

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R./ Amen.

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24).

We are here because we are convinced that the *Way of the Cross* of the Son of God was not simply a journey to the place of execution. We believe that every step of the Condemned Christ, every action and every word, continues to speak to us.

What does it mean to have a part in the Cross of Christ? It means to experience, in the Holy Spirit, the love hidden within the Cross of Christ. It means to recognize, in the light of this love, our own cross. It means to take up that cross once more and, strengthened by this love, to continue our journey... To journey through life, in imitation of the one who “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (*Heb 12:2*).

Lord Jesus Christ, fill our hearts with the light of your Spirit, so that by following you on your final journey we may come to know the price of our Redemption and become worthy of a share in the fruits of your Passion, Death and Resurrection. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

R./ Amen.

*At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.*

I: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Let him be crucified!” When Pilate saw that a riot was breaking out, he washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.” And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

LORD, you were condemned to death
because fear of what other people may think
suppressed the voice of conscience.
So too, throughout history,
the innocent have always been
maltreated, condemned and killed.

How many times have we ourselves
preferred success to the truth,
our reputation to justice?
Strengthen the quiet voice of our conscience,

your own voice, in our lives.
Look at me as you looked at Peter after his denial.
Let your gaze penetrate our hearts
and indicate the direction our lives must take.

On the day of Pentecost
you stirred the hearts of those who,
on Good Friday, clamored for your death,
and you brought them to conversion.
In this way you gave hope to all.
Grant us, ever anew, the grace of conversion.

*Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
All his bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword has passed.*

II. JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

Lord, you willingly subjected yourself
to mockery and scorn.
Help us not to ally ourselves
with those who look down on the weak and suffering

Help us to acknowledge your face
in the lowly and the outcast.
May we never lose heart
when faced with the contempt of this world,
which ridicules our obedience to your will.

You carried your own Cross
and you ask us to follow you on this path (cf. Mt
10:38)

Help us to take up the Cross,
and not to shun it.

May we never complain or become discouraged by
life’s trials.

Help us to follow the path of love and –
in submitting to its demands –
to find true joy.

*Oh, how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blest
Of the sole begotten One!*

III. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

“God laid on him the sins of us all” (cf. Is 53:6). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6).

LORD JESUS, the weight of the cross
made you fall to the ground.
The weight of our sin,
the weight of our pride, brought you down.
But your fall is not a tragedy, or mere human
weakness.
You came here when, in our pride, we were laid low.

The arrogance that makes us think
that we ourselves can create human beings
has turned man into a kind of merchandise

to be bought and sold,
or stored to provide parts for experimentation.

In doing this,
we hope to conquer death by our own efforts,
yet in reality
we are profoundly debasing human dignity.

Lord help us; we have fallen.
Help us to abandon our destructive pride and,
by learning from your humility,
to rise again.

*Is there one who would not weep,
Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

IV. JESUS GREETS HIS HOLY MOTHER



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and his kingdom will have no end” (Lk 1:30-33).

HOLY MARY, Mother of the Lord,
you remained faithful when the disciples fled.
Just as you believed
the angel’s incredible message –
that you would become the Mother of the Most High
–
so, too, you believed
at the hour of his greatest abasement.

In this way, at the hour of the Cross,
at the hour of the world’s darkest night,
you became the Mother of all believers,
the Mother of the Church.

We beg you: teach us to believe,
and grant that our faith
may bear fruit in courageous service
and be the sign of love and ever ready
to share suffering and to offer assistance.

*Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother’s pain untold?*

V. SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

They compelled Simon (cf. Mk 15:21). The Roman soldiers did this because they feared that, in his exhaustion, the Condemned Man would not be able to carry the Cross as far as Golgotha. Then they would not be able to carry out the sentence of crucifixion. They were looking for someone to help carry the Cross. Their eyes fell on Simon. They compelled him to take the weight upon his shoulders.

LORD, you opened the eyes
and heart of Simon of Cyrene,
and you gave him, by his share in your Cross,
the grace of faith.

