

Stations of the Cross

An interactive
walk to the Cross

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“Words of Hope” passages.



Christ Church in La Plata
& Christ Church Wayside

OPENING DEVOTIONS

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Officiant and People

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.

V. We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

R. In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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.*



As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

V. *God did not spare his own Son:*

R. **But delivered him up for us all.**

JESUS SPEAKS

Those words – “He deserves to die.” Here it is. What I’ve known would be. What I’ve hoped, even to this moment, would not be. “Let them be better than I know them to be,” I thought. “Let them surprise me – let it be that they can tolerate hearing the truth; let it be that they can let the Kingdom into their lives, even if it turns their world upside-down; let it be that they can perceive God in their midst and not seek to kill what they cannot control. Let it be so.

But it is not. They are creatures more of the master of this world than the sons and daughters of God they were created to be. That is why they have needed a Savior. They are so used to living under a sentence of death, they cannot help but condemn others when given the opportunity.

And here it is: God has placed himself into their hands – and they have condemned me to death. Do I deserve to die? I am one of them. I am taking upon myself the burden of all their sins. Yes, I deserve to die – for them. Don’t I?

A WORD OF PROMISE

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

(Romans 8:1-4)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE SECOND STATION: JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:
Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.*



Jesus went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

V. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all:
R. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

JESUS SPEAKS

This wood is heavy – heavier than I could comfortably carry if I were in normal condition. Now, when I am so weak, have lost so much blood, have seen the hatred of those who scarcely know me, the timidity of leaders who could protect me, the betrayal of my most loyal friends and disciples who have abandoned me...

What is heavier? This thirty pounds of wood beam digging into my flesh? Or the knowledge of sin weighing down my heart? The dull ache of fear and dread and sin-knowledge settling into my guts? Feelings I have known about but never experienced until now.

This must be, that I must take this crushing load of sin-sickness to the cross, that it may die there along with me. This wood I carry is not the burden – it will itself be the carrier of the burden of humanity's sin, the place where all the world's sins and wounds and injustices and evils go to die.

*"Take up your cross," I told my disciples, "if you would follow me."
Here I am.*

A WORD OF PROMISE

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.... But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. (*I Corinthians 1:18,25,27-29*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:*
**Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.**



Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness.

And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is the Lord our God.

V. Surely he has borne our griefs:

R. And carried our sorrows.

JESUS SPEAKS

I wanted to do this without falling. How much humiliation, O Father? How much? This road is slick with mud and filth; my feet can't grip; this beam is chafing the wounds left by the whips... Let me rest here a moment. Just a moment.

But the soldiers grab my arms roughly and pull me to my feet. They dig their staves into my back. "Get moving!" they hiss. It is their job to deliver me to Golgotha. Alive. So they can't kill me here – that would be too merciful.

So I will move again, one foot in front of another, reciting psalms to keep my mind from drowning in this misery. ... "Consider how many are my foes, and with what violent hatred they hate me. O guard my life, and deliver me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you." How many psalms seem to have been written for me to pray today?

A WORD OF PROMISE

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be

weary, they shall walk and not faint. (*Isaiah 40:28-31*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers,

that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand

upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all

dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our

Lord. *Amen.*

Holy God,

Holy and Mighty,

Holy Immortal One,

Have mercy upon us.

THE FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:*
**Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.**



To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you,
O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use
to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion?

For vast as the sea is your ruin.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be
comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

V. A sword will pierce your own soul also:

R. And fill your heart with bitter pain.

MARY SPEAKS

I will speak now. I have held my counsel all these years, "pondering these things in my heart." Now I will speak.

I remember that old man, Simeon, in the temple when we brought him to be circumcised. Eight days old. So tiny. So vulnerable. He said, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed." The salvation of his people, he called my baby. But he also looked into my eyes and said, "—and a sword will pierce your own heart also."

All these years, wondering what exactly he meant. The quiet years, when Jesus was just living at home, helping Joseph with the business. The triumphant years, when he was the talk of Galilee and Judea, the miracle-worker, the healer, the teacher of all teachers – those words echoed a faint refrain at the back of my mind. Where is the sword? I wondered.

