



# Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

## Stabat Mater



## Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

## Station I

### Jesus is Condemned to Death

“Videns autem Pilátus quia nihil proficeret, sed magis tumultus fieret: accépta aqua, lavit manus coram pópulo, dicens: Ínnocens ego sum a sángvine iusti huius: vos vidéritis. Et respóndens univérsum pópulus, dixit: Sanguis eius super nos, et super filios nostros. Tunc dimísit illis Barábbam: Iesum autem flagellátum trádedit eis ut crucifigerétur.”

“So, when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released for them Barab’bas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.” (St. Matthew 27.24-26)

*Let us pray:*

**Lord**, have mercy on us, for none of us are innocent. In this mirror allow me to see when I have denied you, when I have refused to take responsibility, feared involvement in the suffering of others, turned away at the cost of the innocent. Lord, grant me the grace, the courage, to face suffering, to stand as a reed against towering Cedars that would crush the blameless, to contend with evil knowing that my failure to find my outrage is my complicity in it. Too, teach me humility, my God, in knowing that *were* I there, **I** would have denied You, too ... because I deny you, flee you, each time I choose sin over You. May this be so no more.

Judgment is no more mine than it was Pilate's. Lord, open my heart to pray for all those condemned to die.

Am I not numbered among them?

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## Station II

### Jesus takes up his Cross

“Si quis vult post Me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur Me. Qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere, perdet illam: nam qui perdidit animam suam propter Me, salvam faciet illam. Quid enim proficit homo, si lucratur universum mundum, se autem ipsum perdat, et detrimentum sui faciat?”

And he said to all, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (St. Luke 9.23-25)

*Let us pray:*

**Lord Jesus**, in this mirror, in this picture, I see the unfathomable, the unspeakable depth of Your love for me. There were none to defend You from the hatred of the world when You stood silently, uttering no abuse and covered in shame. Our shame. Surrendering to the Father, You *embraced* us in the cruel wood of the Cross — while we surrendered to fear and *abandoned* you. You watched us flee, even as our sins rushed in upon You. That emblem of ignominy, rough-hewn, sin-saturated and fraught with such torment, You did not push away although a Legion of Angels stood at Your call. How the world trembled around You! Angels and men!

You had lost so much blood! How could You have borne it? The way to the height of that sad summit of suffering was a gauntlet of pain and abuse, mockery, derision, and violence to Your flesh — and still, still you choose the Cross? Alike, we who fled, and those who stayed — we, who took no violence to our flesh, and they who brought such violence to Yours ... alike we bore down upon you as insufferable weight in the Cross. You could have fled, called down your Angels, passed through their midst — but You stayed because of us, as we fled because of You.

**And still You stay! — in the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!**

*And still we flee You!* Fearing violence to our desires through submission to grace; fearing that same guilt by association that would call us, in You, to hold fast to our vows, fleeing the hatred of the world that would rush in upon us as our own sins rushed in upon You.

From afar we watch You stagger as *our* Cross is thrown upon you. Blinded by spittle and blood, buffeted on every side, You begin to wend your way into our lives. “Greater love hath no man ...” You know that we will come, one day, to understand this and through Your example hold fast against the withering hate of this world.

Give me, O, Christ, to become like unto Thee, to take *my* first steps through that gauntlet of grace that leads me beyond that suffering height ... that I may die for Thee ... as Thou hast died for me!

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### Station III

## Jesus Falls the First Time

“Vere languóres nostros ipse tulit, et dolóres nostros ipse portávit; et nos putávimus eum quasi leprósum, et percússum a Deo, et humiliátum. Ipse autem vulnerátus est propter iniquitátes nostras ;attrítus est propter scélera nostra:disciplína pacis nostræ super eum,et livóre eius sanáti sumus.”

“Surely he has borne our grief's and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 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 are healed.” (Isaiah 53.4-5)

*Let us pray:*

**Lamb of God**, I no longer can number my sins ... which of them brought you first to Your knees? Which sin was so laden with evil that You stumbled beneath it and fell to the ground? Was it the ponderous weight of hatred in my heart that caused Your knees to buckle? Which voluptuous night? Which day of unbridled insolence? Was it the day I struck You when I struck down my brother? The day I throttled a debtor to reclaim what was never mine? Which day, my Lord? Which sin? They are without number and I am seized with grief — could I but atone for this one ... this one that brought you to the ground.

**The world applauded as you fell** ... endlessly through the empty corridors of my life that end abruptly now, here at Your knees.

