



The Holy See

WAY OF THE CROSS AT THE COLOSSEUM

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE VIA CRUCIS 2025

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Palatine Hill

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[Multimedia]

Introduction

The road to Calvary passes through the streets we tread each day. Usually, Lord, we are walking in the other direction, and so it may just happen that we encounter you, catch sight of your face, meet your gaze. We are going about our way as usual, and you are coming towards us. Your eyes look into our hearts. Then we find it hard to continue on, as if nothing happened. We can turn around, contemplate you and follow you. We can walk in your footsteps and come to realize that it was good for us to change direction.

From the Gospel according to Mark (10:21)

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Your name is Jesus, and truly in you “God saves.” The God of Abraham who calls, the God of Isaac who provides, the God of Jacob who blesses, the God of Israel who liberates: in your gaze, Lord, as you pass through Jerusalem, an entire revelation is contained. The steps you take as you leave the city can foreshadow our own exodus to a new land. You came to change the world: for us, that means changing direction, seeing the goodness of your path, letting the memory of your glance transform our hearts.

The Stations of the Cross is the prayer of people on the move. It disrupts our usual routine and enables us to pass from weariness and apathy towards true joy. Yes, following the path of Jesus has a price: in this world that puts a price on everything, gratuitousness proves costly. In that gift, however, everything blossoms anew: a city split into factions and torn by conflict can move towards reconciliation; an arid piety can rediscover the freshness of God's promises; and a heart of stone can turn into a heart of flesh. We need only hear his invitation: "Come! Follow me!" And trust in that gaze of love.

First Station

Jesus is condemned to death

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:13-16)

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him."

It did not work out that way. Pilate did not set you free. Yet, it might have gone differently. Such is the dramatic interplay of our individual freedoms. That was what you so greatly respected in us, Lord. You trusted Herod, Pilate, your friends and your enemies alike. You never take back the trust with which you place yourself in our hands. We can learn marvellous lessons from this: how to free those unjustly accused, how to acknowledge the complexity of situations, how to protest lethal judgements. Even Herod could have followed the holy restlessness that attracted him to you: yet he chose not to, even when he was finally in your presence. Pilate could have freed you: he had already acquitted you. He chose not to. The way of the cross, Jesus, is a possibility that we have already too many times failed to consider. Let us admit it: we have been prisoners of the roles we choose to continue playing, fearful of the challenge of a change in the direction of our lives. Yet you are always there, silently standing before us, in every one of our sisters and brothers exposed to judgement and bigotry. Religious disputes, legal quibbles, the so-called common sense that keeps us from getting involved in the fate of others: a thousand reasons drag us to the side of Herod, the priests, Pilate and the crowd. Yet, it could be otherwise. You, Jesus, do not wash your hands of all this. You continue to love, in silence. You have made your choice, and now it is our turn.

Let us pray, saying: *Open my heart, Jesus!*

When I see someone I have already judged,

Open my heart, Jesus!

When my certainties are simply prejudices,
 When I am harsh and unbending,
 When goodness quietly attracts me,
 When I want to be strong, but fear my frailty,

Open my heart, Jesus!
Open my heart, Jesus!
Open my heart, Jesus!
Open my heart, Jesus!

Second Station

Jesus carries his cross

From the Gospel according to Luke (9:43-45)

While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands." But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

For months, perhaps years, you bore that burden, Jesus. When you spoke of it, no one listened to you: there was invincible resistance even to thinking about it. You did not ask for the cross, yet you felt it, ever more clearly, moving towards you. If you accepted it, it was because you felt not only its burden, but also its responsibility. The way of your cross, Jesus, is not only uphill. It is also your descent towards those whom you loved, towards this world that God loves. It is a response, an acceptance of responsibility. The cross has its price, as do all the deepest bonds, the greatest loves. The burden you bear speaks of the Spirit that moves you, the Holy Spirit "who is Lord, the giver of life." Why, really, are we afraid even to question you about this? In truth, we are the ones who gasp, out of breath, as a result of our attempts to flee responsibility. All we need do is to stop running away and to remain in the company of those you have given us, in the situations where you have placed us. To bind ourselves to them, recognizing that only in this way can we stop being prisoners of ourselves. Selfishness burdens us more than the cross. Indifference burdens us more than sharing. The prophet had foretold it: *Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Is 40:30-31).*

