

FOREWORD

. . . THE Way of the Cross has always been a most attractive devotion. Perhaps it originated with the Blessed Virgin herself. Like any mother, she, no doubt, visited the tomb of her Son. We can easily imagine her and the Apostles retracing the steps of their Master, she in an instinctive clinging to the memories of her Beloved, they in reparation for their treason to the Son of God.

Few people could personally visit the scenes of Christ's labors and death. Accordingly, the Supreme Pontiffs decreed that merit and indulgences could be gained by following representations of the Way of Sorrow in various temples of worship.

Recently, the question of indulgences was clarified by Pius XI. The conditions and benefits are simply defined. No indulgences were to exist on any Stations except those legitimately erected. The Indulgences accruing to them were as follows:

(1) a plenary indulgence to be gained as often as the Way of the Cross is made:

(2) an additional plenary indulgence is granted to those who receive Holy Communion on the day on which they make the Way of the Cross, or also, if they have made the Way of the Cross ten times during one month,

to those who receive Holy Communion any day during that month;

(3) a partial indulgence of ten years and as many quarantines is granted for each Station if one has started the Way of the Cross and does not for any reasonable cause finish the same.

The same indulgences are granted to those persons who for reason of illness, travel, or other legitimate reason cannot visit a place where the Stations of the Way of the Cross are erected, provided they hold in their hands a crucifix blessed with the Stations of the Way of the Cross and recite twenty Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory. If for any reasonable cause they cannot receive all the twenty Our Fathers, etc., necessary to gain the plenary indulgence, they can gain for each Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory, a partial indulgence of ten years and as many quarantines. (Sacred Penitentiary, October 20, 1931; *Acta Ap. Sedis*, XXIII, 522.)

Nothing more can be said, except, that the Way of the Cross is freighted with merit and grace. Aside from the Indulgences, there is the invaluable advantage of Meditation on the God-Man. No one can approach that Furnace of Love without being consumed by its fire. To walk in the footsteps of Christ is to become like Him. To prostrate oneself on Calvary is to train one's eyes beyond the cross-bars, on the blushing of Easter Morning.

PRAYER BEFORE THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Crucified Christ, look down upon us with compassion. In the contemplation of your Passion and Death, give us the grace to hate sin and detest evil. We wish to gain every merit possible in following you on this Sorrowful Way.

As you stumble along, grant, that we fight shoulder to shoulder with you. As you are beaten, make us feel keenly the torture of you, Our Brother. As you are crucified, let us hang patiently with you on the Cross, that we might always share with you eternal glory.

Note: It is not necessary to say any particular prayer or prayers at each station. A sincere meditation, long or short, suffices. Prayers, preferably the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be To The Father, may be said after the Way of the Cross, for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope.

THE FIRST STATION



Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus is Condemned to Death

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Imagine Almighty God, Who held the universe in the palm of His hand, being condemned to death by a pagan, Pontius Pilate! The mind staggers at the mystery of it all. The Lamb of God is led to the slaughter by a mob whom He could have annihilated by a single sweep of His hand. But He preferred our salvation to a display of His omnipotent power.

Prayer

Christ, now we know how sin lacerated Your Sacred Heart. Grant us the grace to persevere in observing your commandments. Put your hand out and deter us from ever sinning again.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE SECOND STATION



Jesus Carries His Cross

THE SECOND STATION

Jesus Carries His Cross

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Consider in this station how worn out and weak Christ is from the horrors of the night before, the traitor's kiss, the whipping at the pillar, the crowning with thorns and the reviling and spitting of the soldiery. But He reaches for the cross almost with a smile.

Prayer

Grant, Christ, that we may bear up under the crosses you will send us with as much readiness. We often tire of the grind of life. Adversity and sorrow frequently bear us to the ground. But they become almost easy to shoulder because you have shown us the way. The drops of blood along the road, Your dragging footsteps give us hope. So, take us by the hand, O Christ.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE THIRD STATION



Jesus falls the first time

THE THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

The great weight of the cross was cutting into His shoulders as it jarred along the cobblestones. What a terrifying spectacle as He crashes in a heap to the ground! The curses of the soldiery, the jeers of the crowd, the stifled sobs of the good men and women who looked upon the most perfect man with overflowing pity. He is jerked to His feet again and lashed more viciously. He must last until Calvary is reached.

