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## DEVOTIONS TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

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"Jesus Christ, having entered the sanctuary of heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit." There is no other way to the Father but through Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### *FIRST FRIDAY DEVOTION*

"The prayer of the Church venerates and honors the *Heart of Jesus* . . . which, out of love for men, he allowed to be pierced by our sins."<sup>2</sup>

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is of great antiquity in the Church. It was St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, however, who made this devotion widespread. In 1675, within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, our Lord appeared to her and said: "Behold this heart which, notwithstanding the burning love for men with which it is consumed and exhausted, meets with no other return from most Christians than sacrilege, contempt, indifference and ingratitude, even in the sacrament of my love [the Eucharist]. But what pierces my heart most deeply is that I am subjected to these insults by persons especially consecrated to my service."<sup>3</sup>

To those who show him love and who make reparation for sins, however, our Lord made a great pledge: "I promise you in the unfathomable mercy of my heart that my omnipotent love will procure

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1. Cf. CCC, 667, 2664, 2665.

2. Cf. CCC, 2669.

3. St. Margaret M. Alacoque, *Autobiography* (=MMAA).

the grace of final penitence for all those who receive communion on nine successive first Fridays of the month; they will not die in my disfavor, or without having received the sacraments, since my divine heart will be their sure refuge in the last moments of their life."<sup>4</sup>

The great promise of the Sacred Heart is most consoling: the grace of final perseverance and the joy of having Jesus' heart as our sure refuge and infinite ocean of mercy in our last hour.

To gain this grace, we must:

- Receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays.
- Have the intention of honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of reaching final perseverance.
- Offer each Holy Communion as an act of atonement for offenses against the Blessed Sacrament.

### Introductory Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, look upon the heart of your well-beloved Son and upon the praise and satisfaction which he offers to you in the name of all sinners; and grant them pardon when they seek your mercy. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.

**R. Amen.**

### Reading

**Jn 19:31–37**

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the oth-

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4. Ibidem.

er who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth — that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.”

### Considerations<sup>5</sup>

1. Love is revealed to us in the Incarnation, the redemptive journey which Jesus Christ made on our earth, culminating in the supreme sacrifice of the cross. And on the cross it showed itself through a new sign: “One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.” This water and blood of Jesus speak to us of a self-sacrifice brought to the last extreme: “It is finished” — everything is achieved, for the sake of love....

The fullness of God is revealed and given to us in Christ, in the love of Christ, in Christ’s heart. For it is the heart of him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Were one to lose sight of this great plan of God — the overflow of love in the world through the Incarnation, the Redemption and Pentecost — he could not understand the refinement with which our Lord deals with us.

2. Let us realize all the richness hidden in the words

5. St. Josemaria Escriva, *“Finding Peace in the Heart of Christ,”* 162–170, Princeton, N.J.: Scepter Publishers, 1974. Footnotes used by the author in the original homily are omitted.

"the Sacred Heart of Jesus." When we speak of a person's heart, we refer not just to his sentiments, but to the whole person in his loving dealings with others. In order to help us understand divine things, Scripture uses the expression "heart" in its full human meaning, as the summary and source, expression and ultimate basis, of one's thoughts, words and actions. One is worth what one's heart is worth....

So, when we talk about the heart of Jesus, we stress the certainty of God's love and the truth of his commitment to us. When we recommend devotion to the Sacred Heart, we are recommending that we should give our whole selves to Jesus, to the whole Jesus—our souls, our feelings and thoughts, our words and actions, our joys.

That is what true devotion to the heart of Jesus means. It is knowing God and ourselves. It is looking at Jesus and turning to him, letting him encourage and teach and guide us. The only difficulty that could beset this devotion would be our own failure to understand the reality of an incarnate God.

3. Jesus on the cross, with his heart overflowing with love for us, is such an eloquent commentary on the value of people and things that words only get in the way. Men, their happiness and their lives, are so important that the very Son of God gave himself to redeem and cleanse and raise them up. "Who will not love this heart so wounded?" a contemplative asks in this connection. "Who will not return love for love? Who will not embrace a heart so pure? We, who are made of flesh, will repay love with love. We will embrace our wounded One, whose hands and feet ungodly men have nailed; we will cling to his side and to his heart. Let us pray that we be worthy

of linking our heart with his love and of wounding it with a lance, for it is still hard and impenitent...."

