



WAY OF THE CROSS FOR YOUTH

Opening Prayer: *(Sr Salome fsp)*

Embarking on this journey of the 'Way of the Cross' is not merely a ritual. It's a profound expedition of the heart, a pathway of contemplation and connection with the timeless story Jesus' sacrifice for our redemption. As young pilgrims, we seek to explore the profound meaning of the Paschal mystery, seeking understanding, inspiration, and transformation along the way. Join us friends, as we venture forth, navigating the stations with open minds and receptive hearts, discovering the relevance of Christ's passion in our lives today, amidst the challenges of faith in our own times.

First Station: PILATE CONDEMNS JESUS TO DEATH.

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

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

Reflection: *(Br Ashton)*

In a world that can be quick to judge, young people find themselves condemned for choices or beliefs that don't align with mainstream norms. Jesus too was unjustly condemned for being different from the traditional values of society. We reflect on how societal expectations & power structures can sometimes lead to unjust condemnations. Do I condemn people for being different? Do I judge people wrongly because their beliefs do not align with my beliefs?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, grant that we may stand firm in our convictions, even in the face of external pressures. Strengthen us in our convictions of the truth, give us an understanding heart that is inclusive, slow to judge and ever ready to listen. Amen.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Second Station: JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS.

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

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

Reflection: *(Br Jewlyn)*



Jesus carrying his cross is a powerful symbol of perseverance and sacrifice. It reminds us that even in the face of great adversity, we can find the strength to carry on. In today's world, many young people face overwhelming challenges such as; mental health issues, social pressures, and economic instability. Like Jesus, we are invited to carry our own crosses and face our challenges head-on having faith in ourselves and in a higher power to guide us through difficult times. Jesus carrying his cross teaches us the importance of empathy and compassion.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, in a world often divided and hostile, teach us to see the humanity in others and treat them with kindness and respect as to create a just and equitable society for all and a better future for ourselves and our communities. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us **O Lord.** **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Third station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

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

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

Reflection: (Br Derrick)

'I have come to do the will of my father'. (Jn 6:37-39) Jesus was determined to fulfill the plan of God. Yet he falls down due to the heaviness of the cross. We too are determined to achieve many things in life. But find ourselves stumbling under the burdens of our modern world; temptations like misuse of mobile phones, sexual pleasures, addiction, pornography etc that weaken our resolve and cause us to falter. Jesus rose up from his fall because he knew his destination. May we rise from our weaknesses and failures to meet our destination.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in the face of trials and distractions, help us to emulate your determination to fulfil the will of the Father. When we stumble under the weight of our burdens, grant us the grace to rise again, with our eyes fixed on you, who walked our paths and showed us that there is no crown of glory without the cross. Guide us through the challenges modern life and its allurements and to an everlasting joy in you. Amen.

Hymn: 431. Verses 1&3. We hail thee, Saviour and Lord, thy cross ever be adored! (*Joyful Celebration Hymnal*)

Leader: Have mercy on us **O Lord.** **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Fourth station: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER, MARY

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

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

Reflection: (Br Richard)

Jesus, on the way to his crucifixion, and in the midst of great pain, his mother was with him. She must have been in distress and helpless looking at her only son carrying the cross. On the other



hand, Mary remembers the words spoken to her: "and you yourself a sword will pierce." However, that pain reflects the greatest love and hope at the same time. She stood by him and her presence made a big difference. In our world of instant gratification and experimentation, young people can easily fall a prey. May they find safe refuge and strength in the maternal presence of mother Mary.

Prayer: There are such moments when we too are overwhelmed with painful emotions while walking alongside people we love, as they bear the cross of sickness, divorces, unemployment or deaths. May we learn from our Blessed mother to offer the gift of presence and support to all who are hurting and carrying crosses beyond their human strength. Amen.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Fifth station: SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

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

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

Reflection: (Br Rolwyn)

There is power in compassion and selflessness. Simon who may have had his own struggles is made to lift the cross of another. Stepping into the hurting shoes of a fellow being might cost us dearly, yet we are invited to share and lighten one another's burden like Simon and offer solace to those struggling on the path of life; to those whose families are broken, to those who are at their weakest, to those who have lost hope, to those unable to feed themselves, to those vulnerable. May these bonds of compassion transcend the pain and the challenges of life and make the world a place of great love.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may we be quick to help and also be humble enough to receive help when needed. Be our friend in our moments of loss and despair; lighten the weight of our cross by reducing troubles and giving us the grace to find comfort in you, through prayer and silence. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

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.*

Reflection: (Br Anand)

Today, many youths are captivated by a misleading image of the world and make their poor decisions and choices; leading them to distress, fear and insecurity. We pray that today's youth, who have made such wrong decisions in their lives, may find compassionate mentors and true Christian friends whose unconditional love and care will help them embrace the path of truth and integrity of life.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, Give us the grace to overcome our own pride and reluctance to befriend people who are victimised for no fault of theirs or even those who are guilty of wrongs committed, knowing well that even you, the sinless one was victimised and accused for our sake. Keep us



away from self righteous attitude. Amen.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Seventh station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

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

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

Reflection: (Br Melvyn)

It's not easy. So many expectations are all around us and within us. Yes, we've got to do better, make something of our life. But we are not perfect. We fail, we slip up. It's so difficult to fall ... when so much is expected of us. It feels impossible to rise; it's easier to give up especially when we repeatedly fall in spite of the help of our loved ones and well wishers. Perhaps the many falls of Jesus is precisely meant to teach us that no fault is too great and no sin unredeemable before the Divine Mercy.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, give us the grace to introspect ourselves and gather the will power to avoid the near occasions of sin and when we sin, help us to see beyond our current situation, what we are feeling...thinking and to hold on to you who did not stay defeated for our sake. You are with us and you will see us through. Amen.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

