

# **THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

by The Community of the **Beatitudes**

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The First Station:  
**Jesus is Condemned to Death**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...  
-because by your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.

Here is the man. The crowd, intoxicated by the spirit of evil, beholds the Lamb without blemish. Upon his lacerated flesh, beads of blood descend from each thorn of his crown, blurring his sight. Through the blood that burns him, He perceives humanity crying out: “May this blood be upon our heads and those of our children.”

Pilate would release him, “but they insisted with loud cries, demanding that He be crucified. And their clamoring prevailed.” And so the Roman prefect “delivered Him up to their will.” God became Man to be delivered up to men, to be clothed in scarlet and crowned with sorrow.

Love put on our humanity, for humanity fell short of love, and such a fault leads to death. He took upon Himself the condemnation that was upon us. That is why Pilate said: “Here is the man;” and also: “Here is your King.”

O Jesus, I adore the wounds on your forehead. May each one of the wounds on your venerable head heal a wound of your Body, the Church.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Second Station:  
**Jesus Receives his Cross**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

“So they took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His Cross”... Ever since Abraham fastened his beloved son to the wood, God’s thoughts had been returning to the tree in the Garden of Eden.

That tree that He had planted in his wisdom, had He not cursed this tree when it deprived Him of man, when it estranged Him from mankind, who is the fruit of his Love? Had He not chosen this tree in the first place to bear the fruit of Love?

And now the tree returns, and it indeed bears the fruit of love. The weight of the tree, the immensity of the Father’s will, lays heavy upon Him, upon the Son, the Only Child, the First-Born.

But see how He welcomes it and embraces it. O blessed Cross! O happy fault of Adam that earned us such a Redeemer. And this weight, this kéved כבד, has become the glory, the kavód כבוד, that forever belongs to Him because He humbled Himself and bore this holy burden.

O Jesus, I adore the lesions on your shoulders. The weight that bruised your flesh delivers us from the oppressor.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Third Station:  
**Jesus Falls for the First Time**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

Under the weight of the Cross, Jesus staggers and falls. His hands are tied to the beam. He does not protect Himself, He cannot defend Himself. He falls from his full heavenly height. The Earth, which in the end will be unable to lock him in its bowels, receives his body for the first time.

The most beautiful of the sons of men, the sons of Adam, the b'nei Adám בני אדם , falls upon the ground. He tastes the earth, the adamáh אדמה. The Son of Man has assumed our humanity that was, in the beginning, molded out of earth. And the blood, sweat, and tears mingle with the dirt.

My God, did Jesus have to fall? It is before Him that all knees must bend on Earth, in heaven, and under the earth. Now, rather, it is his knee that is crushed before the eyes of men.

And we also fall. Each time the weight of the flesh brings us down to the earth from whence we came, let us not listen to our pride that bids us, like Adam, to hide our shame far from the sight of God and men. Let us rise to our feet without hesitation, strengthened by the thought of our courageous Lord.

O Jesus, I adore the wounds on your knees, and I bless You who have made your Body the new Temple and our flesh the dwelling place of the Spirit.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Fourth Station:  
**Jesus Meets his Mother**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...



Mary is in the midst of the crowds, and she seeks her Son as she sought Him when He was a child. She catches sight of Him, and in that moment, the sword that was destined for her begins to cleave her heart.

In the hammering of her heart she hears the words He had spoken even as He came of age: “Did you not know that I have to be about my Father’s business?”

And in silence, the new Eve, mother of the living, joins the new Adam in the fulfillment of the Father’s will, to bring new life to all things.

O Mary, my Mother, I entrust to you all the children of the world, and I entrust them to your heart. O Virgin, I lift up to you the Family of God, and I ask you to fill it with new life, that at the heart of the Church, you may be love.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Fifth Station:  
**Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry his Cross**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

“As they were leading Him away, they laid hands upon a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the Cross and carry it after Jesus.”

