

# JESUS' WAY OF THE CROSS

## THROUGH THE EYES OF MARY, HIS MOTHER

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,.....

The Way of the Cross is the way of every person's life. Doesn't every life have suffering, falls, hurts, rejections, condemnations, death, burial.....and resurrection?

It has been a Catholic tradition through the centuries to meditate on the Way of the Cross, so that it becomes **our** way of life.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, made that first way of the cross. These stations attempt to show us, through Mary's eyes, what Jesus was going through on the way to Calvary.

We hope this spiritual journey takes us deeper into the sufferings of Christ so that we can better appreciate what He did for us, and develop a deeper love for Him and for our brothers and sisters.

FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Jesus is brought before Pilate on trumped-up charges of treason, and is condemned to death.

Pilate  
&  
Mary

MARY: It was early Friday morning when I saw my son. That was the first glimpse I had of him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks.

Then Pilate, from his chair of judgment, asked the crowd why they wanted my son executed. All around me they shouted, "Crucify him!" I wanted to plead with them to stop.

But I knew this had to be. So I stood by and cried silently.

READER: Jesus is innocent. Pilate is clear on that. He knows the Chief Priests have handed him over out of jealousy. But he cannot figure out in what way that poor, meek man, standing before him, can be a king.

He is astounded. He would like to release Jesus, but the threatening cry of the mob is pressuring him. "Crucify him!" A cry of all times and generations, and each one of us can recognize his or her voice in the chorus.

- jealousy on the part of the priests,
- hostility on the part of the people they have manipulated,
- self-interest and cowardice on the part of a politician unwilling to live up to his responsibility.

LET US PRAY:

Lord Jesus, it is hard for me to imagine the anguish your mother felt at your condemnation. But what about today,

when I hold a grudge...? "Crucify him!"

when I judge others.....? "Crucify him."

Doesn't this bring tears of anguish to both you and your mother?

Forgive me, Jesus.

OUR FATHER.....

HAIL MARY.....

## **SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS**

A heavy cross is thrust on Jesus' shoulders and he is ordered to carry it to the site of his execution. Jesus accepts the cross with love.

**MARY:** Regaining a little strength, I walked with the crowds to the entrance of the square. A door flew open and my son stumbled out, the guards laughing behind him. Two men dragged over a heavy wooden cross and dropped it on his shoulders. Then they shoved him down the road. My pain for him was unbearable. I wanted to take the cross from him and carry it myself.

But I knew this had to be, so I walked on silently.

**READER:** Throughout the world, mankind is burdened by crosses - war, hunger, poverty. But we seldom realize this. For that matter, we scarcely notice the people around us who are also carrying large crosses:

- the student who is failing everything
- the family that is struggling because of a lost job
- the elderly person who is nearing the end and is afraid
- the person in love with someone who doesn't return that love

### **LET US PRAY:**

Lord Jesus, I beg you to forgive me for the many times I have added more weight to your cross by closing my eyes to the pain and loneliness of my neighbor. Forgive me for gossiping about others and for always trying to find excuses to avoid certain people who wish to talk with me. Help me to be like Mary, always seeking to lighten the crosses of others. Forgive me, Jesus.

**OUR FATHER.....**

**HAIL MARY.....**

### THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

The cross is heavy, the road to Calvary is long.  
Jesus slumps to the ground.  
Quickly the soldiers drag him to his feet again.

*soldier*

MARY: I followed closely behind my son as he stumbled toward Calvary. Nothing had ever hurt me more than to see him in such pain. I saw the cross digging into his shoulders - the shoulders I had caressed and kissed when he was a child.

Then my heart dropped when I saw him fall - face to the ground. For a moment I thought my beloved son was dead. My whole body began to tremble. Then the guards kicked him. He rose slowly and began to walk again, yet they still whipped him. I wanted to protect him with my own body.

But, I knew this had to be, so I walked on and wept silently.