Help us to aid our neighbors in need,
even when this interferes
with our own plans and desires.

Help us to realize
that it is a grace to be able to share

the cross of others
and, in this way, know that we are walking
with you along the way.

Help us to appreciate with joy that,
when we share in your suffering
and the sufferings of the world,
we become servants of salvation
and are able to help build up your Body, the Church.

*Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.*

VI. VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

On the road to Calvary a woman pushed her way through the soldiers escorting Jesus and with a veil wiped the sweat and blood from the Lord's face.

Acts of love do not pass away. Every act of goodness, of understanding, of service leaves on people's hearts an indelible imprint and makes us ever more like the One who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7).

LORD, grant us restless hearts,
hearts which seek your face.
Keep us from the blindness of heart
which sees only the surface of things.
Give us the simplicity and purity
which allow us to recognize
your presence in the world.

When we are not able to accomplish great things,
grant us the courage
which is born of humility and goodness.
Impress your face on our hearts.
May we encounter you along the way
and show your image to the world.

*Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live;*

VII. JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has blocked my way with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He has broken my teeth one by one, he has fed me with ashes.

LORD JESUS CHRIST,
you have borne all our burdens
and you continue to carry us.
Our weight has made you fall.

Lift us up, for by ourselves
we cannot rise from the dust.
Free us from the bonds of lust.
In place of a heart of stone,
give us a heart of flesh,
a heart capable of seeing.

Lay low the power of ideologies,
so that we may see
that they are a web of lies.

Do not let the wall of materialism
become insurmountable.
Make us aware of your presence.

Keep us sober and vigilant,
capable of resisting the forces of evil.
Help us to recognize the spiritual
and material needs of others,
and to give them the help they need.

Lift us up,
so that we may lift others up.
Give us hope at every moment of darkness,
so that we may bring your hope
to the world.

*For the sins of his own nation
Saw him hang in desolation,
Till the Spirit forth he sent.*

VIII. JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ At that time people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?” (Lk 23:28-31).

LORD, to the weeping women
you spoke of repentance
and the Day of Judgment,
when all of us will stand before your face:
before you, the Judge of the world.

You call us to leave behind
the trivialization of evil,
which salves our consciences
and allows us to carry on as before.
You show us the seriousness of our responsibility,

the danger of our being found guilty and without
excuse
on the Day of Judgment.

Grant that we may not simply walk at your side,
with nothing to offer other than compassionate
words.

Convert us and give us new life.

Grant that, in the end, we will not be dry wood,
but living branches in you, the true vine,
bearing fruit for eternal life.

*Virgin of all virgins blest!
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief divine;*

IX. JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

“Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross”
(Phil 2:6-8)

LORD, your Church often seems
like a boat about to sink,
a boat taking in water on every side.

In your field, we see more weeds than wheat.
The soiled garments and face of your Church
throw us into confusion.
Yet it is we ourselves who have soiled them!

It is we who betray you time and time again,
after all our lofty words and grand gestures.
Have mercy on your Church;
within her too, Adam continues to fall.

But you will rise again.
You stood up, you arose
and you can also raise us up.
Save and sanctify your Church.
Save and sanctify us all.

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender Child
All with bloody scourges rent;*

X. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,” in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled that says: “They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.” This is what the soldiers did (Jn 19:23-24).

LORD JESUS,
you were stripped of your garments,
exposed to shame, and cast out of society.
You took upon yourself the shame of Adam,
and you healed it.
You also take upon yourself
the sufferings and needs of the poor,
the outcasts of the world.
And in this very way
you fulfill the words of the prophets.

This is how you bring meaning
into apparent meaninglessness.
This is how you make us realize
that your Father holds you, us,
and the whole world in his hands.
Give us a profound respect for man
at every stage of his existence,
and in all the situations in which we encounter him.
Clothe us in the light of your grace.

*Let me, to my last breath,
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.*

XI. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

“They tear holes in my hands and my feet; I can count every one of my bones” (Ps 21:17- 18).
The words of the Prophet are fulfilled.