Let us pray, saying: *Deliver us from weariness, Lord*

If we feel burdened by life,
 If we lack the will to help others,
 If we seek excuses to shirk our duties,
 If we have talents and skills to share,
 If our hearts rebel against injustice,

Deliver us from weariness, Lord!
Deliver us from weariness, Lord!
Deliver us from weariness, Lord!
Deliver us from weariness, Lord!
Deliver us from weariness, Lord!

Third Station

Jesus falls the first time

From the Gospel according to Luke (10:13-15)

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But at the judgement it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.”

It was like hitting rock bottom, and you spoke harsh words, Jesus, about those places that were so dear to you. The seed of your word seemed to have fallen into the abyss, as did all your acts of deliverance. Every prophet felt himself plunging into the abyss of failure, only then to get up and keep walking in the ways of God. Your life, Jesus, is a parable: on the soil of our lives, you never fall in vain. Even at that first fall, your disappointment was soon interrupted by the joy of remembering the disciples whom you had sent out: they returned from their mission and told you of the signs of the Kingdom of God. Then you rejoiced with a spontaneous, overflowing joy that made you leap to your feet with contagious energy. You blessed the Father, who conceals his plans from the wise and the learned in order to reveal them to the little ones. Even the way of the cross is traced close to the earth. The mighty withdraw from it; they desire to grasp at heaven. Yet heaven is here below; it hangs low, and we can encounter it even when we fall flat on the ground. Today's builders of Babel tell us that there is no room for losers, and that those who fall along the way are losers. Theirs is the construction site of Hell. God's economy, on the other hand, does not kill, discard or crush. It is lowly, faithful to the earth. Your way, Jesus, is the way of the Beatitudes. It does not crush, but cultivates, repairs and protects.

Let us pray, saying: *May your kingdom come!*

For those who think they have failed,	<i>May your kingdom come!</i>
To challenge an economy that kills,	<i>May your kingdom come!</i>
To restore strength to those who have fallen,	<i>May your kingdom come!</i>
In a world of competition and competitors,	<i>May your kingdom come!</i>
For those left behind, lacking hope for the future,	<i>May your kingdom come!</i>

Fourth Station

Jesus meets his Mother

From the Gospel according to Luke (8:19-21)

Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Your Mother is there, on the way to the cross: she was your first disciple. With quiet determination, with the wisdom born of pondering all these things in her heart, your Mother is present. From the moment she was asked to welcome you in her womb, she turned to you. She bent her ways to yours. This was not a sacrifice but a continuous discovery, all the way to Calvary. To follow you is to let you go; to possess you is to make room for your newness. As every mother knows, children constantly surprise us. Beloved Son, you realize that your mother and your brothers and sisters are all those who hear your words and let themselves be changed, those who do not speak, but act. In God, words are deeds, promises are realities. On the way to the cross, O Mother, you are among the few who remember this. Now it is your Son who needs you: he knows that you do not despair. He senses that you continue to give birth to the Word in your heart. We too, Jesus, can follow you because we were begotten by your followers. We too can live in the world due to the faith of your Mother and of the countless witnesses who generate life even in those places where everything speaks of death. That time, in Galilee, it was they who wanted to see you. Now, as you ascend to Calvary, you seek the gaze of those who listen and act. An ineffable understanding. An unbreakable covenant.

