



WAY OF THE CROSS: **A WAY OF MISSION**



On the occasion of Lent 2019

WAY OF THE CROSS: A WAY OF MISSION

CONTEXT

ON THE OCCASION OF LENT 2019 and in the wake of “an extraordinary time of prayer and reflection on the Ad gentes mission” (October 2019), Pope Francis *recalls how necessary the holiness of life is to the efficacy of the apostolate, he recommends therefore, an ever-stronger union with Christ and a more convinced and joyful involvement in his divine passion for announcing the Gospel to all, loving and employing mercy towards everyone.*

This renewal requires a personal conversion, living the mission as a permanent opportunity to announce Christ, meeting him and helping others to have a personal encounter with him too. I hope your material and spiritual assistance to churches around the world will make the churches more and more based on the Gospel and on the baptismal involvement of all the faithful, laymen and clerics, in the Church’s only mission: to make God’s love close to every man, especially to those most in need of his mercy.” (Pope Francis Speech to National Directors of Pontifical Mission Societies, Rome, Saturday 3 June 2017).

During the highlights of the liturgical year, Lent and Holy Week allow the joyful reunion with the source of all communal and individual faith: Jesus, Christ and Lord. In addition to the liturgy, some devotions favor a deep assimilation of the way of Jesus and his choices by having these actually experienced and prayed. The Way of the cross is an ecclesial devotion that unites the lives of Jesus and Christians, proposes a catechetical itinerary and calls out to worshippers in view of bringing about significant change in the daily lives of Christian communities and individuals alike.

This devotion assists believers to remain contemporaries and committed witnesses of the particularly meaningful events and places in the life of Jesus and the history of salvation: Jerusalem and each of our communities. It appears an opportune time to offer our country’s faithful, in 2019, an original version of the way of the cross whose symbolic and catechetical title could be *Way of the Cross: A way of mission*. It is suggested that the pastoral text take into account the points of reference put forward by His Holiness Pope Francis and update our communities the challenges of a life of faith to reinforce an effective solidarity with the Churches and the Christians of the Holy Land and the greater Middle East.

THIS WAY OF THE CROSS IS DESIGNED FOR PASTORAL USE during moments of parish prayer, as well as for groups of gatherings on Good Friday or to be part of public processions or vigils which have been the practice in some cities. It can be repeated throughout the year, whenever worshipers wish to experience the *way of the cross* as based on the challenges of love. It can also serve as a personal meditation at any time.



EACH STATION INCLUDES:

- ◇ *One verse from the Gospel of John, Chapter 17, when Jesus prays for himself, his apostles and believers of all time;*
- ◇ *A brief meditation that evokes a challenge of faith and mission and, over time, a deeper involvement as a missionary disciple;*
- ◇ *A short verse taken from the Book of Psalms to voice the experience of Jesus and the community;*
- ◇ *A refrain or a hymn to provide a transition from one station to the next, and which reminds the community that we can experience in song what it means to be faithful and involved on the journey.*

The leaders of this Way of the Cross are invited to make adaptations according to local circumstances and settings. It is intended to be a “working tool”. Different voices can be used to lead the Way of the Cross. This can help show how each station has three dimensions: the Word of God, the meditation and a verse to voice those who are assembled.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HYMNS

THE HYMNS THAT ARE LISTED ARE SIMPLY SUGGESTIONS. Communities are invited to draw from their own repertoire and heritage. Most of the hymns suggested here are from the *Catholic Book of Worship (CBW III)*, Pew edition, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000. Attention should be given to hymns related to mission in discipleship and Church sharing the mission of God.

❧ MISSION'S HYMNS ❧

Apostles of our ancient faith 486; Disciple's song 505; Only this I want 516; Lord Jesus, we must know you 517; Here I am Lord 520; Blest Are They 522; The Song of Beatitudes 523; Laudate omnes gentes 570; Church of God 581.

❧ OPENING OF THE CELEBRATION ❧

Take Up your Cross 353; O Lord, throughout the forty days 367; Come and journey with a Savior 476; You are near 487; We walk by faith 495.

