

The Way of the Cross

Praying the Psalms with Jesus



OPENING PRAYER

(STAND)

Priest: Jesus came with his disciples to a country place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit down here, while I go over yonder and pray." Then he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be saddened and exceedingly troubled. He said to them, "My soul is sad, even unto death. Wait here and watch with me." He went forward a little, and falling prostrate he prayed, saying, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; yet not as I will but as you will." (Mt. 26, 36-39)

(KNEEL)

All: Almighty and eternal Father, / accept our prayer of thanksgiving for your Beloved Son, our Savior and Lord. / As we recall his Sacred Passion / send the Spirit of Christ into our hearts, / we beg You, / so that whether we pray or work we might do all in union with Christ our Redeemer. / Amen.

(STAND)

Sing: (to the tune of Stabat Mater)

*Jesus, Lord condemned, defiled,
May we too be meek and mild
As we tread your holy Way.*

*May we feel no bitter hatred,
When we too are persecuted,
Left alone to walk with You.*

FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

Priest: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise You. (GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified." Then, he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. - Matthew 27:22-23, 26

Let us contemplate Jesus standing beside Pilate. As his eyes behold the frenetic crowds that have filled the praetorium, he can also see the remnants of palm branches that still line the streets from his entrance into Jerusalem a mere five days earlier. Let us consider Jesus silently reciting the following words of Psalm 57 as he stands atop the steps of the praetorium and hears the chants of: "Crucify him! Crucify him! (Pause)

My heart is steadfast, God,
my heart is steadfast.
I will sing and chant praise.

ALL: Have mercy on me, God, have mercy on me. In you I seek refuge. In the shadow of your wings I seek refuge till harm pass by.

I call to God Most High, to God who provides for me. May God send help from heaven to save me, shame those who trample upon me.

May God send fidelity and mercy. -Psalm 57:7, 1-3.

(STAND)

Sing: Now the cross as Jesus bore it,
Has become for us who share it,
The jeweled Cross of Victory.

SECOND STATION

Jesus Carries his Cross

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: [The soldiers] clothed him in a purple cloak and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. -Mark 15:17-20

Let us contemplate Jesus in his prison cell. As he beholds the soldiers who kneel before him in mockery and “homage,” Jesus can see the moment when these men will kneel before him in worship at the hour of their deaths. Together, let us consider Jesus silently reciting the following words of Psalm 25 as he endures the mockery of the Roman soldiers. (Pause)

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul
Oh my God, in you I trust,
Let me not be put to shame;
Let not my enemies exalt over me.

**ALL: My eyes are ever upon the LORD,
who frees my feet from the snare? Look upon me, have pity on me,
for I am alone and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart;
bring me out of my distress. Preserve my soul and rescue me; do not let me be disgraced, for
in you I seek refuge. -Psalm 25:1-2, 15-17, 20**

(STAND)

Sing: Weakened, prodded, cursed, and fallen,
His whole Body bruised and swollen,
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.

THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Surely, he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. 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 were healed.

—Isaiah 53:4, 5

Let us contemplate Jesus as he falls under the weight of the Cross. The merciless scourging from the Roman soldiers has left him weakened. The wounds on his back add to Jesus’ struggle to bear his cross, and with each stride he is pierced with the pain of this journey. As he collapses to the ground, all Jesus can see are the feet of those who swarm around him in ridicule. As Jesus hears their jeers and slander, let us together consider him silently reciting the following words of Psalm 35. (Pause)

Yet when I stumbled, they gathered with glee, gathered against me and I did not know it.
They slandered me without ceasing;
without respect they mocked me,
gnashed their teeth against me.

ALL: You see this, LORD; do not be silent; Lord, do not withdraw from me. Defend me because you are just, LORD; my God, do not let them rejoice over me. -Psalm 35:15-16, 22, 24
(STAND)

Sing: Jesus met his grieving Mother,
She who made the Lord our Brother;
Now the sword her heart has pierced.

FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his afflicted mother

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.
(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also) that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." And his mother kept all these things in her heart. -Luke 2:34-35, 51

+Let us contemplate Jesus as he meets his mother on the Way of the Cross. The Psalms were at the heart of Jewish spirituality and therein would have been at the heart of life for the Holy Family in Nazareth. Mary and Jesus would have chanted the Psalms daily. Let us consider Jesus' eyes meeting his mother's eyes. Then, just as they would have done in Nazareth, let us imagine Jesus intoning the opening verse and then the two of them together reciting the remainder of Psalm 31. (Pause)

In you, LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me;
incline your ear to me;
make haste to rescue me!
Be my rock of refuge,
a stronghold to save me.