Let us pray, saying: *Behold my Mother!*

Mary listens, then speaks:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary asks and reflects:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary sets out with determination:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary rejoices and consoles:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary welcomes and cares:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary risks and protects:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary has no fear of judgements and insinuations:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary stays and waits:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary guides and accompanies:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>
Mary concedes nothing to death:	<i>Behold my Mother!</i>

Fifth Station

Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:26)

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

He did not volunteer; they stopped him. Simon was returning from his work and they made him carry the cross of a condemned man. He may have had the right physique, but surely he had something else in mind, another set of things to do. Yet we can encounter God like that. Lord, who knows why that name — Simon of Cyrene — was never forgotten by your disciples. On the way to the cross they were not there, nor were we, but Simon was. It is true to this day: when someone

offers himself completely, we can be elsewhere, even on the run, or we can choose to get involved. We believe, Lord, that the reason we remember Simon's name was because that unexpected event changed him forever. After that, he never stopped thinking of you. He became part of your body, a first-hand witness of how you were unlike any other condemned man. Simon of Cyrene found himself, without having asked, bearing your cross, like the yoke of which you once said: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (*Mt 11:30*). Even beasts plough better when they move forward together. You, Jesus, love to involve us in your work, which ploughs the earth so that it may be sown anew. We need the surprising lightness of your yoke. We need people who can stop us at times and put some burden on our shoulders, one that we have no choice but to bear. We can work all day long, but without you, it is in vain. Vain is the toil of the builders, in vain does the watchman keep watch over a city that God does not build (cf. *Ps 127*). On the way of the cross, the new Jerusalem is rising. May we, like Simon of Cyrene, alter our course and work with you.

Let us pray saying: *Alter our course, Lord!*

When we go our own way, eyes averted:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>
When news reports do not disturb us:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>
When faces become statistics:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>
When we never find time to listen:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>
When we make decisions in haste:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>
When we refuse to break out of our routine:	<i>Alter our course, Lord!</i>

Sixth Station

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

From the Gospel according to Luke (9:29-31)

While he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

From Psalm 27

"Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"

Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Contemplating your face, Jesus, we see into your heart. In your eyes, we see your determination; it is etched into your face, which manifests your clear resolve. You see Veronica, as you do me. I too see your face, which tells of your decision to love us to your last breath and even beyond, for love is strong as death (cf. *Song 8:6*). Our hearts are changed by the sight of your face, which I

long to contemplate and cherish. You deliver yourself into our hands, day by day, in the face of every man and woman we meet, a living reminder of your Incarnation. Whenever we turn to the least of our brothers and sisters, we see you, your flesh and your presence among us. In this way, you brighten our hearts and our facial expressions. Instead of rejecting others, we now accept them. On the way of the cross, our faces, like yours, can at last become radiant and a source of blessing. You have impressed the memory of your face in our hearts as a pledge of your return, when you will recognize each of us at first glance. Then, perhaps, we will come to be like you. Then we shall be — face to face, in eternal dialogue, in joyful intimacy — the family of God.

Let us pray, saying: *Jesus, impress your memory upon us!*

If our faces are expressionless:
 If our hearts are indifferent:
 If our actions are divisive:
 If our choices cause hurt:
 If our plans exclude others:

Jesus, impress your memory upon us!
Jesus, impress your memory upon us!
Jesus, impress your memory upon us!
Jesus, impress your memory upon us!
Jesus, impress your memory upon us!

Seventh Station

Jesus falls the second time

From the Gospel according to Luke (15: 2-6)

And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'"

Fall and get up again; fall and get up again. That is how you taught us, Jesus, to approach the adventure of human life. A life that is human because it is open to the future. We do not permit machines to make mistakes: we expect them to be perfect. People, on the other hand, get confused, distracted, lost. Yet they also know joy: the joy of new beginnings, the joy of rebirth. Humans are not mass-produced but handcrafted: we are unique treasures, a blend of grace and responsibility. Lord Jesus, you made yourself one of us; you were not afraid to stumble and fall. All those who are embarrassed by this, those who want to appear infallible, who hide their own falls yet refuse to pardon those of others, reject the path that you chose. You, Jesus, are the Lord of joy. In you, all of us were found and brought home, like the one sheep that had gone astray. An economy in which the ninety-nine are more important than the one is inhumane. Yet we have built a world that works like that: a world of calculation and algorithms, of cold logic and implacable interests. The law of your home, the divine economy, is different, Lord. When we turn our hearts to

you, who fall and rise again, we experience a change of course and a change of pace. A conversion that restores our joy and brings us safely home.

