

# My Spiritual Journey with Jesus



THE WAY OF THE CROSS

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**You are invited to pray  
The Way of the Cross  
with the Dominican Friars  
at the Rosary Shrine of St. Jude.  
Each Station begins with a prayer,  
offers an appropriate reference  
from the Holy Scriptures  
and concludes with a Meditation  
written by Saint John Paul II.**



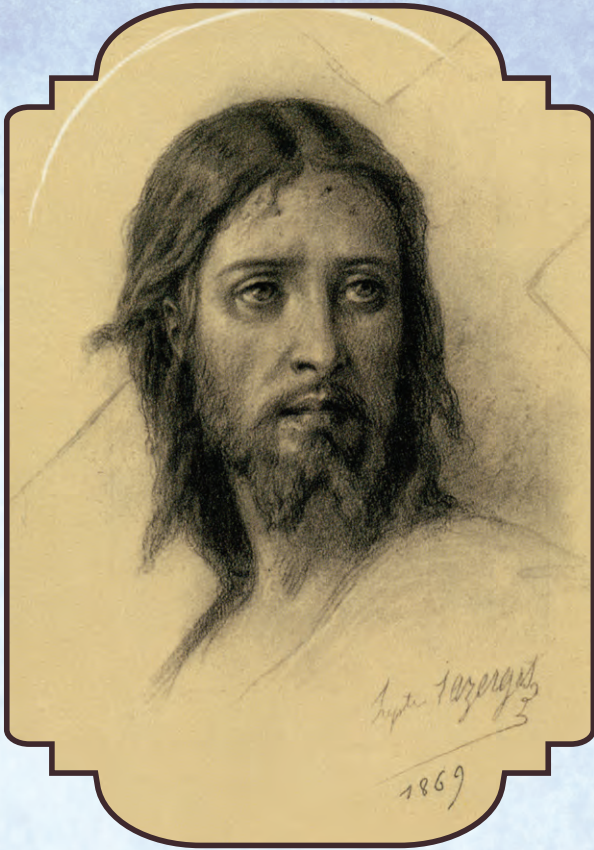
**During Lent 2003, Pope John Paul II wrote the Way of the Cross meditations that follow in this booklet. Originally, the Holy Father himself carried the Cross from Station to Station at the annual Good Friday prayer of the Stations of the Cross at the Roman Coliseum. May we now take up the Cross as we ask Saint John Paul II to pray for us.**

## Opening Reflection and Prayer

**The Blessed Virgin Mary stood on the hill of Golgotha as the Mother of the dying Son, as the new Eve standing beneath the Tree of Life, as the Woman of Sorrow, Daughter of Adam, Our Sister, Queen of Peace.**

**As the Mother of Mercy, she watches over her children who still face dangers and exhaustion, to see their sufferings, to hear the cry arising from their afflictions, to bring them comfort and to renew their hope of peace.**

**Let us pray, Father most Holy, look upon the blood flowing from the Savior's pierced side; look upon the blood shed by the many victims of hatred, of war, of terrorism, and in Your mercy, grant that the course**



**of world events may unfold according to Your will, in justice and in peace, and that Your Church may devote herself with quiet confidence to Your service and to the liberation of mankind. Amen.**

# 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.**

But the crowd shouted all the more,  
“Crucify Him”. So Pilate, wishing to satisfy  
the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and  
having scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to  
be crucified. *Mark 15:14-15*

## **MEDITATION**

**Pilate thought he could dissociate himself from the sentence, washing his hands of it, just as he had already distanced himself from Christ’s words identifying His Kingdom with the Truth, and with witness to the Truth.**

**In both instances Pilate was trying to preserve his own independence, to remain somehow “uninvolved”. So it may have seemed to him, on the surface. But the Cross to which Jesus of Nazareth was condemned, like the truth He told about His Kingdom, had to strike deep into Pilate’s soul.**