Prayer

Christ, we have fallen often into the dirt and mire of sin. But we have struggled up again because You have shown us how. With the vision of You on the way of sorrow, with every drop of blood a superabundant ransom, we cannot stay down there in the dust. Reach out Your hand and drag us to our feet. We firmly promise that we will follow after you.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE FOURTH STATION



Jesus meets His afflicted Mother

THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets His afflicted Mother

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Somewhere a prophet wrote "all ye that pass by the way, give ear and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow"—It can well be written in the eyes of Mary as she suddenly comes face to face with her Divine Son. The pure, beautiful body which she had bathed and dressed with such tender hands, that exquisite face, from whose youthful forehead she had often brushed back a curl and kissed with a good night kiss, is now running with blood, stripped and quivering beneath pistol-like cracks of a whip.

Prayer

O God! It must have been terrible! Mary, mother, we may have helped drive deep your sorrow. As we kneel here we swear with all the fervor of which we are possible that we will be your servants forever. The purity of you, the sheer greatness of your soul! Mother, we love you with so much love.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE FIFTH STATION



*Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry
the cross*

THE FIFTH STATION

*Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry
the cross*

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Perhaps it was the sight of His Mother that made Christ stagger very near to fainting. So Simon of Cyrene from far distant Africa, was forced to help Jesus carry His cross. Today we venerate him as a saint. His two sons, Rufus and Alexander, were martyred spreading the gospel in Spain.

Indeed, we never can tell just what cross will stamp us with the prize of sainthood.

Perhaps a death, perhaps a business reverse, the persecution of men, the suffering of infirmities, might be that invitation of Christ to ascend the heights of sanctity.

Prayer

Christ, make us all ready to help you on your journey as Simon did. Give us the grace to see your cross in the trials of life and grant that we may lighten yours by our avoidance of sin.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE SIXTH STATION



Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus

THE SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

There were many breaking hearts along the line of march that day.

The by-standers saw a grimy, blood-soaked face, great pensive brown eyes gazing steadfastly ahead and slow dragging footsteps. Suddenly a woman came from the crowd and wiped His face with a clean piece of linen. She was brave, not afraid to profess herself a follower of Christ; and she went away holding the outlines of the Holy Face.

Prayer

Christ, by Your passion and death, give me the strength to be always loyal, never afraid to step from the crowd and espouse Your cause. Let me always wear the outlines of Your Holy Face next to my heart, the Face of my King and my love.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE SEVENTH STATION



Jesus falls the Second Time

THE SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls the Second Time

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Again Christ sinks to the cobblestones. How the legions of angels must have yearned to reach from the parapets of heaven and pick Him up! But each time He fell beneath the terrible heaviness of it all, He gave another death stroke to sin, because He was born to vanquish the powers of darkness.

Prayer

Christ, if our sins helped bear you down, be assured that in the future we'll strive by might and main to be your devoted servants. If there was not even a stone on which to lay your tortured head, always know that there is room in our hearts. God, if we only could undo the effects of our sins.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE EIGHTH STATION



The daughters of Jerusalem weep over Jesus

THE EIGHTH STATION

The daughters of Jerusalem weep over Jesus

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Many women watched Christ drag along His sorrowful way. Imagine looking on the perfect Man in such a horrible condition! No doubt there were mothers in the crowd. Perhaps the gentle hands of Christ had healed the crippled bodies of their children or told them stories on the shores of the lake. The tenderness that is in every woman overflowed. He admonished and consoled them in his kindly way.

"Weep not for Me but for yourselves and for your children," He said.

Prayer

Christ, we are grateful to those women. They made Your way easier. Grant that we respect and love those masterpieces of Your hand; the beauty, the tenderness, the power of a good woman! Ever let us see in them Your most exquisite handiwork. Let us always remember that Your mother put womanhood on a pedestal forever.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE NINTH STATION



Jesus Falls the Third Time

THE NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Almost at the top of Golgotha, He fell again. Perhaps they had to drag Him the rest of the way. His face, wrung with pain, He watched the soldiers as they pulled out the mallets and the nails and dug the hole that was to contain His gallows. It was the final test of the man.

Prayer

Christ, we are eternally grateful for Your courage. Inspire us with that unflagging spirit that will enable us to mount the last reaches of our own crucifixions. Right now we are laboring under crosses. We are not far behind, Christ, so reach out Your hand to help us in our sorrows.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE TENTH STATION



Jesus is stripped of His garments

THE TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of His garments

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

The pure Lamb of God is stripped naked before the gaze of those barbarians. The whiteness of His skin is streaked with red. He is truly the King of Kings with a robe of scarlet, a diadem of thorns, and with warm precious gems tumbling from His life's blood, each one able to ransom worlds. The Lamb of God, naked and alone, makes His appeal for the precious virtue of purity.

