

WAY OF THE CROSS

INTRODUCTION:

These fourteen steps
that you are now about to walk,
you do not take alone.

I walk with you.

Though you are you,
and I am I,
yet we are truly one-
one Christ.

And therefore
My way of the cross
two thousand years ago
and your "way" now
are also one.

But note this difference.
My life was incomplete until I crowned it
by my death.
Your fourteen steps
will only be complete
when you have crowned them
by your life.

The First Station

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

In Pilate's hands, my other self,
I see my Father's will.
Though Pilate is unjust,
he has earthly power over me.

And so the Son of God obeys.

If I can bow to my Father's will,
can you also submit, even in the face of injustice?

Prayer (all):

My Jesus, Lord,
obedience cost you your life.
For me
it costs an act of will-
no more-
and yet how hard it is for me to bend.

Remove the blinders from my eyes
that I may see that it is You alone whom I obey –

Lord, it is you.

Our Father - - - -

Hail Mary - - - - -

Glory be - - - - - -

The Second Station
JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

This cross,
this chunk of tree,
is what my Father chose for me.

The crosses you must bear
are largely products of your daily life.
And yet my Father chose them, too,
for you.

Receive them from His hands.

Take heart, my other self,
I will not let your burdens grow
one ounce too heavy for your strength.

Let us Pray (all):

My Jesus, Lord,
I take my daily cross.
I welcome the monotony
that often marks my day,
discomforts of all kinds,
the summer's heat, the winter's cold,
my disappointments, tensions, setbacks, cares.'

Remind me often that
in carrying my cross,
I carry yours with you.
And though I bear a sliver only
of your cross,
You carry all of mine, except a sliver,
in return.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - - -

The Third Station
JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

The God who made the universe,
and holds it in existence
by His will alone,
becomes a man, too weak to bear
a piece of timber's weight.

How human in his weakness is the Son of God.

My Father willed it thus.
I could not be your model otherwise.

If you would be my other self,
you also must accept without complaint
your human frailties.

Let us Pray (All):

Lord Jesus, how can I refuse?

I willingly accept my weaknesses,
My irritations and my moods,
my headaches and fatigue,
all my defects of body, mind, and soul.

Because they are your will for me,
these "handicaps" of my humanity,
I gladly suffer them.

Make me content
with all my discontents,
but give me strength
to struggle after you.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - - -

The Fourth Station

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

My Mother sees me whipped.
She sees me kicked and driven like a beast.
She counts my every wound.
But though her soul cries out in agony,
no protest or complaint
escapes her lips
or even enters her thoughts.

She shares my martyrdom—
and I share hers.
We hide no pain, no sorrow,
from each other's eyes.
This is my Father's will.

Let us Pray (all):

My Jesus, Lord,
I know what you are telling me.
To watch the pain of those we love
is harder than to bear our own.

To carry my cross after you,
I, too, must stand and watch
the sufferings of my dear ones--
the heartaches, sicknesses, and grief
of those I love.

And I must let them watch mine, too.

I do believe—
for those who love you
all things work together unto good.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - -

The Fifth Station
SIMON HELPS JESUS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ Speaks

My strength is gone;
I can no longer bear the cross alone.
And so the legionnaires
make Simon give me aid.

This Simon is like you, my other self.
Give me your strength.

Each time you lift some burden from another's back,
you lift as with your very hand
the cross's awful weight
that crushes me.

Let us Pray (all):

Lord, make me realize
that every time I wipe a dish,
pick up an object off the floor,
assist a child in some small task,
or give another preference
in traffic or the store;
each time I feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,
teach the ignorant,
or lend my hand in any way—
it matters not to whom—
my name is Simon.
And the kindness I extend to them
I really give to you.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - - -

The Sixth Station

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

Can be brave enough, my other self,
to wipe my bloody face?

Where is my face, you ask?

At home whenever eyes fill up with tears,
at work when tensions rise,
on playgrounds, in the slums,
the courts, the hospitals, the jails—
wherever suffering exists—
my face is there.
And there I look for you
to wipe away my blood and tears.

Let us Pray (all):

Lord, what you ask is hard.
It calls for courage and self-sacrifice,
and I am weak.
Please, give me strength.
Don't let me run away because of fear.

Lord, live in me
and act in me
and love in me.
And not in me alone—in all of us—
so that we may reveal
no more Your bloody but your glorious face
on earth.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - - -

The Seventh Station
JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

This seventh step, my other self,
is one that tests your will.
From this fall learn to persevere
in doing good.

The time will come
when all your efforts seem to fail
and you will think,
“I can’t go on.”

Then turn to me,
my heavy-laden one,
and I will give you rest.

Trust me and carry on.

Let us Pray (all):

Give me your courage, Lord.
When failure presses heavily on me
and I am desolate,
stretch out your hand
to lift me up.

I know I must not cease,
but persevere in doing good.

But help me, Lord.
Alone there’s nothing I can do.
With you, I can do anything you ask.

I will.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - - -

The Eighth Station

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

How often had I longed to take
the children of Jerusalem
and gather them to me.
But they refused.

But now these women weep for me
and my heart mourns for them—
mourns for their sorrows that will come.

I comfort those who seek to solace me.

How gentle can you be, my other self?
How kind?

Let us Pray (all):

My Jesus,
your compassion
in your passion
is beyond compare.

Lord, teach me,
help me learn.
When I would snap at those
who hurt me with their ridicule,
those who misunderstand,
or hinder me with some misguided helpfulness,
those who intrude upon my privacy—
then help me curb my tongue.

My gentleness become my cloak.

Lord, make me kind like you.

Our Father - - - -

Hail Mary - - - - -

Glory be - - - - -

The Ninth Station
JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

Completely drained of strength
I lie, collapsed, upon the cobblestones.
My body cannot move.
No blows, no kicks, can rouse it up.

