

WAY OF THE CROSS FOR TODAY

Leader: Lord Jesus, we have come in faith to walk along with you to Calvary and to the new life of the resurrection. The world we live in today has a lot of injustice, a lot of hypocrisy and insincerity. We tend to blame others but do not lift a finger to change the situation. Help us to walk along with you contemplating the wounds that are inflicted on you throughout the world everyday. Give us the wisdom to realize that transformation must begin with ourselves.

First Station: Globalization of indifference Gen.4: 9-10

Leader: Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said "What have you done? Listen your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!"

All: Ever living and loving Father, you placed us on the earth to be the crown of creation, to be your images, to be embodiments of love and fellowship. Selfishness has overpowered us at all levels and we fail to see our brothers and sisters in the other. We are eager to prey over the other. We not only want to win but also to make sure that the other loses. Cain who murdered his brother or Pilate who condemned the just one are not mere historic persons but ever living human beings, known under various names. We have lost humanity. We have lost love. We have lost all sense of togetherness and concern for the other. Forgive us. Help us to restore love and consideration to our world, our homes and to our lives.

All: *Holy Mother, pierce through in my heart, each wound renewed of my Savior Crucified.*

All: *We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because, by your cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Second Station: Taking or shirking responsibility LK.10: 33-36

Leader: But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?

All: Lord, crosses come to us in various shapes and forms. Our unwillingness to accept them as you accepted the most underserving cross from Pilate, leads to suffering, abandonment of the poor and to death and misery. The example of the Samaritan, showing sympathy to the wounded person, has become a piece in literature. But how indifferent is most of humanity when it is confronted with suffering in their neighborhood and in the world at large. We shrink away, we hesitate and we leave it for others. Help us to be more caring, more loving and more prepared to take risk for the poor and the needy.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Third Station: Being human and not ashamed or afraid LK.10: 38-42

Leader: Now as they went on their way, he entered a village and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she also had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

All: Jesus, you the powerful son of God fell onto the cobblestones of the way as you went on your way of the cross. Without any fear or shame, you got up and went your way. When you were alive and walked the earth, you did not hesitate to mingle with people of all kinds and to do good to whoever needed it. Martha and Mary were women in distress and you reached out to them. But you did not confine your visit to mere socialization but to teach them values of the kingdom. We involve ourselves very often in the lives of people. But we often limit ourselves to the social and neglect the reason of our being there: to reach out to them with the word of life, to give them values that matter. Make every person, especially your members to become people who do not hesitate or feel shy to share your Word, your life.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Fourth Station: Be connected John15: 18-25

Leader: "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, servants are not greater than their master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my father. It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law; "They hated me without a cause."

All: Master of the universe, we fail to distinguish between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge comes from the external and wisdom comes from you. Mary, your mother learnt wisdom from the presence of the spirit in her. She was able to put up with all pain and sorrow because she had learnt its value through life. She was able to undertake all the troubles of the life she had accepted because of love. She was courageous enough to hold on to you and to protect you wherever and whenever you needed it. At your birth, in the flight to Egypt, when you stayed back in the temple, when the family in Cana was in need, on the way to Calvary, on Calvary itself and along with the distraught disciples after your death. We are guided and molded often by short term considerations and we forget or sacrifice the sweetness of our call to children of God. Help us to be constant like your mother, in following you.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Fifth Station: God's hidden plan in every tragedy Mt.2: 19-23

Leader: When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his Mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

All: Simon of Cyrene, a normal worker, on his way home after a day's work is interrupted by the soldiers and forced to help a stranger, that too to carry a heavy cross. Out of compulsion from the soldiers he does it. Lord, your life, the lives of Joseph and Mary too are full of painful situations which are totally against their plans and calculations. The much-awaited return home after a painful exile is also disrupted by the same God who commanded them to flee and to return. Yet they do not complain but see the will of God and go on serenely. We are so often perturbed and react when things do not go according to our plans. Teach us through this station that your plans for us are surer and certainly happier.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Sixth Station: Courage to be oneself John.15: 12-17