Did You see my feet before you as you lay on the ground? Did You look up on my indifference, bloodied and dazed?

**I know you did! I saw You!** Homeless and ravaged with addiction, You laid at my feet and looked up at me from the squalor of my selfishness, uttering no word of reproach —as I stepped over You on my way to work. I have seen your eyes a thousand times ... from doorways and dumpsters ... and a thousand times I passed you by.

For all my grief on this first fall you know ... you know that falling once will not suffice. I have brought the very Son of God to His knees ... and still it will not do! Still I am not convinced, that You will pour your life out in your love ... for me. You must topple this god I have made of myself, vanquish this idol again and again. I will see if yet You love me so!

What will it take?

But I will follow You ... *to see if so you love me still* —despite my countless sins that press you down against the pavement of my hardened heart.

Could one fall suffice, I would never have sinned again ...

*O, Pie, Jesu, Domine ... !*

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## **Station IV**

### **Jesus Meets His Mother, Mary**

“Et benedixit illis Simeon, et dixit ad Mariam matrem eius: Ecce positus est hic in ruina[m] et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel, et in signum cui contradicetur: et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius ut revelentur ex multis cordibus cogitationes.”

“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.” (St. Luke 2.34-35)

*Let us pray:*

**Mary**, consummate faithful one! — to the revelation of God and the thoughts of men!

Uttering, “**yes**,” score ten and three years past — at that Annunciation from the One True God, He sealed that "yes" in solemn song upon your lips! Responsory from the Espoused of God! “Yes! Your will be done! *Fiat!*”

Wearied with sorrow, unforgetting in love, you intone your muffled *Magnificat*, sublime in your suffering that should have been mine —still magnifying Him in your pain Who magnified you.

Love reflects love, Mother and Son. May I, too, sing my *Magnificat* with you, not only in joy, but in sorrow and pain. “*Your will be done!*”

**O**, Mary! The Beginning and the End now stands here before you ... ! “*The Alpha and the Omega. The First and the Last!*”

As in the *beginning* at Bethlehem, so here at the *end* — He lies before you again, in need, naked and weak, His face in your hands and pressed to your lips!



A Light to everlasting life, a night to everlasting death, He is the beginning and the end once again ... the beginning that was an end is now the end that is a beginning. There are no dreams in this night, but the fulfillment of all!

From paradox to paradox He passes through the shadow and light in our lives ... ceaselessly bringing us from shadow to light.

But here, in this Station He pauses, for He has succumbed to your grief ...

What did He seek, O Mother, from that storm filled with sorrow? What word did you speak?

It could only be one.

With the same word you welcomed, and now you relinquish, Whom in time and eternity you ever loved most. *“Fiat!”* ...

“Fiat” ... the whispered assent — in the *beginning* — to the voice of an Angel; “Fiat,” the whispered assent — at the *end* — to the will of the Father ... and the rage of the mob.

Whom you embraced in unspeakable love in your arms ... you now surrender to the clamor and darkness of death.

*Daughter of Abraham!* You do not hold back whom most you love, but immolate your only begotten in a holocaust of grief commingled with love — and the fire on Moriah is but an ember in your heart, a smoldering wick on the hill of the Place of the Skull where the world will take Him to number all of His bones!

*“Mulier, ecce filius tuus!” — “Woman, behold thy Son!”*

O, Mary, daughter of Abraham ... your children are numbered beyond the stars in the vault of the firmament of night, beyond the shifting sands at the edge of the ebb of all tides, beyond the dreams of the Patriarchs who prophesied this night! You surrender the One and in the One receive many ... can you count them, number them through the cavalcade of all time?

Only your love, Mary, verges upon the love of your Son, for *your* surrender was *His*, and *His* surrender was *yours* — Mother and Son surrendered *to us*, immolated *for us* in one will.

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## Station V

### Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

“Et exspuēntes in Eum, accepērunt arūdinem, et percutiēbant caput Ejus. Et postquam illusērunt Ei, exuērunt Eum chlāmyde, et induērunt Eum vestimētis Eius, et duxērunt Eum ut crucifigerent. Exeuntes autem invenerunt hominem Cyrenaeum, nomine Simonem : hunc angariaverunt ut tolleret crucem Ejus.”

