STATIONS OF THE CROSS

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Artwork Located In:
St. John Catholic Church, Indianapolis
PRAYER BEFORE WAY OF THE CROSS

(Standing, ALL)
O Lord Jesus, / the curtain is now about
to go up on the awful and abiding drama
of your redemptive love.

And as I hear your words “Take up your
cross and daily follow me,”
I stand affrighted, lest its burden be too
great and its shame too bitter.

If I could but see that your command
to follow you to Calvary was not just as
iron law of cruel fate, but a condition of
everlasting happiness,
perhaps I could better make the journey.

But I fear, dear Jesus, that in having you I
must have nothing else besides.

Let my fear be dispelled in seeing death
as the condition of life. For through your
apostle Paul, you have told us it is the
joy at the end of the journey that makes
us endure the Cross.

I shall, then, take up my cross.
O Jesus, why must we love you so!
(Genuflecting)
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

(Standing)
Pilate, the time- serving politician, stepped
forward on his sunlit portico. On his right
stood Christ, the Just One, who came to
give His life for the redemption of many. On
his left stood Barabbas the wicked one,
who had incited a revolt and taken a life.
Pilate asked the mob to choose between
the two: “Whom do you want to release to
you, Barabbas or Jesus?”

How would I have answered that question
had I been in the courtyard that Good
Friday morning? I cannot escape answering
by saying that the question belongs only
to the past, for it is as actual now as ever.
My conscience is the tribunal of Pilate.
Daily, hourly, every minute of the day,
Christ comes before that tribunal, as virtue,
honesty, and purity. Barabbas comes as
vice, dishonesty, and uncleanness. As often
as I choose to speak the uncharitable word,
“Release unto me Barabbas.” And to choose
Barabbas means to crucify Christ.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

(Kneeling)
O Jesus, many times in my life / I have pre-
ferred Barabbas to you. There is no way that I
can undo those choices / but to make my way
to your feet and beg your forgiveness. But
that is so humiliating, for your wear the gar-
ment of a fool, and you bear in your hand /
the reed scepter of a mock king!
It is so hard for me to do penance / and to
admit that I am guilty! It is so hard to be seen
with you, / who are wearing your crown of
thorns. It is hard! / But let me see, Jesus, /
that it is harder to wear the crown of thorns.

(Chorus to Station 2)
At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Our Blessed Lord had been a visitor to our earth for forty days when Simeon, with prophetic vision, declared that this Child would someday become a sign of the contradiction. That day had now come, for “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” As a symbol of the world’s rejection of His life-giving message, His enemies gave Him a Cross, in which one bar is at variance with, or contradicts, the other: the horizontal bar symbolizing death (for all death is flat and prostate), the vertical bar symbolizing life (for all life is upright and erect).

But by a divine act, Our Lord made the sign of contradiction the sign of redemption, and converted the Cross into the Crucifix. The Cross is the problem of pain and death; but revealed the pain is the condition of pleasure, that death is the prelude to life, and that unless we take up our own crosses and follow Him we cannot be his disciples.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

I know, dear Lord, how crosses are made. Your will is the vertical bar; my will is the horizontal bar. When I place my will against your will, I make a cross. Up to this point, dear Jesus, I have done nothing but fashion crosses by disobeying your holy law and asserting my own selfish desires. Grant that I may make you no more crosses, but henceforth may place the bar of my will alongside the bar of your will, and make a yoke that will always be sweet and a burden that will always be light.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing, All His bitter anguish bearing, Lo! The piercing sword had passed.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Three times Our Savior was tempted on the
mountain, and three times He fell on the
way to Mount Calvary. Thus did he atone
for our three falls- to the temptations of
the flesh, the world, and the devil. After
fasting forty days in the desert, our blessed
Lord was hungry. Satan tempted Him first
on the part of the flesh, by asking Him to do
the natural thing when hungry, namely, to
use His power to command that the stones
become bread. But the Master rebuked
Satan, saying that the food that satisfies the
longings of our hearts comes not from the
flesh, but from the Spirit of God.