❧ BETWEEN THE STATIONS ❧

Acclamations for the Stations of the Cross 355/356; Jesus, Remember me 380; O Lord, Hear my prayer 491; God is love 473; God, Whose Love in Jesus Found Us 501; No Greater Love 599; When Love is Found 629; Where there is Love 631; Ubi Caritas 376; Salvator mundi 370.

❧ FOLLOWING THE DISMISSAL ❧

Great God of Mercy 361; Jesus, Lord 365; O Cross of Christ 368; Tree of Life 373; The Lord is now exalted 377; When I behold the Wondrous Cross 382; Lift High the Cross 435; Praise to You, o Christ, Our Savior 442; Amazing Grace 480; Eye Has not seen 482; For You are my God 483.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

THE SERVICE BEGINS IN A PRAYERFUL SILENCE

P: *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

ALL: *Amen*



OPENING REFLECTION

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, Pope Francis wrote recently: *“This renewal requires a personal conversion, living the mission as a permanent opportunity to announce Christ, meeting him and helping others to have a personal encounter with him too. I hope your material and spiritual assistance to churches around the world will make the churches more and more based on the Gospel and on the baptismal involvement of all the faithful, laymen and clerics, in the Church’s only mission: to make God’s love close to every man, especially to those most in need of his mercy.”* (Pope Francis Speech to National Directors of Pontifical Mission Societies, Rome, Saturday, June 3, 2017)

We have come together to experience the last hours of the journey of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the fundamental Hour of our salvation, all salvation. We keep watch with Jesus Christ, the apostles and all the Christians to discover and to deepen the grace and the challenges of God’s mission in our world and in our times.

✠ OPENING HYMN ✠

STATION 1

Jesus is condemned to death

“Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17, 1b-3)



MEDITATION

Lord, with you, the course of time stops. Among those who hate you, many hope that everything will end soon. They think among themselves: “Everything is about to finish, we’ll arrest him, and finally, we’ll remain silent.” But you, Lord, in your intimate prayer with the Father, precisely in that moment of hostility and hatred, you gently gather time in time: “Father, the hour has come.”

Lord, this is what amazes us: we talk about death, and you use words of *eternal life!* You are at the end of your terrestrial life. You pray the Father so that all of us may receive eternal life from You, and know Him, the *only true God*. What a wonderful and a deep exchange.

SILENCE

R : *In you is the source of life and in your light we see light. (Ps 35, 10)*

REFRAIN

STATION 2

Jesus carries his cross

“I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.” (John 17, 4-5)



MEDITATION

Lord, we're astounded by the way you do things. You tell us about the glory that you gave the Father by accomplishing his will. Now, you ask to receive the glory that only the Father and you know “before the world began”. The image of your glory that we have in our mind is similar to the triumphal entry of a King: It's the praise given to a victorious hero and shown to everyone.

Lord, the way that you reveal yourself is quite different: it's the mystery of communion between the Father and you. Everything that you said, did, taught and experienced, you have always looked for it and borne witness through facts. You have shown to Humankind this union of infinite Love. Now, it is this Love that you show us through an indissoluble bond: the folly of the Cross.

SILENCE

R : *What else have I in heaven but you? Apart from you, I am nothing on earth. My body and my heart faint for joy; God is my possession for ever. (Ps 72, 25-26)*

REFRAIN

STATION 3

Jesus falls for the first time

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they kept your word.” (John 17, 6)



MEDITATION

Lord, what at first was abstract and distant, you made it visible and near. You showed us the Father's face. God is no longer unnameable. He's no longer a cold and theoretical doctrine. Whoever sees you sees the Father's face. Whoever listens to you, listens to the Father. Whoever welcomes you, not only welcomes you, but also welcomes the one who sends you: the Heavenly Father.

Today, this still happens mysteriously within us through your Word and Gospel, when once again, we find ourselves, encountered, visited and loved, well beyond our abilities and merits. Father, let us always remain bound to your Word of love, like Jesus bounded with us through bonds of love.

