

STATIONS *of the* CROSS

A Pilgrim Guidebook
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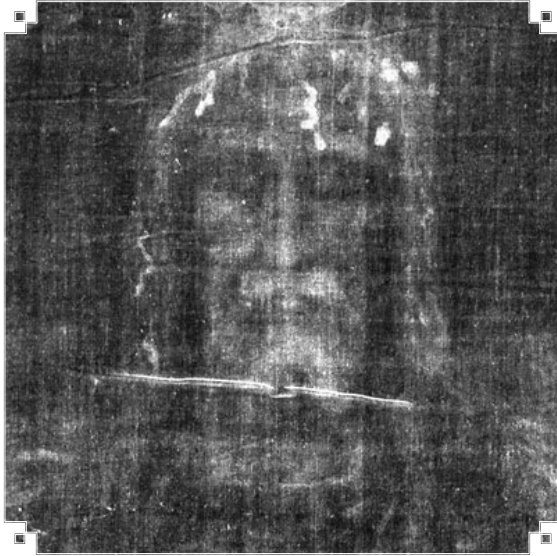


PILGRIM
Center of Hope

Guiding people to Christ

*Photographs of the Shroud of Turin ©1978
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INTRODUCTION



The Stations of the Cross are primarily a journey into the mercy of Jesus which causes us to examine our conscience, to acknowledge how much influence our faith has on the decisions we make. The Stations are not just a casual devotion; they remind us of the love of God and the price of our salvation.

We see that after Jesus spent three years proclaiming the Kingdom of God and performing miracles, he was met with opposition especially from religious leaders who thought their interpretation of the Law given by Moses allowed them to make judgement on the lives of those who they believed were offending God. Their pride and rigorous religiosity left no room for mercy. Consequently, they rejected the Lord of mercy, Jesus Christ, so they looked for a way to arrest him.

On Thursday night, as Jesus celebrated the Passover with his Apostles, he instituted the priesthood and the Holy Eucharist which would be fundamental to the eternal continuation of the Church he founded.

After celebrating Passover, they proceeded to the Garden of Gethsemane where they had joined together for prayer many times. This time would be different.

Jesus knew the time for his Passion had begun. Yet he prayed: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

“He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground” (Luke 22:44).

He sweat blood in anticipation of the torture he would experience.

“Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, ‘The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him’” (Matthew 26:47-48).

And so they arrested Jesus and led “him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled” (Matthew 26:57).

There, he was interrogated. Jesus spent that night without friends, without food, water, or sleep.

The next morning, they took him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, to be judged.

Let us begin the journey...

FIRST STATION

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



Photo of Ecce Homo in Jerusalem's Old City, where tradition holds that Jesus was condemned. Ecce Homo in Latin means *Behold the man*.

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

As Jesus stands before Pilate, he says, "I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (cf. John 18:37-38)

Jesus was condemned because he is Truth. It was not only the religious leaders and the crowd that condemned Jesus; everyone who denies truth is denying Jesus. It was for this reason that Jesus came into the world, to reveal the way to live in communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We live in a time when many people reject objective truth because it challenges us to change our lives, which we call conversion. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops defines conversion in this way:

"Conversion is the change of our lives which comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit. All who accept the Gospel undergo change as we continually put on the mind of Christ by rejecting sin and becoming more faithful disciples in his Church. Unless we undergo conversion, we have not truly accepted the Gospel."

Lord, we ask forgiveness for not taking seriously the tremendous suffering you experienced for our salvation.

Lord, have mercy!