Leader: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You do not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

All: "Love till it hurts" is something that we often advise others. But when it comes to real life situations, we are constrained by many factors. The fear of what others will say or think, being identified with someone, fear of being alienated from certain circles. The woman of Jerusalem, Veronica was not guided by any such considerations. She steps forward and wipes your face. As one of the rarest instances, you rewarded her instantly. Many others like Veronica have stepped out and wiped your face on the street. Mother Theresa did that in our times. You tell us clearly today Lord through this station, that a servant does things out of duty, but we do it out of love. Loving service brings reward. Help us to be beacons of loving service to people in need, for you assure us that whenever we did it to the least of these, we did it to you.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Seventh Station: I am a sinner and I fall but I am not ashamed Lk.15:17-25

Leader: But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son, treat me like one of your hired hands". So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe - the best one - and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

All: Jesus Lord, you taught us through parables that are eternally powerful and have perennial value, not just for your people but for humanity. The parable of the prodigal son and all that teaches are enough for a life time contemplation. As we think of your second fall along your difficult way to Calvary, we think of and identify ourselves with the second son. We have been reckless often in our thoughts and behavior. We have fought against all values and traditions, claiming to be modern, universal. This has led us to misery and suffering. Unlike our brother who strayed, we refuse to accept our mistake and try to drag others into it or continue to blame others. Teach us through this station, that we are human and it is human to fall and divine to forgive. That we are human and you are divine, divinity that cannot be comprehended or measured by us.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Eighth Station: See the others' problems Lk.7: 12-15

Leader: As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

All: Jesus, when you taught us about love and forgiveness, it was a lesson from your heart and a lesson to be lived not preached. Your unsolicited involvement in the life of that poor widow and her son and your words to the weeping women of Jerusalem inspire us. Help us not to limit ourselves to inspiration but to be bold enough to reach out to the needy, even when they do not ask us for help. The victims of accidents, the victims of attacks, the hungry and sick who feel unsafe or shy to ask for help, the men, women and youth who have problems, they are all fields of action, opportunities to be godly. Help us to put away all other considerations and to reach out in love and lead to life as you did to the mother and son and to them women of Jerusalem.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Ninth Station: Never despair or give up Acts.12: 1-11

Leader: About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the festival of unleavened bread. When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him

over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and second guard, they came before the Iron Gate leading in to the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said; "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

All: Lord Jesus, the bark of Peter that you left us with has been and is being rocked by violent waves especially these years. When you fell a third time on your way, you did not give up but struggled and got up knowing that the Father was near. You went on and reached Golgotha. The scandals that emerge day after day, the secularization of the most sacred places, events and every aspect of Christian life, the enemies from outside, the enemies from inside, are shaking our faith, discouraging many, leave many with questions without clear answers, and crushing us. We need your intervention by strengthening our faith. Peter imagined that he was seeing a vision but later realized that it was real. Give us the conviction that your ship will never sink, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it".

Our Father.... We adore you....

Tenth Station: Be prepared to lose. All will leave Lk.23: 48-49

Leader: And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

All: Lord, your mangled body had very little on it and yet the soldiers were greedy for it. They stripped you, cast lots for your dress; benefitting from you till the last moment. Those whom you had called, trained and appointed to carry on your mission went looking for safety and others followed from a distance. Often in our life, we feel like you. Others are with us as long as we have something to offer them. The moment we become useless to them or a possible burden to them, they prefer to walk away or watch from a distance. This station reminds us of the many parents who have been driven to despair by their uncaring children, the many children born with deformities and are not loved by their families, the broken homes where no love exists, those socially isolated due to various reasons and all those who are being stripped of dignity of any kind, being deprived of love and the care they deserve.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Eleventh Station: Be clear about your mission and vision Lk.13: 31-33

Leader: At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.”