LORD JESUS CHRIST,
you let yourself be nailed to the Cross,
accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering,
the destruction of your body and your dignity.

You allowed yourself to be nailed fast;
you did not try to escape
or to lessen your suffering.
May we never flee
from what we are called to do.

Help us to remain faithful to you.
Help us to unmask the false freedom
which would distance us from you.
Help us to accept your “binding” freedom, and,
“bound” fast to you, to discover true freedom.

*Wounded with his ev’ry wound,
Steep my soul til it hath swooned
In his very Blood away.*

XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. 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. When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts

LORD JESUS CHRIST,
at the hour of your death
the sun was darkened.
Ever anew you are being nailed to the Cross.
At this present hour of history
we are living in God’s darkness.

Through your great sufferings
and the wickedness of men,
the face of God – your face –
seems obscured, unrecognizable.
And yet, on the Cross,
you have revealed yourself.

Precisely by being the one
who suffers and loves,
you are exalted.
From the Cross on high, you have triumphed.

Help us to recognize your face
at this hour of darkness and tribulation.
Help us to believe in you
and to follow you in our hour
of darkness and need.
Show yourself once more
to the world, at this hour.
Reveal to us your salvation.

*Christ above in torment hangs;
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying glorious Son.*

XIII. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus is dead. From his heart, pierced by the lance of the Roman soldier, flow blood and water: a mysterious image of the stream of the sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist, by which the Church is constantly reborn from the opened heart of the Lord. And now, at the end of his sufferings, it is clear that, for all the dismay which filled men's hearts, for all the power of hatred and cowardice, he was never alone. There are faithful ones who remain with him. Under the Cross stand Mary, his Mother, the sister of his Mother, Mary, Mary Magdalen and the disciple whom he loved. Even in the night of death, the Lord continues to be our Lord and Savior. The Church of Jesus Christ, his new family, begins to take shape.

LORD, you descended
into the darkness of death.
But your body is placed in good hands
and wrapped in a white shroud (Mt 27:59).

Faith has not completely died;
the sun has not completely set.

In the hour of darkness,
help us to know that you are still there.
Do not abandon us

Give us the fidelity
to withstand moments of confusion
and a love ready to embrace you
in your utter helplessness.

Help us to look beyond all our fears and prejudices,
and to offer you our abilities,
our hearts and our time,
and thus to prepare a garden for the Resurrection.

*Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
Lest in flames I burn and die,
In that awful Judgment day.*

XIV. JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. R./ Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Taking the body, Joseph of Arimathea wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

LORD JESUS CHRIST,
in your burial you have taken on
the death of the grain of wheat.
You have become the lifeless grain of wheat
which produces abundant fruit
for every age and for all eternity.

From the tomb shines forth in every generation
the promise of the grain of wheat
which gives rise to the true manna,
the Bread of Life,
in which you offer us your very self.

The eternal Word,
through his Incarnation and death,
has become a Word which is close to us:
you put yourself into our hands
and into your hearts,
so that your word can grow within us
and bear fruit.

Though the death of the grain of wheat
you give us yourself,
so that we, too, can dare to lose our life
in order to find it,
so that we, too, can trust the promise
of the grain of wheat.

Help us grow in love and veneration
for the Eucharistic mystery –
to make you, the Bread of heaven,
the source of our life.
Help us to become your “fragrance,”
and to make known in this world
the mysterious traces of your life.

Like the grain of wheat which rises from the earth,
putting forth its stalk and then its ear,
you could not remain enclosed in the tomb:
the tomb is empty because he – the Father –
“did not abandon you to the nether world,

nor let your flesh see corruption” (Acts2:31; Ps.
15:10).

No, you did not see corruption.
You have risen,
and have made a place

for our transfigured flesh
in the very heart of God.

Help us to rejoice in this hope
and bring it joyfully to the world.
Help us to become witnesses of your resurrection.

*While my body her decays,
May my soul thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with thee. Amen.*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE
SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.