SECOND STATION

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

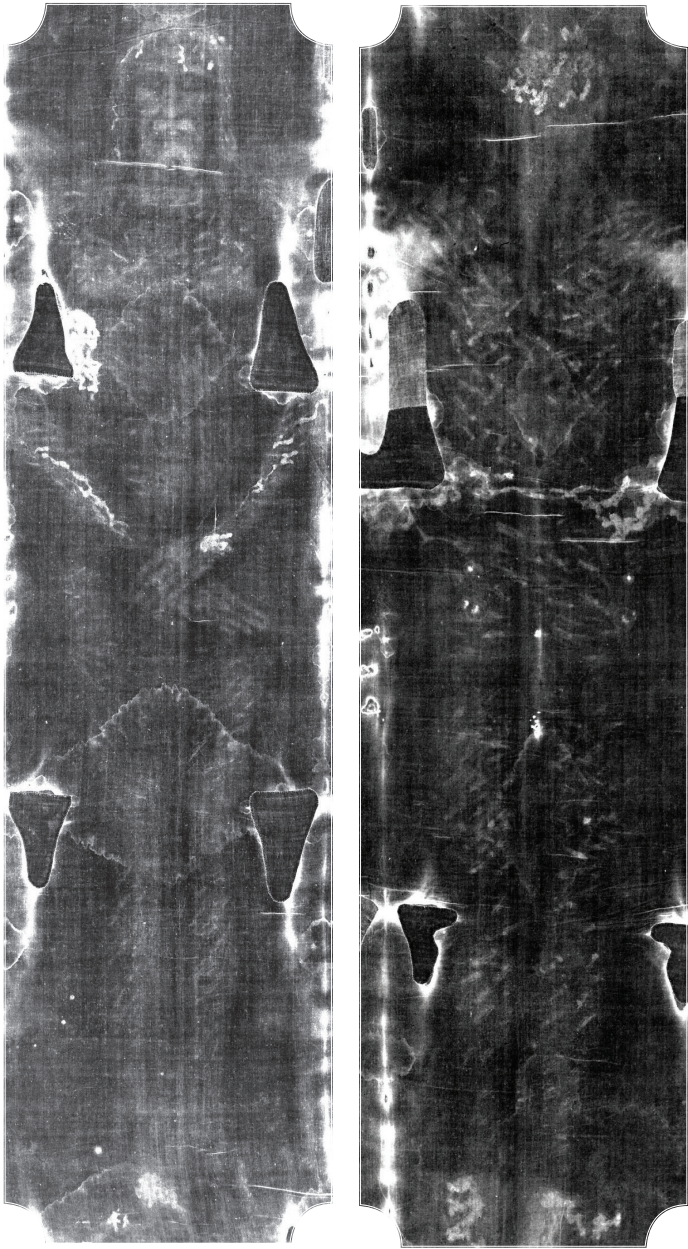
*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Pope St. John Paul II said that the Shroud of Turin is *a mirror of the Gospel* accounts of Jesus' Passion. Jesus has already been scourged mercilessly, mocked, and crowned with thorns. The Shroud of Turin testifies to the extent of deep wounds from the lashes Jesus received; front and back, up and down—the entire length of his body, leaving him with loss of blood and flesh.

Weakened by the loss of sleep, lack of food and water, and this barbaric beating, now Jesus must carry the horizontal beam of the cross—weighing more than sixty pounds—the length of the city of Jerusalem, about 3,000 feet. As he struggles through the streets, he is jeered, spit upon, and whipped.

Jesus said that if we are to be his disciples we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. No one will ever have to carry a cross as heavy as the one our Lord carried, but if we unite our crosses—whatever they may be—with his cross, he promises to lighten our burden. However, first we must deny ourselves the things that are obstacles to our relationship with him. Our Lord asks us to do many things we can only do with the help he longs to give us through the sacraments.

Lord, have mercy!



Photographic negatives of the Shroud of Turin reveal puncture wounds around the skull and lash marks across the front & back of the man's body.

THIRD STATION

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME



The Third Station on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Under the weight of the cross and the sins of the world, Jesus falls to the pavement. His hands are tied to the beam he carries and so he has no way to protect himself as he falls face-first to the ground. He has only begun his journey, and has hardly enough strength to move. How can it be that Almighty God loves us so much that he is willing to go through this torture even though he knows humanity will continue to deny him and indulge in sin as if there is no God?

Lord, when we fall from grace, give us a true contrition of heart to realize how sin wounds your own heart and diminishes our dignity and relationship with you.

Lord, have mercy!

FOURTH STATION

JESUS MEETS HIS SORROWFUL MOTHER

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

No one on this earth has loved or will ever love Jesus more than his mother, Mary. The two are as one heart, sharing the same blood in their veins. No other person could have been impacted by the torture of Jesus' passion more than Mary, who knew Jesus' passion was the consequence of sin.

Yet, Mary is called the Mother of Mercy, appearing throughout the world to individuals and large gatherings of people, encouraging us to pray for our conversion and for the conversion of the world so that we may find the purpose of our life in her Son, Jesus. Our love for Mary will help us to deepen our love for her Son.

Lord, have mercy!
Mary, pray for us!



Our Lady of Sorrows on Mount Calvary
Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

FIFTH STATION

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS



Titian's Christ Carrying the Cross

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Seeing that Jesus had been weakened by the cruel treatment that he experienced, the soldiers began to fear that he would not be able to complete the tortuous journey to Calvary, so they forced Simon of Cyrene to help Jesus carry the cross.

When we help others to carry their crosses for love of Jesus, we lighten the weight of Jesus' cross. Jesus said that whatever we do for someone in need, we do for him.

Jesus, help us to be aware of the frequent opportunities to assist others by our prayers and actions so that they may have hope as they experience your mercy.

Lord, have mercy!

SIXTH STATION

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Veronica had the courage to move past the soldiers, to provide some relief for Jesus. It often takes courage to do what we know is right when there is a possibility that we will be ostracized or ridiculed. As faithful Christians, we are challenged to be a light in darkness. We are often confronted with bad language or a variety of things we know are contrary to Christian example. We must pray for the courage to do what we know we should do, and not give passive approval to what we know is offensive to God and humanity.

Lord, have mercy!



The Sixth Station of the High Stations in Lourdes, France

SEVENTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



The Seventh Station on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Even with the help of Simon, Jesus falls a second time because of the awesome weight of the sins of humanity. Jesus knew before he began his passion that it would require the strength of God alone, pushing his humanity beyond its limits.

Passing through the mysteries of this life, we all will experience trials that can't be remedied by our own resources. We may be tempted to give up, but because of the passion of Christ, there will always be hope if we put our trust in Jesus and in the help he longs to give us through the supernatural power of the sacraments.