Many times we too have been tempted
to give way to the demands of our lower
nature when the spirit should have been
served, But unlike our divine Master, we
fell by consenting to the promptings of the
flesh instead of to the urges of grace, and
by doing what is natural when we should
have done the supernatural. And alas!
We have found it always true that giving
in to selfish impulses has left us hungry,
rather than satisfied. On the bread of lower
desires, no one can live.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

When my bodily frame is buffeted by the
power of Satan, seal my senses, O Lord,
and keep me mindful that my body is a tem-
ple of the Holy Spirit, and that only the clean
heart shall see you. Grand henceforth that by
the merits of this fall under the cross.
I may be saved from the falls of the flesh -
not by bread made from stones, / but by the
Bread of Life.

O how sad and sore distressed
Was the Mother, highly blessed,
Of the sole-begotten One.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

At the marriage feast of Cana, when Mary first noted the embarrassment of the hosts and asked her divine Son to work His first miracle, He answered “My hour is not yet come.” But at her request, he anticipated the hour, and changed the water into wine. His hour, He said, has “not yet come.” But His hour was her hour too, and now it had come! At Cana, He had changed water into wine. On the road to Calvary, the wine is changed into blood. It is the solemn hour of consecration by which she unites herself with the suffering of her beloved Son, to save the world from the terrible embarrassment of sin and from the want of God’s redemptive wine of His love. It was the hour in which the world’s idea of love was reversed - in which the Son summoned His mother to suffer. Love, then, does not mean “to have”; it means “to be had.” It is the giving of oneself for another. No other human being ever loved Jesus as much as Mary did; so we must say that no one else ever suffered for Jesus as Mary did.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the love of your Immaculate Conception! Your present sorrows are the pains of childbirth by which you are to become the Mother of Mankind, just as in Bethlehem you came the Mother of Jesus, / your First Born. You are, then, really my Mother too. / Teach me, Mother, to see that Jesus calls to suffering / those whom He loves. / And grant that / just as Jesus keeps the best wine of His love / for the hour when we need it most, so too may He keep you near us when we need you the most - in all trials and temptations, / but especially at the hour of death.

Chorus to Station 5
Woe-begone, with heart’s prostration
Mother meek, the bitter Passion
Saw she of her glorious Son.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

It was not merely death that sinful people wished of blessed Savior; it was a particular kind of death upon the sign of contradiction. Fearing that exhaustion and weakness would rob them of unfurling Him, like a banner of warning, on top of Mount Calvary, they forced Simon of Cyrene to help Him with His task. Simon saw in the cross only a shameful burden of wood, but not the burden of the world's sins. Hence he became at first an unwilling helper. But a few minutes in the sweet company of Jesus changed his outlook; his slavery became freedom, his constraint became love, and his reluctance become sweet abandon.

We too are like Simon in his first moments: we know about Jesus, but we do not know Jesus. We have feared to be a sharer of His cross, and hence have loved Him little, because we have known Him only a little. We have too often insisted on beginning with pleasure, when it is with pleasure that we should have ended.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Give me, O Jesus / an understanding of this great mystery: that it is only a distance that the Cross frightens - that its shadow is really more terrible than its reality - that its splinters are more terrifying than its beams - that the whole of it is easier to carry than a part.

You have told us, dear Savior, that we must each take up our cross daily and follow you. Grant then, that when a cross comes between you and me, as it did between you and Simon, I may be willing to follow your footsteps as Simon did, until at last I shall be forever more an uncaught captive / in your loving hands.

Who on Christ's dear Mother gazing, in her trouble so amazing, Born of woman, would not weep?
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Simon the Cyrenean helped Jesus with His burden. For us, this is a sign that every person is called to the sublime vocation of carrying a cross. On the dread day, Veronica, with a woman's own special vision, looked on a countenance bruised and stained with dust and blood, and saw in it the very Face of Divinity.

Ignoring what others might think, she touched a towel to Jesus' face and as if to remind us that the likeness between Christ and us is most perfect in suffering and sorrow, the Divine Savior, on His way to Calvary, left the impression of the divinely sorrowful face. By the one act, our blessed Lord revealed that we can never become like unto Him in the nobility of His birth, when angels sang to shepherds, nor in the glory of His Transfiguration, when His face shown like the sun and His garments were as white as snow. There is only one way we can become exactly like Him, and that is by suffering.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the

O Lord, / the day I was born anew of water and the Holy Spirit, the image of your Cross was stamped on my soul, and the inscription of your sorrow was engraved on my heart. Today you asked me: / "Whose inscription is written thereon?" If it be yours, / then let me render to God the things that are God's Grant that, like Veronica, / I may brave all human respect in order to carry your image about with me, / not on a veil but on the tablet of my heart. Bestow on me the grace to be so much like you that others among whom I live may see something of you in me, as the maidservant saw something in Peter. If they do not see in me the marks of your passion, let them at least see the sparks of your love.