**All this was, and is, a single reality, in the face of which one cannot remain uninvolved, on the sidelines.**

THE SECOND STATION

Jesus takes up His Cross





**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

After they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple cloak, and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him. *Mark 15:20*

## **MEDITATION**

**Christ draws near to the Cross, His body atrociously bruised and lacerated, blood running down His face from His head crowned with thorns. Ecce Homo!**

**In Him, we see all the Truth foretold by the prophets about the Son of Man, the Truth proclaimed by Isaiah about the servant of Yahweh: “He was wounded for our transgressions . . . and by His stripes we are healed”.**

**In Him, we see also the amazing consequence of what man has done to his God.**

# THE THIRD STATION

Jesus falls for the first time



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His bruises we are healed. *Isaiah 53:4-6*

## **MEDITATION**

**Jesus falls under the weight of the Cross. He does not resort to His superhuman powers. He does not resort to the power of the angels, “Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once send Me more than twelve legions of Angels?”**

**And the crowd who saw Him when He showed His power over crippling diseases and even death itself, would yell: “He saved others but He cannot save Himself.”**

**He accepts these provocations, which seem to undermine the whole meaning of His mission, His teaching, His miracles. He accepts them all, for He is determined not to combat them. To be insulted is what He wills. To stagger and fall under the weight of the Cross is what He wills. To the end, down to the bitter end, He is faithful to what He had said: “Not My will, but Yours be done”. God will bring forth the salvation of humanity from Christ’s falling beneath the weight of the Cross.**

# THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets His Mother



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

Simeon said to Mary, His mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign of contradiction, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce through your own soul also . . .” His mother kept all these things in her heart. *Luke 2:34-35, 51*

## **MEDITATION**

**The Mother. Mary meets her Son along the way of the Cross. His Cross becomes her Cross, His humiliation is her humiliation, and the public scorn is on her shoulders. “And a sword will pierce through your soul also”. The words spoken by Simeon when Jesus was forty days old are now fulfilled. They are now completely fulfilled. And so, pierced by that invisible sword, Mary sets out towards her Son’s Calvary, her own Calvary.**

Although this pain is hers, striking deep in her maternal heart, the full truth of this suffering can be expressed only in terms of a shared suffering - ‘compassion’. That word is part of the mystery; it expresses in some way her unity with the sufferings of her Son.

## THE FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus  
to carry the Cross



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

They compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His Cross. And they brought Him to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. *Mark 15:21-22*

## **MEDITATION**

**Simon of Cyrene, called upon to carry the Cross, doubtless had no wish to do so. He was forced to. He walked beside Christ, bearing the same burden. When the condemned man's shoulders became too weak, Simon lent Jesus his. He walked the climb to Calvary very close to Jesus, closer than Mary, closer than John.**

**How long did he continue to resent being forced into this? How long did he continue to walk beside this condemned man, all the while making it clear that he had nothing in common with Him, nothing to do with His crime, nothing to do with His punishment?**

**How long did he go on like that, torn within himself, a barrier of indifference standing between him and the Man who was suffering? "I was naked, I was thirsty, I was in prison," I carried the Cross.**

# THE SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus





**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

He had no form or comeliness that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. *Isaiah 53:2-3*

## **MEDITATION**

**Veronica could not physically carry the Cross or even be called upon to do so. Yet, in fact, she did carry the Cross with Jesus. She carried it in the only way possible to her at the moment and in obedience to the dictates of her heart; she wiped His face.**

**An imprint of Christ's features remained on the cloth she used. Since the cloth was covered with blood and sweat, it would preserve traces and outlines.**

**Yet, this detail can have a different meaning if it is considered in the light of Christ's words about the last days. Many will then ask: "Lord, when did we ever do these things for You?" And Jesus will reply: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me". In fact, the Savior leaves His Imprint on every single act of charity, as He did on Veronica's cloth.**

# THE SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls for the second time



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
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 ways with hewn stones. He has made my paths crooked . . . He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. *Lamentations 3:1-2,9,16*

## **MEDITATION**

**“I am a worm, and no man, scorned by men, and despised by the people.”** The prophetic words of the psalmist are wholly fulfilled in these steep, narrow alleys of Jerusalem in the final hours before the Passover. We know that those hours before the feast are unnerving, the streets teeming with people. As these words are being fulfilled, nobody gives this a thought. He now falls for the second time, and is a laughing-stock.

