

WAY OF THE CROSS



19th August 2005

**“HE, who is to shepherd my people.” (Mt 2:6b)
HE has crossed our path**

In his message for XX World Youth Day 2005, Pope John Paul II writes: “And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother’ (Mt 2:11). There is nothing extraordinary about this at first sight. Yet that Child was different from any other: He is the only Son of God, yet He emptied Himself of His glory (cf. Phil 2:7) and came to earth to die on the Cross. He came down among us and became poor in order to reveal to us His divine glory, which we shall contemplate fully in heaven, our blessed home. (...) He came in poverty to offer salvation to sinners.”

We see the Way of the Cross of Jesus, inspired by images that reveal the ordeal of Jesus in two ways: in his life on earth and in the people of our time (regarding the images, see also the explanation at the end of the Way of the Cross). We pray to God and thank Him for “such magnanimous goodness” (John Paul II).

1st Station: Jesus is condemned to death

Song “*Crucem tuam*”

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Messiah.” Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

(Mk 8:27-30)

Intercession:

As humans, we can give fair and unfair judgements. Our judgements enable us to encourage and support, but also to discourage and destroy. To this day Jesus is subject to our judgements. Of him, of whom Peter says: “You are the Messiah”, we ask:

Send the spirit of fairness to all those who, as judges, teachers, parents or superiors, judge other people.

Send the spirit of honesty to ourselves, when we have to assess personal and social situations and judge other people.

O Lord, hear my pray’r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we have wrongly judged others unfairly or held prejudices against people, we ask you to help us change and to send us forgiveness.

Kyrie (Taizé)

2nd Station: Jesus takes up his Cross

Song "Cruce[m] tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.

(Mt 11:28-30)

Intercession:

Some burdens we take voluntarily, some are given to us. Time and again Jesus invites us to find rest and peace with Him. By taking the Cross upon himself, He relieves us of our burdens. And he does more: Jesus takes upon his shoulders the Cross that is the source of new life. We ask of him:

Send strength to all those who relieve others of their burdens and hence make their lives easier.

Give us courage so we can rise to our challenges and take responsibility.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we have become a burden to others, we ask you to help us change and to send us forgiveness.

Kyrie (Taizé)

3rd Station: Jesus falls the first time under the weight of the Cross

Song "Cruce[m] tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus said, "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them."

(Lk 11:46)

Contemplation:

People can become overburdened because too much is expected of them - too high expectations, too many sorrows, too extreme disappointments. We can submit ourselves or others to unnecessary burdens, or pass off our responsibilities to others. Jesus, who fell under the weight of the Cross, warns us of placing too heavy a burden on others.

- Silence -

4th Station: Jesus meets his mother

Song "Cruce[m] tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

(Mk 6:1-3)

Intercession:

We learn how difficult it can be to encounter suffering people within our families and circles of friends whom we are unable to help. Mary and Jesus will have felt the same. They lived as a family together with Joseph. As the mother of Jesus, Mary will have felt helpless when she encountered her son carrying the Cross. Yet she still remained true to him. We ask her to pray for us and ask Jesus:

For strength for all those who see their parents, children, brothers, sisters and friends suffer.

For courage for ourselves, when we have to suffer along with those we love the most.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

In difficult situations, where we have abandoned people close to us out of helplessness or convenience, we ask you to help us change and to send us forgiveness.

Kyrie (Taizé)

5th Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the Cross

Song "Crucem tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

(Lk 10:25-37)

Intercession:

Jesus asks us to help others and encourages us to let others help us. Origin, religious belief or nationality should not play a role. Of Him, who accepted the help of a stranger during His ordeal, we ask:

For strength for all those working for aid organizations, who have committed themselves to justice, peace and preserving creation, and who help others to ease and improve their lives.

For ourselves, for the spirit of love so we can help others independently of gender, nationality, cultural background or religious beliefs.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we only love those who love us, or where we make our aid conditional upon the standing of the persons we help, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

6th Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Song "Crucem tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

(Mk 12:41-44)

Intercession:

We can allow ourselves to be touched by the sufferings of others, even where we cannot do much to help them. Veronica, too, cannot help. She gives Jesus only a cloth, and the widow at the offering box only puts in small coins. Both give all they have. Of Jesus, who looks into people's hearts, we ask:

For solidarity among all those who recognize the face of Jesus in the poor and the suffering of our times.

For the willingness to give all we can when we encounter people in desperate situations.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we turn our heads away from suffering and pain and fail to do what we can, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

7th Station: Jesus falls the second time under the weight of the Cross

Song "Crucem tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

(Mt 5:3-12)

Contemplation:

The beatitudes place our life into question. Are the peacemakers and the persecuted, the righteous

and the attacked really the blessed ones? Jesus, who breaks down under the burden of other people's sins, promises the suffering and the oppressed not heaven on earth, but happiness in the Kingdom of God that is present today and whose completion we await.