“And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head. And after they had mocked Him, they took off the cloak from Him, and put on Him His own

garments, and led Him away to crucify Him. And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross.” (St. Matthew 27.30-32)

*Let us pray:*

**Mary**, Mother of unspeakable Sorrow ...

The world did not simply seek the death of your Son ... but His shame!

He must not die before He can be publicly reviled. He has yet to satisfy the blood-lust of the mob, the vindication of the self-righteous. The soldiers had not yet vented, exhausted, their cruelty upon Him, and the crowds still gathered far ahead, each with a handful, a mouthful, of shame to heap upon Him as He passed. His blood was not enough. They sought more; to shatter the dignity of His beautiful humanity.

Oh, Mary, they would rip Him from your womb even as they tear Him from your heart!

The immolation must be complete, and when the conflagration passes, they would have even the cinders ground into the soil, scattered to the wind. But first He must wend His sorrowful way through the tumultuous crowd, a trail of blood at His feet until He can move no more.

*“You! ... Simon! ... You must bear this malefactors Cross, otherwise he will die before we can slake our full vengeance!”*

Simon blanches, but is forced withal to the Cross, to carry our shame placed upon Him without sin. The scourges, the buffets, the filth of mankind are hurled at Simon, too, and the weight of the Cross now bears down upon *him*. The Cross and the to-be-Crucified become *his* affliction — and he cannot turn away ... or will not!

Pray for us, Simon from the plains of Cyrene! You bore the affliction we throw back into the face of the Father!

With what love, Mary, you had gazed on the face of the man who took to himself the Cross and the Christ!

So gaze on me, under my cross, borne on the shoulders of my Angel, when I fall and have no strength to arise. Look on me, and I will find the strength to endure the buffets of the world and even far darker things ...

Trembling, I take refuge under the shadow of your heel! ... quaff deeply of life from the love in your eyes!

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## Station VI

### Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

“Et plecténtes corónam de spinis, posuérunt super caput Eius, et arúndinem in délixtera Eius. Et genu flexo ante Eum, illudébant ei, dicéntes: Ave rex Judæórum. Et exspuéntes in Eum, accepérunt

arúndinem, et percutiébant caput Eius. Et postquam illusérunt ei, exuérunt Eum chlámýde, et induérunt Eum vestiméntis Eius, et duxérunt Eum ut crucifígerent.”

“Plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him they mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they spat upon Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify him.” (St. Matthew 27.29-31)

*Let us pray:*

**Mary**, Mother of Mercy ...

Veronica alone hastened to Christ in His Passion. Everyone else fled. Only you, Mary, with John and the Magdalen now remained, pressed back by the shields of the might of Rome.

Simon looks on, buttressing the Cross that would crush the Son, the Cross to which he came under the hands of violent men, but here another comes, not under duress, but compelled by compassion. From that profane furor of the fevered crowd, unheeded by steeled hearts of stone, she comes an angel with shadow from the fierce Semitic sun. A winding-cloth, as it were, spun from her veil and pressed past the thorns.

Veronica .... you *are* the *vera icon* — the true image — pressing your veil to Jesus' bleeding face you find it etched within your trembling hands. The image of the face of God! *Vera icon* in the midst of men!

You are an icon bearer twice in truth. In your hands the incorruptible face of God, in your heart the unblemished mirror of mercy, image of the Mother of Mercy and the Son of God. *Vera icon in the midst of men!*

Make of me, an icon, too, my God! A *Vera icon* in the midst of men. A true image of the Mother, Son.

**Responsory:**

And Jesus cried out and said, *“He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.* (St. John 12) Thou hast said, *“Seek ye My face.”* My heart says to thee, *“Thy face, LORD, do I seek.”* *Hide not thy face from me. Turn not thy servant away in anger, thou who hast been my help. Cast me not off, forsake me not, O God of my salvation!”* (Psalm 27)

***Let us pray:***

**O, Jesus** , in this mirror of suffering, I also seek Your face ...

O my Jesus, my suffering Savior, I see Your face and I meet understanding, as I see my own pain and suffering reflected as if in a mirror.

I see, too, the faces of suffering humanity, waiting for a Veronica to show compassion and love.

Beauty is never hidden from those who love, they embrace the total person in the other.