**And He wills all this. He wills the fulfillment of the prophecy. And so He falls, exhausted by all the effort.**

**A worm creeps along the ground, whereas man, like a king among creatures, walks above it. A worm will gnaw even at wood: like a worm, remorse for sin gnaws at man’s conscience. Remorse for the second fall.**

# THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women  
of Jerusalem



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

But Jesus turning to them said,  
“Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep  
for Me, but weep for yourselves and  
for your children.” *Luke 23:28-31*

## **MEDITATION**

**Here is a call to repentance, true  
repentance, and sorrow at the reality of  
the evil that has been committed. Jesus  
says to the daughters of Jerusalem who are  
weeping at the sight of Him, “Do not weep  
for Me, but weep for yourselves and for  
your children.” One cannot merely scrape  
away at the surface of evil; one has to get  
down to its roots, its causes, and the inner  
truth of conscience.**

**This is precisely what Jesus means to say  
as He carries His Cross: He always “knew  
what was in man” and He continues to know  
it. That is why He must always be for us the  
closest onlooker, the One who sees all our  
actions and is aware of all the verdicts which  
our consciences pass on them.**

**Lord, let me know how to live and walk  
in the Truth.**

# THE NINTH STATION

Jesus falls for the third time



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all . . . And we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” *Isaiah 53:6*

## **MEDITATION**

**Every station along this Way is a milestone of that obedience and self-emptying. We can appreciate the extent of that self-emptying when we see Jesus falling for the third time under the Cross.**

**We can appreciate it when we meditate on Who it is falling, Who it is lying in the dusty road under the Cross, at the feet of a hostile crowd that spares Him no insult or humiliation.**

**Who is it who has fallen? Who is Jesus Christ? “Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross.”**

# THE TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped and offered  
gall and vinegar to drink





**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. *Matthew 27:34*

## **MEDITATION**

**He did not want a sedative, which would have dulled his consciousness during the agony. He wanted to be fully aware as he suffered on the Cross, accomplishing the mission he had received from the Father.**

**That was not what the soldiers in charge of the execution were used to. Since they had to nail the condemned man to the Cross, they tried to dull his senses and his consciousness. But with Christ this could not be. Jesus knows that his death on the Cross must be a sacrifice of expiation.**

**This is why he wants to remain alert to the very end. Without consciousness, he could not, in complete freedom, accept the full measure of suffering.**

**Conscience and freedom: these are the essential elements of fully human action. The world has so many ways of weakening the will and of darkening conscience.**

THE ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the cross



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

And the inscription of the charge against Him read: "The King of the Jews."  
And with Him, they crucified two robbers: one on His right and one on His left. *Mark 15:25-27*

## MEDITATION

**"They have pierced My hands and feet, I can count all My bones." How prophetic were these words! The whole of this body, His hands, His feet, His every bone, is a priceless ransom. The whole Man is in a state of utmost tension: His bones, His muscles, His nerves, His every organ and every cell, is stretched and strained to the breaking-point. "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."**

**And the whole of the world which Jesus wills to draw to Himself enters into the reality of the Cross. The Passion of Christ Crucified lies precisely in this gravitational pull, and the salvation of the world is dependent upon it.**

**"You are from below, I am from above."**

# THE TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

At the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. When the centurion, who stood facing Him, saw that He thus breathed His last, he said: "Truly this Man was the Son of God." *Mark 15:34,37,39*

