

# Prayers for Way of the Cross

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Leader(L): In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All(A): Amen.

Leader(L): Almighty Father, since the dawn of creation,  
You have shown Your love for mankind.

You sent Your own Son to redeem us.

All(A): As we meditate on His suffering, death, and Resurrection,  
help us to realize that mere sentiment is not enough.

Change our passive love into active loyalty.

Make every work of ours show appreciation of Your love.

Teach us through these solemn thoughts that  
our Redeemer died so that we might live.

## **THE FIRST STATION**

Jesus is condemned to death

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Mt 26:59, 27:13-14, Jn 18:38, Mt 27:20,23,26)

The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony  
against Jesus in order to put him to death.

Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against  
you?"

But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to  
destroy Jesus.

But he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Let him  
be crucified!"

Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged,\* he handed him  
over to be crucified.

## Contemplation

Pilate and Jesus are two very different kinds of men. The man Pilate is a symbol of  
the pride, the wealth and the power of the Roman Empire.

The man Jesus is the true man, another humanity, a divine humanity.

When Pilate condemns Jesus he condemns love, he makes the choice we sometimes  
make by refusing to follow a way of life open to God.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, grant me the grace not to condemn love but to live love and to follow the way you show me along the path of your divine humanity.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never let me be separated from you again. Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **THE SECOND STATION**

Jesus receives his cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Mt 27:27-31, Jn 19:17.)

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

And carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

## Contemplation

The Cross is something we often see as a burden, something heavy, painful, unwanted. Jesus did not come to glorify suffering but by taking up his cross he shows us how precious we are in the sight of God. There is no limit to his love for us which teaches us that we can turn each cross into a victory of love just like Jesus.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, help me to accept the cross in my life, whatever it may be- suffering, loneliness, bereavement, failure. Give me the grace to know that you are carrying it with me, so that it becomes for me a source of new life.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never let me be separated from you again.

Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE THIRD STATION**

Jesus falls a first time under the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

#### Prophet (Is 53:2-4.)

He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye, no beauty to draw us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, knowing pain, like one from whom you turn your face, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured.

#### Contemplation

Jesus came as a human being sharing all the limitations and weaknesses of human nature.

His falling to the ground reminds us of our weaknesses. His getting up again reminds us that only love can enable us to overcome our wrong-doing and help us begin again.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, you save the poor who cry to you and you lift up those who have fallen.

Give me a spirit of dependence, rooted in humility so that I might help and support all who fall under the weight of suffering.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never let me be separated from you again.

Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE FOURTH STATION**

Jesus meets his mother

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

#### Gospel (Lk 2:34-35.)

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

#### Contemplation

A mother meets her Son-both in agony, both in indescribable heartache.

In this man, Jesus, and in this woman, Mary, there is spoken a “YES” to the Father, a “YES” to love, to that divine desire to restore human relationships within the heart of love itself.

L: Let us pray:

A: Help us, Lord, to learn from the motherhood of Mary how to love every person as a beloved child, how to become signs of your loving supporting care.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE FIFTH STATION**

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross

Behind our lord

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Lk 23:26.)

As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus.

Contemplation

Simon was hauled from the crowd and forced to help.

Jesus needed Simon, the Cross was heavy and he was getting weaker.

We encounter those who suffer but do not want to do anything that might make us unpopular. Let us be like Simon and help others with their crosses.

L: Let us pray:

A: Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow men throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them, by our hands, their daily bread. By our understanding give them peace and joy.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **THE SIXTH STATION**

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Psalms (Ps 69:21.)

Insult has broken my heart, and I despair; I looked for compassion, but there was none, for comforters, but found none.

Contemplation

A woman sees the Holy Face disfigured. She wipes that face. This simple act leaves her with the imprint of the face of Jesus on her towel.

In fact, the Savior leaves his imprint on every single act of charity as on Veronica's towel.

Let us be like Veronica and respond to those who suffer.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father of light, no one has seen your face. Yet, through your loving Son, we see it come clear in the least and most contemptible of people. Give us eyes to see, so that we may see you in those who seek our help.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never let me be separated from you again.

Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **THE SEVENTH STATION**

Jesus falls a second time under the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Prophet (Is 53:4-6.)

We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way; But the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all.

Contemplation

Jesus falls again. We fall again and again because of infidelity or hardness of heart. God does not leave us crushed by our burden and our sin but He saves us.

L: Let us pray:

A: Give me courage, Lord, when failure presses heavily on me and I am desolate, stretch out your hand and raise me up.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE EIGHTH STATION**

The women of Jerusalem mourn for Jesus

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Lk 23:27-28.)

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.”

### **Contemplation**

Jesus reminds us that it is not enough to have pity on those who suffer and are subject to injustice. We have to act, to commit ourselves to changing what needs to be changed in our lives and in our society.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, you placed in each of us the gift of compassion and the longing for justice. Help us to realise our responsibility for each other’s pain and, like Jesus, to give our lives for all.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE NINTH STATION**

Jesus falls a third time under the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Prophet (Is 52:14, 53:10-11.)