*“Lord I seek Your face, hide not Your face from me.”*

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## **Station VII**

### **Jesus Falls the Second Time**

*“Veníte ad me omnes qui laborátis, et oneráti estis, et Ego refíciam vos. Tóllite jugum Meum super vos, et díscite a Me, quia mitis sum, et húmilis corde: et inveniétis réquiem animábus vestris. Iugum enim Meum suáve est, et onus Meum leve.”*

*“Come to me, all who labor 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.” (Matthew 11.28-30)*

*Let us pray:*

**O, my Jesus,** You have fallen yet again — under the power of so much hate and rejection. The hate of men, the implacable hatred of darkness in deep places ... beneath the unrelenting weight of our sins ... and still we heap them on You ...

As Son of God and Son of Mary, You were possessed of the most perfect human body!

Tattered, torn, bruised and brutalized, it now lies under the Cross, and scarce would I recognize You beneath the rancor that violates the most sacred of flesh, the foul breath of all evil obscuring, subduing, all beauty and grace in a litany of sin ...

You did not succumb to the weight or the blows that bore You down, the withering malice that would not leave You unscathed, untrammelled — it was not physical weakness that made You fall twice — but the burden of lovelessness, that weight beyond measure.

Here you fall under the sins of omission ... of love that should have loved, but was twisted to hate.

Have mercy on me ... in my failure to love. Thee, O Christ! ... and the least of these in whom we crucify You twice!



## Station VIII

### Jesus Meets the Sorrowing Women

“Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi et mulierum, quae plangebant et lamentabantur Eum. Conversus autem ad illas Iesus, dixit: Filiae Ierusalem, nolite flere super Me, sed super vos ipsas flete et super filios vestros.”

“And there followed Him a great multitude of the 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.” (St. Luke 23.27-28)

*Let us pray:*

“**Jesus wept.**” (John 11:35) This is the shortest verse in all Holy Scripture, and it occurs upon Jesus learning of the death of Lazarus, and at the tomb before which Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, also wept. True God and True Man, Jesus knew the depth of human suffering, of pain in the heart to the point of tears. He, too, wept.

But now, confronted with the irrepressible grief of the holy women of Jerusalem, lamenting His own suffering — even as Jesus lamented the suffering of Martha and Mary — He seeks no compassion ... but brings solace to them instead. “*Weep not for Me.*” He cannot lament His own agony, for He would then lament the

salvation of the world He was enacting before them. Instead, He embraces it, and tells the holy women to weep for themselves and their children. Why? Especially, why for their children?

Most of them must have understood it at once. Any parent will understand it immediately.

It was not only for their own sins that they should weep — but for the sins of their children. What parent has not known the agony of a wandering and wayward child whose selfish sins (and all sin is selfish) have left behind them a wake of destruction and shattered lives that in turn have left a wake of sin and sorrow after them! What parent has not feared for the salvation of their own flesh in light of unrepentant sin? And all sin ... all sin ... the sin of *all* time ... is now laid upon the bleeding shoulders of the Son of God Who stops before them.

Bearing not simply all sins past, or even all sins present .... but all the sins of all the world for all of time ... He bears the sins yet to be, the sins of those not yet present, but in the generations to spring forth from the wombs of these holy women. Their sons, their daughters, even now, before their eyes, torment the Christ — as will their children's children unto the last man, the last woman, standing at the chasm of the end of all time. “Weep for them! So many ... so many, know not what they do! But here you see it before you, O, holy women who would lament Me instead of your own children, who I know are as dear to you as I am to Mary.”

This Station is, as it were, a hall of mirrors reflecting *ad infinitum* ... in which we see ourselves, and ourselves replicated endlessly beyond us — each image bearing down on the weight of the Cross.

In this mirror of suffering Lord, we see the pain of all mothers, not only your own beloved Mother, but all the mothers of humanity, as they mourn and weep for their children.

Receive, O Lord, my gift of prayer for all mothers who at this moment are suffering because their child is in sin, wayward and lost, *or through our indifference* dying — under their own cross of terminal illness or drugs, persecution or war.

Give them, these holy women, Your blessing and your grace. Pause before them, too ... and speak words of some solace ...

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## **Station IX**

### **Jesus Falls the Third Time**

“O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus! quoniam vindemiavit me, ut locutus est Dominus, in die irae furoris sui. De excelsu misit ignem in ossibus meis, et erudit me: expandit rete pedibus meis, convertit me retrorsum; posuit me desolatam, tota die mero confectam. Vigilavit iugum iniquitatum mearum; in manu eius convolutae sunt, et impositae collo meo. Infirmata est virtus mea: dedit me Dominus in manu de qua non potero surgere.”