The scourging, capable of bringing death, had exhausted all the physical strength of the God-Man. His appearance is frightful.

His persecutors realize that He cannot make it to the end of his ordeal. Lest He die before having been hoisted up between Heaven and Earth, a bystander is enlisted to supplement his human stamina.

O Son of God, I ask for a share in your Passion. I choose to take up the Cross and follow You. I want to lift You up from under the misery of rebellious humanity. O Jesus, I present all suffering to You so that it may not be fruitless or in vain, but that it might have a redemptive worth.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Sixth Station:  
**Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**  
We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

This cloth that she clings to, is it to hide her pain? Yet when she unveils her heart she reveals her love. She demonstrates that her allegiance is to You before men. She knows that You will not be ashamed of her before the Father.

She does not fear the soldiers, for perfect love banishes fear. Maybe she had been following You for days, and it is at this terrible hour that her passion encounters your passion.

She might have been called Mary Magdalene, but from now on she is simply Veronica: true image, true icon. She shall bear the name of your countenance forever.

O Jesus, I adore You in those who have become faceless, those whom we try to avoid, those who have been cut off from the society of men. Beloved Face of Jesus, set Yourself like a seal on my heart, like a seal in my soul. Look into my eyes and see me as I am.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



**The Seventh Station:  
Jesus Falls for the Second Time**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

Inevitably man falls in his spiritual life. Man's distress can be so relentless that it makes him faint. Jesus rises and says to us: "Never despair, even if it seems to you that you have betrayed God and that no return is possible."

We even recline at the table of sinners, immersing our souls and our psyche in sin. "Do not despair," Christ utters. "I have paid the price of your return."

The light that penetrates the wounds of his body is beautiful. Infinitely more beautiful is the light that floods the wounds of the soul.

O Jesus, I adore the wounds on your head and the wounds to your soul. The light that transfigures them today is the promise of an eternal  
ecstasy of love.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



**The Eighth Station:  
Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...



“A great multitude followed Him, including women who mourned and lamented for Him. Jesus turned to them and said: ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming when they will say, ‘Happy the barren, the wombs that never bore.’”

Through a blur of tears I look upon You, sick, wretched, defeated. Yet You look upon me and see me as I truly am. You see my sin, the shame that I hide, and You, in all Your pain, You weep over me.

I adore You, Jesus, King of the Jews, whose kingship is not of this world.

Hasten the hour when your people, waving palms to welcome your Coming in Glory, will say: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Ninth Station:  
**Jesus Falls for the Third Time**  
We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

It seemed that the Lord's second fall had reached the very depth of abandonment. Mercy was to descend further still: for the third time, He falls.

O my God, why? He glances up and in his regard I see His purpose: "I fell once for the weakness of the flesh, then I fell once more for the weakness of the soul. But I had to reach into the depths of humanity in order to save it entirely. I fell for the weakness of the spirit."

O Jesus, in the face of such violence, I adore You. Watch over those who go through the horrible night of the spirit, and keep us from despair.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Tenth Station:  
**Jesus is Stripped of his Garments**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

“The soldiers take his clothes and cast lots for his tunic woven in one piece.”

God is naked, exposed to the gaze of all. Naked like our father Adam, naked like the bare and desolate earth, naked like Job on his heap of dung. Naked like man at his birth and when he returns to mother earth. Naked like the catechumen who strips off his old life and is about to be clothed in Christ.

O Jesus, if I meet You naked in the street or in any place, in a man who is hungry or in prison, let me cover You in the tunic of my love. May I not turn away saying: "When did I see You naked and did not clothe You?"

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Eleventh Station:  
**Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

“It was the third hour and they crucified Him.”

He is pierced because of our iniquities. Jesus welcomes the Cross as his nuptial bed, for here will be shed the water and the blood of a new Cana.

He is laid down like Noah on the day of his drunkenness, but laid down rather into the slumber of death; drunk rather with love on the winepress of the Cross.

