

VIA CRUCIS

THE WAY OF THE CROSS
WITH ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



St. Joseph the Worker

PREPARATORY PRAYER

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

O most merciful Jesus, with a contrite heart and penitent spirit, I bow down in profound humility before Thy divine majesty. I adore Thee as my supreme Lord and Master; I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee above all things. I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, my Supreme and Only Good. I resolve to amend my life, and although I am unworthy to obtain mercy, yet the sight of Thy holy cross, on which Thou didst die, inspires me with hope and consolation. I will, therefore, meditate on Thy sufferings, and visit the stations of Thy Passion in company with Thy sorrowful Mother and my guardian angel, with the intention of promoting Thy honor and saving my soul.

I desire to gain all the indulgences granted for this holy exercise for myself and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. O merciful Redeemer, who has said, "And I, if I be lifted from earth, will draw all things to Myself," draw my heart and my love to Thee, that I may perform this devotion as perfectly as possible, and that I may live and die in union with Thee.

Amen.



FIRST STATION

Jesus is Condemned to Death

(John 3:16, Isaiah 53:7, John 18:33-John 19:1-16)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Jesus, most innocent, who neither did nor could commit a sin, 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 Thou willingly dost accept the unjust sentence of death, that I might live. For whom, then, shall I henceforth live, if not for Thee, my Lord? Should I desire to please men, I could not be Thy servant. Let me, therefore, rather displease men and all the world, than not please Thee, O Jesus.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



SECOND STATION

Jesus is Made to Bear His Cross

(Isaiah 53:4-6, Matthew 27:31, Luke 9:23)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: When our divine Savior beheld the cross, He most willingly stretched out His bleeding arms, lovingly embraced it, and tenderly kissed it, and placing it on His bruised shoulders, He, although almost exhausted, joyfully carried it.

Prayer: O my Jesus, I cannot be Thy friend and follower, if I refuse to carry the cross. O dearly beloved cross! I embrace thee, I kiss thee, I joyfully accept thee from the hands of my God. Far be it from me to glory in anything, save in the cross of my Lord and Redeemer. By it the world shall be crucified to me and I to the world, that I may be Thine forever.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



THIRD STATION
Jesus Falls for the First Time
(Isaiah 53:6)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Our dear Savior, carrying the cross, was so weakened by 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, Thou didst bear my burden and the heavy weight of my sins. Should I, then, not bear in union with Thee, my easy burden of suffering and accept the sweet yoke of Thy commandments? Thy yoke is sweet and Thy burden is light: I therefore willingly accept it. I will take up my cross and follow Thee.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

*O, how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blessed
Of the sole-begotten One!*



FOURTH STATION
Jesus Meets His Mother
(John 19:25-27, John 16:22)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: How painful and how sad it must have been for Mary, the sorrowful Mother, to behold her beloved 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 that she assist you in the hour of your death.

Prayer: O Jesus, O Mary, I am the cause of the great and manifold pains which pierce your loving hearts! Oh, that also my heart would feel and experience at least some of your sufferings! O Mother of Sorrows, let me participate in the sufferings which thou and Thy Son endured for me, and let me experience thy sorrow, that afflicted with thee, I may enjoy thy assistance in the hour of my death.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



FIFTH STATION

Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

(Matthew 27:30-32, Matthew 25:40, Galatians 6:2)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Simon of Cyrene was compelled to help Jesus carry 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. What a reproach, to bear the cross reluctantly!

Prayer: O Jesus! Whosoever does not take up his cross and follow Thee, is not worthy of Thee. Behold, I join Thee in the Way of Thy Cross; I will be Thy assistant, following Thy bloody footsteps, that I may come to Thee in eternal life.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

(Isaiah 52:14, John 14:9)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Veronica, impelled by devotion and compassion, presents her veil to Jesus to wipe His disfigured face. And Jesus imprints on it His holy countenance: a great recompense for so small a service. What return to you make to your Savior for His great and manifold benefits?

Prayer: Most merciful Jesus! What return shall I make for all the benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me? Behold I consecrate myself entirely to Thy service. I offer and consecrate to Thee my heart: imprint on it Thy sacred image, never again to be effaced by sin.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



SEVENTH STATION
Jesus Falls a Second Time
(Hebrews 4:15)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: 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 oppress Jesus. Witnessing this, how can I continue to sin?