## **MEDITATION**

**Here we have the greatest, the most sublime work of the Son in union with the Father. Yes, in union, in the most perfect union possible, precisely at the moment when He cries: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"**

**To gaze upon those arms (on the cross) as they embrace all humanity and all the world. Here is the Man. Here is God himself. In Him we live and move and have our being. In those arms outstretched along the beam of the Cross.**

**This is the Mystery of the Redemption. Nailed to the Cross, pinned in that terrible position, Jesus calls on the Father. All His words bear witness that He is one with the Father. "I and the Father are one." "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." "My Father is working still, and I am working."**



## THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the Cross



**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

And when evening had come, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God, brought a linen shroud, and took the body of Jesus down from the Cross. *Mark 15:42-43,46*

## **MEDITATION**

**The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross and laid in His mother's arms. We think back to the moment when Mary accepted the message brought by the Angel Gabriel: "And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus; the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and of His Kingdom there will be no end." Mary had replied simply, "Let it be to me according to your word," as though even then she wanted to give expression to what she now experiences.**

**In the Mystery of the Redemption, Grace - the gift of God Himself - is interwoven with a "price" paid by the human heart.**

**And Mary, who more than anyone was enriched by gifts, pays all the more. With her heart. Inseparable from this Mystery is the extraordinary promise spoken of by Simeon during the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple: "And a sword will pierce your heart, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."**

**How many human hearts bleed for the heart of this mother who has paid so dearly! Once again Jesus lies in her arms, as He did in the stable in Bethlehem, during the flight into Egypt.**

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is placed in the tomb





**We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.  
Because, by Your Holy Cross,  
You have redeemed the world.**

Joseph of Arimathea, wrapped the body of Jesus in the linen shroud, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. *Mark 15:46-47*

## **MEDITATION**

**From the moment when man, as a result of sin, was driven away from the Tree of Life, the earth became a burial ground. With as many burial places as there are men. A great planet of tombs.**

**Close to Calvary, there was a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. In it, the body of Jesus was placed after being taken down from the Cross. They laid it there in haste, so that the burial might be completed before the feast of Passover, which began at sunset.**

**Though our planet is constantly being filled with fresh tombs, though the cemetery in which man, who comes from dust and returns to dust, is always growing, nonetheless all who gaze upon the tomb of Jesus Christ live in the hope of the Resurrection.**

## Concluding Prayer:

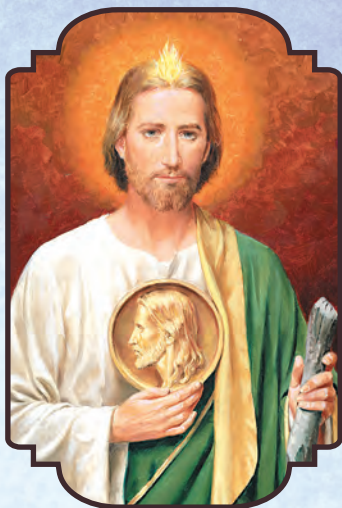
**O God, we have seen how You worked our salvation through the sufferings, death and resurrection of Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Teach us to unite our trials and sorrows to His sufferings and death, so that we may likewise share in the joy and glory of His Resurrection. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Through the Cross of Christ, the sign of our redemption, may Almighty God bless us, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” John 3:16-17*



## **The Rosary Shrine of St. Jude**

**There is no Catholic devotion more richly endowed with indulgences than the Way of the Cross, and none which allows us to more literally obey Christ's call to "Take up our cross and follow Him."**

*The reflections presented here were prepared for you as you retrace the final hours of Our Lord's life through the Stations of the Cross.*

*It is especially important to carry forward the Cross of Hope in these troubling times.*

*May your journey with Christ through these words inspire you to share your faith with all whose lives you touch.*



# The ROSARY SHRINE *of* SAINT JUDE

*America's Center for Saint Jude Devotion in our Nation's Capital*

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