READER: The world is filled with people who have fallen and are trying desperately to get up. Many are in prisons where conditions are deplorable. Once outside those walls, they frequently still are walled in by prejudice toward "ex-cons." Many face a daily battle to stay away from drugs or alcohol, gambling and other addictions. How many times do we label them "losers" instead of giving them the support they need. Isn't our lack of concern a greater failure than theirs?

### LET US PRAY:

Lord, how often have I seen you fall, and, unlike Mary, have left you there without concern? How often have I seen people make mistakes and gotten angry with them or laughed at them? How often do I find myself getting angry when someone does things differently than I? Mary offered you her support through your entire passion. Help me to do the same for you by the support I give to others.  
Lord, have mercy on me.

OUR FATHER.....  
HAIL MARY.....

#### **FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS GRIEVING MOTHER**

Mary is able to break through the mocking crowd and their eyes meet.  
For the first time since his passion began, Jesus is looked upon with love.

MARY: I had managed to break through the crowd and was walking side by side with my son. I called to him through the shouting voices.

He stopped.

Our eyes met, mine full of tears of anguish, His full of pain and confusion.

I felt helpless; then his eyes said to me, "Courage! There is a purpose for this." As he stumbled on, I knew he was right.

So I followed and prayed silently.

READER: On our TV screens we have seen the effects of so many wars and natural disasters that we seldom wince and soon forget. Even the faces of starving children fail to move us now.

This same kind of insensitivity can affect our relationships with those who are close to us. We overlook the pain and discouragement of a fellow student who has failed an important test. We fail to see the panic in the eyes of a neighbor whose wife is terminally ill. We ignore the worries or concerns of a relative because we're too busy. But, when the suffering of another fails to touch us, then we, too, are suffering from an affliction and also need to be healed.

LET US PRAY:

Lord Jesus, forgive me the many times our eyes met and I turned mine away. Forgive me the times things did not go my way and I let everyone know about it. Forgive me the times I brooded over little inconveniences or became discouraged and did not listen to your call to courage!

Yes, Lord, our eyes have met many times, but fruitlessly.

OUR FATHER.....

HAIL MARY.....

**FIFTH STATION: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS**

*Simon*

Because Jesus is faltering under his cross and might die on the way, the soldiers grab a bystander named Simon and order him to help.

**MARY:** I could now see almost complete helplessness on the face of my son as he tried to carry his heavy load. Each step looked as if I would be his last. I felt his every pain in my heart and I wanted the whole thing to end.

Then I noticed some commotion near Jesus. The guards had pulled a protesting man from the crowd. They forced him to pick up the back of the cross to help lighten my son's load. He asked the guards why this had to be.

I knew, and so I followed silently.

**READER:** We can't blame Simon for his reluctance to help Jesus. When the faces of poverty, war and despair flood our TV screens, we too look the other way. Who wants to worry about other people's problems? We have enough of our own.

Yet, there are things we can do that could help others who are stumbling under their crosses. Within blocks of our homes there are children who could use a tutor, people we could visit or shop for, young mothers who could use some time for themselves. We need to get out of ourselves and move out toward others.

There are many unknowns on the way of the cross. One follows Christ with no security, yet one thing gives us hope. The Simons of this world are never alone. The Son of Man walks by their side.

**LET US PRAY:**

Lord Jesus, I have refused to help you many times. I have been a selfish person who has often questioned your word and turned away from suffering. Don't let me remain like Simon, but help me to be generous enough to share the cross of others who need me.

Help me to be like your mother, Mary, who always silently followed and obeyed.

**OUR FATHER.....**

**HAIL MARY.....**

*Veronica*

**SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

As Jesus passes by, a compassionate woman rushes after him and wipes the blood from his face. To her astonishment, the outline of his features is left on the cloth.

**MARY:** As I continued close by Jesus, this woman pushed past the guards, took off her veil and began to wipe my son's sweating, bloody face. The guards immediately pulled her back.