Opening his eyes all He can see are the heavens, and He cries out to his Father. Pleading verses from Psalms, He intercedes for humanity. He offers up each blow of the hammer like a beat of his own heart.

How beautiful are the feet that were washed in the tears of the prostitute. Love covers a multitude of sins; your love, Jesus, has shrouded the universe.

O Jesus, I adore the wounds in your feet and in your hands. How beautiful on the mountain of Golgotha are the feet of the One who announces the Good News of deliverance, the Good News of peace.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Twelfth Station:  
**Jesus Dies on the Cross**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...



The Cross suddenly rises, heaved up with ropes, and then falls into place with a violent jolt. Jesus had said: "When I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw all men to Myself." And here He is stretching out His majestic arms in a gesture of universal embrace.

"I thirst," He says. "Sir, how can You ask me for a drink. And the well is deep. How can You reach the living water?"

It is for us that He thirsts, as we are attracted, drawn by his Cross, drawn by the Gift of God. The tree with life-giving fruit is standing, the fountain of living water has been opened. Just as Eve emerged from the side of the sleeping Adam, the Church is being born from the side of the New Adam, asleep on the tree that reveals the knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus repeats the words he learned from Mary, the same that all Jewish children learn from their mothers leaning over their beds as they fall asleep: "Into your hand, I commit my breath, my spirit." Exhaling this final sigh, He breathed his last.

O Jesus, I adore You in your immolation. "It is accomplished." Your seven words have been uttered, in your Covenant, the world's destiny has been sealed.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Thirteenth Station:  
**Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

With reverence, Joseph of Arimathea cradles in his arms the Immolated Lamb. He lays it upon the Virgin's bosom. With her tears she washes her Son's face as one cleanses a new-born.

Immaculately conceived, she was spared the pangs of childbirth. But here the new Eve, mother of the Body, mother of the Church, gives birth to her child in infinitely greater pain. As the prophet Jeremiah prophesied: "How can I describe you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? For your affliction is as vast as the sea. Who can heal you?"

O Mary, sorrowful Queen of Mercy, place your hand upon all those who suffer. There you remain until the consummation of the ages, holding in your arms the immense Body of your Son, covering his nakedness with your mantle, enveloping him in tenderness. The words of the Canticum are fulfilled: "Your left arm is under my head and your right embraces me."

O Jesus, I venerate your tender body and your holy abandonment. When I feel abandoned by men and by God, teach me to abandon myself into the arms of your Mother.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.



The Fourteenth Station:  
**Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

We adore You, O Christ,  
and we praise You...

“Then they wrapped Him in a shroud and put him in a tomb hewn in the rock, where no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and so Shabbat was imminent. Now the women who had come with Him from Galilee, having followed Joseph of Arimathea, took note of the tomb and how his Body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and on Shabbat they rested, as the law required.”

He has lain down, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the shoot of David. He is fulfilling Shabbat, He enters into his Father’s repose, for such was the purpose of the all Creation.

The sound of his footsteps echoes in the dwelling-place of the dead. Adam hears it and his heart is ready to burst. He remembers the sound of God’s steps in the Garden of Eden, just before the fall. But Jesus has not come down to the underworld to cast him out, but to draw him up into his wondrous light, for the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

O Jesus, through all suffering, all nights, all apparent deaths, we want to remain in your victory.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be.

## CONCLUSION PRAYER

My good and dear Jesus,  
I kneel before you,  
asking you most earnestly  
to engrave upon my heart  
a deep and lively faith, hope, and charity,  
with true repentance for my sins,  
and a firm resolve to make amends.  
As I reflect upon your five wounds,  
and dwell upon them  
with deep compassion and grief,  
I recall, good Jesus,  
the words the prophet David spoke  
long ago concerning yourself:  
"They have pierced my hands and my feet;  
they have counted all my bones!"