



18 March 2022

THE WAY OF THE CROSS FOR SENIORS

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

Hymn: *We Hail Thee, Verse -1*(or any other)

Introduction

According to the data from World Health Organization, by 2050 there will be two billion people over 60 in the world, which would mean, one in five people will be elderly.

The document “*Old age: our future. The elderly after the pandemic*”, published by The Pontifical Academy for Life and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (09 February 2021) states, “Being elderly is a gift from God and an enormous resource, an achievement to be safeguarded with care . . .”

As we dedicate this Way of the Cross for the Seniors and Elderly, let us thank God for the gift of our life, and for all the years he has blessed us with—both, those which are beautiful and are a pleasure to recall and relive, and those we would like to put behind us—the years that bear painful memories.

Prayer: (All) Loving God, thank you for the gift of life you have given us, and for all the blessings that were ours through the years—from the time we were born to this moment. Thank you for the comfort we feel knowing that you will continue to journey with us through the ups and downs of our senior years.

Pardon us for the times we grumbled and complained along the way, and forgive us for all our sins and failures. We surrender to you, our life, and all the days you will be pleased to grant us still. And as we walk through the journey of your Son during this Way of the Cross, we praise and we thank you for the gift of our redemption, and we pray that our faith in your love and goodness grow deeper, and that we may have the grace to gratefully and joyfully embrace our life as seniors, one moment, one step at a time. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The first station – Jesus is condemned to death

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.* (Mk 15:13-15)

Reflection: “Why, what evil has he done?” . . . Jesus did no evil. On the contrary, Jesus spent all his life doing good—preaching, healing, raising the dead to life, giving hope to the poor

and the downtrodden, blessing the children, empowering women, challenging unlawful practices, and countless other good actions. . . . Yet he was condemned to death—death on the cross. . . .

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, forgive us for those times we have stood silent when the moment demanded that we speak up against injustice meted out to our vulnerable brothers and sisters, giving in to external pressures. Help us to be strong within, and stand by the principles and values we learned from you—love, peace, courage, justice and truth.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to her Son to the last.*

The second station – Jesus carries his cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. (Jn 19:16-17)*

Reflection: The cross is more than a piece of wood. For us humans, the cross is everything that's burdensome, oppressive, something that robs us of our peace and comfort. For Jesus, the cross is not only a piece of wood, but on it is the sin of the world as we are told in 1 Pet 2:24, "On the cross Jesus bore our sins in his body, so that we might die to sin and death." Obedient to the Father's will, he carried the cross unto death—all for our sake, to save us.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, forgive us for the times we were unwilling to carry our crosses—our illness; disability; old age with waning strength; loss of a job; unemployment; financial problem; loneliness; straying children; broken relationship which to a great extent are the outcome of our own doing. Lord, grant us the grace to follow your example, to embrace our crosses obediently and wholeheartedly, knowing that sharing in the mystery of your cross, we may share in the glory of your resurrection.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed*

The third station – Jesus falls the first time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* (Mt 11:28-30)

Reflection: In his fall, Jesus invites us to come to him whenever we experience human powerlessness, and to discover there the power of God. He teaches us the lesson of a meekness which quells rebellion and a trust which supplants arrogance; he gives us, most of all, the great lesson of humility.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, our life’s arduous journey drains away our energy, leaving us exhausted and powerless—the adverse situations that came our way, our repeated failures and losses in our battle against addictions of different kinds, the unmet expectations, our failure to reach the standard we have set for ourselves and many more. But thank you Jesus for showing us the way that we can always rise again. Be with us Lord; walk with us, and take us to our journey’s end.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*O how sad and sore distressed
was that Mother, highly blest,
of the sole-begotten One.*

The fourth station – Jesus meets his mother

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *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 from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.* (Jn 19:26-27)

Reflection: When Jesus and his mother met they must have just looked at each other, with feelings that words cannot express. What he saw in his mother’s eyes must have hurt him more than his physical pain. And the violence inflicted upon him must have etched into the very heart of his mother. Yet, both, mother and son said their ‘yes’ once more to the will of the Father.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, the gaze that rested between you and your mother was a gaze of pure, deep love. Fill us with such love, that no matter how painful it is to watch our children being defeated in their battle against drugs, alcohol and other addictions and vices, we may have the strength to move on, and overcome all odds of life.