Let us pray, saying: *Raise us up, God, our salvation!*

We are children who cry at times:	<i>Raise us up, God our salvation!</i>
We are adolescents who feel insecure:	<i>Raise us up, God our salvation!</i>
We are young people dismissed by many adults	<i>Raise us up, God our salvation!</i>
We are adults who have made mistakes:	<i>Raise us up, God our salvation!</i>
We are elderly people who still want to dream:	<i>Raise us up, God our salvation!</i>

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:27-31)

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and 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?"

In women, Lord, you always saw a special likeness to the heart of God. That is why, amid the great crowd of people who turned around and followed you that day, you immediately caught sight of the women and once again felt their closeness. A city is a different place when women care for those around them, when we see mothers holding their children and nursing them; then we look beyond power and profit, and sense the things that really matter. The wailing women find their hearts moved at the sight of your suffering. For the heart is where things connect, and thoughts and decisions are born. "Do not weep for me." God's heart throbs with love for his people; he creates a new city: "Weep for yourselves and for your children." There is a kind of weeping, indeed, which can bring forth a new birth. It brings forth tears of regret, unabashed and unrestrained. Lord, our broken world, and the hurts and offences that tear our human family apart, call for tears that are heartfelt and not merely perfunctory. Otherwise, the apocalyptic visions will all come true: we will no longer generate life, and everything around us will collapse. Faith, on the other hand, can move mountains. The mountains and the hills will not crash down upon us, but a path will open up in their midst. It is your path, Jesus: an uphill path, a path on which the apostles abandoned you, while the faithful women — the mothers of the Church — continued to follow you.

Let us pray, saying: *Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!*

You filled the Church's history with holy women:	<i>Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!</i>
You disdained arrogance and domination:	<i>Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!</i>
You embraced and consoled the tears of mothers:	<i>Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!</i>
You made women the messengers of the resurrection:	<i>Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!</i>
You inspire new charisms and missions in the Church:	<i>Jesus, grant us a maternal heart!</i>

Ninth Station

Jesus falls the third time

From the Gospel according to Luke (7:44-49)

[Jesus] said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

Not just once or twice, Jesus: you fall yet another time. When you were a child, like every child, you knew what it was to fall. In this way, you came to understand and embrace our humanity, which falls constantly. Sin distances us from one another, yet your sinless existence brings you close to every sinner, even amid their falls. And this invites them to conversion. That is a scandal for all those who keep their distance from others and even from themselves. It is a scandal for those who lead a double life, between what they should be and what they really are. Before your mercy, Jesus, all hypocrisy falls away. Our masks, our elegant veneers, are of no use. God sees into the heart. He loves the heart. He warms the heart. And so it is that you lift me up and set me on my way once more on paths yet untrodden, paths of boldness and generosity. Who are you, Jesus, who forgives even sins? Fallen to the ground on the way of the cross, you are the Saviour of this earth that we tread, this earth from which we were made. Here, on this earth, you continue to shape us, like a skillful potter.

Let us pray, saying: *We are clay in your hands*

When it seems that nothing can change, remind us:	<i>We are clay in your hands.</i>
When conflicts seem interminable, remind us:	<i>We are clay in your hands.</i>
When technology tempts us to feel all-powerful, remind us:	<i>We are clay in your hands.</i>
When prosperity estranges us from the earth, remind us:	<i>We are clay in your hands.</i>

When we are more concerned about appearances than the heart, remind us:

We are clay in your hands.

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his garments

From the Book of Job (1:20-22)

Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.