Prayer

Christ, we grieve with you in your shame. We are most sorry for our sins against the holy virtue of purity. We know Your mercy, and we can feel our hearts stricken clean by the power of Your grace.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE ELEVENTH STATION



Jesus nailed to the Cross

THE ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus nailed to the Cross

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

“They have pierced My hands and My feet: they have numbered all My bones.” So predicted the prophet David. How frightfully true it was. We can hear His sinews snap as they jerk Christ’s arms and legs into place; the blows of the hammers, the crunching noise of the nails, it is all too horrible to contemplate; and He chokes, “Father, forgive them because they know not what they do.”

Prayer

O Christ, if You have ever taught us a lesson it is here, the divine gift of forgiveness. Give us that same spirit of Charity, when the world nails our good names to the cross-bars of shame, when it tortures our limbs with poverty. No wonder the centurion dropped to His knees and murmured, “Indeed this was the Son of God.”

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE TWELFTH STATION



Jesus dies on the Cross

THE TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Three long hours hanging in the glaring sun, gazing at the world as it passed! "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What desolation He must have experienced especially with His mother clinging to His feet, feeling the warm drip of His blood on her head. And St. John with his arms about her shoulder. It is the high point of the passion. He whispers, "Son, behold your mother," and to Mary, "Mother, behold your Son." He could not leave the world without just one ray of sunshine.

Prayer

Christ, we are grateful. During these days when motherhood is so horribly profaned by the false apostles of light, lead us to Your feet and teach us the tender lessons of motherhood. Let us feel the magic of Mary's hand and the glowing warmth of her smile.

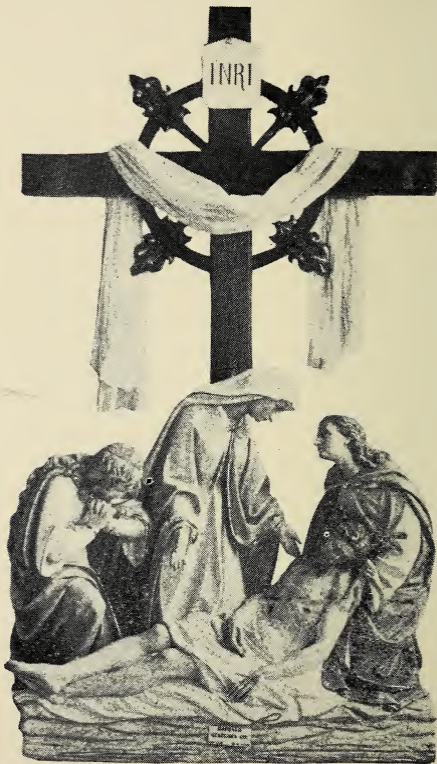
Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE THIRTEENTH STATION



Jesus is taken down from the Cross

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Towards evening Mary begs her friends to unfasten the nails and bring Him down to her. Against her white bosom, she presses the slaughtered Lamb of God. Bethlehem—Nazareth—Galilee—, the infant she so often fondled, the eyes she had so often closed in sleep with a kiss; they were deep, bitter memories, now. They gave the last stab to her tender heart. A mother, gazing at a Son fresh from the execution! Words are futile. It is overwhelming in its sorrow.

Prayer

Mary, can we share a little of your grief? We yearn to hold your trembling hands and assure you of our friendship. If we have in any way contributed to your sadness, we are sorry, and by our future life we will make good our loyalty.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

THE FOURTEENTH STATION



Christ is laid in the Sepulchre

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Christ is laid in the Sepulchre

V. We adore thee, O Christ, and praise thee:

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world!

Thought

Joseph of Aramathea lays Christ in his tomb. So ends the long, sorrowful journey, the royal road of the cross, the dragging footsteps that spelled out our salvation, the cup of death that Christ drained to its dregs. From Gethsemane to Calvary, He saw us on the horizon, He fought for us, suffered for us, and died for us.

Prayer

Christ, we pledge our service here and now. We will fight under Your standards with all the strength that is in us. It is a standard soaked with blood, twisted with thorns in the symbol of death.

But You have made that mean life.

Our Father

Hail Mary

V. Lord Jesus Crucified:

R. Have mercy on us!