Prayer: O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! Offer me Thy helping hand, and aid me, that I may not fall again into my former sins. From this very moment, I will earnestly strive to reform: nevermore will I sin! Thou, O sole support of the weak, by Thy grace, without which I can do nothing, strengthen me to carry out faithfully this my resolution.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

*Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender child,
All with bloody scourges rent.*



EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

(Luke 23:27-31, John 15:6)

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Meditation: 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 thou also, for there is nothing more pleasing to Our Lord and nothing more profitable for thyself, than tears shed from contrition for thy sins.

Prayer: O Jesus, Who shall give to my eyes a torrent of tears, that day and night I may weep for my sins? I beseech Thee, through Thy bitter and bloody tears, to move my heart by Thy divine grace, so that from my eyes tears may flow abundantly, and that I may weep all my days over Thy sufferings, and still more over their cause, my sins.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



NINTH STATION
Jesus Falls the Third Time
(Philippians 2:5-7, Luke 14:11)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Jesus, arriving exhausted at the foot of Calvary, falls for the third time to the ground. His love for us, however, is not diminished, not extinguished. 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 us into the abyss of Hell.

Prayer: Most merciful Jesus, I return Thee 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.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

*O thou Mother! fount of love,
Touch my spirit from above.
Make my heart with thine accord:*



TENTH STATION
Jesus is Stripped of His Garments
(John 19:23-25, Luke 14:33)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: When Our Savior had arrived on Calvary, He was cruelly despoiled of His garments. How painful this must 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 were renewed. Jesus was despoiled of His garments that He might die possessed of nothing; how happy will I also die after laying aside my former self with all evil desires and sinful inclinations!

Prayer: Induce me, O Jesus, to lay aside my former self and to be renewed according to Thy will and desire. I will not spare myself, however painful this should be for me: despoiled of things temporal, of my own will, I desire to die, in order to live for Thee forever.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

(Psalm 22:17-18, Zechariah 12:10, Luke 23:33)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: Jesus, being stripped of His garments, was violently thrown upon the cross and His hands and feet nailed thereto. In such excruciating pains He remained silent, because it pleased His heavenly Father. He suffered patiently, because He suffered for me. How do I act in sufferings and in troubles? How fretful and impatient, how full of complaints I am!

Prayer: O Jesus, gracious Lamb of God, I renounce forever my impatience. Crucify, O Lord, my flesh and its concupiscences; scourge, scathe, and punish me in this world, do but spare me in the next. I commit my destiny to Thee, resigning myself to Thy holy will: may it be done in all things!

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

*Holy Mother, pierce me through!
In my heart, each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.*



TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies on the Cross

(Luke 23:46, John 19:30, Philippians 2:8-9)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: 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! Who will grant me that I may die for Thee! I will at least endeavor to die to the world. How must I regard the world and its vanities, when I behold Thee hanging on the cross, covered with wounds? O Jesus, receive me into Thy wounded Heart: I belong entirely to Thee; for Thee alone do I desire to live and to die.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

*Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all our sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.*



THIRTEENSTATION

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

(Luke 23:50-53, John 19:31-37, Luke 24:26)

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross, Thou hast redeemed the world.

Meditation: 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 divine Mother. Persevere in your resolutions of reform and do not part from the cross; he who persevereth 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, Thy lifeless body, mangled and lacerated, found a worthy resting-place on the bosom of Thy virgin Mother. Have I not often compelled Thee to dwell in my heart, full of sin and impurity as it was? Create in me a new heart, that I may worthily receive Thy most sacred body in Holy Communion, and that Thou mayest remain in me and I in Thee for all eternity.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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



FOURTEENSTATION

Jesus is Laid in His Tomb

(Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42, John 12:24-25, Romans 6:10-11)

*We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy cross,
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Meditation: The body of Jesus is interred in a stranger's sepulchre. 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 from this world. You, who are so attached to the world, henceforth despise it, that you may not perish with it.

Prayer: O Jesus, Thou hast set me apart from the world; what, then, shall I seek therein? Thou hast created me for Heaven; what, then, have I to do with the world? Depart from me, deceitful world, with thy vanities! Henceforth I will follow the Way of the Cross traced out for me by my Redeemer, and journey onward to my heavenly home, there to dwell forever and ever.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

Lord Jesus, crucified, have mercy on us!

Stabat Mater Stanza

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

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God, merciful Father, who hast given to the human race Thy beloved Son as an example of humility, obedience, and patience, to precede us on the way of life, bearing the cross: Graciously grant us that we, inflamed by His infinite love, may take up the sweet yoke of His Gospel together with the mortification of the cross, following Him as His true disciples, so that we shall one day gloriously rise with Him and joyfully hear the final sentence: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning," where Thou reignest with the Son and the Holy Spirit, and where we hope to reign with Thee, world without end.

Amen.

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