

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. (Mark 8:31)

They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over. (Matthew 26:15-16)

And Jesus said to the chief priests and temple guards and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? (Luke 22:52)

Let us pray:

God of power and mercy, in love you sent your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live with you forever. Bless us as we reflect on his suffering and death that we may learn from his example. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

R: Amen

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. (Mark 15:15)

Consider Jesus scourged and crowned with thorns. Unjustly condemned to death by Pilate. The Judge of the world, who will come again to judge us all, stands there, dishonored and defenseless before the earthly judge.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22)

R: But they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Luke 23:21)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE SECOND STATION

Jesus carries his Cross

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17)

Consider Jesus with the cross on his shoulders. Walking to the death he was about to suffer. Jesus, the true King, does not reign through violence, but through a love which suffers for us and with us. He takes up the Cross, our cross, the burden of being human, the burden of the world. And so he goes before us and points out to us the way which leads to true life.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.
(Matthew 16:24)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

I was hard pressed and falling, but the LORD came to my help. (Psalm 118:13)

Consider the first fall of Jesus. Tradition tells us that the scourging had so weakened him that he could hardly walk; and yet he had to carry that great load. In Jesus' fall beneath the weight of the Cross, the meaning of his whole life is seen: his voluntary abasement, which lifts us up from the depths of our pride.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: He was pierced for our sins. (Isaiah 53:5)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his Mother

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, and you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke 2:34-35)

Consider the Son and His Mother. Tradition tells us that they met on his way to Calvary. The sorrow at such a meeting would have been unbearable. His Cross becomes her Cross, his humiliation is her humiliation. Mother of sorrows! This expresses in some way her unity with the suffering of her Son.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.”
(Luke 1:28)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps bear the Cross

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (Mark 15:21)

Consider the Cyrenian, passing by, forced to carry the cross of a condemned man. He does what he must do, but reluctantly. Significantly, Mark not only names Simon, but also his children, who were evidently known to the community as Christians. From this chance encounter, faith was born.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
(Romans 6:3)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

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.

Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.

(Matthew 25:40)

Consider Veronica. Her name is not mentioned in the Gospels, even though the names of other women who accompanied Jesus do appear.

According to tradition, she pushed her way through the soldiers escorting Jesus on the road to Calvary and wiped the sweat and blood from the Lord's face with a veil. That face remained imprinted on the veil, a faithful reflection, a "true icon", a "Veronica." In her act of love we see the true image of Jesus.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Love is patient, love is kind. Love never fails.
(1 Corinthians 13:4,7)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

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.

For I have said that they would gloat over me, exult over me if I stumble. I am very near to falling. (Psalm 38:17-18)

Consider the second fall of Jesus. The tradition that Jesus fell three times beneath the weight of the Cross evokes the fall of Adam—the state of fallen humanity—and the mystery of Jesus' own sharing in our fall. Man lies fallen in the dust. The Lord bears this burden and falls, over and over again, in order to meet us. He falls in order to raise us up.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Lord, show me your way. (Psalm 27:11)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets 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.

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.' For if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:27-31)

Consider the women of Jerusalem who followed Jesus. They wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in such a pitiable state. But Jesus said: "do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children." Here is a call to repentance, true repentance, and sorrow at the reality of the evil that has been committed.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Wherever you go, I will go. (Ruth 1:16)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE NINTH STATION

Jesus falls 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 valiant one whose steps are guided by the LORD, who will delight in his way, May stumble, but he will never fall, for the LORD holds his hand. (Psalm 37:23-24)

Consider how Jesus fell for the third time. Tradition says he was extremely weak and hardly had strength to move. Every station along this Way is a milestone of 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.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Though the just fall seven times, they rise again. (Proverbs 24:16)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

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.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. (John 19:23)

Consider Jesus stripped of his garments by his executioners. His public stripping means that Jesus is no longer anything at all, exposed to shame, he is simply an outcast, rejected by all alike. He takes the shame of Adam, the sufferings and the needs of the poor, the outcasts of our world, and fulfills the words of the prophets.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back there. (Job 1:21)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

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.

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him. (Luke 23:33)

Consider Jesus nailed to the cross. He stretched out his arms and offered the sacrifice of his life for our salvation. They nailed his hands and feet, and then, raising the cross, left him to die.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: They have pierced my hands and my feet
(Psalm 22:17)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

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.

When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. (John 19:30)

Consider the death of Jesus. After three hours of agony on the cross, he bows his head and dies. Now he has radically fulfilled the commandment of love, he has completed the offering of himself, and in this way he is now the revelation of the true God, the God who is love.
(Here, we kneel/pause in silent prayer.)

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Psalm 22:2)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. (John 19:38)

Consider how, after our Lord died, He was taken down from the cross by two of his disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, and, according to tradition, was placed in the arms of his afflicted Mother.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: “And you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”
(Luke 2:35)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Taking the body, Joseph 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. (Matthew 27:59-60)

Consider how the disciple carried the body of Jesus to its burial. Tradition tells us that his holy Mother went with him and arranged the body in the tomb with her own hands. Then they closed the tomb and departed. In his burial, Jesus is the grain of wheat which gives rise to the true manna, the Bread of Life, in the mystery of the Eucharist.

V: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

R: If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. (Romans 6:8)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

THE RESURRECTION

When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here." (Mark 16:4-6)

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

R: Amen