SILENCE

*R : I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled.
(Ps 21,23)*

REFRAIN

STATION 4

Jesus meets his mother

“Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.” (John 17, 7-8)



MEDITATION

Lord, being conscious that you have named us and desired us through the mystery of your prayer is something wonderful. The love that you tell us about is so great that we have some difficulty to welcome it within each of us as a true reality. “Father, all this love for us, comes from you?”

Oh Father, what a great gift you grant us by giving us your only Son! Not only has he revealed your face of love through his words, but he has demeaned himself into our human misery and he has become your Word of love: the Living! Lord, let us welcome you as the greatest love.

SILENCE

*R : I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight; since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.
(Ps 15, 17-18)*

REFRAIN

STATION 5

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross

“I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.” (John 17, 9-10)



MEDITATION

Who remembers when and how each of us was called to carry Jesus’s cross and take part in Humankind’s salvation? How many times we don’t remember the occasions that led us to a first encounter with Jesus Christ and made us take part in his mission?

The call to faith goes through people and events. We understand their meaning along the way and through meditation. Little by little, we learn that the Father has given us to his Son so that we may know him and share his love, his life and his mission. He constantly prays for us so that we may love the vocation that he gives us and we find our joy through that reciprocity of love and service.

SILENCE

L : Save me, for I am yours since I seek your precepts. (Ps 118, 94)

REFRAIN

STATION 6

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

“And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me.” (John 17, 11-12a)



MEDITATION

Jesus’s face is aching and shattered, not only because of hostility and lies, but also because of contradictions between the disciples and contradictions between the Christian communities. Nothing is more disconcerting than divisions with multiple faces and stories, between those that already accepted Jesus’s Name and promised to walk along through the unity of love.

The unity of Jesus’s disciples is faithfulness to his Word and his will. It is a credible sign for those who see and observe Christians living in the world. It is a responsibility and a testimony. The disciples’ fraternal union remains the work of divine holiness that confronts the darkness of division. It makes it possible to find Jesus’s transfigured face again: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

SILENCE

R : *Yes, the just will praise your name: the upright shall live in your presence.*
(Ps 139, 13b)

REFRAIN

STATION 7

Jesus falls for the second time

“I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.” (John 17, 12b-14)



MEDITATION

Living and walking along as a disciple involves many surprises and consequences not always perceived during the first steps of Christian life. It is impossible that one day, the disciples would avoid hostility, suffering, persecution, even martyrdom, solely because they are Christians. It is demanding to lead a life of faithfulness to God’s will and Jesus’s words.

Many brothers and sisters around the world experience this strain permanently. It is not easy to stand up straight when there are so many traps. Learning to take care of one another in the life of faith and the Christian testimony is an essential attitude, but it doesn’t come spontaneously. Thus, taking care is to provide an imaginative support and share a joy that gives courage and makes it possible to persevere.

SILENCE

R: *Thus even my friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has turned against me.*
(Ps 40, 10)

REFRAIN

STATION 8

Jesus meets the daughters of Jerusalem

“I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world; just I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me in the world, so I have sent them in the world.” (John 17, 15-18)



MEDITATION

Being and living as a Christian in society and culture are not mere accidents, it is a choice and a life condition. The disciples learn, day after day, that they share Jesus’s passion and mission. They are sent out and the challenges to overcome are similar to those of Jesus. They learn fast that taking things into consideration between what is Good and Evil is a discernment that leaves little rest.

When we know temptation, we are aware that Jesus walks along with us. He teaches us to unmask the temptations that keep us away from our real life. Jesus makes the truth with us and, at the heart of strong hardships, confirms us through faith and mission.

SILENCE

R : *Will you not restore again our life that your people may rejoice in you? (Ps 84, 7)*

REFRAIN

STATION 9

Jesus falls for the third time

*“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”
(John 17, 19)*



MEDITATION

Jesus pushes self-sacrifice to the extreme. In order for us to live, he doesn't sacrifice anyone nor anything else than himself. Each stumbling rock and each new challenge become to Jesus an occasion to complete the disciples' transformation by giving his own life. Being sanctified himself, Jesus sanctifies his disciples and confirms them as missionaries.

