



THE WAY OF THE CROSS
Blessed Columba Marmion, OSB

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

Opening Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ, You have made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned You; but now I love You with my whole heart, and because I love you I repent sincerely for having ever offended You. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany You on this journey. You went to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of You. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to You.

The First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Death by Pilate

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

R. **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

“And Jesus stood before the governor” (Mt 27:11). He stands, because, being the second Adam, He is the head of the whole race which He is about to redeem by His immolation. The first Adam merited death by his sin. Jesus, innocent but laden with the sins of the world, is to expiate them by His sacrifice. Through the clamor made by the chief priests, the Pharisees, His own nation, our sins cry out and tumultuously demand the death of the Just: *“Away with Him, away with Him, Crucify Him”* (Jn 19:15). If Jesus stands because He is our Head and to give testimony to the truth of His doctrine and we adore thee, O Christ, and we praise thee—the Divinity of His Person and mission, He yet humbles Himself in inward self-abasement before the sentence pronounced by Pilate in whom He acknowledges an authentic power. He voluntarily accepts the sentence of condemnation in order to restore life to us.

My Divine Master, I unite myself to Your Sacred Heart in its perfect submission and utter abandonment to the Father’s Will. May the virtue of Your grace produce in my soul that spirit of submission which will yield me up unreservedly and without murmuring to the Divine good pleasure and to all that it shall please You to send me at the hour when I must leave this world. Amen.

Our Father...

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

The Second Station Jesus is Laden With His Cross

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“Then therefore (Pilate) delivered Him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him forth, bearing His own cross” (Jn 19:16-17). At that moment, Jesus accepted the increase of suffering that this heavy burden laid upon His bruised shoulders brought to Him. He accepted the bitter sarcasms, the malignant blasphemies which His worst enemies, apparently triumphant, were about to heap upon Him as soon as they saw Him hung upon the infamous gibbet: He accepted the three hours’ agony, the being forsaken by His Father...At that moment, too, Christ Jesus Who represented us all, and was going to die for us, accepted the cross for all His members, for each one of us. He then united to His own sufferings all those of His Mystical Body.

My Jesus, I accept all the crosses, all the trials, all the adversities that the Father has destined for me. May the unction of Your grace give me strength to bear them with the submission of which You gave us the example in receiving Yours for us.

Our Father...

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword has pass’d.

The Third Station Jesus Falls the First Time Under the Cross

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“He shall be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity” (Is 53:3) This prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled to the letter. Jesus, exhausted by His sufferings of soul and body, sinks beneath the weight of the cross. He, the Almighty, falls from weakness. By this weakness He expiates our sins, repairs the revolt of our pride, and raises up a fallen world, powerless to save itself. Moreover, at that moment He merited for us the grace to humble ourselves for our sins, to acknowledge our falls, and sincerely to confess them. He merited for us the grace of fortitude to sustain our weakness.

O Christ Jesus, prostrate beneath Your cross, I adore You. “Power of God” leave me not to myself for I am but frailty. May Your power dwell in me, so that I fall not into evil.

Our Father...

Oh, how sad and sore distress’d
Was the Mother highly blest
Of the sole-begotten One!

The Fourth Station

Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

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

R. **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

The day has come for the Blessed Virgin whereon Simeon's prophecy is to be fulfilled in her: "*Thy own soul a sword shall pierce*" (Lk 2:35). In the same way that she was united to Jesus when offering Him in the Temple in years gone by, so now in this hour when Jesus is about to consummate His sacrifice she enters more than ever into His dispositions and shares His sufferings. She sets out towards Calvary where she knows that her Son is to be crucified. Upon the way she meets Him. What an immense sorrow to see Him in this terrible state: Her gaze meets His, and the abyss of Christ's sufferings calls upon the abyss of His Mother's compassion.

O Mother, behold your Son. By the love that we bear towards Him, obtain for us that the remembrance of His sufferings may everywhere follow us. It is in His Name that we ask this of you; to refuse it to us would be to refuse it to Him since we are His members. O Christ Jesus, behold Your Mother. For her sake grant that we may compassionate Your sorrows so that we may become like unto You.

Our Father...

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

The Fifth Station

Simon the Cyrenean Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross

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

R. **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

"*And going out they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, him they forced to take up His cross*" (Mt 27:32). Jesus is exhausted. Although He is the Almighty, He wills that His Sacred Humanity, laden with all the sins of the world, shall feel the weight of justice and expiation. But He wants us to help Him carry His cross. Simon represents us all, and Christ asks all of us to share in His sufferings. We are His disciples only upon this condition. "*If any man will come after Me, let him...take up his cross and follow Me*" (Mk 8:34). But in His cross He has placed the unction which makes ours tolerable, for in carrying our cross, it is truly His own which we accept. He unites our sufferings to His sorrow, and by this union He confers upon them an inestimable value, the source of great merits.