- Silence -

8th Station: Jesus meets the weeping women

Song "Cruce[m tuam]"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

When Jesus was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head. There were some who were indignant. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor." They were infuriated with her. Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

(Mk 14:3-9)

Intercession:

When we suffer we find it difficult to open our eyes to the suffering of others. Despite his own ordeal, Jesus, who places himself alongside the poor and the suffering, opens his heart to the sufferings of the weeping women and to the pain of all people. We ask of him:

Send patience and generosity to all those who serve the sick and the poor.

Give us an open mind so we can attend to the problems of others even though we have worries of our own.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we are unable to see anything but our own worries, cares and problems, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

9th Station: Jesus falls the third time under the weight of the Cross

Song "Cruce[m tuam]"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus

said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

(Mt 4:1-11)

Contemplation:

At all times, we humans are tempted to be like God. Time and again we entertain illusions of almightiness and believe that we are better and stronger than others. People reserve the right to exercise power over others. In his life Jesus withstood the temptation to become more and more powerful. He breaks down not under his pride, but under the burden of other people's haughtiness.

- Silence -

10th Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

Song "Crucem tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

(Lk 2:1-14)

Intercession:

Children and weak people, in particular, are dependent on other people's goodwill. They are particularly vulnerable to exposure: at the end, they are as naked as when they were born. Of Jesus, who gave himself up and suffered exposure at the hands of others, we ask:

For your protective love for all children and weak people.

For courage for us, so we can protect others and help them when they are exposed.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we have exploited or exposed others, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

11th Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Song "Crucem tuam"

Image, accompanied by approx. 30 seconds of music (image remains still at each station)

Biblical text:

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

(Mk 15:34)

Intercession:

Even today people are suppressed, robbed of their liberty, and nailed down. Jesus fights for the freedom and liberation of the people. With us, he shouts out to God the suffering of all those who doubt God's presence. For us, he agonizes with God. We ask of him:

Strengthen our belief in your love for all of those who are oppressed and cannot believe in the presence of God.

Give us inner freedom so we can bear witness to everyone that you have liberated and freed us.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we oppress others or fail to fight for the freedom of others, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

12th Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Image and Song "Crucem tuam"

Image remains still, approx. 30 seconds of music

Biblical text:

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

(Lk 23:44-46)

Intercession:

When Jesus died, night fell. Of Him, who gave his life so we could see a new day after we die, we ask:

For life everlasting for all those who have passed away..

For gratitude to you, because you gave your life for us.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

Prayer for forgiveness:

Where we doubt that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all people, we ask you to help us change and to forgive us.

Kyrie (Taizé)

13th Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross and laid in the arms of his mother

Image and Song "Crucem tuam"

Image remains still, approx. 30 seconds of music

Biblical text:

Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for

eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me."

(Jn 12:23-26)

Contemplation:

Jesus says of himself that this is the hour of all hours. To explain his death, he uses an example from nature. The grain of wheat must die in order to bear fruit. It can only grow if it is put in the earth first. Did Mary consider that her dead son was the grain that would bring new life? Together we Christians look up to the crucified man who says himself that he wishes to give life to all humans. We stand together with Mary under the Cross, as people for whom the Cross of Jesus became the tree that is the source of life. This message does not only apply in particularly desperate situations, in times of natural disaster, war or disease. This message is valid at all times, in all places.

All:

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee:
Blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

14th Station: Jesus' holy body is laid in the tomb

Image and Song "*Crucem tuam*"

Image remains still, approx. 30 seconds of music

Biblical text:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away."

(Rev 21:1-4)

Intercession:

The last Station of the Cross once again directs our attention to the present and the future. Jesus Christ wants to give us good perspectives. With him at our side, we need not be afraid of the difficult and painful side to life. Suffering and pain will not pass us by. They are, however, not the last Station of the Cross, but lead us to freedom and salvation, to resurrection and life. In this belief, we ask:

Give all Christians strength to bear witness to your presence through their actions and thoughts during the difficult times in their lives.

Help people of all religions to work towards a life in peace and justice.

Give all those who have died everlasting life.

O Lord, hear my pray'r ...

All:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever.
Amen.

The leader of the Way of the Cross gives the blessing:

If the leader is a bishop:

Bishop:
The Lord be with you.

All:
And also with you.

Bishop:
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All:
Now and forever.

Bishop:
Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All:
Who made heaven and earth.

Bishop:
May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

If the leader is a priest:

Priest:
The Lord be with you.

All:
And also with you.

Priest:
May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.