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.*

Reflection: (Sr Salome fsp)

The empathy of the women highlights the shared humanity and compassion that binds us all together. Jesus acknowledged their grief while inviting them deeper into repentance and renewal. Without repentance, Sin fractures communal bonds, leading to distrust, and division, tearing the fabric of relationships and communion among people. Moreover, the normalization of sin can erode moral standards and ethical values. In today's fiercely competitive world, the relentless demands for excellence and challenges of both life and work or the risk of involvement can easily leave no room for empathy to the plight of our fellow being. Are we ready to stand apart for truth and justice?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, at the confessional, you continue to invite us to repentance and reparation for our sins. Grant us the grace of true sorrow and avoidance of the near occasion of sins. As daily beneficiaries of your boundless mercy, let us also be gentle, towards the faults of others and work towards building a more inclusive and compassionate society. Amen.



Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Ninth station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

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

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

Reflection: (Br Nikunj)

Many a time we find people who lose hope in life. They worked hard but do not get expected results. They failed to achieve their goal. They feel hopeless and decide to give up life. Jesus falls for the third time, yet he gets up and moves ahead amidst pain, rejection and mockery. Let us pray for courage and strength from God so that we always rise up from our falls and move ahead in life.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, give us the grace of simplicity in lifestyle, but strength in our thinking and will power to rise even from our lowest point and focus on our goals. We trust that when we do our best and surrender the rest to you, you will empower and surprise us with your own strength. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Tenth station: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

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

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

Reflection: (Br Kenneth)

This station takes us back to the event in the Garden of Eden where the fall necessitated a covering of the nakedness. But this time in Jesus, it is only a reversal of that event. The garments in the Eden garden were symbolic of a covering up of our sense; of being inadequate, defeated, guilty and shamed. They are a cry, seeking the love and acceptance of others. We are constantly on the lookout for these masks to conceal what seems unacceptable in us. Jesus, in allowing himself to be stripped of his garments, leads the way in inviting us to shed our dependence on external embellishments and pretense that we feel are necessary to give us dignity.

Prayer: Loving Jesus, help us realise that our true dignity and worth comes from the fact that we are children of God created in God's own image and not from the name, fame, and external accumulations that give a temporary feel good factor. Help us never to give undue importance to the passing things of the world. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

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.*



Reflection: (Br Wilfred)

Jesus had to bear the Cross which was considered as least and shameful punishment of His time, for our redemption. For St. Paul, the Cross of Christ was not only a precious remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death, but also a symbol closely associated with His sacrifice and the mystery of the Passion. Today, as we remember that event of Christ, let us also nail all our weakness and sins to the same cross of Jesus. By doing so, we may enter into that life which Jesus offered in its fullness, freed from slavery to various things and habits, into a life in Jesus.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, the cross which was a symbol of shame became a symbol of salvation and hope for us. Give us the grace of responsibility and humble acceptance of our own crosses, life's ups and downs, its success and failures. By this act of and surrender, may we enter into everlasting life you promised us. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Twelfth station: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS (Pause and kneel.....for Silent Prayer)

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

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

Reflection: (Br Rony)

As Jesus hung on the cross; he forgave the soldiers who had crucified him, and prayed for his mother and friends. Jesus wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so he gave all he had for us. Jesus died on the cross carrying away with Him the burden of our sins; the past failures, experiences of discrimination and injustices, the feeling of brokenness, of being alone, or selfishness. May we too die to ourselves, to prejudices and to all that prevents a fuller life so as to find a life of purpose and love.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you invite young people to unite their struggles with your own, to find solace and strength in your unconditional love and mercy. You offer them your friendship, consolation, and healing companionship. Give us the grace to die to our sins so that we may rise anew gloriously like a buried seed. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

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.*

Reflection: (Br Ignatius)

Jesus, how brutally you were put to death. How gently you are taken from the cross. Your suffering ended, as you rest in the lap of your mother. The dirt and blood are wiped away. We seem to be kinder when someone dies. If only we could learn to see the good things about them while they were alive! If only we would tell those around us how much we love them, while we still have the



opportunity to do so. We often disrespect or take for granted our parents and family members, unlike Jesus and Mary who stood by each other in life and in death. Let us resolve to look for the good in those around us. Let us live this day as if it were the last. May we become gentler, loving and more appreciative of those around us.

Prayer: O Mary, Mother most sorrowful, the sword of grief pierced your soul when you saw Jesus lying lifeless on your bosom. Help us to grow in affection and compassion towards the people whom we live with, in our families and in the society. Amen

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

Fourteenth station: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

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

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

Reflection: (Br Preetam)

Now it seems like all is over. Everyone returned home in grief and hopelessness. But in reality, there is a hope of Resurrection. Just as the night falls before the Sun rises anew, without Cross there is no Resurrection. Young people today go through their dark times of difficulties, temptations, stress, peer pressure, unemployment, conflicting relationships etc. But the tomb reminds us to focus and hope for the light of resurrection.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we pray for all our youth who have buried their dreams or who are at the verge of giving up, because they could see no glimpse of hope for their future. May all young people seek the lasting friendship of the Son of God who have gone through the darkest moments for our sake, and gloriously won for us, eternal life. Amen.

Leader: Have mercy on us O Lord. **All:** *Have mercy on us.*

For the intentions of our Holy father..... Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be...

Concluding Hymn:

No. 203. Verses 2, 5 & 8. If you wish to be my disciple, take up your cross and follow me. (*Joyful Celebration Hymnal*)

**-Contributed by the Seminarians
of St Pious the X College, Bombay**