My Jesus, I accept from Your Hand the particles that You detach for me "that You permit or that it pleases You to send me. I accept them as my share of expiation.

Is there one who would not weep?
Whelm'd in miseries so deep
Christ's dear mother to behold?

The Sixth Station Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Tradition relates that a woman named Veronica, touched with compassion, drew near to Jesus and offered Him a linen cloth to wipe His adorable Face. Isaiah foretold of the suffering Jesus: *“There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness, and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him”* (Is 53:2). The Gospel tells us that during those terrible hours after His apprehension the soldiers had dealt Him insolent blows, and had spat in His Face; the crowning of thorns had caused the blood to trickle down His Sacred Countenance. Christ Jesus willed that we should be healed by the bruises that His Divine Face received for us. Being our Elder Brother, He restored to us, by substituting Himself for us in His Passion, the grace that makes us the children of His Father.

O Heavenly Father, in return for the bruises that Thy Son Jesus willed to suffer for us, glorify Him, exalt Him, give unto Him that splendor which He merited when His Adorable Countenance was disfigured for our salvation.

Our Father...

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

The Seventh Station Jesus Falls the Second Time

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

Again we see our Divine Savior sinking under the weight of the cross. God had laid the weight of all the sins of the world upon His shoulders. They are our sins that crush Him. He beholds them in all their multitude and in their every detail. He accepts them as if they were His own to the extent that He no longer appears, according to St. Paul’s words, anything but a living sin: *“For our sake He made Him to be sin”* (2 Cor 5:21). Being the Eternal Word, Jesus is all-powerful but He chooses to feel all the weakness of a burdened humanity. This wholly voluntary weakness honors the justice of His Heavenly Father, and merits strength for us.

O Jesus, who became weak for love of me, crushed beneath the weight of my sins, give me the strength that is in You so that You alone may be glorified by my deeds.”

Our Father...

Bruis’d, derided, curs’d, defil’d
She beheld her tender child
All with bloody scourges rent.

For the sins of His own nation
Saw Him hang in desolation
Till His Spirit forth He sent.

The Eighth Station

Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“And there followed Him a great multitude of people and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me; but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren...For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?” (Lk 23:27-31). Jesus knows the ineffable exigencies of His Father’s justice and holiness. He reminds the daughters of Jerusalem that this justice and holiness are adorable perfections of the Divine Being. Let us implore mercy against the dreadful day when Jesus will come, no longer as a Victim bowed down beneath the weight of our sins but as the Sovereign Judge to Whom the Father has given all power.

O Jesus, True Vine, grant that I may remain united to You by grace and good works so that I may bear fruit worthy of You. Grant that I may not become, through my sins, a dead branch good for nothing but to be gathered up and cast into the fire.”

Our Father...

O thou Mother! Fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above;
Make my heart with thine accord.

The Ninth Station

Jesus Falls For the Third Time

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity” (Is 53:10), said Isaiah, speaking of Christ during His Passion. Jesus is crushed beneath the weight of Divine Justice. None other has borne the weight of it in all its fullness; not even the damned. But the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, united to this Divine Justice by immediate contact, underwent all its power and rigor. As the Victim Who delivered Himself out of love to all its action, He falls prostrate, crushed and broken beneath its weight.

O my Jesus, teach me to detest sin which obliges justice to require of You such expiation. Grant me to unite all my sufferings to Yours so that by them my sins may be blotted out and I may make satisfaction even here below.”

Our Father...

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

The Tenth Station

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“They parted My garments amongst them; and upon My vesture they cast lots” (Ps 22:18). This is the prophecy of the Psalmist. Jesus is stripped of everything and placed in the nakedness of utter poverty. He does not even dispose of His garments for as soon as He is raised upon the cross, the soldiers divide them among themselves and cast lots for His coat. Nothing is so glorious to God or so useful to our souls as to unite the offering of ourselves, absolutely and without condition, to the offering which Jesus made at the moment when He gave Himself up to the executioners to be stripped of His raiment and fastened to the cross *“that through His poverty we might be rich” (2 Cor 8:9).*

O my Jesus, accept the offering that I make to You of my whole being. Join it to that which You made to Your Heavenly Father at the moment of reaching Calvary. Strip me of all attachment to created things and to myself.”