Her face seemed to say, "Why are you doing this to him?"

I knew, so I walked on in faith, silently.

**READER:** Veronica still lives today. She lives in people like the sisters of Mother Teresa who minister to the dying poor throughout the world. We may not be called to do their work, but there are so many opportunities in our lives <sup>such as</sup> kind words and compassionate gesture. Without being phony, we can support and encourage a friend who is having a bad day. We can welcome someone who is new to our neighborhood, our country. We can all try to stop the spread of gossip about another person. There are all sorts of ways we can help.

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, this woman gave you the best she could. On the other hand, I have wanted to take more than I give. So many opportunities arise every day for me to give to you by giving to others - but I pass them by.

My savior, never let me ask why again, but help me to give all I have to you.

**OUR FATHER.....**

**HAIL MARY.....**

## **SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

Despite Simon's assistance, Jesus again falls. He lies on the ground until the soldiers roughly pull him to his feet again.

**MARY:** Again my son fell, and again my grief was overwhelming at the thought that he might die.

I started to move toward him, but the soldiers prevented me. He rose and stumbled ahead slowly. Seeing my son fall, get up again, and continue on, was bitter anguish to me.

But, since I knew this had to be, I walked on silently.

**READER:** The weight of the cross and his own weakness forced Jesus to the ground. Oppression and greed force many to their knees in our society. Perhaps the most disadvantaged segment of our population, for example, is the migrant farm worker who frequently is grossly underpaid and lives in shacks. Yet, his efforts to improve his conditions have been resisted for decades and still are rebuffed today.

We find it easy to overlook the burden which forces strangers to the ground. We are well-fed, well-housed and well-educated. But, are not these strangers our brothers and sisters?

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, of all people Mary was your most faithful follower, never stopping in spite of all the pain she felt for you. I have many times turned away from you by my sins and have caused others to turn away from you.

I beg you to have mercy on me.

**OUR FATHER.....**  
**HAIL MARY.....**



## **EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN**

Forgetting about his own pain, Jesus consoles women who are weeping at his condition.

*woman*

**MARY:** I was walking a few steps behind Jesus when I saw him stop. Some women were there crying for him and pitying him.

He told them not to shed tears for him. They had the opportunity to accept him as the messiah; like many others, they rejected him instead. He told them to shed tears for themselves, tears of repentance that would bring about their conversion. They did not see the connection between that and his walk to death.

I did, and as he walked on, I followed silently.

**READER:** The daughters of Jerusalem weep for the fate of Jesus. They are well aware of the injustice, which is being done to Mary's son. Their motherly hearts are deeply upset. Overwhelmed by grief, they could do nothing but weep when they saw Jesus. But tears are not enough.

If we reflect on the millions who are facing death by starvation around the world, we may also feel like crying. But tears do not produce bread.

To help the starving, we must do our part. This means studying the problem and searching out long-range solutions. It also means that we should try to "live with" those who are starving by cutting down on food or by fasting occasionally. And, it means we should give our support and prayers to agencies and persons who are carrying food and ideas to the hungry.

**LET US PRAY:** My Savior, many times I have acted like these women, always seeing the problems and faults of others and pitying them. Yet, very rarely have I seen my own sinfulness and asked your pardon. Lord, you have taught me through these women. Forgive me, Lord, for my blindness.

**OUR FATHER.....**

**HAIL MARY.....**

## **NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

Lack of sleep, the scourging and crowning with thorns, the horrible journey with his cross - all have taken their toll. Once more, Jesus slumps to the ground.

**MARY:** This fall of Jesus was agony to me. Not only had he fallen on the rocky ground again, but now, he was almost at the top of the hill of crucifixion.

The soldiers screamed at him and abused him, almost dragging him the last few steps. My heart pounded as I imagined what they would do to him next.

But, I knew this had to be, so I climbed the hill silently behind him.

