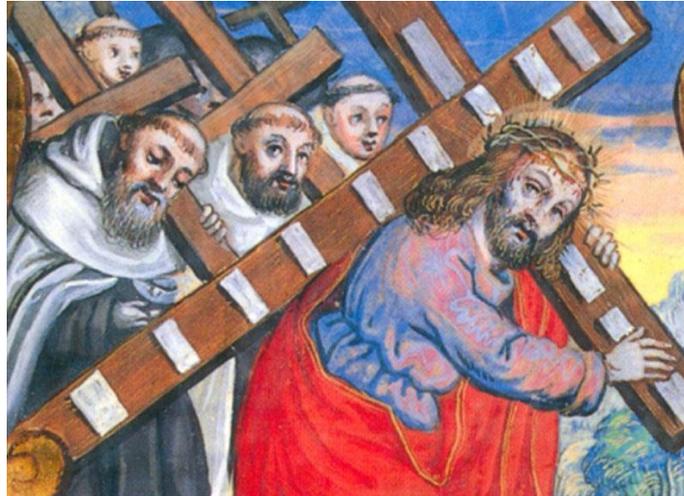


The Way of the Cross with Carmelite Saints

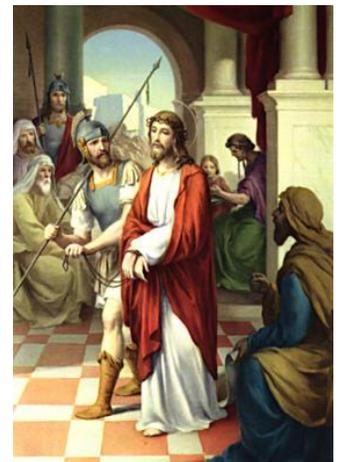


prepared by Carmelite Vocation and WebTeam

FIRST STATION: Jesus is condemned to death

"When the soul reaches the stage at which it pays little attention to praise, it pays even less attention to disapproval. Blame strengthens the soul; what's more, it acquires a special and tender love for its persecutors." ~ Saint Teresa of Avila

Lord, my soul is before you. You know me deeply, you know all about me, you read into my inmost depths. You gather every tear and respond to my every smile. There is no space or time in my life when you do not visit with your love, with your friendship. I thank you for all of this, my God. My path in this life is traced out, is certain: with each step, I want to be with you, in joy and in struggle, in peace and in misunderstanding, in company and in solitude. Your presence, O Jesus, makes my soul strong, even in weakness.



SECOND STATION: Jesus carries the cross



"Jesus lavishes his crosses as the most certain mark of his tenderness, for He will to make you like Him. So why be afraid of not being able to carry the cross without weakening?" ~ Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

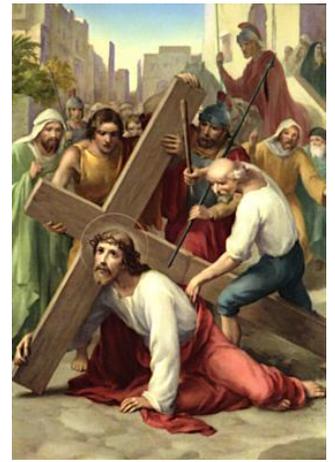
Lord, so many times I knew your tenderness in my life! Especially in the painful moments, when I could no longer find the words to say, when it was impossible for me to pray, when there was only night... You became near, even in silence, with a barely perceptible touch. I saw you in some many times, Jesus, that I could look you in the eye. Then, when the light returned, when the tears were dried, I felt a little more like you, a little more your son and brother.

(Prepared and translated by Carmelite Nuns of Ravenna, Carmelite Vocation Resource, Fr. Emiel Abalahin, O.Carm)

THIRD STATION: Jesus falls the first time

A 'scientia crucis' can be gained only when one comes to feel the cross radically. The entire sum of human failures can be blotted out by the expiation of the cross.
~ St. Edith Stein

Lord, I know that I do not know you as I should, as I would like. I know that I still have a long journey, walking behind you, following in your footsteps, even in the shadow of the cross. All that I can brag about are my weaknesses, my faults. Humanly speaking, Jesus, I am truly a poor thing, but with you in my heart and in my life, I feel rich, I feel happy. I do not want to hide myself before you; I open my arms, I open my heart so that you may enter into my poverty with true wealth, which is your cross. Yes, my Savior: this is the sign of Love.



FOURTH STATION: Jesus meets his mother



The Gospel here places no words in the mouth of your mother. And you, too, my Jesus speak not a word. Your silence is eloquent. ~ Bl. Titus Brandsma

Lord, I also want to remain in silence, in this moment, to gather that exchange of infinite love that unites you and your Mother. I lift my eyes, Jesus, and see you, I stay to look at your face, the eyes of a Son, that reflect the figure of your Mother. You do not speak, but give your Presence: you give yourself, and you give your Mother. I receive her as my Lady, my dearest Mother.

FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene helps carry the cross

"All bear their crosses although these crosses be different. If a person wants to gain freedom of spirit and not always be troubled let him begin by not being frightened by the cross. Then he will see how the Lord helps him carry it." ~ St. John of the Cross

Lord, I am afraid. I want to flee from every pain, from every trial. Above all, solitude frightens me, blocks me. All of those times when the shadow of the cross reappears in my life, I struggle to continue to hope. Perhaps I am tired by now, Jesus. But I want to try once more, I want to make myself closer to your heart. I extend my hand and grasp yours; I offer the little strength I have, the nothing that I am. Only with you will I be able to carry the cross.