Our Father...

Holy Mother! Pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.

The Eleventh Station

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“They crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst” (Jn 19:18). Jesus delivers Himself up to His executioners, *“dumb as a lamb before his shearers” (Is 53:70).* Jesus unceasingly gazes in to the face of His Father and with incommensurable love He yields up His body to repair the insults offered to the Eternal Majesty. He delivers Himself likewise for us. Each one can repeat in all truth the burning words of St. Paul: *“He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me” (Gal 2:20).* What a revelation of the love of Jesus for us! And this love is likewise the love of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these Three are but One.

O Jesus, Who “in obeying the will of the Father and through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, did by Your death give life to the world, deliver me by Your most sacred Body and Blood from all my iniquities and from all evils. . . .” (Ancient Christmas Hymn)

Our Father...

Let me share with you His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

The Twelfth Station Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

“And Jesus crying with a loud voice said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying this, He gave up the ghost” (Lk 23:46). After three hours of indescribable sufferings, Jesus dies. The only oblation worthy of God, the one sacrifice that redeems the world and sanctifies souls, is consummated. Christ Jesus had promised that when He should be lifted up from the earth, He would draw all things to Himself. Let us implore Him to draw us to His Sacred Heart by the virtue of His death upon the Cross; to grant that we may die to our self-love and self-will, the sources of so many infidelities and sins, and that we may live only for Him Who died for us.

O Father, glorify Thy Son hanging upon the gibbet. Since He humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross, exalt Him. May the name that Thou hast given Him be glorified, may every knee bow before Him and every tongue confess that Thy Son Jesus lives henceforward in Thy eternal glory!”

Our Father...

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourn'd for me,
All the days that I may live.

The Thirteenth Station The Body of Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross and Given to His Mother

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

R. Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

The mangled body of Jesus is restored to Mary. We cannot imagine the grief of the Blessed Virgin at this moment. Never did mother love her child as Mary loved Jesus. The Holy Spirit had fashioned within her a mother's heart to love a God-Man. Never did human heart beat with more tenderness for the Word Incarnate than did the heart of Mary, for she was full of grace and her love met with no obstacle to its expansion. Then she owed all to Jesus; her Immaculate Conception, the privileges which made of her a unique creature had been given to her in prevision of the Death of her Son. What unutterable sorrow was hers when she received the bloodstained Body of Jesus within her arms!

O Mother, fount of love, make me understand the strength of your love so that I may share your grief. Make my heart glow with love for Christ, my God, that I may think only of pleasing Him.

Our Father...

By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
This I ask of thee to give.

The Fourteenth Station
Jesus is Laid in the Sepulcher

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

R. **Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.**

Joseph of Arimathea having taken the Body of Jesus down from the cross, “*wrapped Him in fine linen, and laid Him in a sepulcher that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid*” (Lk 23:53). St. Paul tells us that “*we are buried together with Him by baptism*” (Rom 6:4). The sacramental virtue of our baptism forever endures. In uniting ourselves by faith and love to Christ laid in the tomb, we renew the grace of dying to sin in order to live only for God.

Lord Jesus, may I bury in Your tomb all my sins, my failings, my infidelities. By the virtue of Your Death and Burial, give me grace to renounce more and more all that separates me from You. By the virtue of Your Resurrection, grant that, like You, I may no longer live but for the glory of Your Father.

Our Father...

Virgin of all virgins best,
Listen to my fond request
Let me share thy grief divine.

Closing Prayer

**O God, / who by the Passion of Christ your Son, Our Lord, /
abolished the death inherited from ancient sin /
by every succeeding generation /
grant that / by being conformed to Him / and to His Passion
while on earth, / and being sanctified by His grace /
we may rise with Him / to Eternal Life in Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

“After the Sacraments and liturgical worship I am convinced there is no practice more fruitful for our souls than the Way of the Cross made with devotion. Its supernatural efficacy is sovereign. The Passion is the “holy of holies” among the mysteries of Jesus, the pre-eminent work of our Supreme High Priest; it is there above all that His virtues shine forth, and when we contemplate Him in His sufferings He gives us according to the measure of our faith, the grace to practice the virtues that He manifested during these holy hours...At each station Our Divine Savior presents Himself to us in this triple character: as the Mediator Who saves us by His merits, the perfect Model of sublime virtues, and the efficacious Cause Who can, through His Divine Omnipotence, produce in our souls the virtues of which He gives us the example.”

- Blessed Columba Marmion, OSB