**READER:** Failure - our own and others. Millions live constantly with a numbing sense of their own failures. The alcoholic reaching for a bottle, and hating himself for it; the drug addict who is destroying himself, students who are overwhelmed by sexual experiences which bring them only guilt and shame.

“I can’t go on.” Sometimes we feel that way. We become painfully aware of our own weaknesses and shortcomings and get down on ourselves. We need the courage to keep getting back up on our feet.

**LET US PRAY:** My loving Jesus, I know that many times I have offered my hand to help people, but when it became inconvenient or painful to me, I left them, making excuses for myself.  
Help me, Lord, to be like your mother, Mary, and never take my supporting hand away from those who need it.

**OUR FATHER.....**  
**HAIL MARY.....**

## **TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS**

The journey comes to an end at Calvary. The soldiers quickly strip away his clothes, to humiliate him further in front of the crowd.

**MARY:** With my son finally relieved of the weight of the cross, I thought he would have a chance to rest. But, the guards immediately started to rip his clothes off his blood-clotted skin. The sight of my son in such pain was unbearable.

Yet, since I knew this had to be, I stood by and cried silently.

**READER:** A poor man, Jesus is stripped of the little that is his. Today, the same process continues on a massive scale. Wealthy nations scoop up larger and larger amounts of the world's goods, while the poorer nations get poorer.

We are conscious of all that we have - our clothes, i-pods, cars, computers and enough money to keep us supplied with many extras. We may not like to admit it, but these possessions mean a lot to us. Is it possible for us to "strip: ourselves of some of our worldly goods and share them with others not so fortunate?

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, I am very selfish. Not only do I cling to everything I own, but in my own way, I too have stripped you. I have taken away the good name of another by foolish talk, and have stripped people of human dignity by my prejudice toward newcomers and people of different races, religions and nationalities.

Jesus, there are so many ways I have offended you through the hurt I have caused others. Help me to see you in all people.

**OUR FATHER.....**

**HAIL MARY.....**

## **ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

**Roughly the soldiers hurl Jesus down on the cross he has been carrying. Then they nail his hands and feet to the wood.**

**MARY:** As they threw Jesus on the cross, he willingly allowed himself to be nailed. As they punctured his hands and his feet, I felt the pain in my heart. Then they lifted up the cross.

There he was, my son, whom I love so much, being scorned as he struggled for the last few moments of earthly life.

But I knew this had to be, so I stood by and prayed silently.

**READER:** The soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross have their counterparts today. In some countries, torture and brutality are part of the governing process. In others, torture is used to interrogate prisoners. They are beaten, receive electrical shocks and are brutally brainwashed. Seldom does our government, or its citizens, protest strongly.

Torture has various forms. We know a few of our own. We can make a person wince by a mocking word, a clever put-down. We know how to irritate others, to exclude those who we do not like, pass on gossip or stir up an argument.

Pass the nails, please.

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, what pain you endured for me, and what pain your mother went through, seeing her only son die for love of me! Yet, both you and she are ready to forgive me as soon as I repent of my sin. Help me to root torture out of my life so that I no longer nail people to crosses by my words or actions. Help me, Lord, to turn away from my sinfulness.

**OUR FAHER.....**  
**HAIL MARY.....**

woman

## TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

The nightmare of pain and suffering comes to an end. After three hours on the cross, Jesus dies.

MARY: What greater pain is there for a mother than to see her son die right before her eyes!

I, who had brought this savior into the world and watched him grow, stood helplessly beneath his cross as he lowered his head and died. His earthly anguish was finished, but mine was greater than ever.

Yet, his had to be and I had to accept it, so I stood by and I mourned silently.

READER: Death by violence. His was not the first and certainly not the last. In our cities each day, dozens are fatally shot and knifed, beaten to death in fights, wiped out in senseless traffic accidents. And then there is institutional violence, caused by the fact that a privileged few of us control most of the earth's resources and can cheerfully watch the poor scramble for the crumbs we leave behind. Many die before they get them.