“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of His fierce anger. “From on high He sent fire; into my bones He made it descend; He spread a net for my feet; He turned me back; He has left me stunned, faint all the day long. My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by His hand they were fastened together; they were set upon my neck; He caused my strength to fail; the Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand.” (Lamentations 1.12-14)

*Let us pray:*

*O*, my Jesus, in this mirror of suffering I see You, the Lord of Lord, the King of Kings, prostrate on the ground, exhausted, weighed down by your pain, collapsing under our sins.

In this icon I see your poverty, I see You, the great Shepherd of the sheep, crushed as a sacrificial lamb ...

This is the way in which we, too, must walk before we come to good pastures.

We are all called to walk to our own Calvary; called by our Shepherd into the light of the Resurrection ... beyond the Cross; beyond all tears, all suffering, all sorrow — to the home You have prepared for us from before all time ...

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## Station X

### Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

“Mílites ergo cum crucifixíssent Eum, accepérunt vestiménta Eius et fecérunt quátuor partes, unicuíque míliti partem et túnícam. Erat autem túnica inconsútilis, désuper contéxta per totum.”

“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” (St. John 19.23)

*Let us pray:*

*O, my Jesus ... chastity!*

Robed in the splendor and glory of the Father You came into this world, naked in that beautiful innocence that never left You. And now the soldiers remove Your garments, revealing what they hold to be your shame, for flesh was, as it is now, not part of the beautiful dignity of your Person, but the object of shame through the world’s violation of it. It is sold, displayed, used, abused, and then discarded.

The mockery of this station is multiplied without number in the world, in every “strip club”, in every “X-rated” movie, in every salacious novel pandering to the most base and perverse shadow in the human soul. Did they not strip You for their perverse pleasure, too — Hold You up to laughter, the applause, the satisfaction, the blood-lust of the crowd?

Each time I disrobe anyone with my eyes, in my thoughts ... each time I am “entertained” by the rape of modesty in another ... give me to see *You* before the wanton gaze of those who used You and abused You and shamed You to their own ends

*O, my Jesus ... chastity!* Give me this most beautiful gift of purity ... knowing that whenever I honor the modesty, dignity, and beauty of another ... even the least of them ... I honor You!

### **Responsory**

*O, my Jesus*, true God and perfect man, in this mirror of suffering I see You exposed, stripped and exhibited.

Forgive me Lord, forgive me when I have exposed the vulnerability of others.

You came into this world clothed in your Father’s glory, wrapped round with His love, and after disrobing You with our shame — after we have had our way with You — we cast You out as just another entertaining and disposable object in our society of ultimately disposable people ...

## Station XI

### Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

“Et postquam venérunt in locum qui vocátur Calváriae, ibi crucifixerunt Eum: et latrones, unum a dextris, et álterum a sinístris. Iesus autem dicébat: Pater, dimítte illis: non enim sciunt quid fáciunt.”

“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. And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (St. Luke 23.33-34)

*Let us pray:*

**You** opened your hands so many times before, my beloved Jesus. To bless, to heal, to raise the maimed, the ill — even to raise the dead; to caress the face of lepers, to hold the children who gathered so gleefully around You, to lift up from shame those brought down in disgrace.

And now You open them once more in an act of love and compassion greater than any other. The same love that opened them to the blind, opens them to the blind once again ... who do not see, do not understand, what they do. Willingly You open them to be transfixed by my sin — it was not the force of soldiers’ calloused fists,

but the force of love that unfolded Your hands beneath the shattering blow in the towering hatred and hammer.

You did not resist what in a word You could have vanquished!

Teach me, my Jesus, to be like unto Thee: meek before hatred, returning love for spite, and blessing for malediction! ... to suffer evil without reproach, to immolate myself in my suffering — beneath the hands of men more evil than me — in an offering to Thee, *O, God ... my God ...* Who has not forsaken me! Into Whose Hands I commend my cause ... and commit my spirit!

### **Responsory**

***O, my Jesus,*** in this mirror of suffering I see Your wounded hands and feet. Though your wounds are bleeding freely, yet on Your face is peace. Your mission is almost accomplished; You have done what was Yours to do. O Jesus, teach me now to do what is mine. Your arms are open in total surrender to the will of the Father — I ask for the grace to abandon myself totally to Your will, and through You to the Father.



## Station XII

### Jesus Dies on the Cross

“Cum vidisset ergo Iesus matrem, et discipulum stantem, quem diligebat, dicit matri suae: Mulier, ecce filius tuus. Deinde dicit discipulo: Ecce mater tua. Et ex illa hora accipit eam discipulus in sua. Postea sciens Iesus quia omnia consummata sunt, ut consummaretur Scriptura, dixit: Sitio.”