But note that God does not say: "In exchange for your own heart, I will give you a will of pure spirit." No, he gives us a heart, a human heart, like Christ's. I don't have one heart for loving God and another for loving people. I love Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit and our Lady with the same heart with which I love my parents and my friends. I shall never tire of repeating this. We must be very human, for otherwise we cannot be divine....

If we don't learn from Jesus, we will never love. If, like some people, we were to think that to keep a clean heart, a heart worthy of God, means "not mixing it up, not contaminating it" with human affection, we would become insensitive to other people's pain and sorrow. We would be capable of only an "official charity," something dry and soulless. But ours would not be the true charity of Jesus Christ, which involves affection and human warmth. In saying this, I am not supporting the mistaken theories—pitiful excuses—that misdirect hearts away from God and lead them into occasions of sin and perdition....

4. But I have still a further consideration to put before you. We have to fight vigorously to do good, precisely because it is difficult for us to resolve seriously to be just, and there is a long way to go before human relations are inspired by love and not hatred or indifference. We should also be aware that, even if we achieve a reasonable distribution of wealth and a harmonious organization of society, there will still be the suffering of illness, of misunderstanding, of loneliness, of the death of loved ones, of the experience of our own limitations.

Faced with the weight of all this, a Christian can find only one genuine answer, a definitive answer: Christ on the cross, a God who suffers and dies, a God who gives us his heart opened by a lance for the love of us all. Our Lord abominates injustice and condemns those who commit it. But he respects the freedom of each individual. He permits injustice to happen because, as a result of original sin, it is part and parcel of the human condition. Yet his heart is full of love for men. Our suffering, our sadness, our anguish, our hunger and thirst for justice... he took all these tortures on himself by means of the cross...

Suffering is part of God's plans. This is the truth, however difficult it may be for us to understand it. It was difficult for Jesus Christ the man to undergo his passion: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." In this tension of pleading and acceptance of the Father's will, Jesus goes calmly to his death, pardoning those who crucify him.

This supernatural acceptance of suffering was, precisely, the greatest of all conquests. By dying on the cross, Jesus overcame death. God brings life from death. The attitude of a child of God is not one of resignation to a possibly tragic fate; it is the sense of achievement of someone who has a foretaste of victory. In the name of this victorious love of Christ, we Christians should go out into the world to be sowers of peace and joy through everything we say and do. We have to fight—a fight of peace—against evil, against injustice, against sin. Thus do we serve notice that the present condition of mankind is not definitive. Only the love of God, shown in the heart of Christ, will attain our glorious spiritual triumph.

## **ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

**ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE**

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque was born in 1647 in L'Hauteclair, France. She entered the Visitation convent in Paray-le-Monial in 1671 and soon experienced a series of visions in which Christ asked her to spread devotion to his Sacred Heart, the devotion of First Fridays, and the practice of making Holy Hours before the Blessed Sacrament. She died in 1690 and was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920. Her incorrupt body rests in Paray-le-Monial.

Some of the graces promised by Christ to those who consecrate themselves to his Sacred Heart include the graces necessary in their state of life, abundant blessings and comfort, and peace in their homes. Those who receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive First Fridays will be given the grace of final perseverance and will find a safe refuge in the Sacred Heart at the moment of death.

To the Sacred Heart of our Lord, Jesus Christ, I give myself and I consecrate my person and my life, my actions, pains, and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honor, love, and glorify the Sacred Heart.

This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all his and to do all things for the love of him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to him. I therefore take you, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life, and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in you, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease you or resist your holy will; let your pure love imprint your image so deeply upon my heart that I shall never be able to forget you or to be separated from you.

May I obtain from your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in your heart, for in you I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to you.

### Concluding Prayer

Father,  
we honor the heart of your Son,  
broken by our cruelty,  
yet symbol of love's triumph,  
pledge of all that we are called to be.  
Teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch  
and to offer him living worship  
by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.



## **LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

According to tradition, this litany, approved in 1899 for public recitation, originated at Marseilles, where devotion to the Sacred Heart became very popular during the early eighteenth century.

Lord, have mercy.	<b>Lord, have mercy.</b>
Christ, have mercy.	<b>Christ, have mercy.</b>
Lord, have mercy.	<b>Lord, have mercy.</b>
God our Father in heaven	<b>Have mercy on us.</b>
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,...	
God the Holy Spirit,...	
Holy Trinity, one God,...	
Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father,...	
Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mother,...	
Heart of Jesus, one with the eternal Word,...	
Heart of Jesus, infinite in majesty,...	
Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God,...	
Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High,...	
Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of heaven,...	
Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us,...	
Heart of Jesus, source of justice and love,...	
Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love,...	
Heart of Jesus, wellspring of all virtue,...	
Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise,...	
Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts,...	
Heart of Jesus, treasure house of wisdom and knowledge,...	
Heart of Jesus, in whom there dwells the fullness of God,...	
Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased,...	