(Continued)

MARY SPEAKS

*And now – how I wish it would pierce my heart and leave his!
If I could step into that road, if I could take that wood off him, I
f they would let me go in his place. But it wouldn't work, would it?
He has to do this, because he is not like the rest of us. I've always
known that, from his wild and wondrous birth...*

*But is **this** the only way He can be the Savior of his people?*

A WORD OF PROMISE

Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says the Lord: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says the Lord: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; there is hope for your future, says the Lord: your children shall come back to their own country. (*Jeremiah 31:15-17*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother: Mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE FIFTH STATION: THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:
Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.*



As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

V. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me:

R. Cannot be my disciple.

SIMON OF CYRENE SPEAKS

This burden is not light. How on earth did this poor guy manage to carry it this far? What did he do, I wonder? They really worked him over.

Why did they grab me for this duty? Is it because I'm dark-skinned? Is this a trick, a trap? We'll get there and they'll grab me and nail me too... aiiiiii, I can't think of that. I can't think of what's about to happen to this guy. I mean, death might be a blessing for him at this point – but not that kind of death. That kind of barbaric cruelty has no place— Well, maybe I should be glad to be able to give him a little relief in these final minutes of his life, to have one bit of kindness stand against the evil.

He's looking at me now, and his eyes are kind. Even with all the pain he's in, his face streaked with blood and sweat, his eyes are strong and kind. God, he's very powerful, for a man in his position. There is power in those eyes, and... blessing, somehow. He's blessing me. I can feel it. Who could do such a thing – oh my, oh dear God, I just realized who this is! This must be that preacher. The one who did so many miracles and healings and drew the crowds – they say he claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah. That's why they're killing him. (Pause.) Could it be true?

A WORD OF PROMISE

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action... And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us. (*I John 3:16-18, 23-24*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE SIXTH STATION: A WOMAN WIPES JESUS' FACE

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:
Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.*



We have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of men. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

V. Restore us, O Lord God of hosts:

**R. Show the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.**

THE WOMAN SPEAKS

I don't know what made me so bold – I was just in the crowd. I've been in the crowd, watching him, for months now. I've never pushed my way to the front, or drawn attention to myself, or asked for anything. But I couldn't stay away either. I always had to come and listen and watch.

Today too. I was in the crowd when they shouted for his blood. I didn't shout – but did I speak against it? They would have killed me. And I stayed in the crowd as they followed him down this way to Golgotha. And I cried out when he fell, and when the soldiers hit him...

And suddenly I knew the moment had come for me to step out. The moment was almost gone forever. I looked at his face as he passed – bruised, cut, dried blood from the crown of thorns they forced onto his head, mud, dirt – and I thought, "If I can do nothing else, at least I can clean his face, so he can see where he's going." So I grabbed the scarf off my head and put some water on it from my jug, and without thinking more I pushed myself out into the road and stood in his path, trembling like a...

(Continued)

THE WOMAN SPEAKS

He stopped and looked at me, and without a word I wiped off his face, first one side, then the other. Then I stood aside and let him pass. I don't know if he said anything, because

I was looking down at the ground, my face hot, my heart pounding. "I touched him," I thought. "I touched my Lord."

I looked at the piece of cloth in my hand, stained with his blood and sweat. This is my most precious possession now. I will never wash it or wear it again. It has touched the face of God.

A WORD OF PROMISE

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

(II Corinthians 3:12-18)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

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.*



Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

V. *But as for me, I am a worm and no man:*

R. **Scorned by all and despised by the people.**

JESUS SPEAKS

So this is how it is to be: my strength ebbing away, my life draining out of my body with each drop of blood. (Pause.) My blood. I told them last night that the wine they were drinking was my blood. You should have seen their faces – we Jews know that we are not to consume blood. It is life.

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you, for many, for the forgiveness of sins," I said. I am being poured out like a sacrificial oblation, a drink offering. You see, we Jews also know that every covenant is sealed in the blood of sacrifice. Today I am that sacrifice lamb, offered for the new covenant promised of old. "The time is coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

The time is now. The day is here. I am their God, and by my blood I make them my people, again and for ever.

A WORD OF PROMISE

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us... Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.

