

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

By F.X.Lasance

PREPARATORY PRAYER

MOST merciful Jesus! With a contrite heart and penitent spirit I purpose now to perform this devotion in honor of your bitter passion and death. I adore You most humbly as my Lord and my God. I thank You most heartily, my divine Savior, for the infinite love wherewith You did make the painful journey to Calvary for me, a wretched sinner, and did die upon the cross for my salvation. for all my sins, because by them I have offended You, Who art infinitely good. I detest them, and I am resolved to amend my life. Grant that I may gain all the indulgences which are attached to this devotion, and since You have promised to draw all things to Thyself, draw my heart and my love to You, that I may live and die in union with You. Amen.

First station

Jesus is Condemned to Death

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

R. Because by your holy cross You have redeemed the world!

JESUS, most innocent and perfectly sinless, was condemned to death, and, moreover, to the most ignominious death of the cross. To remain a friend of Caesar, Pilate delivered Him into the hands of His enemies. A fearful crime -- to condemn Innocence to death, and to offend God in order not to displease men!

Prayer

O INNOCENT Jesus, having sinned, I am guilty of eternal death, but You willingly did accept the unjust sentence of death, that I might live. For whom, then, shall I henceforth live, if not for Lord? Should I desire to please men, I could not be your servant. Let me, therefore, rather displease men and all the world than not please You, O Jesus.

Second Station

Jesus Carries His Cross

V. We adore You, O Christ...

WHEN OUR divine Savior beheld the cross, He stretched out His bleeding arms toward it eager desire, lovingly embraced it,...placing it on His bruised shoulders, joyfully carried it although He was worn and weary unto death.

Prayer

I can not be your friend and follower if I refuse to carry the cross. O dearly beloved cross, I embrace you, I kiss you, I joyfully accept you from the hands of my God. Far be it from me to glory in anything, save in the cross

of my Redeemer. By it the world shall be crucified to me and I to the world, that I may be yours, O Jesus, forever.

Third Station

Jesus Falls the First Time

V. We adore You, O Christ...

OUR dear Savior carrying the cross was so weakened its heavy weight as to fall exhausted to the ground. Our sins and misdeeds were the heavy burden which oppressed Him; the cross was to Him light and sweet, but our sins were galling and insupportable.

Prayer

O my Jesus, you did bear my burden and the heavy weight of my sins. Should I then not bear in union with you my easy burden of suffering and accept the sweet yoke of Your commandments? Your yoke is sweet and Your burden is light: I therefore willingly accept it. I will take up my cross and follow you.

Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

How painful and sad it must have been for Mary, the sorrowful Mother, to behold her Son laden with the burden of the cross. What unspeakable pangs her most tender heart experienced. How earnestly did she desire to die in place of Jesus, or at least with Him. Implore this sorrowful Mother to assist you graciously in the hour of your death.

Prayer

O Jesus, O Mary, I am the cause of great and manifold pains which pierce your loving hearts. O that my heart also would experience at least some of your sufferings. Mother of sorrows pray for me that I may be truly sorry for all my sins, bear my sufferings patiently in union you, and merit to enjoy thy assistance in the hour of my death.

Fifth Station

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry his Cross.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

SIMON of Cyrene was compelled to assist Jesus in carrying His cross, and Jesus accepted his assistance. How willingly would He also permit you to carry the cross. He calls, but you hear Him not; He invites you, but you decline His invitation. What a reproach it is to bear the cross reluctantly!

Prayer

O Jesus, whosoever does not take up his cross and follow You is not worthy

of You. Behold, I will accompany You on the way of the cross; I will carry my cross cheerfully; I will walk in Your bloodstained footsteps, and follow You, that I may be with You in life eternal.

Sixth Station

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

VERONICA, impelled by devotion and compassion, wipes the disfigured face of Jesus with her veil. And Jesus imprints on it His holy countenance, a great recompense for so small a service. What return do you make to your Savior for His great and manifold benefits?

Prayer

Most merciful Jesus, what return shall I make for all the benefits You have bestowed upon me? Behold I consecrate myself entirely to Your service. I offer and consecrate to You my heart: imprint on it Your sacred image, never again to be effaced by sin.

Seventh Station

Jesus Falls the Second Time

V. We adore You, O Christ...

THE suffering Jesus, under the weight of His cross, again falls to the ground; but the cruel executioners do not permit Him to rest a moment. Pushing and striking Him, they urge Him onward. It is the frequent repetition of our sins which oppresses Jesus. Knowing and realizing this, how can I continue to sin?

Prayer

O Jesus, Son of David! Have mercy on me. Extend to me Your gracious hand and support me, that I may never fall again into my old sins. From this very moment I will earnestly strive to reform my life and to avoid every sin. Help of the weak, strengthen me by Your grace, without which I can do nothing, that I may carry out faithfully my good resolution.