Prayer: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Christ above in torment hangs,
she beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying glorious Son.*

The fifth station – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. (Mk 15:21)*

Reflection: Jesus humbly accepts the help of Simon of Cyrene. And, although he was compelled to do, Simon must have had experiences unknown before. There would have surged within his soul, love, and mysterious awe and reverence for the man he was assisting, unknown then that the deemed criminal was God's own Son.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, we are created to be social beings, and in our life's journey, we need of each other's company and help. Help us to be generous in lending our shoulders to lift our brothers' and sisters' crosses, and when we find ourselves in situations beyond our control, grant us your spirit of humility, to humbly and gratefully accept help from others.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

The sixth station – Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.(2 Cor 4:6)*

Reflection: In that face, marred by suffering, Veronica recognises the holy face of the Saviour who would transform and restore our image marred by sin and human weakness. In the features of the suffering Servant she sees the King of kings and the Lord of all creation.

Prayer: (All) Lord, you told us "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it to me." Grant us the grace to go beyond the externals, and see your face in the poor and the needy, the sick and the lonely, the weak and the vulnerable and all those we meet in our daily life. Give us a compassionate heart that feels the suffering of others, and a generous spirit, to reach out to anyone in need, in whichever way situations demand.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?*

The seventh station – Jesus falls a second time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *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.* (1 Pet 2:21)

Reflection: Drained out of energy and strength, his weakened body could stand it no longer, Jesus stumbled and fell to the ground once more. Yet determined to fulfil the Father's plan, hauled himself up and walked on to Calvary. His fall reminds us that in life, challenges, problems and difficulties are bound to present themselves before us, and that at times we will fall, but that we must rise, dust off the dirt and move on.

Prayer: (All) Lord, because of the frailties of our human nature and the trials of our daily life, we feel drained out, our desire to fight it out goes into shadows, we feel like giving up and let go. But your fall tells us, that no matter what, the strength of your presence and grace will enable us rise up and keep fighting to the finish. Help us keep trusting in you.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Virgin of all virgins blest!
listen to my fond request:
let me share thy grief divine.*

The eighth station – Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *There followed him a great multitude of people, and of 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."* (Lk 23:27-28)

Reflection: He who wept over Jerusalem did not allow the women weep for him. Compassionate as he was, though with laboured breath, spoke to the women who are following him, and in the most gentle tone, exhorted them to weep for themselves and their children—arming them to deal with their own pain and suffering which is part and parcel of human life.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, most compassionate and gentle, you reached out to the women in spite of the agony you yourself were in. Grant us an unselfish heart that does not dwell on our own troubles, but like you, to be quick to sense the pain and suffering of others beyond the façade of their smiling face or their seemingly confident voice. May we find joy in the service we render to others, and in turn find our life meaningful and worth living.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*She beheld her tender Child,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.*

The ninth station – Jesus falls the third time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *Our steps are made firm by the LORD, when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the LORD holds us by the hand.* Ps 37:23-24

Reflection: Weary and exhausted, Jesus collapses once again under the weight of the cross. . . In his third fall, Jesus expresses the love with which, for our sake, he embraced the burden of suffering, and he renews his call to follow him faithfully to the end. He also gives us a glimpse of what lies beyond pain and suffering: “If we endure, we shall also reign with him.”

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, we often find ourselves falling back to our old bad habits. Help us get back on track and discover the lesson we need to learn hidden inside this fall. Grant us the grace to rise again and trudge on even if it meant great suffering. Lord, we place our life in your merciful hands and we trust in your never-failing love.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
make my heart with thine accord.*

The tenth station – Jesus is stripped of his garments

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *The soldiers took Jesus’ garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another: “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfil the scripture.* (Jn 19:23-24a)

Reflection: For our sake, Jesus not only lets go of his human life, but his very dignity as a person. He invites us to let go of what we possess. “Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it” (Lk 9:24). Jesus, stripped of his garments, wove from the cross the new robe of our dignity as sons and daughters of God.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, you, who are Lord of creation, let go of everything you had, even what is essential—the clothes that cover your body. Help us realize that our possessions and achievements don’t define us. Grant us the grace to be convinced deep in our hearts, that you are the centre of our lives. Reveal to us the truth, that in our life’s final moments, God is all we need.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Make me feel as thou hast felt;
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ my Lord.*

The eleventh station – Jesus is nailed to the cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. (Jn 19:18)*