(Hebrews 10:14-15, 19-23)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

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.*



There followed after Jesus a great multitude of the people, and among them were women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

V. *Those who sowed with tears:*

R. **Will reap with songs of joy.**

A WOMAN OF JERUSALEM SPEAKS

"Do not weep for me." Is that what he said? "Weep for yourselves and for your children?" How can I not weep when I see this shell of a man in front of me? He was so robust, so full of life. How could he have let this happen? We thought he was God. But could God come to this? It is impossible.

Don't tell us not to weep. We could not stop if we tried. We are weeping for ourselves and for our children – for if this Jesus was not the One, the Savior, who are we to hope for next? Yes, we will weep. With his mother, we will weep. We will weep for all the mothers who have lost children, for all the children who have lost their mothers. We will weep for Jerusalem, the city of God that knows no peace. We will weep, until God shows his face!

A WORD OF PROMISE

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his
arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.
(Isaiah 40:9-11)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty,
and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace,
the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children
and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:
Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.*



I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has besieged me and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. Though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. Remember, O Lord, my affliction and bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!"

V. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter:

R. **And like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth.**

JESUS SPEAKS

This time I fall all the way to the ground, pitching forward, my face planted in the muck of the road, nothing to stop my fall as my arms are holding the cross beam on my shoulders. I don't know if I can make it. Can I do what you've asked, Father? Or is there to be another plan yet?

Now there is rancid mud in my wounds, covering my mouth, my nose. I stop for a moment to wipe it away with my hand, and the stave of the soldiers hits me between the shoulder blades. A moment ago, a kind woman, a stranger, leapt out of the crowd and wiped my face before they could stop her. Now it is filthier than before.

"This is the hour of evil, when darkness reigns." That's what I told them last night when they arrested me. From now on, every good will be wiped away by a greater evil, as the forces of darkness rise up in premature triumph. On the day that God is murdered, even the sun will be blackened, covered, eclipsed. The stones themselves will cry out.

This is your hour, Satan. But it is your last.

A WORD OF PROMISE

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

(II Corinthians 4:7-12)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

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.*



When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing."

V. *They gave me gall to eat:*

R. **And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.**

JESUS SPEAKS

Now, when there is nothing else to take from me, they take my clothes. Death by crucifixion is not horrible enough – the victim must also be utterly exposed to humiliation and ridicule, nothing between his flesh and the harsh elements, the stares of strangers.

They handle me roughly, stripping me, but my under-robe, that they are gentle with, so as not to tear it. They want to keep it, use it, so they cast lots to see who will get it. Another psalm of my life fulfilled.

There should be no shame for me in nakedness. Shame at their nakedness was the first consequence for Adam and Eve of their disobedience. But I have not disobeyed. I have not sinned against my Father or my fellow-creature. Why should I feel shame, or fear?

But I am under the same sentence of condemnation as they are – for their sakes I took on even that when I took on their flesh and their nature. And so I am ashamed, I who have been obedient unto death, even such a death as I am about to undergo, the death of a criminal on a cross. And there is no one to cover me.

A WORD OF PROMISE

Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs... I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

(Isaiah 61:7,10)

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

*We adore you,
O Christ,
and we bless you:
Because by your
holy cross you
have redeemed
the world.*



When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

V. *They pierce my hands and my feet:*

R. **They stare and gloat over me.**

JESUS SPEAKS

I want to tell you I was unconscious by this time, numb from the pain and the strain, from three falls and thirty-nine lashes and beatings and too many miles – I want to tell you that, but I can't. I felt it. I felt it.

I will not describe for you in anatomical detail what they did, what the nails did – others may, but I will spare you that. I will not speak of what it feels like to be fastened to your fate, unable to move, to scratch, to point. I would describe, if I could, the searing jolt of pain up each of my limbs, that did not subside until later, when mercifully I began to lose consciousness.

But do you need to hear my story to know of your fellow-man's capacity for cruelty? Do you need to hear of my interaction with the two thieves crucified next to me to know that human spirits can be generous, even under extreme duress?

