

THE WAY OF THE CROSS - BY ST. JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

I. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

IT IS AFTER TEN IN THE MORNING. The trial is moving to its close. There has been no conclusive evidence. The judge knows that his enemies have handed Jesus over to him out of envy, and he tries an absurd move: a choice between Barabbas, a criminal accused of robbery and murder, and Jesus, who says he is Christ. The people choose Barabbas. Pilate is frightened by the growing uproar. So he sends for water, and washes his hands in the sight of the people, saying as he does so: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; it is your affair." And having had Jesus scourged, he hands him over to them to be crucified. Their frenzied and possessed throats fall silent. As if God had already been vanquished... If only you and I had recognised the day of the Lord!

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

II. JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

OFFERING NO RESISTANCE, Jesus gives himself up to the execution of the sentence. He is to be spared nothing, and upon his shoulders falls the weight of the ignominious cross. But, through love, the Cross is to become the throne from which he reigns. I O

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

III . JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

THE WORN OUT BODY of Jesus staggers now beneath the huge Cross... Our Lord falls to the ground exhausted. Is it not true that as soon as you cease to be afraid of the Cross, of what people call the cross, when you set your will to accept the Will of God, then you find happiness, and all your worries, all your sufferings, physical or moral, pass away? Truly the Cross of Jesus is gentle and lovable. There, sorrows cease to count; there is only the joy of knowing that we are co-redeemers with Him.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

IV. JESUS IS MET BY HIS BLESSED MOTHER

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

HAND IN HAND with Mary, you and I also want to console Jesus, by accepting always and in everything the Will of his Father, of our Father.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

V. SIMON HELPS JESUS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

IN THE WHOLE CONTEXT of the Passion, this help does not add up to very much. But for Jesus, a smile, a word, a gesture, a little bit of love is enough for him to pour out his grace bountifully on the soul of his friend... At times the Cross appears without our looking for it: it is Christ who is seeking us out. And if by chance, before this unexpected Cross which, perhaps, is therefore more difficult to understand, your heart were to show repugnance... don't give it consolations. And, filled with a noble compassion, when it asks for them, say to it slowly, as one speaking in confidence: 'Heart: heart on the Cross! Heart on the Cross!'

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

VI. JESUS' FACE IS WIPED BY VERONICA

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

THE BELOVED FACE OF JESUS, that smiled upon children and was transfigured with glory on Mount Tabor, is now, as it were, concealed by suffering. But this suffering is our purification; the sweat and the blood, which disfigure and tarnish his features, serve to cleanse us.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

VII. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

TO OUR FALLING AGAIN and again into evil, Jesus responds with his determination to redeem us, with an abundance of forgiveness. And, so that no one may despair, again he wearily raises himself, embracing the Cross.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

VIII. JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

A NUMBER OF WOMEN are unable to restrain their compassion and break into tears... But Our Lord wishes to channel their weeping towards a more supernatural motive, and he invites them to weep for sins... Your sins, my sins, the sins of all men, rise up. All the evil we have done and the good that we have neglected to do.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

IX. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

MY GOD! MAY I HATE SIN, and unite myself to You, embracing the Holy Cross, so that I too may fulfil your most lovable Will. Stripped of every earthly attachment, with no other goal but your glory.... generously, offering myself with you in a perfect holocaust.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

X. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

THE EXECUTIONERS TAKE HIS garments and divide them into four parts. But the cloak is without seam, so they say: 'It would be better not to tear it, but let us cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.' So Scripture is again fulfilled: 'They divided my garments among them, for my vesture they cast lots.' Despoiled, left in the most absolute poverty: our Lord is left with nothing save the wooden Cross. To reach God, Christ is the way; but Christ is on the Cross, and to climb up to the Cross we must have our hearts free.

Our Father...
V. Have mercy on us, O Lord
R. Have mercy on us.

XI. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

NOW THEY ARE CRUCIFYING OUR LORD, and with him two thieves, one on his right and one on his left. Meanwhile, Jesus says: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' It is Love that has brought Jesus to Calvary. And once on the Cross, all his gestures and all his words are of love, a love both calm and strong. With a gesture befitting an Eternal Priest, he opens his arms to the whole human race... And we, our souls rent with sorrow, say to Jesus sincerely: 'I am yours, and I give my whole self to You; gladly do I nail myself to your Cross, ready to be in the cross-roads of this world a soul dedicated to You, to your glory, to the work of Redemption, the coredeemption of all mankind.'

Our Father...
V. Have mercy on us, O Lord
R. Have mercy on us.

XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)
R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS stands his Mother, Mary, with other holy women. Jesus looks at her; then he looks at the disciple whom he loves, and he says to his Mother: 'Woman, behold thy son.' Then he says to the disciple: 'Behold thy mother.' ... It is close on three o'clock, when Jesus cries out: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' ... 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' And he expires. Love sacrifice; it is a fountain of interior life. Love the Cross, which is an altar of sacrifice. Love pain, until you drink, as Christ did, the very dregs of the chalice.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

XIII. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA and Nicodemus were not known publicly as disciples of the Master... But now, when things have turned bad, when the others have fled, they are not afraid to stand up for their Lord. Between the two of them they take down the body of Jesus and place it in the arms of his most holy Mother. Mary's grief is renewed... The Blessed Virgin is our Mother, and we do not wish to, we cannot, leave her alone.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

XIV. JESUS' BODY IS BURIED

V. We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. (Genuflect)

R. Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

NOW IT IS ALL OVER. The work of our Redemption has been accomplished. We are now children of God, because Jesus has died for us and his death has ransomed us. *Empti enim estis pretio magno!* You and I have been bought at a great price. We must make our own the life and death of Christ. We must die through mortification and penance, so that Christ may live in us through Love. And then follow in the footsteps of Christ, with zeal to co-redeem all mankind.

Our Father...

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.