

## THE WAY OF THE CROSS - YOUTH

*(The Way of the Cross may be adapted as per your Parish requirement.  
You may choose appropriate hymns)*



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

**Each station ends with:** *Have mercy on us O Lord... Have mercy on us.*

### Sign of The Cross.

### INTRODUCTION

As youth we like to see and experience the world around us. Today we will look at the scenes of the Way of the Cross. It may be frightening but it can lead us to encounter Christ. As youth we also encounter others and each encounter is unique. Today, as we follow Jesus on the road to Calvary, let us open ourselves to encounter Him.

### FIRST STATION: Jesus is condemned to death

*A third time he said to them, ... I will have him flogged and then release him. But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; ... Pilate released ... the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and handed Jesus over as they wished.*

Jesus, you are standing before the governor. He tried not to sentence you three times. The people oppose him and finally he released one who was wanted for murder and insurrection. Hidden in the crowd we lose our identity. We become one of the many voices. We get misled by trouble-makers. Unknowingly we join in with the others and shout for your condemnation.

Today we are horrified at this injustice. We also at times are ready to save others instead of going with the truth. Forgive us for the times we turned a deaf ear to the voice of goodness. Give us courage to be the single voice that can stand for the truth. Surely it can make a difference.

### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, at our Baptism you made us your Sons and daughters and members of your Church. Help us to love you, know you and be faithful to you in all that we do. May your light always bring us clarity and lead us to make the right decisions and ask the right questions.

### SECOND STATION: Jesus receives his cross

*Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

Jesus, you are crowned with thorns and you receive your cross given to you. You accept it, just you accepted everyone who came to you. You did not rebel about the weight of the Cross. As you being your journey you willingly carry this unjust and humiliating instrument of torture.

Jesus how many times I have shown rebellious behaviour at home, college etc... because I have viewed them as unjust. You teach us to be accepting. You teach us to discover that there is always something beyond appearances. Life always offers us something remarkable and meaningful. We learn that when we stumble, we can rise up and walk again. Your cross gives us a glimpse of your resurrection to come.

### PRAYER

Lord, grant us the grace to embrace our own crosses. Help us to look back into our own lives and rediscover your love which has always been there for us.

### **THIRD STATION: Jesus falls for the first time**

*Surely, he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.*

Jesus, you are making your way to Calvary and bearing our sins. Due to the weight of the cross you fall to the ground on your hands and knees in pain. You endure this humiliation for us even as people make fun of you. As youth we feel that to have faith means we will never fall in life.

Jesus you get up and resume your journey keeping your Father's will in mind. Jesus, you remind us of small children who lose their balance and fall. But trusting their parents they get up and continue walking. Jesus, you teach us we do have a choice to get up and keep moving ahead. We learn from our parents, elders, teachers and that trust is stronger than fear.

#### **PRAYER**

Jesus, we thank you for those who you have placed in our life that always encourage us. We ask you to give us the courage to get up after every fall as you did. Give us the grace to trust you and the strength to keep going always. Amen.

### **FOURTH STATION: Jesus meets his mother**

*Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, ... a sword will pierce your own soul too".*

Jesus, your mother Mary makes her way to meet you through the crowd. Mother Mary accompanies you on the road to Calvary. She looks at her Sons back which bears the marks of scourging. He is forced to carry the weight of the cross. Exhausted, he falls beneath the cross. The prophecies you heard about your son are being fulfilled.

We see mothers accompanying their children every day. Sometimes to school, doing homework, for important exams or to the doctor etc... Our own mothers in still in us the values of justice and truth. Today exactly the opposite is happening in the world and we are confused. The plans they had for us; will we ever achieve them. Like Mary, Jesus we learn to place our hope and trust in God and never despair.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, help us to be like Mary keeping our eyes fixed on you at all times. Help us to know that we are never alone or abandoned by you or your Mother Mary.

### **FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross**

*As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.*

The weight of the cross is now beginning to crush Jesus. We do not see his disciples or friends around. An unknown passer-by is placed by your side and asked to share your burden. His name is Simon of Cyrene. As he carries the cross, he has an unexpected encounter with you.

Every day we experience encounters and conflicts with those who we meet. We learn that in these unexpected meetings there arise hidden opportunities to love and to see the best in others. Very often Jesus we feel lonely and abandoned. You teach us that we are never alone and there is always a Simon of Cyrene ready to share our yoke.

#### **PRAYER**

Jesus, grant us the courage to be like Simone of Cyrene. When we feel alone and abandoned may we remember that there is always a Simon of Cyrene to help us. May we accept the help of others with humility and the grace to be open to all kinds of encounters in our life.

## **SIXTH STATION: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

*"He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him".*

Jesus, you are barely recognizable. Your face is disfigured and bleeding. A woman steps out of the crowd. She wants to help and does a small act of kindness. She wipes your face with her veil. Hers is the power of tenderness.

Veronica is not much mentioned in the Bible. She is rewarded by a simple gesture of love. Today we hesitate to help because we don't want to get involved. We are afraid we can get wrongly implicated and in trouble with the authorities. Jesus you invite us to love and help others unconditionally, like Veronica.

### **PRAYER**

Jesus, may I always come to the aid of my neighbour, in whom you dwell just as Veronica came to help you on the road to Calvary.