(continued)

JESUS SPEAKS

No, you don't need to comprehend my suffering or my sacrifice – you have only to accept that it was for you, to feel the love for you that made me do it.

It's not that someone was barbarous or heroic – there have been worse cruelties and more extreme heroics. But never before or since has God come to live in human form and die in order that humankind be set free. And why? Because I love you.

A WORD OF PROMISE

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls. *(II Peter 2:21-25)*

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

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.*



When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished!" And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And he bowed his head, and handed over his spirit.

V. *Christ for us became obedient unto death:*
R. **Even death on a cross.**

JOHN SPEAKS

I watched him die. I saw his body slump for the last time, his head come to rest against his chest. I took his mother, whom he had entrusted to my care, and turned her to face me, away from his agony. He said, "It is finished." I could barely hear him.

What is finished? His life? The mission he was always trying to get through to us disciples? What is finished? Us? We're scattered, scared, few of us dared even to come here today.

Why did he, with his last few breaths, bother to "give" his mother to me, and I to her? He had other brothers and sisters. She didn't need me. But maybe he knew – he who knew me better than I know myself – maybe he knew I would need her, I would need a work that was meaningful, that I would protect his mother with my life. Even in his last moments he thought of me. Even in his last moments he thought of his mother, giving her a new son. Even in his last moments he thought of his Father – "Into your hands I commend my spirit!"

*And now he is dead. **Is** it finished?*

A WORD OF PROMISE

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (*I Corinthians 15:51-57*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

THE THIRTEEN STATION: JESUS' BODY IS GIVEN TO HIS MOTHER

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
Because by your holy cross you have
redeemed the world.*



All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is in tumult; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi (which means Pleasant), call me Mara (which means Bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

V. *Her tears run down her cheeks:*

R. **And she has none to comfort her.**

MARY SPEAKS

I bore this body in my body for nine months. I bore it into the world. Am I to bear it again now? I held this body so many times when he was small – even naked like this, but clean, from a bath or after swimming in the river. It was blue then, too, but clean, and not... broken. He was so whole, so breathtakingly alive. And clean. Unmarked.

How are we going to get him clean for the shroud when the Passover Sabbath is so close? Where are we to lay him?

Ah, my son, my first, my best-beloved, my greatest burden and my deepest joy. What have they done to you? All my life I tried to care for you, to protect you, for whatever it was you were sent to do. Joseph and I, we protected you from Herod, from starvation, from ridicule from others who heard the strange story of your birth, who knew you were different... But I could not protect you from this. I could not protect you from them. I am as ignorant and helpless as the rest. I could not save you.

Could it be, in all this that you have suffered, that you have saved me?

A WORD OF PROMISE

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." (*Revelation 21:1-5a*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

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.*



When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

V. *You will not abandon me to the grave:*

R. **Nor let your holy One see corruption.**

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA SPEAKS

Am I to have the last word, then? I, who am most on the edges of this story? Even my friend Nicodemus, who helped me prepare his body for burial, even he has his own chapter in the tale. But what do you know about me?

That I am a rich man, rich enough to have my own tomb set aside, waiting for my death. That I come from Arimathea – a place you've never heard of, a village in the hill country of Ephraim, in Judea, 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem. That I am a prominent member of the Council, the Jewish leadership, like Nicodemus. That I had become one of Jesus' disciples, but secretly, because, unlike my Lord, I was afraid of what my brethren on the Council would do to me if they knew what I believed. Who I believed in. I was not ready to lose my position, my livelihood, my life. I was not ready to die.

(Continued)

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA SPEAKS

But I can offer what I can offer. That's all any of us can do. I had a tomb, and Jesus' broken, bloodied body needed a place of rest. I had the connections to approach Pilate and get permission to take Jesus' body away from that place of skulls. I had the means to provide the proper linens and spices for burial, so that Jesus' body in death would receive the care it never had in life. I offered what I could.

What can you offer him, who died for you? He no longer needs a tomb, but he craves a place of rest in your heart. Is there room for him there?

A WORD OF PROMISE

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.... The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. (*Romans 6:3-8,10*)

Let us pray. (*Silence*)

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

***Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.***

ADORATION OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST



CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

**Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you,
O Lord.**

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*