bruises and swollen sores; and they are not dressed, nor pound up, nor fomented with oil.”—(Ps. xxxi.)

Jesus falls again. The full significance of these words is grasped only when we have a vivid picture of the tortured Jesus before our minds: His whole body is torn into shreds, and He is literally crushed, face foremost, to the ground. There He is struck and kicked, and then violently jerked to His feet by ruffians through whom the very devils of hell vent their hatred on Him.

(Kneeling)

O Jesus! this new fall, like all else Thou dost endure, is not only *for* me, but to *teach* me. Thou wilt readily pardon the sin which I commit without great wilfulness or which I am earnestly resolved not to re-commit; but Thou art grieved exceedingly by my *repeated* falls, Thou canst not excuse my *habits* of sin. Therefore, on my knees, I promise Thee to overcome completely any sin into which I habitually fall.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

EIGHTH STATION.

Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women of Jerusalem.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and your children.”—(Luke xxiii, 28.)

Does Jesus not appreciate the stream of sympathy which these good women were pouring upon His ocean of sufferings? Oh yes, indeed; but in this hour our blessed Redeemer is not thinking of Himself; His thoughts are so pre-occupied with the offended Majesty of God, and with the infinite malice of sin, that He would direct the thoughts of the tender-hearted women to the *cause* of His sufferings, theirs and their children's sins.

(Kneeling)

O dear Lord, whilst Thou hast a human heart, and hence dost appreciate the sympathy I manifest towards Thee in Thy sufferings, Thou must nevertheless remind me that my sins are responsible for all. And since genuine sorrow for my sins is best shown by the care that I take to avoid them, I beseech Thee, by Thy powerful grace, to lead me to a thorough amendment of my life.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

NINTH STATION.

Jesus Falls a Thlrd Time.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“And they came to a place called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary.”—(Matt. xxvii, 33.)

It was at the foot of Calvary that Jesus fell the last time. The guards want no more lamentations from sympathetic women, so in compelling Jesus to rise at once and hasten forward, they multiply their blows and kicks and imprecations. A brute beast so treated would elicit our profoundest compassion. But it was foretold: “He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer and shall not open his mouth.”

(Kneeling)

O Jesus! When I consider how careful people are not to irritate a tender sore or wound, I cannot comprehend how Thou canst purposely provoke new sufferings from Thy ten thousand open wounds by Thy repeated falls. Is it not Thy intention, by this last fall, to make reparation for the innumerable venial sins which I daily commit without remorse? Oh, I shall no longer draw the line between mortal and venial sins, but avoid everything which Thy holy Law does not sanction.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

TENTH STATION.

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“They divided His garments, casting lots for them.”—(Mark xv, 24.) “And they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when He tasted, He would not drink.”—(Matt. xxvii.)

What agony, to have skin and flesh torn from His lacerated body by the rough removal of His garments! And the humiliation which He experienced by the stripping cannot be imagined; but He was atoning for the most deadly of all sins—that of impurity—which should not even be known among Christians.

By his refusal to drink, even when tormented by a burning thirst, Jesus would offer reparation for the all too common sin of Drunkenness which, next to Impurity, defiles the temple of the Holy Ghost.

(Kneeling)

Dear Redeemer, I did not need this new argument to teach me that impurity in its different forms, more than any other sin, is an abomination before Thee. Thy body torn into shreds for my impure deeds, and Thy head pierced with thorns for my unclean thoughts and desires, should certainly be arguments convincing. Still Thou wouldst

render so emphatic the hideousness of this sin that I would carry the lesson to my grave. And this I promise to do.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

ELEVENTH STATION.

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands? With them I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me.”—(Zach. xiii.)

Whilst Jesus was kissing the cross on which He was to die, the soldiers roughly throw Him down upon it, stretch out His sore arms and through His sacred hands drive long, blunt nails. Oh, those hands, which had always been uplifted in blessing, which had relieved so much suffering and misery, are nailed to the cross! And the feet which Magdalen had bathed with her tears, at which so many hardened sinners had found peace and consolation, are pierced through and through!

(Kneeling)

Oh Jesus! what next? Before Thy actual tortures began, “Thy soul was sorrowful even to death;” and now Thy body has since endured what should have killed Thee a dozen times. Was all this necessary “to blot out the hand-

writing which was against me?" Free me now from every charge Thou hast against me and like the converted Magdalen I shall ever be true to Thee.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

TWELFTH STATION.

Jesus Dies on the Cross.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

"They shall look upon Me, Whom they have pierced."—(Zach. xii, 10.)