For His people's sins rejected, She saw Jesus unprotected, Saw with thorns, with scourges rent
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

In the second temptation on the mount, the devil asked our Blessed Lord to abandon Himself wholly to God and to take no care or thought of Himself, saying: “Cast yourself down, for the angels will bear you up.” But the Savior answered: “You shall not tempt the Lord, your God,” reminding Satan, and us, that God never saves us against our will, but only when we cooperate with His grace.

This temptation came not from the flesh, but from the world, which so many times has said to us: “Cast yourself down on the rocks of sin; abandon yourself to God; God is merciful; He will bear you up; there is plenty of time for repentance - God will take care of you.” And many times we, unlike the Master, have given in to such whisperings. We have sinned by presumption, then made a halfhearted attempt to amend our lives - and then we sinned again.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Dear Savior, by this, your second fall, you atoned for my excessive love of the world and for the many times I abused your mercy and goodness as an excuse for sinning again. By lifting yourself up again, you have merited for me the grace of lifting myself up once more and continuing the journey with you to Calvary. Free me from the spirit of the world. Let me see that it profits me nothing to gain the whole world and loose my immortal soul. You have told me that the world will hate me if I love you. So when the world scorns me most, I ask that I may be consoled by the memory that it has hated you before it hated me.

Font of love and holy sorrow, Mother! may my spirit borrow Somewhat of thy woe profound.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you - 
Because by your Holy Cross you have 
redeemed the world.

Of all things on earth, that which we know 
least is ourselves. We know the sins and 
the defects of others a thousand times 
better than we know our own; and we see 
immediately the mote in our neighbor's 
eye, but not the beam in our own eyes. 
That great truth was illuminated on the 
way to Calvary. The pious women of 
Jerusalem, though quite unafraid to show 
their pity before impious men, saw only the 
suffering Jesus whom they loved; they did 
not see the loving Christ who suffered for 
them. They sympathized with his pain, but 
they did not see themselves as the cause 
of that pain. It was their sins - and ours as 
well - which He took upon Himself. And as 
if to bring that truth home to us all, there 
well ed up from the depths of His sacred 
heart these words: “Weep not for me, but 
weep for yourselves.”

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - 
That we may be made worthy of the 
promises of Christ.

O Jesus, / let me see the connection between 
my sins and your Calvary. 
let me not weep for you apart from me, 
but for you on account of me. 
Let me see that if I had been less proud, 
the crown of thorns would have been less 
piercing; 
that if I had been less selfish, 
the cross would have been less heavy; 
That if I had been less sinful, 
the road to Calvary would have been shorter. 
Give me the grace to weep for my sins. 
And may my fountain of tears become, 
through the example of your love, 
a fountain of everlasting joy.

Unto Christ, with pure emotion, 
Raise my contrite heart's devotion, 
Love to read in every wound.

STATION 8
Jésus console les femmes de Jérusalem
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The third temptation on the mount was not temptation by the flesh or by the world, but by the devil himself. Satan asked our blessed Lord to fall down and adore him, promising to give Him all of the earth's kingdoms. But Jesus said to him, “The Lord your God shall adore, and Him alone shall you serve.”

There have been countless occasions in our lives when we have exchanged the priceless treasure of divine grace for some passing toy or pleasure. Unlike Christ, we have believed the devil’s lies and traded away eternity for time, peace for remorse, and our freedom as children of God for the terrible slavery of sin. And each time we have learned that whereas Satan promises a kingdom of pleasure, he actually gives only a wasteland of unhappiness and pain.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Many times, dear Jesus, / I promised you after having fallen to temptation by the flesh and the world, that I would never fall again. Your third fall, dear Jesus, is a witness that I have fallen by the snares of the devil. But by rising again, / you have given me another reason to hope. You have taught me that there are two kinds of person I can be: a person who falls down and stays down, / or a person who falls but gets up again. By this, your third fall, / you purchased for me the grace of rising again each time I fall. The devil would give up the world to make me his own. You gave up your very life to keep me for yourself, to show me that I am worth saving.