Even as many were amazed at him—so marred were his features, beyond that of mortals his appearance, beyond that of human beings—But it was the LORD's will to crush him with pain. By making his life as a reparation offering, he shall see his offspring, shall lengthen his days, and the LORD's will shall be accomplished through him. Because of his anguish he shall see the light; because of his knowledge he shall be content; My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, their iniquity he shall bear.

Contemplation

Every station along this way of the cross in a mile-stone of obedience and self-deprivation.

When we see Jesus falling the third time we appreciate how much he loved us.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, you willed that your Incarnate Son should be obedient to death, even death on a cross. Grant that by the example of his humiliations and suffering we may share in his courage by walking upright to our own Calvary.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

**THE TENTH STATION**

Jesus is stripped of his garments

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Lk 23:32-35)

Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."] They divided his garments by casting lots. The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God."

Contemplation

When Jesus is stripped at Golgotha, not just is he stripped of his clothes, but also of his dignity, his respect and his right. He is also stripped of his life by the Romans. He was naked and vulnerable before the people.

L: Let us pray:

A: Lord, give us the grace to devoid ourselves of our masks and all that puts a barrier between you and us so that we might be clothed in the garments of your love.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE ELEVENTH STATION**

Jesus is nailed to the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

#### Gospel (Jn 19:25-27)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

#### Contemplation

We are surrounded by many people 'nailed' as it were to a bed of sickness, to a wheelchair, to suffering. It is this reality that Jesus shares as he remains nailed to the Cross.

It is this suffering, this reality that Jesus wished to transform with his love. It is this suffering that He calls us also to care for and fill with his love – by giving hope and giving our time, by sharing with those in need. Only love can give heart to our wounded brothers and sister.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, before your Son gives himself up to death he commits his body to the cross. May the memory of his cross and resurrection help us to free ourselves of all attachment to sin. May he draw us to himself and make us sharers in his sufferings so that one day we may share his glory.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **THE TWELFTH STATION**

Jesus dies on the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Mk 15:33-34,36, Lk 23:46)

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

### Contemplation

While pinned immobile to the cross, Jesus cried out 'I am thirsty'.

They gave him vinegar, sour wine, wine pressed from the vintage of our toil, a symbol of the bitter taste of our sinfulness.

L: Let us pray:

A: Lord, I cannot shed my blood and give my life for you. At least I desire to die to all that displeases you, to the desire of my senses, to the world and to myself. Cross of my Saviour, you are the tree of life that unites heaven and earth and the altar upon which I wish to sacrifice myself in dying with Jesus.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never let me be separated from you again.

Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **THE THIRTEENTH STATION**

Jesus is taken down from the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Gospel (Jn 19:31-34)

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

### Contemplation

The friends of Jesus acted out of love and they also acted out of haste in order to bury Jesus before the Feast of Passover.

The Jews wanted no reminders of the Cross. But the Cross remains throughout history as a sign of God's love for us.

Jesus, taken down from the cross, is again in the arms of his mother as he was in the stable of Bethlehem and at Nazareth.

L: Let us pray:

A: Father, as we stand beneath the Cross. We desire to venerate the body of your Son lying lifeless in the arms of his mother. May we imitate her by accepting a share in his cross and by trying to live always in your presence freed from sin and the fear of death.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,  
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.  
Never let me be separated from you again.  
Grant that I may love you always  
And then do with me whatever you wish.

### **THE FOURTEENTH STATION**

Jesus is laid in the tomb

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

(All kneel with one knee)

A: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

### Gospel (Jn 19:38-42.)

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body.

Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.

Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

## Contemplation

From the moment when man, because of sin, was banished from the tree of life, the earth became a burial ground. In one of the innumerable tombs scattered all over the continents of this planet of ours, the Son of God, the man Jesus Christ conquered death with death.

Jesus lies in the ground dead, yet now the earth is pregnant with eternal life.

L: Let us pray:

A: Lord of all hopes and freedom, like the grain of wheat, you fell into the ground and died to give us life. When all our hopes fail, give us courage. When we feel cut off bring us back to the newness of life.

(Silence)

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,

I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.

Never let me be separated from you again.

Grant that I may love you always

And then do with me whatever you wish.

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

L: Now we come to the great conclusion, the tremendous climax of our rescue. On the third day, Jesus is risen in His glorious body. This is what gives meaning to all that He has done: the action of saving men is now complete. Jesus passed through life in the flesh into a new life of oneness with the Father. Now He is seen in all His splendor; His disciples have the joy of knowing that He is really God, their Savior, the long-awaited One.

A: Jesus, our risen Savior, help us to become a part of Your great redemptive act, Your "Passover." Make us Your travelling companions. Teach us to turn away from sin and selfishness and give ourselves wholeheartedly to You. Then we know we will reach true happiness. Not that empty bubble the world offers in full-page ads and the TV commercials, but the genuine happiness of being with You and the Father and the Holy Spirit forever in heaven. Amen.