Heart of Jesus, from whose fullness  
 we have all received, **Have mercy on us.**

Heart of Jesus, desire of the eternal hills,...

Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy,...

Heart of Jesus, generous to all who turn to you,...

Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness,...

Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins,...

Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with insults,...

Heart of Jesus, broken for our sins,...

Heart of Jesus, obedient even to death,...

Heart of Jesus, pierced by a lance,...

Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation,...

Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection,...

Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation,...

Heart of Jesus, victim for our sins,...

Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you,...

Heart of Jesus, hope of all who die in you,...

Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints,...

Lamb of God, you take away  
 the sins of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away  
 the sins of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away  
 the sins of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

**V.** Jesus, gentle and humble of heart,

**R.** **Touch our hearts and make them like your own.**

Let us pray.

Father, we rejoice in the gifts of love | we have received from the heart of Jesus, your Son. | Open our hearts to share his life | and continue to bless us with his love. | We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

**R.** **Amen.**

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS<sup>6</sup>

The Christian loves to follow the Way of the Cross in the Savior's footsteps. The Stations, from the Prætorium to Golgotha and the tomb, trace the Passion and Death of Christ, who by his Holy Cross has redeemed the world. To understand the mystery of Redemption and the *salvific meaning of suffering*, one ought to meditate upon the sufferings of our Lord, which he took upon himself to save us from sin. God is always with those who suffer. His omnipotence is manifested precisely in the fact that he freely accepted suffering. He could have chosen not to do so. He could have chosen to demonstrate his omnipotence even at the moment of the Crucifixion.<sup>7</sup>

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*My Lord and my God,  
under the loving eyes of our Mother,  
we are making ready to accompany You  
along this path of sorrow,  
which was the price paid for our redemption.  
We wish to suffer all that You suffered,  
to offer You our poor, contrite hearts,  
because You are innocent, and yet  
You are going to die for us,  
who are the only really guilty ones.  
My mother, Virgin of sorrows,  
help us to relive those bitter hours,  
which your Son wished to spend on earth,  
so that we, who were made from a handful of clay,  
may finally live  
in libertatem gloriæ filiorum Dei,  
in the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

6. St. Josemaria Escriva, *The Way of the Cross*, Princeton, N.J.: Scepter Publishers, 1976. Text reprinted here as "Stations of the Cross."

7. Cf. St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *The Meaning of Suffering* 14, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984.



## FIRST STATION

## JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**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 Barrabas, and Pilate exclaims: *What am I to do, then, with Jesus?* (Mt 27:22). They all reply: *Crucify him!* The judge insists: *Why, what evil has he done?* Once again they respond, shouting: *Crucify him! Crucify him!*

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* (Mt 27:24).

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.

\* Jesus is all alone. Far off now are the days when the words of the Man-God brought light and hope to men's hearts, those long processions of sick people whom he healed, the triumphant acclaim of Jerusalem when the Lord arrived, riding on a gentle donkey. If only men had wanted to give a different outlet for God's love! If only you and I had recognized the day of the Lord!

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\* You may wish to kneel here.



## SECOND STATION

## JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Outside the city, to the northwest of Jerusalem, there is a little hill: Golgotha is its name in Aramaic; *locus Calvariæ*, in Latin: the place of skulls, or Calvary.

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.

The people of Jerusalem and those from abroad who have come for the Passover push their way through the city streets, to catch a passing glimpse of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. There is a tumult of voices, and, now and then, short silences—perhaps when Jesus fixes his eyes on someone:

*If anyone wishes to come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me (Mt 16:24).*

How lovingly Jesus embraces the wood which is to bring him to death!

\* 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.



## THIRD STATION

## JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

The heavy cross cuts and tears into our Lord's shoulders.

The crowd has swollen into a multitude, and the legionaries can scarcely contain the angry, surging mob which, like a river that has burst its banks, flows through the streets and alleyways of Jerusalem.

The worn-out body of Jesus staggers now beneath the huge cross. His most loving heart can barely summon up another breath of life for his poor wounded limbs.