You do not remove your robe, it is stripped from you. The difference is clear to all of us, Jesus. Only one who loves us can see our nakedness and make it his own. We, on the other hand, are fearful of the eyes of those who do not know us, who are concerned only to possess us. Stripped naked, exposed to the view of all, you change even humiliation into intimacy. You want to reveal yourself completely even to those who kill you; you look upon those who strip you of everything as loved ones given to you by the Father. There is something greater here than the patience of Job, greater even than his faith. You are the Bridegroom who lets himself be taken and touched, who turns everything to good. You leave us your garments, like relics of a consummated love. They are now in our hands, a sign that you were with us, in our midst. We have kept your garments and now we cast lots for them, but the winner, here, is not just one, but all. You know each of us singly, so as to save us together: all of us, each and every one. And if the Church may appear today as a torn garment, teach us how to weave anew the fabric of our fraternity, grounded in your gift. We are your body, your seamless robe, your Bride. For so we are, all together. For our lots have fallen on goodly places; we have a splendid heritage (cf. *Ps 16:6*).

Let us pray, saying: *Grant peace and unity to your Church*

Lord Jesus, you see your disciples divided:
 Lord Jesus, you bear the wounds of our history:
 Lord Jesus, you know how frail is our love:
 Lord Jesus, you wish us to be members of your
 body:
 Lord Jesus, you are enrobed in mercy:

Grant peace and unity to your Church
Grant peace and unity to your Church
Grant peace and unity to your Church
Grant peace and unity to your Church
Grant peace and unity to your Church

Eleventh Station

Jesus is nailed to the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:32-34)

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

Nothing frightens us more than being unable to move. Yet here you are, bound, nailed, held fast. Still, you are not alone, but in the company of two others, resolved to reveal yourself even on the cross as "God with us." Revelation never stops; it is not nailed to one place. Lord, you show us that in every situation there is a choice to be made. That is the amazing reality of our freedom. Not even on the cross are you stripped of your freedom: you decide why and for whom you are there. You are attentive to both the men crucified with you: you let slip the insults of one and you hear the plea of the other. You are even concerned for the men who crucify you: you peer into the hearts of those who "know not what they do." You look up to the sky: you would like it clearer, yet you break through its barrier of gloom with the light of your intercession. Nailed to the cross you intercede: you "stand between" conflicting parties. And you bring them to God, because your cross tears down walls, cancels debts, quashes judgements, establishes reconciliation. You yourself are the true Jubilee. Convert us to you, Jesus; though nailed fast to the cross, you are able to do all things.

Let us pray, saying: *Teach us to love*

When we are strong and when we are not:	<i>Teach us to love.</i>
When we are bound by unjust laws or decisions:	<i>Teach us to love.</i>
When we are at odds with those uninterested in truth	<i>Teach us to love.</i>
and justice:	
When we are tempted to despair:	<i>Teach us to love.</i>
When everyone says, "There is nothing to be done:"	<i>Teach us to love.</i>

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:45-49)

The sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Where do we stand on Calvary? Beneath the cross? Somewhere nearby? At a safe distance? Or perhaps, like the apostles, no longer even there. You breathe your last, and this breath, both last and first, asks only to be received. Lord Jesus, direct our paths towards this, your gift. Do not allow your breath of life to be dispersed. Our darkness seeks light. Our temples want to remain ever open. Now the Holy One is no longer beyond the veil: his mystery is revealed to all. It is perceived by a soldier, who, watching you die, recognizes a new kind of power. The crowd that had cried out against you understands it: formerly distant, they now encounter the spectacle of an unprecedented love, a beauty that revives faith. To those who watch you die, Lord, you give an opportunity to repent, to return to you, and to beat our breast in order to shatter our hardness of heart. Jesus, grant that we, who all too often regard you from a distance, may always be mindful of you, so that when at last you come, death itself may find us alive.