St. Paul says: "By one man sin came into the world and by sin, death, and death passed on to all men;" but here death, in its cruelest form, lays hold of God, the Author of all life. Heaven's angels weep, all nature mourns—but man, for whom it all occurred, is little moved. Dying on the cross, Jesus is a conscious observer of the mockery and derision, of the cursing and blasphemy heaped upon Him. Only when brutal men tired of afflicting Him, did He "bow His head and die."

(Kneeling)

Kneeling at Thy feet, O dying Jesus, in company with the two Marys and John, I acknowledge the part I had in Thy cruel passion and death.

Cruel as it was, Thy death is my hope; were I more guilty than the thieves dying at Thy side, Thou wouldst

not have me to despair if only I be resolved to renounce sin. This is my firmest determination. Grant that from today I might lead a pious life, the best pledge of a truly happy death.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

THIRTEENTH STATION.

Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross and Received in the Arms of His Afflicted Mother.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“Oh, all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.”—(Lam. i, 12.)

The sufferings of Jesus are now at an end, but the agony of Mary is keener than ever. Mary is all alone to bear what no human being was ever expected to bear. How carefully she handles the mangled body, looks upon that face doubly sweet on account of the marks of torture! How her thoughts ran over the thirty years during which her life was inseparably one with Jesus! No parting by death was ever one-half as hard as that of Mary from Jesus.

(Kneeling)

The receiving of the body of Jesus by Mary recalls my frequent receptions of the same adorable body in Holy Communion; and Oh, how my conscience accuses me when I contrast my disposi-

tions with those of Mary! In Holy Communion I receive this self-same body, glorified as it now is in Heaven, into my heart. O Mary, obtain for me more of thy devotion and love, more of thy sinlessness and purity of soul, that I might the more worthily and profitably receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

FOURTEENTH STATION.

Jesus is Placed in the Tomb.

We adore Thee, O Lord, etc.

“They took, therefore, the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”—(John xix.)

The mob and the executioners have left Calvary and only a few friends remain with Mary to condole with her and to accompany her loved one's remains to the grave. She herself is exhausted after the long excitement and suffering and sleepless nights; but God, who afflicted her so terribly, will soon reward her by the restoration of Jesus, resplendent with heavenly glory.

(Kneeling)

At the closed grave of the murdered Jesus, what are my thoughts? Like the weeping women I must be reminded that my sins were the efficient cause of the Savior's death. It was sin that struck Him with its fist, that spat in

His face, that scourged Him, that crowned Him, that nailed Him to the cross. Until I renounce all connection with sin I cannot truly love Jesus, and surely after this inhuman death "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." (I. Cor. xvi, 22.)

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

CONCLUDING PRAYER.

O dearest Savior! it is only after meditating on Thy bitter passion and shameful death that I properly grasp the significance of Thy question: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" It is now plain to me why there should have been millions of martyrs, why today thousands of men and women exchange home for monastery and cloister, why there should be a special season for penance and prayer. It is because no other achievement is worthy of my ambition as compared to the salvation of my soul; it is because no other love is worthy of my heart as compared to "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." May the lessons taught by Thy cruel passion and death, O Jesus! move me to sorrow, deter me from sin, and keep my heart ever warm with love for Thee. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

STABAT MATER.

1. At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.
2. Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Lo! the piercing sword has passed.
3. O how sad, and sore distressed,
Now was she, that Mother Blessed,
Of the Sole begotten One.
4. Woe-begone, with heart's prostration,
Mother meek, the bitter Passion
Saw she of her glorious Son.
5. Who could mark, from tears refraining,
Christ's dear Mother uncomplaining,
In so great a sorrow bowed?
6. Who, unmoved, behold her languish
Underneath His Cross of anguish,
'Mid the fierce, unpitying crowd?
7. For His people's sins rejected,
She her Jesus, unprotected,
Saw with thorns, with scourges rent.
8. Saw her Son, from judgment taken,
Her beloved in death forsaken,
Till His Spirit forth He sent.
9. Fount of love and holy sorrow,
Mother! may my spirit borrow
Somewhat of thy woe profound.
10. Unto Christ, with pure emotion,
Raise my contrite heart's devotion,
Love to read in every wound.
11. Those five wounds on Jesus smitten,
Mother, in my heart be written
Deep as in thine own they be.

12. Thou, my Savior's cross who bearest,
Thou, thy Son's rebuke who sharest,
Let me share them both with thee.
13. When in death my limbs are falling,
Let thy Mother's prayer prevailing,
Lift me, Jesus, to Thy throne.
14. To my parting soul be given,
Entrance through the gates of heaven,
There confess me for Thine own.

Amen.

BENEDICTION.

1. O Salutaris Hostia,
Qui coeli pandis ostium
Bella premunt hostilia;
Da robur, fer auxilium.
 2. Uni trinoque Domino,
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria. Amen.
 1. Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur, cernui;
Et antiquum Documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.
 2. Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio;
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio;
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.
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