To his right and left, our Lord sees the multitude moving around like sheep without a shepherd. He could call them one by one by their names—by our names. There they are, those who were fed at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, those who were cured of their ailments, those he taught by the lakeside, on the mountain and in the porticoes of the Temple.

A sharp pain pierces the soul of Jesus; our Lord falls to the ground, exhausted.

\* You and I can say nothing: now we know why the cross of Jesus weighs so much. We weep over our wretched failings and also for the terrible ingratitude of the human heart. From the depths of our soul there comes an act of real contrition, which lifts us up from the prostration of sin. Jesus has fallen that we might get up again, each and every time.



## FOURTH STATION

## JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

No sooner has Jesus risen from his first fall than he meets his Blessed Mother, standing by the wayside where he is passing.

With immense love Mary looks at Jesus, and Jesus at his mother. Their eyes meet, and each heart pours into the other its own deep sorrow. Mary's soul is steeped in bitter grief, the grief of Jesus Christ.

*O all you that pass by the way, look and see, was there ever a sorrow to compare with my sorrow! (Lam 1:12).*

But no one notices, no one pays attention; only Jesus. Simeon's prophecy has been fulfilled: *Thine own soul a sword shall pierce (Lk 2:35).*

In the dark loneliness of the Passion, our Lady offers her son a comforting balm of tenderness, of union, of faithfulness; a "yes" to the divine will.

\* 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.

Only thus will we taste the sweetness of Christ's cross and come to embrace it with all the strength of Love, carrying it in triumph along the ways of the earth.



## FIFTH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS  
TO CARRY THE CROSS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Jesus is exhausted. His footsteps become more and more unsteady, and the soldiers are in a hurry to be finished. So when they are going out of the city through the Judgment Gate, they take hold of a man who is coming in from a farm, a man called Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, and they force him to carry the cross of Jesus (cf. Mk 15:21).

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 or a little bit of love is enough for him to pour out his grace bountifully on the soul of his friend. Years later, Simon's sons, Christians by then, will be known and held in high esteem among their brothers in the faith. And it all started with this unexpected meeting with the cross.

*I went to those who were not looking for me; I was found by those that sought me not (Is 65:1).*

\* 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!"



## SIXTH STATION

## VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

*There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him and there was no sightliness, that we should be attracted to him. Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and his look was, as it were, hidden and despised. Whereupon we esteemed him not (Is 53:2-3).*

It is the Son of God who is passing by, a madman... madly in love!

A woman, Veronica by name, makes her way through the crowd, with a white linen cloth folded in her hands, and with this she reverently wipes the face of Jesus. Our Lord leaves the impression of his holy Face on the three parts of the veil.

The beloved face of Jesus, which had 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.

\* Lord, help me to decide to tear off, through penance, this pitiful mask that I have fashioned with my wretched doings... Then, and only then, by following the path of contemplation and atonement, will my life begin to copy faithfully the features of your life. I will find myself becoming more and more like you.

We will be other Christs, Christ himself, *ipse Christus*.



## SEVENTH STATION

## JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Outside the walls of the city, the body of Jesus again gives way through weakness, and he falls a second time, amid the shouts of the crowd and the rough handling of the soldiers.

Infirmity of body and bitterness of soul have caused Jesus to fall again. All the sins of men—mine too—weigh down on his Sacred Humanity.

*He has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we have taken him for a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins. On him fell the punishment that brought us salvation, and by his wounds we have been healed (Is 53:4–5).*

Jesus stumbles, but his fall lifts us up; his death brings us back to life.

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.

\* May our stumbles and defeats separate us from him no more. Just as a feeble child throws himself contritely into the strong arms of his father, you and I will hold tightly to the yoke of Jesus. Only a contrition and humility like this can transform our human weakness into the fortitude of God.



## EIGHTH STATION

JESUS CONSOLES  
THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Among the people watching our Lord as he passes by are a number of women who, unable to restrain their compassion, break into tears, perhaps recalling those glorious days spent with Jesus, when everyone exclaimed in amazement: *Bene omnia fecit* (Mk 7:37). He has done all things well.

But our Lord wishes to channel their weeping towards a more supernatural motive. He invites them to weep for sins, which are the cause of the Passion and which will draw down the rigor of divine justice: *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children. . . . For if they do these things to the green wood, what shall be done to the dry?* (Lk 23:28, 31).

\* 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. The desolate panorama of the countless crimes and iniquities which we would have committed, if he, Jesus, had not strengthened us with the light of his most loving glance.