ALL: Be strong, and let your heart take courage, All you who wait for the LORD! -Psalm 31:1-2, 24

(STAND)

Sing: Simon stopped in hesitation,
Not foreseeing his proud station,
Called to bear the Cross of Christ.

FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. –*Matthew 27:32*

Let us consider Jesus looking deep into the eyes of Simon the Cyrenian. Simon's arms meet the arms of Jesus, wrapped around the Cross. Simon can feel the exhaustion of Jesus' body begging for help. As their eyes meet, and their arms intertwine, Jesus whispers the words of Psalm 69 to Simon. *(Pause)*

Let those who wait in hope for you, LORD of hosts, not be shamed because of me.
Because zeal for your house has consumed me.
But I will pray to you, LORD, at a favorable time.

All: But here I am miserable and in pain; let your saving help protect me, God, That I may praise God's name in song and glorify it with thanksgiving. –Psalm 69:6, 9, 13, 29-30

Sing: Brave but trembling came the woman,
None but she would flaunt the Roman,
Moved by love beyond her fear.

SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 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 esteem him not. –
Isaiah 53:2-3

Let us contemplate Veronica wiping the face of Jesus. As she tenderly wipes away the blood from his face, Jesus' eyes shine bright beneath the removed blood. Together, let us consider Jesus looking deep into Veronica's eyes and offering the words of Psalm 20 in gratitude. *(Pause)*

The LORD answers you in time of distress; the name of the God of Jacob defend you!
May he send you help from the sanctuary, from Zion be your support.

May he remember your every offering, graciously accept your burnt offering,
Grant what is in your heart, fulfill your every plan.

ALL: Now I know the LORD gives victory to his anointed. He will answer him from the holy heavens with a strong arm that brings victory. LORD, grant victory to the king; answer when we call upon you. -Psalm 20:1-4, 6, 9

(STAND)

Sing: Prostrate on the dust He crumbled,
Flogged in Body He resembled
All our brothers poor and scorned.

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls the second time

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief, my soul and body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away. – Psalm 31:9-10

Let us contemplate Jesus as he lies face down on the ground under the weight of the Cross and silently recites the following words of Psalm 56. (Pause)

Have mercy on me, God, for I am treated harshly; attackers press me all the day.
My foes treat me harshly all the day; yes, many are my attackers. O Most High,
when I am afraid, in you I place my trust.

ALL: I praise the word of God, I praise the word of the LORD. In God I trust, I do not fear. What can man do to me? For you have snatched me from death, kept my feet from stumbling, That I may walk before God in the light of the living. -Psalm 56:1-3, 10-11, 13

(STAND)

Sing: May our sympathy for Jesus
Turn to those who here now need us,
May we see Christ bruised in them.

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" – Luke 23:28-31

Let us contemplate Jesus remembering the words of Psalm 34 as he meets the women of Jerusalem. (Pause)

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous,
and his ears toward their cry.
The righteous cry out, the LORD hears and he rescues them from all their afflictions.
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed.

ALL: Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him from them all. He watches over all his bones; not one of them shall be broken The LORD is the redeemer of the souls of his servants; and none are condemned who take refuge in him. -Psalm 34:15, 17-18, 19-20, 22

(STAND)

Sing: Jesus fell again in weakness,
Stumbling as we do, to lead us
Through our sorrow and our pain

NINTH STATION

Jesus falls a third time

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days, the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. -Isaiah 53:7, 10-11

Let us contemplate Jesus as he falls a third time. Even with Simon's assistance, the abuse during his arrest in the Garden, the exhaustion from being imprisoned, and the torture of the scourging have all taken a toll on his body. In that moment, Jesus could have clung to the words of Psalm 41. (Pause)

My enemies say bad things against me: 'When will he die, and his name be forgotten?'

When someone comes to visit me, he speaks without sincerity. His heart stores up malice; when he leaves, he gossips.

ALL: But you, LORD, take note of me to raise me up that I may repay them.” By this I will know you are pleased with me, that my enemy no longer shouts in triumph over me. In my integrity may you support me and let me stand in your presence forever. Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from all eternity and forever.

-Psalm 41:5-6, 10-13 (STAND)

Sing: Stripped and jeered by his own nation,
Jesus stood in desolation,
Giving all He had to give.

TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his 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.” –John 19:23

Let us contemplate Jesus praying Psalm 22 as he is stripped of his garments. (Pause)

All who see me mock at me,
they make mouths at me,
they wag their heads;
“He committed his cause to the LORD
let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

ALL: Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O LORD, be not far off! O my help, hasten to me aid! -Psalm 22:7-8, 11, 17-19

(STAND)

Sing: Pierced the hands that blessed and cured us,
Pierced the feet that walked to free us,
Walked the hill of Calvary.