Those five wounds of Jesus smitten,
Mother! in my heart be written,
Deep as in thine own they be.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

God's dealing with humanity has been a
continuous process kept in motion by His
overflowing goodness. The first overflowing
was in giving things existence, and that was
Creation. The second overflowing was in His
telling us the secret of His love for us, and
that was Revelation. Finally, this love that
has no limits resulted in the Incarnation. As
St. Paul wrote, God "emptied Himself," cast
His glory into the background, and took
upon Himself the human form and habit of
a man.

Now, on the hill called Calvary, Jesus
willed not only to empty Himself of His
divine glory, but to abandon His claim to
any earthly possessions. He, the Heavenly
Vagabond who had nowhere to lay His
head, was stripped of His garments, so that
in death He might have nothing but give all.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

Jesus my savior, / if you emptied yourself
so that I could have divine life, did you not
intend that I should be filled with it? Grant,
then, dear Jesus, / that I may empty myself
of selfishness so that I may be filled with your
selflessness; grant that I may empty myself
of sin, and be filled with your graces; and
grant that I may empty myself of sin, and be
filled with your graces; and grant that I may
empty myself of earthliness, and be filled with
heavenliness. Strip from me the garments of
worldliness, and clothe me in the white robe
of baptism. Through poverty in earthly things,
/ I can become rich in spirit. Strengthen me
so that I may welcome sacrifice and accept
bodily suffering as my way of repaying you
for, and joining you in, / the merit of your
Passion.

Thou, thy Savior's Cross who bearest,
Thou thy Son's rebuke who sharereth.
Let me share them both with thee.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Our blessed Lord mounts His pulpit for the last time. This time, it is not Peter's boat or the Galilean hills, but the pulpit of the cross. Like the words He shall utter from it, this pulpit will itself be eloquent even when time shall end. The Preacher is the living Word of God; the congregation is made up of the soldiers who play at dice for his seamless garment, of unbelievers whose mouths are trumpets of hate and blasphemy, and of three faithful ones - Mary, Magdalen, and John. Those three faithful ones are the three types of souls always to be found beneath the cross; they represent innocence, penitence, and priesthood. The last words of Jesus are spoken first on behalf of the mockers and blasphemers: “Forgive them, For they know not what they do.” Next, to the sinners: “This day you shall be with me in paradise.” And finally, to saints: “Mother, behold your son”

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Dear Jesus, the words you spoke from the cross reveal your tremendous thirst for the salvation of all your human creatures. From your example I begin to see what love really is, and to become aware how often I have crucified love. Your hands, raised to bless me, I have nailed fast. Your feet, which have sought me when I was caught in the snares of sin, / I pierced with an iron stake. Your lips, which have so often called me from the paths of wickedness, / I have blistered with dust. Your words of forgiveness I only now begin to hear. And I begin to understand that when I pierced your heart, / it was my own that I was slaying. So now I return to the cross, the choice of all miseries, the hope of nearly hopeless. / I stand beneath your cross, O Lord, so that I can learn that it takes little time to become a saint, / but much love. And I understand now, / that if I had never sinned, / I could never call you “Savior.”

Virgin, tho of virgins fairest,
May the bitter woe thou bearest,
Make on me impression deep.

Virgin, tho of virgins fairest,
May the bitter woe thou bearest,
Make on me impression deep.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

The great funeral pyre of suffering gradually burns itself out, and the blood of the God-man dries on the wood of the cross, as a sign of His passing. His garments are consigned to His executioners, His blood to the earth His body to the grave, His mother to John, and His soul to His Heavenly Father. Having finished the last word of His testament, He bows His head and dies. His spirit descends into Limbo, and His escort there is a thief. All is finished now. God has had His revenge on Satan and sin.

Three things cooperated in the fall of the human race from grace: the disobedient man, Adam; the proud women, Eve; and the tree. To restore that grace to us, God relied on the obedient man, Christ; the humble women, Mary; and the tree of the cross. But at the moment of Christ’s death, His triumph was still hidden from human eyes. A mocking voice cried out, “Others He saved. Himself He cannot save.”