All: Almighty Father, it takes courage to face life with all its complexities. It takes more courage and heavenly wisdom to face death. Jesus did just that for us. Just before his passion he had prayed from the heart, “Father, if it’s possible, let this cup pass me by.” But he immediately added, “not my will but yours.” Just as in death, in life too he was clear about his mission. Nothing could deter him from being on your mission. In spite of all our profession of faith, the public declarations at various sacraments and sacred events like Religious profession, diaconate ordination, Priestly ordination etc., we easily enter into compromises and neglect our mission. We become complacent that with the least we do things can go on. The passion for you has gone out of our lives. We have become smoldering logs that produce neither light nor heat but just smoke. Forgive us. Make us wake up to your call, to your mission.

Our Father.... We adore you....

Twelfth Station: Die, we must, but the Father cares Jn.14: 8-14

Leader: Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own: but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

All: Physical death, Lord is the only reality we are sure of in this life. Yet we are never sure of how, when, where this will happen. When we think of it, we feel scared. But most often we do not even think about this sure reality. We live as if we will never die. The good we fail to do, the good word we forget to say, the evil actions we easily indulge in, the clandestine plans we make and subtly carry out, are all expressions of it. Finally, when the moment of death arrives, we seek more time to mend our ways and settle accounts of all types. Jesus, always was aware of and spoke boldly about this death. Even when Peter told him that he would never allow him to be killed, Jesus only reprimanded him. Unfortunately, we often get carried away by false promises and hopes. Teach us through the death of your Son Jesus, that just as death is an inevitable reality, resurrection is real too. The place after the resurrection is of our own making through the years that you have given us on this earth.

Our Father.... We adore you...

Thirteenth Station: After death we are just a dead body. Few will be there, all the care we took Mt.26: 6-13

Leader: Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." But Jesus aware of this said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

All: Lord Jesus, strange events took place at your death. The curtain in the temple was torn in two, the sky darkened and the earth shook and the centurion on duty acknowledged you as the son of God. Yet, there were just a handful to see that you were buried. It was dangerous to be identified with you in front of the soldiers and the Jewish authorities. Only those who really cared were around. We experience this not only in death but also in life. Your assuring the woman with the costly ointment is a lesson for us that we should appreciate others in life and not prepare fantastic eulogies at death. That death is not the end but a new beginning. Death is not just a physical separation but initiation into a new life just as it was for you, just as it was for that woman who poured all she had on to your feet and started anew.

Our Father.... We adore you...

**Fourteenth Station: Can't help ourselves. Depends only on the charity of others
Rev.13: 5-10**

Leader: The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty - two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation. And all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb that was slaughtered. Let anyone who has an ear to listen: if you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go; if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

All: Funeral, Lord is often considered the measurement of the love and respect others own to the dear departed. If weighed in that scale, your funeral was one of the saddest events in life. Buried in a borrowed tomb, deserted by most friends and relatives, and because of the sabbath that was coming, people being in a hurry to finish and return home. We easily confine ourselves to the external and forget the internal. We are afraid of the beast in the book of revelation as he shows himself all powerful. We fail to realize that beyond the grave there is life and that life is with you. We easily neglect prayers for the dead and hardly ever realize that we will one day need the prayers of others. Teach us wisdom Lord, so that we may pray for the dead and that we may realize that one day we will need the prayers of others.

Our Father.... We adore you...

Fifteenth Station: Reward for Faith, Hope and Love: John.11: 21-27

Leader: Martha said to Jesus, “Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes Lord; I believe that you are the messiah, the Son of God, the one coming in to the world.”

All: Hope in the resurrection and being with you forever Lord, is what drives us on. Your resurrection gives us the guarantee. You declared publicly that you are the resurrection and the life. The two sisters Martha and Mary believed your word and experienced the physical resurrection of their brother four days dead. The scriptures and teachers give us enough assurances of the resurrection. But we tend to live as if there is no life after this. Forgive us our thoughtlessness and our divided aims, unclear visions and fractured beliefs. Make us people of faith, hope and love. May we be equally convinced of your second coming and prepare the world for it.

Our Father.... We adore you...

For the intentions of the Holy Father: **Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.**

Leader: Go in the Peace of Christ

All: Thanks be to God.

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