Eighth Station

The Daughters of Jerusalem Weep over Jesus.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

These devoted women, moved by compassion weep over the suffering Savior. But He turns to them, saying: "Weep not for Me Who am innocent, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Weep also [for yourself]; for there is nothing more pleasing to Our Lord, and nothing more profitable for yourself, than tears that are shed in contrition for sin.

Prayer

O Jesus I who will give to my eyes a fountain of tears, that day and night I may weep for my sins. I beseech You, through Your bitter tears, to move my heart to compassion and repentance, so that I may weep all my days over Your sufferings and still more over their cause, my sins.

Ninth Station

Jesus Falls the Third Time

V. We adore You, O Christ...

Jesus, arriving exhausted at the foot of Calvary, falls the third time to the ground. His love for us, however, remains strong and fervent. What a fearfully oppressive burden our sins must be to cause Jesus to fall so often! Had He, however, not taken them upon Himself, they would have plunged into the abyss of hell.

Prayer

MOST merciful Jesus, I return You infinite thanks for not permitting me to continue in sin and to fall, as I have so often deserved, into the depths of hell. Enkindle in me an earnest desire of amendment; let me never again relapse, but vouchsafe me the grace to persevere in penance to the end of my life.

Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

When our savior had arrived on Calvary, He was cruelly despoiled of His garments. How painful must this have been, because they adhered to His wounded and torn body and with them parts of His bloody skin were removed. All the wounds of Jesus are renewed. Jesus is despoiled of His garments that He might die possessed of nothing; how happy shall I also die after casting off my evil self with all its sinful inclinations.

Prayer

Help me Jesus, to conquer myself and to be renewed according to their will and desire. I will not count the cost but will struggle bravely to cast off my evil propensities; despoiled of things temporal, of my own will, I desire to die, that I may live to You forevermore.

Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

Jesus, after he had been stripped of His garments, was violently thrown upon the cross, to which His hands and His feet were nailed most cruelly. In this excruciating pain He remained silent, and perfectly resigned to the will

of His heavenly Father. He suffered patiently, because he suffered for me. How do I act in sufferings and in trouble? How fretful and impatient, how full of complaints I am!

Prayer

O Jesus, meek and gentle Lamb of God, I renounce forever my impatience. Crucify me, afflict me in this life, as you wish, only spare me in eternity. I commit my destiny to you, resigning myself to your holy will. Not my will but yours be done.

Twelfth Station

Jesus Dies on the Cross

V. We adore You, O Christ...

BEHOLD Jesus crucified! Behold His wounds, received for love of you. His whole appearance betokens love! His head is bent to kiss you, His arms are extended to embrace you, His Heart is open to receive you. O superabundance of love, Jesus, the Son of God, dies upon the cross, that man may live and be delivered from everlasting death.

Prayer

O most amiable Jesus! If I can not sacrifice my life for love of You, I will at least endeavor to die to the world. How must I regard the world and its vanities when I behold You hanging on the cross, covered with wounds? O Jesus receive me into Your wounded Heart: I belong entirely to You; for You alone do I desire to live and to die.

Thirteenth Station

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross.

V. We adore You, O Christ...

JESUS did not descend from the cross, but remained on it until He died. And when taken down from it, He, in death as in life, rested on the bosom of His blessed Mother. Persevere in your resolutions of reform and do not part from the cross: he who perseveres to the end shall be saved. Consider, moreover, how pure the heart should be that receives the body and blood of Christ in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

Prayer

O LORD, Jesus, Your lifeless body, mangled and lacerated, found a worthy resting place on the bosom of Your virgin Mother. Have I not often compelled You to dwell in my heart, despite its unworthiness to receive You? Create in me a new heart, that I may worthily receive Your most sacred body in holy communion, and that You may remain in me and I in You, for all eternity.

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher

V. We adore You, O Christ...

THE body of Jesus is interred in a stranger's sepulcher. He Who in this world had not whereupon to rest His head would not even have a grave of His own, because He was not of this world. You who are so attached to the world, henceforth despise it, that you may not perish with it.

Prayer

O Jesus, you have set me apart from the world: what, then, shall I seek therein? You have created me for heaven; what, then, have I to do with the world? Depart from me, deceitful world, with thy vanities. Hence forth I will follow the way of the cross traced out for me by my Redeemer, and journey onward to my heavenly home, my eternal dwelling place.

CONCLUSION

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, merciful Father, Who has given to the human race Your beloved Son as an example of humility, obedience, and patience, to precede us on the Way of the Cross and on the Way of Life, graciously grant that we, inflamed by His infinite love, may take upon us the sweet yoke of His Gospel and the mortification of the cross, following Him as His true disciples, so that we may one day gloriously rise with Him and joyfully hear the final sentence: "Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...'" Matt. 25:34.