How little a life is for making atonement!



## NINTH STATION

## JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

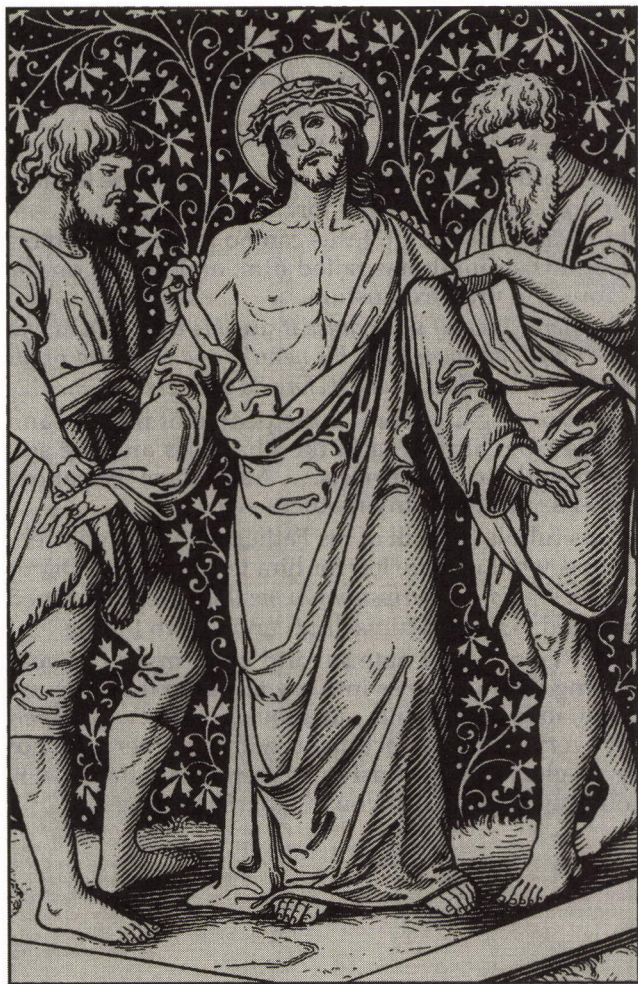
Our Lord falls for the third time, on the slope leading up to Calvary, with only forty or fifty paces between him and the summit. Jesus can no longer stay on his feet: his strength has failed him, and he lies on the ground in utter exhaustion.

*He offered himself up because it was his will; abused and ill-treated, he opened not his mouth, as a sheep led to the slaughter, dumb as a lamb before its shearers (Is 53:7).*

Everyone against him... the people of the city and those from abroad, and the Pharisees and the soldiers and the chief priests... All of them executioners. His mother — my mother — weeps.

Jesus fulfills the will of his Father! Poor; naked. Generous: what is there left for him to surrender? *Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me* (Gal 2:20), he loved me and delivered himself up unto death for me.

\* My God! May I hate sin and unite myself to you, taking the holy cross into my arms, so that I, in my turn, may fulfill your most lovable will... stripped of every earthly attachment, with no other goal but your glory... generously, not keeping anything back, offering myself with you in a perfect holocaust.



## TENTH STATION

## JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

When our Lord arrives at Calvary, he is given some wine to drink mixed with gall, as a narcotic to lessen in some way the pain of the crucifixion. But Jesus, after tasting it to show his gratitude for that kind service, he has not wanted to drink (cf. Mt 27:34). He gives himself up to death with the full freedom of love.

Then the soldiers strip Christ of his garments.

*From the soles of his feet to the top of his head, there is nothing healthy in him: wounds and bruises and swelling sores. They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor anointed with oil (Is 1:6).*

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 (Jn 19:24).*

Thus, Scripture is again fulfilled: *They divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots (Ps 21:19).*

\* Despoiled, stripped, left in the most absolute poverty, our Lord is left with nothing, save the wood of the cross.

For us to reach God, Christ is the way; but Christ is on the cross, and to climb up to the cross we must have our heart free, not tied to earthly things.