And yet my will is mine.
And so is yours.

Know this, my other self,
your body may be broken,
but no force on earth and none in hell
can take away your will.

Your will is yours.

Let us Pray (all):

My Lord,
I see you take a moment's rest
then rise and stagger on.
So I can do—
because my will is mine.

When all my strength is gone
and guilt and self-reproach
press me to earth and seem to hold me fast,
protect me from the sin of Judas—
save me from despair!

Lord, never let me feel
that any sin of mine
is greater than your love.
No matter what my past has been
I can begin anew.

Our Father - - - -

Hail Mary - - - - -

Glory be - - - - -

The Tenth Station

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

Behold, my other self,
the poorest king who ever lived.
Before my creatures I stand stripped.
The cross-my deathbed—
even this is not my own.

Yet who has ever been so rich?

Possessing nothing, I won all—
my Father's love.

If you, too, would own everything,
be not solicitous
about your food, your clothes,
your life.

Let us Pray (all):

My Lord,
I offer you my all—
whatever I possess, and more, my self.

Detach me from the craving for
prestige, position, wealth.

Root out of me
all trace of envy of my neighbor
who has more than I.
Release me from the vice of pride,
my longing to exalt myself,
and lead me to the lowest place.

May I be poor in spirit, Lord.
so that I can be rich in you.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - -

The Eleventh Station

JESUS IS NAILED ON THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

Can you imagine what a crucifixion is?

My executioners stretch my arms;
they hold my hand and wrist against the wood
and press the nail
until it stabs my flesh.

Then, with one heavy hammer smash,
they drive it through—
and pain
bursts like a bomb of fire in my brain.

They seize the other arm;
and agony again explodes.

Then raising up my knees
so that my feet are flat against the wood,
they hammer them fast, too.

Let us Pray (all):

My God,
I look at you and think:
Is my soul worth this much?

What can I give you in return?

I here and now accept
for all my life
whatever sickness, torment, agony may come.
To every cross I touch my lips.

O blessed cross that lets me be—
with you—
a co-redeemer of humanity.

Our Father - - - -

Hail Mary - - - - -

Glory be - - - - -

The Twelfth Station
JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

The cross becomes a pulpit now—
“Forgive them, Father. . . .
You will be with me in Paradise. . . .
There is your Mother. . . . There your son. . . .
I thirst. . . . It is complete.”

To speak I have to raise myself
by pressing on my wrists and feet,
and every move engulfs me
in new waves of agony.

And then, when I have borne enough,
have emptied my humanity,
I let my mortal life depart.

Let us Pray (all):

My Jesus, God, what can I say or do?

I offer you my death
with all its pains,
accepting now
the time and kind of death
in store for me.
Not by a single instant
Would I lengthen my life's span.

I offer you my death
for my own sins
and for those of all humanity.

My God! My God! Forsake us not.
We know not what we do.

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - -

The Thirteenth Station

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

The sacrifice is done.
Yes, my Mass is complete;
but not my mother's
and not yours, my other self.

My mother still must cradle in her arms
the lifeless body of the Son she bore.

You, too, must part from those you love,
and grief will come to you.

In your bereavements think of this;
A multitude of souls were saved
by Mary's sharing in my Calvary.
Your grief can also be
the price of souls.

Let us Pray (all):

I beg you, Lord,
help me accept the partings that must come—
from friends who go away,
my children leaving home,
and most of all, my dear ones
when you shall call them to yourself.

Then, give me grace to say:
"As it has pleased you, Lord,
to take them home,
I bow to your most holy will.
and if by just one word
I might restore their lives against your will,
I would not speak." Grant them eternal joy.

Our Father - - - -

Hail Mary - - - - -

Glory be - - - - -

The Fourteenth Station
JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless You.
Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Christ speaks:

So ends my mortal life.

But now another life begins
for Mary,
and for Magdalen,
for Peter and for John,
and you.

My life's work is done.
My work within and through my church
must now commence.

I look to you, my other self.

Day in, day out, from this time forth,
be my apostle—
victim—
saint.

Let us Pray (all):

My Jesus, Lord,
You know my spirit is as willing
as my flesh is weak.

The teaching you could not impart,
the sufferings you could not bear,
the works of love you could not do
in your short life on earth,
let me impart, and bear, and do through you.

But I am nothing, Lord. Help me!

Our Father - - - -
Hail Mary - - - - -
Glory be - - - - -

CONCLUSION

Christ Speaks:

I told you at the start, my other self,
my life was not complete
until I crowned it by my death.
Your "way" is not complete
unless you crown it by your life.

Accept each moment as it comes to you,
with faith and trust
that all that happens has my mark on it.
A simple *fiat*, this is all it takes;
a breathing in your heart,
"I will it, Lord."

So seek me not in far-off places.
I am close at hand.
Your workbench, office, kitchen,
these are altars
where you offer love.
And I am with you there.

Go now! Take up your cross
and with your life
complete your way.

(Make a sign of the cross)

In the Name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Let us sing: Our Lady of Fatima

*For peace in Ukraine.
And for conversion of Russia*

SONG/OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Verse I

Dear Lady of Fatima,
We come on bended knees
To beg your intercession,
For peace and unity.

Dear Mary, won't you show us,
The right and shining way,
We pledge our love and offer you,
A Rosary each day.

Verse II

You promised at Fatima,
Each time that you appeared.
To help us if we pray to you,
To banish war and fear.

Dear Lady, on First Saturdays,
We ask your guiding hand,
For grace and guidance here on earth,
And protection for our land.

*“ . . . in the end
my Immaculate Heart
will triumph.”*

Our Lady of Fatima, 1917