Through self-fear and the trust in God, the disciples live with their heart turned to God. They experience the joys and tensions of that permanent conversion that urges the accomplishment of the initial choice by leaving a world without God or hostile to God. The ultimate temptation always involves the mystery of God, often recognized and confessed through the abyss of one's silence and faith.

SILENCE

R : My children serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his faithfulness to people yet unborn: These things the Lord has done. (Ps 21, 31-32)

REFRAIN

STATION 10

Jesus is stripped of his garments

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17, 20-21)



MEDITATION

Nowadays, believing in Jesus causes indifference, even a lack of understanding. The Word of God is not well received in our world. Many people have doubts about Jesus and the Gospel. However, Jesus asks us to trust him and to follow him. For following Jesus, it is to believe in God.

Jesus calls us to make him known around us with strength and conviction. He desires that we be zealous missionaries filled with hope and faith. Jesus teaches us to proclaim the Good News joyfully and to spread around us the beatitude of believing in him.

SILENCE

R : *Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth. Guide my heart to fear your name. (Ps 85, 11)*

REFRAIN

STATION 11

Jesus is nailed to the cross

“The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17, 22-23)



MEDITATION

Often, Christians face division, disagreements and several internal feuds experienced by the Church. We have a hard time understanding each other, listening to each other and working together in harmony.

We are responsible to care about the churches in mission countries, but we are often worried about our own reality instead of building a true solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Jesus calls the believers to unite and to reconcile so that God's love transforms the whole world.

SILENCE

R : Yet I was always in your presence; you were holding me by my right hand. You will guide me by your counsel and so you will lead me to glory. (Ps 72, 23-24)

REFRAIN

STATION 12

Jesus dies on the cross

“Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. » (John 17, 24)



MEDITATION

We want God to be with us. We pray to him every day so that he may grant us his favour, answers our intentions and gives us what we ask. However, have we already let ourselves go towards God with simplicity and humility, without asking for something in return?

If we wish that God loves us, we must also love him, listen to him through silence and meditation. What is essential is to love and be loved. Isn't the Christians' mission to love thy neighbour?

SILENCE

R : *Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me from your holy spirit. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. (Ps 50, 13-14)*

REFRAIN

STATION 13

Jesus is removed from the cross

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me.” (John 17, 25)



MEDITATION

When Jesus sent out his disciples to proclaim the Good News throughout the world, he counted on them to call other disciples. The disciples' faith was fragile. Despite that, they proclaimed to the populations, the best way they could, that Christ was among us and that the Kingdom of God was already underway.

Where does our faith in Jesus Christ stand? Are we ready to bear witness of our faith? As Pope Francis calls us to do so, can we become missionary disciples and go to the peripheries to proclaim Jesus Christ to those who have never heard about him?

SILENCE

R : All the nations shall come to adore you and glorify your name, O Lord. (Ps 85, 9)

REFRAIN

STATION 14

Jesus is laid in the tomb

“I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17, 26)



MEDITATION

Our relationship with God and his Son, Jesus, is firstly experienced through a personal relationship. But it has to bear fruit towards the community, society and the world that surrounds us. We are responsible to share God’s love with the others. The benefit of believing in him, we cannot keep it to ourselves!

When Jesus lies within us and when we receive him with joy, he unifies us. We cannot bury our happiness. Peace seizes us. Let us transmit our love for God. The world is looking forward to it!

SILENCE

R : *O praise the Lord all you nations, acclaim him all you peoples! Strong is his love for us; he is faithful for ever. (Ps 116, 1-2)*

REFRAIN

Dismissal



LET US STAND TOGETHER AND
WELCOME GOD'S PEACE AND BLESSING:

P : To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power and authority, before all time and now and for ever. (Jude 24-25)

R : Amen.

P : May Almighty God bless you and the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

R : Amen

∞ CLOSING HYMN ∞



This Way of the Cross is a joint project of three Franciscan groups:

the Hermitage of Gethsemane (Jerusalem), the Franciscan Mission Office (Montreal) and the Commissariat of Holy Land in Canada (Ottawa).

We express our gratitude to the groups and the persons who participated in this project of reflection and prayer.