## **SEVENTH STATION: Jesus falls for the second time**

*... Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.*

Jesus, you fall once again. You get us again more determined. Your eyes are filled with love. You want to complete your Father's will here on earth. Jesus you are close to us. You identify with our troubles, our weaknesses, etc... May we remember that each time you fall and rise, you proclaim your resurrection. Truly, you are a strange king lying in the dust.

Jesus to us this is confusing. We have so many bad habits? We promise never to always give them up. We keep failing? Jesus you inspire us to get up and keep going when we fall and learn from our mistakes.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, grant us the strength to be ready to get up after falling and learn from our failures. Grant us the grace to stay with you and hold your hand at all times. Teach us to show love to those who suffer and fall besides us.

## **EIGHTH STATION: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

*Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ..."*

Jesus, you speak to the women of Jerusalem as you would meet anyone on any given day. These women look at you and weep. Jesus, you speak concretely and directly to them. Jesus, you admonish these women like a Father. You speak to them words of truth in love.

Jesus, when we talk to people, we often speak words that are diplomatic or vague. Sometimes a veil of hypocrisy lies behind what we really say and mean. Teach us to speak the language you speak i.e. love. It is very different from ours.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, help us to speak words of truth and love that will build them up.

## **NINTH STATION: Jesus falls for the third time**

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.*

Jesus, you fall for the third time. By now, your pain and suffering must be terrible and unbearable. Jesus, now you are exhausted, but still stand up to go all the way to Calvary. You did this because of your great love for us. Jesus, as you get up you inspire us with hope and courage.

We have probably never counted how many times we have fallen. Jesus teaches us that no matter how many times we fall, it is in Him that we can find the strength to endure to the end. For You the end is the crucifixion and it reveals your saving love for all of us.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, grant us the courage to keep going forward on our journey. Grant us the strength to be faithful in the different challenges we come across in our life.

#### **TENTH STATION: Jesus is stripped of his garments**

*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.*

Jesus, they strip you naked. They are casting dice for your garments. In the eyes of these men, you have lost your respect and dignity. In the beginning, God had sewn garments to clothe the dignity of humanity. Now you stand stripped of your dignity.

Today we see around us the migrants and the other backward classes in society been targeted and ready to be stripped of their dignity. Brave youth take up their cause. They too are targeted. Like you, they too stand disfigured, and their eyes filled with tears of pain. Jesus grant us the strength to never leave them alone to carry their cross.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, help us to remember that while we had fallen and lived in poverty you reached out to save us by giving your life for us.

#### **ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is nailed to the cross**

*When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing".*

As they reach the place called 'The Skull' Jesus, you are stripped of everything. Jesus you are innocent but they punish you by nailing you to the wood of the cross. In your moments of weakness, you use words that are saving, forgiving and even offered paradise to those willing to repent.

Today, with so much of social media around us we do not know what to believe. We see people being trolled on social media for mistakes, with hate messages etc... We never hear about forgiveness. Today any provocative words used at us we can barely tolerate. Every word hurts us. In our confusion we do not know what to believe and what to do.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, grant that when I see injustice around me, I may find the courage to take life in my hands and act differently. In the difficult and weak moments in my life set me free from fear. Help us to enjoy and partake of the life you have desired and prepared for us.

#### **TWELFTH STATION: Jesus dies on the cross**

*It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ... Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father into your hands I commend my spirit." ... he breathed his last".*

Jesus, you are dying. You have come to the end. The memories of you speaking to the crowds, the miracles you did were so beautiful to behold. We have become accustomed to flee pain and death. In our

lives we are not prepared for pain. You remain there, on the cross and continue to invite us with open arms.

Jesus, you open our eyes to see suffering and pain differently. By your death, you cross over death to New life, a great mystery that we still have many questions. When we open our eyes, we see that you loved us as we really are. In our daily lives and in our imperfection, we still experience your living and active presence in our lives i.e., God-with-us.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, grant us a deeper understanding of the mystery that You have overcome death and now you grant us new Life in abundance.

#### **THIRTEENTH STATION: Jesus is taken down from the cross**

*... Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so, he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, ...*

Jesus, you remain hanging on the cross. Jesus you are taken down from the cross and laid in the lap of your mother and then in the earth. Your lifeless body teaches us to face suffering with strength like you did.

You teach us that love remains unbroken and resists death. In daily life we are often blind and deaf to the difficulties, the pain and suffering of others.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, keep your hope ever alive in us. Help us to trust in your unconditional love. Grant that we may keep our gaze on you and find peace on our journey.

#### **FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus is laid in the tomb**

*Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden, there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

Jesus you are laid in the tomb and you are no longer seen. Darkness has fallen all around. Who can sleep on a night like this? The city is filled with the sound of crying, soldiers making their rounds. The day is dying and you alone are sleeping.

Joseph of Arimathea followed your steps from afar. As you descend from the cross, Joseph carries you on his shoulders and lays you in the tomb. You sleep as you did on the warm straw when you were wrapped in swaddling clothes; and another Joseph held you in his arms.

Where have you gone Jesus? Where have you descended? Jesus, I do not need to run far away. Today I realize that you are within me and always knocking at my door.

#### **PRAYER**

Lord, grant that, in our weariness, we may find rest in you. As we gaze at your sleeping face, may we discover your love and the inner beauty you have given us to help others. Amen.