Lord, have mercy!

EIGHTH STATION

JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Women were especially receptive to the ministry of Jesus because of his compassion and the liberating message of the Gospel. Many women followed Jesus as he preached, and provided for the needs of his ministry. Even as Jesus is near death and all seemed lost to his followers, he consoles the women, especially those who will be with him at the foot of the cross.

We, the living Church, know that the passion and death of Jesus was victorious. Our consolation is in the reality of the mystical body of Christ, in all that he has accomplished through the Church he established, and in the sacraments which allow us to have intimacy with him.

Lord, have mercy!



*This image reminds us of Jesus' consoling words to the women
Stone Pavement underneath the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem
(Traditional site of Jesus' flagellation)*

NINTH STATION

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME



The Ninth Station of the High Stations in Lourdes, France

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

No ordinary human who suffered as Jesus did could complete the tortuous walk to Calvary. However, Jesus knows he will be able to complete his journey because it is the will of his Father.

Everything that rests in the will of the Father will reach its completion unless we fall and refuse to get up and persevere. During our life we may experience things that seem to be impossible to conquer. That's why we keep our focus every day on eternal life. It is the will of God that we spend eternity in heaven. If we stay close to him, we will reach our destination.

Lord, have mercy!

TENTH STATION

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

During his ministry, Jesus, the Son of God, had no place to lay his head and no possessions except for the clothes he wore. Now, even his clothes are taken away as he is jeered at and humiliated while the crowd looked on.

Over and over, Jesus tells us that we cannot be attached to anything of this world. There are many things here for the purpose of our use, but not that we become attached to them. Jesus said, "Wherever your heart is, there will your treasure be." The treasure for Jesus was his Father's will, and he took that to heaven with him.

Jesus, help us to truly desire "Thy will be done" in our lives.

Lord, have mercy!



The Tenth Station in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

ELEVENTH STATION

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



The Eleventh Station in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus is laid upon the cross, and his hands and feet are attached to the wood by nails. The cross is raised so that people may look at him. To breathe, he must push the weight of his body against the nails that support him, magnifying the pain. As he hangs on the cross, he forgives those who crucified him... which is all of us. His last sermon is one of forgiveness.

Jesus, give us the grace to forgive all injuries, so we may join you in heaven.

Lord, have mercy!

TWELFTH STATION

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus dies on the cross for our salvation, and Satan and death are defeated. The victory is ours if we believe all that Jesus taught and keep his commandments, which we can do with his help. God has a wonderful plan for humanity, but he must be part of the plan. His plan is not complicated; it just demands our trust that true happiness now and for all eternity can only be realized in our relationship with him.

At the foot of the cross stood the 'beloved disciple,' John, and Jesus' mother, Mary. When Jesus gives his mother to the beloved disciple, he is giving her to the Church, which means all of us. Through the ages, her mission has been to help individuals come to her Son, Jesus.

He then said, "It is finished."

Help us, Mother Mary, to follow your Son.

Lord, have mercy!



Site of the Crucifixion on Mount Calvary
Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

THIRTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



Michaelangelo's *Pietà*, St. Peter's Basilica, Rome

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

Jesus received his human body from Mary, and now Mary receives the body of the God-Man she brought into the world. The prophecy of the 'sword that would pierce her heart' is complete. What seems to be the end is a new beginning. Mary is now the Mother of the Church, and through the Church she will help her Son to care for souls until the end of time.

Through the intercession of Mary, many documented and undocumented miracles have been recorded. More churches have been named after Mary than any other of his followers because she is the mother of us all.

Lord, have mercy!
Mary, pray for us!

FOURTEENTH STATION

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

*We adore you O' Christ and we praise you,
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

The body of Jesus was placed in the tomb with some urgency because it was the evening of the sabbath. His body was wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in the tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea, and a stone was rolled against the entrance. Even though Jesus told his Apostles he would rise on the third day, they were still in disbelief. We recall that Thomas said he would not believe it unless he could put his fingers in the nail marks.

Our faith calls us to believe in many things that we don't understand. Mystery is an essential component of faith; it invites us to deepen our search for truth. The answers we seek can be found in the living experience of the Church. We believe them because Christ has proclaimed them, and because the Church which he founded has lived them for two thousand years.

Jesus' resurrection is a mystery of hope, because it reveals his eternal plan for all those who believe in him.

Jesus, help us to believe in you.



Replica of Christ's Tomb, Pilgrim Center of Hope, San Antonio, Texas

“There is no evil to be faced that Christ does not face with us. There is no enemy that Christ has not already conquered. There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us and does not now bear with us. And on the far side of every cross we find the newness of life in the Holy Spirit, that new life which will reach its fulfillment in the resurrection. This is our faith. This is our witness before the world.”

–Pope St. John Paul II

“The death of the Lord our God should not be a cause of shame for us; rather, it should be our greatest hope, our greatest glory. In taking upon himself the death that he found in us, he has most faithfully promised to give us life in him, such as we cannot have of ourselves.”

–St. Augustine

Thank you for praying with us. This booklet is available to take home with you or give away.

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