We don't think much about death, and not at all about our own death. It's such a painful topic and, besides, we have many years ahead of us, if our lucks holds out. Or is it fear that makes us reluctant to think about it? We need to get in touch with the feelings we have about death so that we can use our time of life well.

LET US PRAY: My Jesus, have mercy on me for what my sins have done to you and to others. I thank you for your great act of love. You have said that true love is laying down your life for your friends. Let me always be your friend.

Teach me to live my life for others, and not fail you again.

OUR FATHER.....

HAIL MARY.....

**THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS**

*John*

His body hangs limply. The soldiers cut him down and place him, bleeding and broken, in the arms of his mother.

**MARY:** The crowd had gone; the noise had stopped. I stood quietly with one of Jesus' friends and looked up at the dead body of our savior, my son.

Then two men took the body from the cross and placed it in my arms. A deep sorrow engulfed my being. Yet, I also felt deep joy. Life had ended cruelly for my son, but it had also brought life to all of us.

I knew this had to be, and I prayed silently.

*Mary*

**READER:** The scene is repeated constantly: A mother receives the body of a son or husband slain in war. It makes no difference where the war is fought or the color of the skin of the participants. The grief is the same. Incredibly, the wars continue and the grief mounts. Another mother today will receive the broken body of her son.

We feel helpless in the face of grief like this. We feel helpless, too, when a neighbor dies, or the mother or father of a friend. What can we possibly say or do, except to stand by those who are grieving and to make their grief our own. We cannot cure their grief, but we can care.

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, with infinite gentleness, your mother took your body into her arms after your death. Your passion has ended. Yet, it still goes on whenever I choose sin over you. I have done my part in your crucifixion and now, my Savior, I beg your forgiveness with all my heart.  
Help me to live a life worthy of you and your mother.

**OUR FATHER.....**  
**HAIL MARY.....**

**FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB**



Relatives and friends carry his body to the grave. They place it inside, roll a boulder across the entrance, and silently withdraw.

**MARY:** We brought Jesus' body to a tomb and I arranged it there myself, silently weeping – silently rejoicing. I took one more look at my loving son, and then walked out. They closed the tomb and before I left, I thought,

I knew this had to be..... it had to be for you!  
I would wait in faith, silently.

**READER:** The suffering of Calvary still continues. We can see it in the faces of the hungry and destitute of the world, in the victims of war and disaster. Yes, we can see suffering in the eyes of those around us - even in the eyes of our own families and friends.

Our response? We have the hope that tomorrow will be better. To make it so, we need skills, training and the best utilization of our own God-given talents. But, we must never forget that we also have to bury our own selfishness, our own sensitivity. Only then, can we help those who are looking to us and calling our names.

**LET US PRAY:** Lord, when you were buried, it seemed like the end of everything you promised and stood for. But it wasn't, it was only the beginning

This had to be because you love me, and for no other reason. All you ask is that I live a good life. You never said such a life would be easy.

I am willing to leave sin behind and live for you alone, in my brothers and sisters. Help me to bury my own selfishness as a beginning of a stronger love for you and your people.

**OUR FATHER.....**  
**HAIL MARY.....**

**FIFTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD**

**MARY:** I could only be most grateful for the sacrifice of my son for us.  
Yet, what emptiness I felt trying to live without him whom I loved so!

But, only two days later, that emptiness was filled beyond belief -  
He has risen! Our savior had opened the doors to a new life. That is the  
way it had to be - because his undying love for you would not stop at  
anything less.

I could rejoice forever, but not in silence.

**READER:** LET US PRAY:  
My Savior, thank you!  
Thank you for such endless love that helps me to rise  
out of my own sinfulness.  
I will try again to live a better life.  
Help me to always remember that love.

Mary, mother of our risen savior, teach me to be  
like you, and in my love for others, love him in return.

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER.....**