## ELEVENTH STATION

## JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**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 (Lk 23:34).*

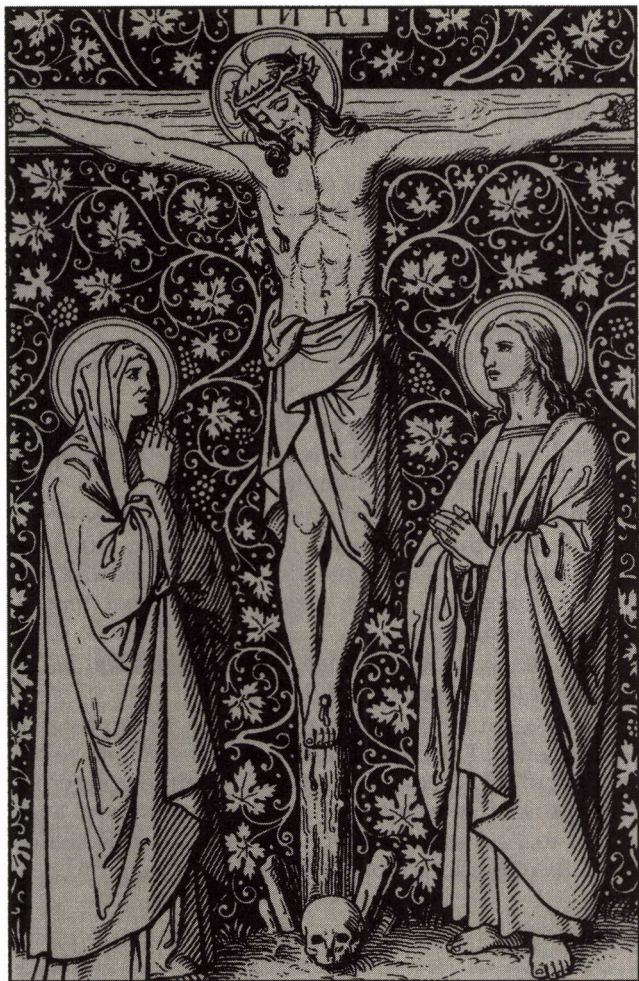
It is Love that has brought Jesus to Calvary. And, on the cross, all his gestures, all his words are of love, a love both calm and strong.

With a gesture befitting an eternal priest without father or mother, without lineage (cf. Hb 7:3), he opens his arms to the whole human race.

With the hammerblows with which Jesus is being nailed, there resound the prophetic words of holy Scripture: *They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones, they stare and gloat over me (Ps 21:17-18).*

*My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I saddened thee? Answer me! (Mi 6:3).*

\* And we, our souls rent with sorrow, say to Jesus in all sincerity: I am yours, and I give my whole self to you; gladly I accept being nailed myself to your cross, ready to be in the crossroads of this world a soul dedicated to you, to your glory, to the work of Redemption, the co-redemption of the whole human race.



## TWELFTH STATION

## JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

On the uppermost part of the cross, the reason for the sentence is written: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (Jn 19:19). And all who pass by insult him and jeer at him. *If he is the king of Israel, let him come down here and now from the cross* (Mt 27:42).

One of the thieves comes to his defense: *This man has done no evil...* (Lk 23:41). Then, turning to Jesus, he makes a humble request, full of faith: *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom* (Lk 23:42).

*Truly, I say to thee: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise* (Lk 23:43).

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* (Jn 19:26–27).

The sun's light is extinguished, and the earth is left in darkness. It is close to three o'clock, when Jesus cries out: *Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? That is: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46).

Then, knowing that all things are about to be accomplished, that the scriptures may be fulfilled, he says: *I am thirsty* (Jn 19:28).

The soldiers soak a sponge in vinegar and, placing it on a reed of hyssop, put it to his mouth. Jesus sips the vinegar, and exclaims: *It is accomplished!*

The veil of the temple is rent, and the earth trembles, when the Lord cries out in a loud voice: *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.



## THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE ARMS  
OF HIS BLESSED MOTHER

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Mary stands by the cross, engulfed in grief. And John is beside her. But it is getting late, and the Jews press for our Lord to be removed from there.

Having obtained from Pilate the permission required by Roman law for the burial of condemned prisoners, there comes to Calvary *a councillor named Joseph, a good and upright man, a native of Arimathea. He has not consented to their counsel and their doings, but is himself one of those waiting for the kingdom of God (Lk 23:50–51).* With him, too, comes Nicodemus, *the same man who earlier visited Jesus by night; he brings with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds in weight (Jn 19:39).*

These men are not known publicly as disciples of the Master. They were not present at the great miracles, nor did they accompany him on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. 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.

*\* Where has thy Beloved gone, o fairest of women? Where has he whom thou lovest gone, and we will seek him with thee? (Cant 5:17).*

The Blessed Virgin is our mother, and we do not wish to—we cannot—leave her alone.