Let us pray, saying: *Holy Spirit, come!*

We have kept our distance from the Lord's wounds:	<i>Holy Spirit, come!</i>
We have turned away from our brothers and sisters	<i>Holy Spirit, come!</i>
in need:	
We have regarded the merciful and the poor in	<i>Holy Spirit, come!</i>
spirit as losers:	
Believers and non-believers stand before your	<i>Holy Spirit, come!</i>
cross:	
The whole world yearns for a new beginning:	<i>Holy Spirit, come!</i>

Thirteenth Station

Jesus is taken down from the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:50-53)

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid.

Your body is now, at last, in the hands of a good and righteous man. You are shrouded in the sleep of death, Jesus, but a vibrant, generous heart has now chosen to stand by you. Joseph was not one of those who talk but then fail to act. "He had not agreed to their plan and action," the Gospel tells us. And this is good news: someone who chose not to care for the opinion of others now cares for you, Jesus. You are cared for by someone who is concerned to do what he considers right. You are now in the hands of Joseph of Arimathea, one who "was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God." You are now in the hands of someone who continues to

hope, one of those who refuse to think that injustice always prevails. You break the bonds of the inevitable, Jesus. You challenge the mindsets that devastate the earth, our common home, and human solidarity. You grant to those who “wait expectantly” for your kingdom the courage to speak to power: like Moses before Pharaoh, like Joseph of Arimathea before Pilate. You embolden us to take on great tasks. In this way, even in death, you continue to reign. For us, Jesus, to serve you is itself to reign.

Let us pray, saying: *To serve you is to reign*

When we feed the hungry:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we give drink to the thirsty:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we clothe the naked:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we welcome the stranger:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we visit the sick:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we visit prisoners:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>
When we bury the dead:	<i>To serve you is to reign.</i>

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

From the Gospel according to Luke (23:53-56)

[Joseph of Arimathea] wrapped [the body of Jesus] in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath, they rested according to the commandment.

In a world of hectic activity, Jesus, you now experience your Sabbath. The women experience it too; their spices and ointments seem already to prefigure the resurrection. Teach us how to do nothing at those times when it is asked of us only to wait. Teach us sensitivity to the seasons of the earth, which are not those of our making. Laid in the tomb, Lord Jesus, you share in our common human condition, descending to the depths that so terrify us. You see how we try to escape them by keeping desperately busy. Often we end up merely going around in circles, but then the light of the Sabbath shines forth: it teaches us; it tells us of our need to rest. To experience a godly life, life on a truly human scale, a life that knows the peace of the Sabbath. This is what the prophet Micah foretold: “They shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid” (*Mic* 4:4). So too, Zechariah tells us: “On that day, says the Lord of hosts, you shall invite each other to come under your vine and fig tree” (*Zech* 3:10). Lord Jesus, who seem to sleep amid the tempests of this world, bring us all into the peace of the Sabbath rest. Then we shall see creation in all its beauty and goodness, destined for

resurrection. Then there will be peace for your people and peace among the nations.

Let us pray, saying: *May your peace come!*

For earth, air and water:	<i>May your peace come!</i>
For the just and the unjust alike:	<i>May your peace come!</i>
For those who are overlooked and voiceless:	<i>May your peace come!</i>
For the powerless and the poor:	<i>May your peace come!</i>
For those who await a springtime of justice:	<i>May your peace come!</i>

Concluding Reflections and Prayer

“*Laudato si, mi’ Signore*’ — ‘Praise be to you, my Lord.’ In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister... This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her” (Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*, 1-2).

“*Fratelli tutti*.’ With these words, Saint Francis addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel” (Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 1).

“‘He loved us, Saint Paul says of Christ... in order to make us realize that nothing can ever ‘separate us’ from that love” (Encyclical Letter *Dilexit Nos*, 1).

We have walked the Stations of the Cross. We have turned towards the love from which nothing can ever separate us. Now, as the King sleeps and a great silence descends upon all the earth, let us pray, in the words of Saint Francis, for the gift of heartfelt conversion:

Most High and glorious God,
Cast your light into the darkness of my heart.
Grant me right faith,
firm hope,
perfect charity,
and profound humility.
Grant me, Lord, wisdom and understanding,
so that I may do your true and holy will. Amen.