Reflection: In Jesus crucified, we see God's undeniable mercy and undying love for each and every one of us. On that Cross, in his body, hang our every fault, fear, worries and cares, our sins, our regrets, our losses, our broken selves, our broken families, our broken world, our broken humanity, our broken creation, our war-torn world, especially Ukraine and its people. But sure, God will do what only He can: He will make the imperfect perfect, bring new life from death, change mourning into joy.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, thank you, for by your Cross you have redeemed the world. Your Cross restores and redeems us, leading us to the glorious and radiant life that awaits us at the end of our journey. Draw us to yourself that we may learn to live doing your will. Open our eyes to the reality of the Father's love for us who gives himself for us, in you, the Son, to the infinite end.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*By the Cross with thee to stay,
there with thee to weep and pray,
is all I ask of thee to give.*

The twelfth station – Jesus dies upon the cross

(Kneel for some time)

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. (Lk 23:46)*

Reflection: Jesus lets go of his earthly life with a beautiful, loving gesture—surrendering himself into the hands of his loving Father. The surrender of Jesus into the hands of the Father portrays the love between them. The death of Jesus should inspire us to trust in God, and that surrendering ourselves to the Father will calm away all fear, fear of pain, fear of

death and fear of the grave, filling us with hope and longing for the life that the father will offer us in his presence—eternal life.

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, your death was a total surrender of your life to the Father, and you died that we may live. Grant us the grace to remember that our life is fragile, and that we may be called at any moment. . . . Gather into your arms all those who die today—in the battlefields, accidents, hospitals, and clinics and homes. Comfort those who mourn; hold us in your mercy, and give us courage to accept our vulnerability and live in hope of the joy you will share with us in eternity.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Let me share with thee His pain,
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died.*

The thirteenth station – Jesus is taken down from the cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *After these things, 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.* (Jn 19:38)

Reflection: What would have been the thoughts of Mary to see the lifeless body of her son? Cradling him once more, she would have pondered every moment of his precious life. She would have pondered his conception, his birth, his presentation in the temple, his public ministry, his passion and death and so much more. She would have pieced together the mystery of his life, and his voice would have rung in her heart, “Why are you searching for me? Do you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” . . . only now, her son is in his Father’s heart—his mission accomplished. . . .

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, our earthly wisdom will not help us to comprehend the meaning of your suffering and death. But the gift of faith you have given us, tells us that you conquered sin and death to pay our ransom, to restore us to the Father. Strengthen our faith, when we are overwhelmed by grief at the loss of our loved one, and help us remember, that no matter what storm batters us in life, you are always there, and that we are always under the mantle of your dearest Mother, whom you gave to be our mother too. Fill us with hope, that the final victory will be ours.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
be Thy Mother my defence,
be Thy Cross my victory.*

The fourteenth station – Jesus is laid in the tomb

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reading: *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden there was a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (Jn 19:41-42)*

Reflection: From human perspective, all was lost, all was over. Jesus' life had come to an end. His body lay in the tomb, the stone covered the entrance and his followers were scattered. But Mother Mary may have thought and felt differently . . . having pieced things together, she would have recalled what he said, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Lk 9:22). And so she must have waited with the firm belief that what her son said would come true. And what filled her heart and mind while laying the body of her son in the tomb was—the *Third Day!*

Prayer: (All) Lord Jesus, may your Blessed Mother inspire us to always hope in the goodness of God and to believe that God is faithful to the end. Help us prepare for that final moment when we shall surrender our life totally to the Father. And may we find that moment sweet and comforting, for it is the moment we return home—to the heart of God, our heavenly Father.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord.

All: Have mercy on us.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

*While my body here decays,
may my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee.*

Conclusion:

Leader: Save us, O Christ our Saviour, through the merits of your cross.

All: You, who have saved us from sin and death, have mercy on us.

Let us pray:

God our Father, look down, we beseech you, upon this your family, for whom your Son our Lord Jesus Christ accepted to be delivered into the hands of wicked people, and to endure the torments and death on the Cross for the salvation of humanity. Grant that we who have known this mystery of love on earth may enjoy the fruits of the redemption in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the intentions of the Pope: Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be...

Concluding hymn: Sing Glory to the Cross of Christ . . .

*-Contributed to the office of the 'Commission for Liturgy' by
Sr Caroline Duai fsp.*