## FOURTEENTH STATION

## JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

**V.** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

Very near Calvary, in an orchard, Joseph of Arimathea had had a new tomb made, cut out of the rock. Since it is the eve of the solemn Pasch of the Jews, Jesus is laid there. Then Joseph, *rolling a great stone, closes the grave door and goes away* (Mt 27:60).

Jesus came into the world with nothing. So, too, with nothing—not even the place where he rests—he has left us.

The mother of our Lord—my mother—and the women who have followed the Master from Galilee, after taking careful note of everything, also take their leave. Night falls.

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!* (1 Cor 6:20). You and I have been bought at a great price.

\* We must bring into our life, to make them 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 a zeal to co-redeem all mankind.

We must give our life for others. That is the only way to live the life of Jesus Christ and to become one and the same thing with him.

## ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH

We, too, O God, will descend into the grave whenever it shall please you, as it shall please you, and wheresoever it shall please you. Let your just decrees be fulfilled; let our sinful bodies return to their parent dust, but, in your great mercy, receive our immortal souls, and when our bodies have risen again, place them likewise in your kingdom, that we may love and bless you for ever and ever.

**R. Amen.**

or:

Dear God and Father of mine, Lord of life and death, with an immutable decree you have established that, as a just chastisement for our sins, all of us have to die. Look at me here bent low before you. From the bottom of my heart, I abhor my past faults, for which I have merited death a thousand times, a death that I now accept as atonement for my sins and as proof of my submission to your lovable will. O Lord, happily will I die at the moment, in the place, and in the way that you want. And until that day I will take advantage of the days of life that remain in order to fight against my defects and grow in your love, to break the bonds that tie my heart to creatures, and to prepare my soul to appear in your presence; and from this moment on I abandon myself without reserve into the arms of your fatherly providence.

### Prayer for a Happy Death

O my Creator and Father, I beg of you the most important of all your graces: that of final perseverance and a holy death. Despite the fact that I have greatly misused the life you have given me, grant me the

grace to live it well from this moment on and to end it in your holy love.

Let me die as the holy patriarchs died, leaving this valley of tears without sadness, to go and enjoy eternal rest in my true homeland.

Let me die as did glorious St. Joseph, accompanied by Jesus and Mary, pronouncing those sweetest of names, which I hope to extol for all eternity.

Let me die as did the Immaculate Virgin, in the purest of love and with the desire of uniting myself to the only object of my love.

Let me die as did Jesus on the cross, fully identified with the will of the Father and made into a holocaust for the sake of love.

Jesus, having accepted death for me, grant me the grace of dying in an act of perfect love for you.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me now and at the hour of my death.

St. Joseph, my father and lord, win for me the favor of dying as one of the just.

### **Prayer for the Moment of Death**

O Lord, my God, from this moment on I accept with a good will, as something coming from your hand, whatever kind of death you want to send me, with all its anguish, pain, and sorrow.

**V.** Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

**R.** I give you my heart and my soul.

**V.** Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

**R.** Assist me in my last agony.

**V.** Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

**R.** May I sleep and take my rest in peace with you.

## *ORATIO S. AUGUSTINI*

Dómine Iesu, nóverim me, nóverim te,  
Nec áliquid cúpiam nisi te.  
Oderim me et amem te.  
Omnia agam propter te.  
Humíliem me, exáltem te.  
Nihil cógitem nisi te.  
Mortíficem me et vivam in te.  
Quæcúmque evéniant accípiam a te.  
Pérsequar me, sequar te,  
Sempérque optem sequi te.  
Fúgiam me, confúgiam ad te,  
Ut mérear deféndi a te.  
Tímeam mihi, tímeam te,  
Et sim inter eléctos a te.  
Diffídám mihi, fidám in te.  
Obœdíre velim propter te.  
Ad nihil affíciar nisi ad te,  
Et pauper sim propter te.  
Aspice me, ut dilígám te.  
Voca me, ut vídeam te,  
Et in ætérnum fruar te.  
Amen.

## *FIAT, ADIMPLEATUR*

Fiat, adimpleátur, laudétur  
atque in aetérnum superexaltétur  
iustíssima, altíssima, et amabilíssima  
volúntas Dei in ómnibus.  
Amen.

*PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE*

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know you,  
And desire nothing, save only you.  
Let me hate myself and love you.  
Let me do everything for the sake of you.  
Let me humble myself and exalt you.  
Let me think of nothing except you.  
Let me die to myself and live in you.  
Let me accept whatever happens as from you.  
Let me banish self and follow you,  
And ever desire to follow you.  
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in you,  
That I may deserve to be defended by you.  
Let me fear for myself, let me fear you,  
And let me be among those who are chosen by you.  
Let me distrust myself and put my trust in you.  
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of you.  
Let me cling to nothing, save only to you,  
And let me be poor because of you.  
Look upon me, that I may love you.  
Call me, that I may see you,  
And for ever enjoy you.  
Amen.

*ACCEPTANCE OF DIVINE WILL*

May the most just, the most lovable,  
and the most high Will of God be done,  
be fulfilled, be praised and exalted  
in all things forever.  
Amen.

**SONNET TO OUR LORD ON THE CROSS**

ANONYMOUS

I am not moved to love you, O my God,  
 That I might hope in promised heaven to dwell;  
 Nor am I moved by fear of pain in hell  
 To turn from sin and follow where you trod.  
 You move me, Lord, broken beneath the rod,  
 Or stretched out on the cross, as nails compel  
 Your hand to twitch. It moves me that we sell,  
 To mockery and death, your precious blood.  
 It is, O Christ, your love which moves me so,  
 That my love rests not on a promised prize;  
 Nor holy fear on threat of endless woe;  
 It is not milk and honey, but the flow  
 Of blood from blessed wounds before my eyes,  
 That waters my buried soul and makes it grow.

**PRAYER OF ST. ANDREW (O BONA CRUX)**

The apostle Andrew was martyred. He died nailed to a cross. His desire to be identified with Christ was so great that, when he was being led toward the place of his martyrdom and saw his own cross in the distance, he cried:

O bona crux, quæ decorem et pulchritudinem de membris Dómini suscepisti: diu desideráta, sollicitè amáta, sine intermissione quæsíta et aliquándo cupiénti ánimo preparáta: áccipe me ab homínibus, et redde me magistro meo. Súscipe discípulum Christi, ac per te me recípiat, qui per te móriens me redémit. Amen.

O good Cross, made beautiful by the body of the Lord: long have I desired you, ardently have I loved you, unceasingly have I sought you out; and now you are ready for my eager soul. Receive me from among men and restore me to my Master, so that he—who, by means of you, in dying redeemed me—may receive me. Amen.

## THE CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY

### *How to Recite the Chaplet*

The Chaplet of Mercy is recited using ordinary rosary beads of five decades. The Chaplet is preceded by two opening prayers from the Diary of Saint Faustina and followed by a closing prayer.

#### 1. Make the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### 2. Optional Opening Prayers

You expired, Jesus,  
but the source of life gushed forth for souls,  
and the ocean of mercy opened up  
for the whole world.

O Fount of Life,  
unfathomable Divine Mercy,  
envelop the whole world  
and empty Yourself out upon us.

*(Repeat three times)*

O Blood and Water,  
which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus  
as a fount of mercy for us,  
I trust in You!

#### 3. Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

#### 4. Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

#### 5. The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting. Amen.

## 6. The Eternal Father

Eternal Father,  
I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity  
of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
in atonement for our sins  
and those of the whole world.

## 7. On the 10 Small Beads of Each Decade

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion,  
have mercy on us and on the whole world.

## 8. Repeat for the remaining decades

Saying the *Eternal Father* (no. 6) on the *Our Father*  
bead and then 10 *For the sake of His sorrowful Passion*  
(no. 7) on the following *Hail Mary* beads.

## 9. Conclude with Holy God

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One,  
have mercy on us and on the whole world.

(Repeat three times)

## 10. Optional Closing Prayer

Eternal God,  
in whom mercy is endless  
and the treasury of compassion—inexhaustible,  
look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us,  
that in difficult moments  
we might not despair nor become despondent,  
but with great confidence  
submit ourselves to Your holy will,  
which is Love and Mercy itself.

### *St. Faustina*

Today Jesus said to me, "I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in My Heart for souls, and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer:

"O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You." (*Diary*, nos. 186–187)

Jesus speaks to St. Faustina:

"Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. My daughter, write about My mercy towards tormented souls. Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask. I cannot punish even the greatest sinner if he makes an appeal to My compassion, but on the contrary, I justify him in My unfathomable and inscrutable mercy. Write: before I come as a just Judge, I first open wide the door of My mercy. He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice." (*Diary*, no. 1146)