“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. After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), “I thirst.” (St. John 19.26-28.)

*Let us pray:*

**O, my Jesus**, in this mirror I see reflected the incomprehensible icon of Your great love for me. Through the Incarnation *You emptied yourself of your Divinity* to assume the flesh and blood of man — and as though this outpouring were not enough, that life You assumed now pours forth from You, a libation in blood, as *you empty Yourself once again ...* now surrendering Your humanity in blood to the darkness of death.

You have given all. Your Divinity *and* your humanity — and *both*, that we may share in Your life as God! Surrendering both, You were poured out utterly — that we may come to the fullness of life through Your death. Utter desolation. Utter abandonment. The total dereliction of God and Man in the God made Man.

It is not taken from You. You surrender it. It is Yours to surrender, and it is Yours to take up again! For all our evil devices we have taken nothing from You but what You willingly surrender, and because it was not in our power to take, it is not in our power to restore. We are not gods after all ... *not by us, but for our sake*, all has now been accomplished. By our malice, our sin, have we brought You to this death — but not by our power. Your meekness has vanquished the might of all men!

In dying You overthrew death itself!

It is no more.

O, Jesus, grant me the grace to give *myself* totally to **You** for the sake of Your love.

Behold, my Lord and my God, from this moment hence I surrender to You all that I am, all that I have! Beyond the scandal of the Cross on this hill of the skull, even now I behold a gathering light and it reveals endless fields that are yet white to harvest! O, truly, Lord, the laborers are few ... and how many even see

## Station XIII

### Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

“Sed unus militum lancea latus ejus aperuit, et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua. Et qui vidit, testimonium perhibuit: et verum est testimonium ejus. Et ille scit quia vera dicit: ut et vos credatis. Facta sunt enim haec ut Scriptura impleretur: Os non comminuetis ex eo. Et iterum alia Scriptura dicit: Vidébunt in quem transfixerunt.”

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth — that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” (St. John 19.34-37)

*Let us pray:*

**O, my Mother**, in this picture, in this mirror I see the dead body of your Son.

Looking at his lifeless body, I see my own death.

Death is a reality that we must all face, but I need the grace, the grace you possessed, Mary, to look beyond the passing *reality* of death to the *greater*

*reality* of life everlasting; life forever beyond that pale shadow that has dogged us all our days and which, in an instant of unquenchable light, will vanish forever and with this valley of tears be remembered no more. This blighted presence of the scandal of death is a shade, the flight of darkness itself from cruciform Light — for “*Dying, You destroyed our death!*”

Mary, pray for me that I may cling to the promises of Christ and believe that they will be fulfilled within me, body and soul!

“*Ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die — I will raise him up on the last day.*” Your Son promised.

I believe.

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## **Station XIV**

### **Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

“Et accépto córpore, Joseph invólvit illud in síndone munda, et pósuit illud in monuménto suo novo, quod excíderat in petra. Et advólvit saxum magnum ad óstium monuménti, et ábiit. Erant autem ibi María Magdaléne, et áltera María, sedéntes contra sepúlchrum.”

“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. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher.” (St. Matthew 27.59-61)

*Let us pray:*

**In** the depths of this mirror a dim light is flickering, it is a light that will soon burst into a flame ...

O my Jesus, you are, as it were, the seed being laid in the ground  
... *“consummatem est”* all is finished ...

On the heights of Mount Tabor, in Your Transfiguration, we glimpsed the truth that has pursued us since: how much is concealed from us, both in light and darkness ... things are never quite what they seem and from this moment forth, nothing will be the same again.

I shall continue to gaze into this mirror Lord until I experience Your risen presence in my life.

O Jesus, I believe in you, I love you — I wait for Your return! Darkness or light, life or death, it matters not ... **I** will always find You there ... when all else tells me that You have left, I will always find You there. Always!

*Alleluia! Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! Dominus Deus Sabaoth ...*

*Qui erat, Qui est, et Qui venturus est! Alleluia!\**

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Written by the Boston Catholic Journal in collaboration with a Cloistered Poor Clare Colettine Nun

The Stations of the Cross depicted above were photographed at Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Parish, Newton, MA, US by the Boston Catholic Journal

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Editor  
Boston Catholic Journal

February 03, 2024  
Feast of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr



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