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God - That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

O Jesus, how truly you have taught us: no man can save himself if he is to save another. Your weakness in the face of death was but a sign of the obedience that the law of sacrifice requires. The leaves of a tree cannot save themselves if they are to bud the stems and branches by their fall. The acorn cannot save itself if it is to become the oak. And so it seems, dear Jesus, that you could not save yourself from death if you were to save us from sin. May I have an everlasting love for the redemption you have won for me. And may I always remember that by accepting my own cross in this life, I will - oh, strangest of paradoxes - save my life for eternity.

Thus Christ’s dying may I carry, With Him in His Passion tarry, And His wounds in memory keep.
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

More than thirty years earlier, Jesus
had left His Father's heavenly home and
traveled to this world. We may think of
Him as God's Prodigal Son, who went off
to a foreign country and spent Himself for
the good of the people of that country. He
opened their blind eyes to God's light, and
He opened their ears to the words of the
gospel. Finally, on a small mound of earth
called Calvary, He gave away the substance
of His body and blood on behalf of that
sinful people.

Taken down from the cross execution, His
body was placed in the arms of His mother,
who still recalled the first time she held
Him in her arms at Bethlehem. Is it possible
that she recalled also that the pierced
hands of Jesus had once been warmed
by the breath of oxen? Is it possible that
her eyes filled with new tears as she
remembered that she had once nourished
His body with food from her own?

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

Yes, Mary, this is not Bethlehem, but Calvary.
Those hands that once accepted the gifts of
the Magi have now been pierced with rude
nails. That brow on which divine majesty
made its throne is now wearing a crown of
piercing thorns. Those infant feet that were
once too small to bear the weight of divine
omnipotence are now again unable to walk.
Between Bethlehem and Calvary, dear Mary,
lies the chasm of sin. Be my intercessor at
the throne of justice and mercy, O Mother of
Sorrows and Help of Sinners. I come now to
you, Mary, / as a repentant prodigal,
wishing to draw from your heart the seven
swords.

Jesus, may Thy Cross defend me,
And Thy Mother's prayer befriended me;
Let me die in Thy embrace
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you -
Because by your Holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

The world showed little hospitality to our blessed Lord, who is Master of Life and death. For His birth, there was available only a rough-and-ready shelter for animals. For death, He was given the hard bed of the cross, with a crown of thorns as a pillow; and His hands and feet were tucked into that bed with nails. The glory of His birth was hidden in the least of the cities of Israel. The meaning of His death was hidden from human eyes in the greatest city of the world. Born in the stranger's cave buried in a stranger's grave: thus did Christ teach us that human birth and death were equally foreign to Him. For those things were foreign to God.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God -
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Sweet Jesus, / now I understand - as your lifeless body is placed in the tomb of a stranger- that the law of life is also the law of death; that everything that lives must also die;and that nothing dies without something coming to life. You have shown me, by your life, that unless there is a cross, there can be no empty tomb; / that unless there is a crown of thorns there can be no heavenly crown; / and that unless the body be scourged, it can never be glorified. / With the joy of your resurrection before me, I ask for the strength to endure my cross / and to share in your suffering, until that next resurrection day, / when, / in the heavenly Jerusalem, all tears shall be wiped away.

I pray also, O Lord / for all whom this world rejects, and to whom it denies any hospitality. Welcome them, loving Savior, into your kingdom, where you reign forever and ever. / Amen

When to dust my dust returneth,
Grant a soul that Thee yearneth,
In Thy Paradise a place. Amen.
(Standing, ALL)

Dear Jesus,
you are the Living Word of God.

You have told us that the Word of God is a seed that brings forth life only if it falls to the ground.

You are the seed of everlasting life, and you fell to the earth by your death on the first Good Friday.

But you rose to glorious life on the first Easter Sunday.

You have taught us that Christian living is actually a dying to this world in this Calvary of time, and that this life is but a prelude to the eternity-long Easter that awaits us in your heavenly kingdom.

Grant that on the last day, when you come again in glory upon the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead, bearing your cross as the sign of your triumph over sin and death, I may be able to show you my cross and hear you say: “Come, you blessed of my Father, into the kingdom prepared for you from all eternity.” Amen

Our Father...

Hail Mary...

Glory Be to the Father...