

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

St. Alphonsus Liguori



Preparatory Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee, I repent sincerely for ever having offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou goest to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

Stabat Mater

At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword has passed.

Station 1: Jesus is Condemned to Death

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the Cross.

My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins that condemned Thee to die. I beseech Thee, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in its journey towards eternity. I love Thee, my beloved Jesus; I repent with my whole heart for having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

O, how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blessed
Of the sole-begotten One!

Station 2: Jesus Bears His Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how Jesus, in making this journey with the Cross on His shoulders thought of us, and for us offered to His Father the death He was about to undergo.

My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations Thou hast destined for me until death. I beseech Thee, by the merits of the pain Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy Cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

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R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

Christ above in torment hangs,
She beneath beholds the pangs,
Of her dying, glorious Son.

Station 3: Jesus Falls the First Time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider this first fall of Jesus under His Cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, His head crowned with thorns, and He had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that he could scarcely walk, and yet he had to carry this great load upon His shoulders. The soldiers struck Him rudely, and thus He fell several times in His journey.

My beloved Jesus, it is not the weight of the Cross, but my sins, which have made Thee suffer so much pain. Ah, by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love Thee, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

Is there one who would not weep

Whelmed in miseries so deep

Christ's dear Mother to Behold?

Station 4: Jesus Meets His Mother

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow Thou didst experience in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Thy most holy Mother. And thou, my Queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by thy intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of thy Son. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Hail Mary

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

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

Station 5: Jesus is Helped by Simon

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how the Jews, seeing that at each step Jesus from weakness was on the point of expiring, and fearing that He would die on the way, when they wished Him to die the ignominious death of the Cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the Cross behind our Lord.

My most sweet Jesus, I will not refuse the Cross, as the Cyrenian did; I accept it; I embrace it. I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me; with all the pains that may accompany it; I unite it to Thy death, I offer it to Thee. Thou hast died for love of me; I will die for love of Thee, and to please Thee. Help me by Thy grace. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender child,
All with bloody scourges rent.

Station 6: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him with a towel, with which He wiped His adorable face, leaving on it the impression of His holy countenance.

My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas, my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in Baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins; Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy Passion, O Jesus. I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

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R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

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R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

For the sins of His own nation
Saw Him hang in desolation
Till His Spirit forth He sent.

Station 7: Jesus Falls a Second Time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the Cross—a fall which renews the pain of all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

My most gentle Jesus, how many times Thou hast pardoned me, and how many times have I fallen again, and begun again to offend Thee! Oh, by the merits of this new fall, give me the necessary help to persevere in Thy grace until death. Grant that in all temptations which assail me I may always commend myself to Thee. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

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

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

Station 8: Jesus Speaks to the Women

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how those women wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in such a pitiable state, streaming with blood, as He walked along. But Jesus said to them: Weep not for Me, but for your children.

My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the offences I have committed against Thee, because of the pains they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure they have caused Thee, who hast loved me so much. It is Thy love, more than the fear of hell, which causes me to weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

Holy Mother, pierce me through!
In my heart, each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.

Station 9: Jesus Falls a Third Time

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider the third fall of Jesus Christ. His weakness was extreme, and the cruelty of His executioners was excessive, who tried to hasten His steps when He had scarcely strength to move.

Ah, my outraged Jesus, by the merits of the weakness Thou didst suffer in going to Calvary, give me strength sufficient to conquer all human respect, and all my wicked passions, which have led me to despise Thy friendship. I love Thee, Jesus my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

Holy Mother, pierce me through!
In my heart, each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.

Station 10: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to His torn flesh, and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Savior thus cruelly treated, and say to Him:

My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment Thou hast felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in Thee, who art so worthy of my love. I love Thee, O Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live.

Station 11: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how Jesus, after being thrown on the Cross extended His hands, and offered to His Eternal Father the sacrifice of His death for our salvation. These barbarians fastened Him with nails, and then, raising the Cross, allowed Him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

My Jesus! loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Thy feet, that it may ever remain there, to love Thee, and never quit Thee again. I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

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Stabat Mater

By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.

Station 12: Jesus Dies on the Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how thy Jesus, after three hours' Agony on the Cross, consumed at length with anguish, abandons Himself to the weight of His body, bows His head, and dies.

O my dying Jesus, I kiss devoutly the Cross on which Thou didst die for love of me. I have merited by my sins to die a miserable death; but Thy death is my hope. Ah, by the merits of Thy death, give me grace to die, embracing Thy feet, and burning with love for Thee. I yield my soul into Thy hands. I love Thee with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

Virgin of all virgins blest!,

Listen to my fond request:

let me share thy grief divine;

Station 13: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how, after the death of our Lord, two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Him down from the Cross, and placed Him in the arms of His afflicted Mother, who received Him with unutterable tenderness, and pressed Him to her bosom.

O Mother of sorrow, for the love of this Son, accept me for thy servant, and pray to Him for me. And Thou, my Redeemer, since Thou hast died for me, permit me to love Thee; for I wish but Thee, and nothing more. I love Thee, my Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Hail Mary

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

Let me, to my latest breath,
in my body bear the death
of that dying Son of thine.

Station 14: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

V. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Consider how the disciples carried the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by His holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulchre with her own hands. They then closed the tomb, and all withdrew.

Oh, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses Thee. But Thou didst rise again the third day. I beseech Thee, by Thy resurrection, make me rise glorious with Thee at the last day, to be always united with Thee in heaven, to praise Thee and love Thee forever. I love Thee, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father

V. Dear Jesus, Thou dost go to die for very love of me:

R. Ah! let me bear Thee company; I wish to die with Thee.

V. Miserere nostri, Domine.

R. Miserere nostri.

Fidelium animae per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen

Stabat Mater

Wounded with His every
wound,
steep my soul till it hath
swooned,
in His very Blood away;

Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
lest in flames I burn and die,
in His awful Judgment Day.

Ending Prayer

BEHOLD, O good and sweetest Jesus,
I cast myself upon my knees in Thy sight,
and with the most fervent desire of my soul
I pray and beseech Thee
to impress upon my heart
lively sentiments of faith,
hope and charity,
with true repentance for my sins
and a most firm desire of amendment:
whilst with deep affection and grief of soul
I consider within myself
and mentally contemplate Thy five most precious Wounds,
having before mine eyes that which David, the prophet,
long ago spoke in Thine own person concerning Thee,
my Jesus: “They have pierced My hands and My feet,
they have numbered all My bones.”

One Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, for the intention of the
Sovereign Pontiff.

St Alphonsus Liguori, Pray for us! Amen.