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: And when they came to the place which is called the Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. –Luke 23:33

Let us contemplate Jesus praying Psalm 116 as he is nailed to the Cross, recalling how these were the very words Jesus prayed as he left the Last Supper. (Pause)

I love the LORD, who listened to my voice in supplication,
Who turned an ear to me on the day I called.
I was caught by the cords of death; the snares of Sheol had seized me;
I felt agony and dread.
Then I called on the name of the LORD,
“O LORD, save my life!”

ALL: How can I repay the LORD for all the great good done for me? I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. Dear in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his devoted. -Psalm 116-4, 12-13, 15

(STAND)

Sing: Life eternal, death defiant,
Bowed his head – the world was silent,
Through his death came life anew.

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the Cross

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A bowl of vinegar stood there; so, they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it in his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. –John 19:28-30

(Pause for extended meditation)

Let us contemplate Jesus praying Psalm 118 as he hangs upon the Cross, recalling how these were the very words he prayed as he left the Last Supper. (Pause)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his mercy endures forever.
In danger I called on the LORD;
the LORD answered me and set me free.
The LORD is with me; I am not afraid;
what can mortals do against me?

ALL: I shall not die but live and declare the deeds of the LORD. I thank you for you answered me; you have been my savior. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his mercy endures forever. -Psalm 118:1, 5-6, 17, 21, 29

(STAND)

Sing: Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother
In your arms was placed our Brother,
“Full of grace” now filled with grief.

THIRTEENTH STATION

The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: Since it was the day of preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath day was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” –John 1:31-34, 36

When Jesus was an infant, Mary would have held him close and rocked him to sleep. Let us contemplate Mary praying Psalm 55 as she rocks back and forth, holding the body of her Son in her arms. (Pause)

Listen, God, to my prayer;
do not hide from my pleading.
My heart pounds within me;
death’s terrors fall upon me.

ALL: But I will call upon God, and the LORD will save me. He will redeem my soul in peace from those who war against me, though there are many who oppose me. But I put my trust in you.-Psalm 55:1, 4, 16, 18, 23

(STAND)

*Sing: Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted,
In three days You resurrected,
You did first what we shall do.*

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Priest: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

(GENUFLECT)

All: Because by your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

LEADER: 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 and departed. –Matthew 27:59-60

When Jesus was a child, Mary would have placed Jesus in his bed when he had fallen asleep. Let us contemplate Mary praying Psalm 119 as she places the body of her Son in the tomb. (Pause)

My soul is depressed; lift me up according to your word.
The way of loyalty I have chosen; I have kept your judgments.
I cling to your testimonies, LORD;
do not let me come to shame.

ALL: This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life. Though the arrogant utterly scorn me, but I do not turn away from your law. Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight. -Psalm 119:28, 30-31, 50-51, 173-174

(STAND)

Sing: Jesus, Risen, be our lover
In your Food and in our brother.
Lead us home to heaven with You.

Concluding Prayer

Prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas

Priest: O merciful God, grant that I may ever perfectly do your will in all things. Let it be my ambition to work only for your honor and glory.

ALL: Let me rejoice in nothing but what leads to you, nor grieve for anything that leads away from you.

Priest: May all passing things be as nothing in my eyes, and may all that is yours be dear to me, and you, my God, dear above them all.

ALL: May all joy be meaningless without you and may I desire nothing apart from you. May all labor and toil delight me when it is for you.

Priest: Make me, O Lord, obedient without complaint, poor without regret, patient without murmur, humble without pretense, joyous without frivolity, and truthful without disguise.

ALL: Give me, O God, an ever-watchful heart which nothing can ever lure away from you; a noble heart, which no unworthy affection can draw downwards to the earth; an upright heart, which no evil can warp; an unconquerable heart, which no tribulation can crush; a free heart, which no perverted affection can claim for its own. Bestow on me, O God, understanding to know you, diligence to seek you, and wisdom to find you; a life which may please you, and a hope which may embrace you at the last.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit. Amen.

Lord:

*Walking the cross gave us a taste of your love,
With the pains and spittle in which your body was found,
With the words that condemned you and the insults that nailed you,
Now you're in the wood for not only what they did to you,
But because of the indifference of our lives and our works,
By the times we condemn you to death because of our wickedness,
Because we put you on the cross for not accepting that you are the divine Son,
For condemning the innocent so not to be born, not to live with rights,
Because we condemn our neighbor because we can't see him as a brother.
Help us Lord to wait for your life to be resurrected to attain your forgiveness.
You destroyed death so that our life can be glorified in your love,
Give us sincere faith to make us your disciples and your witnesses.
Let us wait with Mary and proclaim your resurrection. Amen.*

Father Fernando Torres