SIXTH STATION: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



"Jesus is not alone on the way of the cross. Today, as then, not only are there adversaries, but there are those who assist him. Representative of those who love Him and wish to assist Him is Veronica." ~ St. Edith Stein

Lord, I have only one desire in my heart: to be your friend, to walk with you, to share life with you. I know that you are suffering, walking along the way of sadness. I see so many people around. I also come, I search for you, I make myself as close as possible. I want to love you; nothing else is important to me. Together with Veronica I search for your face, O You who are my Light!

SEVENTH STATION: Jesus falls the second time

"When you walk in the dark night and in the emptiness of spiritual poverty, you will think that everyone and everything is failing you — including God. But nothing is failing you." ~ St. John of the Cross

Lord, I miss you! How can you tell me that you are always near, that you share everything with me? I feel the solitude, the sadness, the anxiety. You also fell, under the weight of an infinite pain. How can I find you again, my Shepherd? I, the lost sheep, need you. Rise up again, arise, good Shepherd! Now I will follow you all the days of my life.



EIGHTH STATION: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



"O Jesus, let me weep for myself, for I am nothing but dry wood to be cast into the fire. But you give new life to the dry wood by grafting it onto the wood of the cross." ~ Bl. Titus Brandsma

Lord, you are my Fire! Like poor wood, by now without life, I only want to throw myself into your arms. Gather me close, I pray! It does not matter if this means that I will need to be united to the cross of your pain. Only with you can I be happy again. Our united tears will become a song of joy.

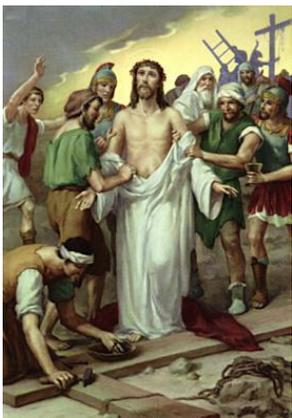
NINTH STATION: Jesus falls the third time

"Even though you should fall one hundred times, to prove your love for Him, rise each time with even greater strength." ~ St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Lord, I am ashamed of myself; I fall and fall again, my lose myself, I distance myself, I close myself off. And when I find myself like this, down and without anymore strength in myself, I then understand that the only thing to do, the only step to take is to enter into myself again, like the lost son of in the parable, and there, in the depths of my soul, to rediscover your love for me. Clinging to this I can rise up again, only urged on by infinite trust in the tenderness of your friend, O my Savior.



TENTH STATION: Jesus is stripped of his garments



"The soul that is stripped of self and clothed in Jesus Christ has nothing to fear from the exterior world. Therefore I renounce myself each day so that Christ may increase in me." ~ Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity

Lord, so many times by now, I have felt stripped of everything that I held precious, indispensable to my life. So many experiences in the world have made me understand that, in the end, nothing remains except your only presence, your faithful love. I thought, therefore, of leaving behind useless things, perhaps even so many companions that did not bring me to you. Little by little, I stripped myself and re clothed myself in the most beautiful garment, which is You, O Jesus.

ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is nailed to the cross



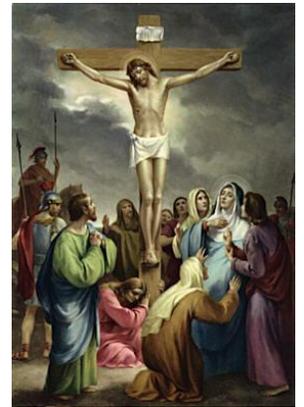
"I resolved to remain in spirit at the foot of the cross and to receive the divine dew, the blood falling to the ground with no one hastening to gather it up. I then understood that I was to pour it out upon souls." ~ St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Lord, by your grace, I have arrived to this point, at the foot of your cross. I see you nailed, to the wood, but even more to the pain, to love, to your will to save us. Every drop of your blood that falls is a promise of a new life, for each one of us, your sons, scattered throughout the world, throughout all times of the poor history of humanity. As your brother and your friend, O Jesus, I want to learn every day to gather the precious drops of your word for us, of your infinite love, and then, without keeping them for me, I want more and more to give them to all those who I meet along my path.

TWELFTH STATION: Jesus dies on the cross

"Death cannot be bitter for the soul that loves, for in it she finds all the sweetness and delight of love. She rejoices over death as she would over the thought of her betrothal and marriage, and she longs for the day and the hour of her death." ~ St. John of the Cross

Lord, your death is a great school; here I can learn to love, to truly live; here I can find a sense of my life. Before you, crucified, I see that love and pain are one thing and it is through this that death is defeated and cannot overcome us. Together with you, even death, every little death in my experience of life, becomes sweet, because now I know that in pain I can find love. Thank you, Lord Jesus.



THIRTEENTH STATION: Jesus is taken down from the cross



"You will not arrive at what you desire by following your own path, or even by high contemplation; but only through a great humility and a surrender of the heart." ~ St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Lord, I know that there is nothing great, bright or strong for me to present to you. I have nothing more if not my heart. After this long walk in your footsteps, through trial and the pain of the cross, I desire only the give you my heart, my love, my life. I abandon myself to your embrace: I know that you receive me, as I am.

FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus is laid in the tomb

"The soul must empty itself of all that is not God in order to go to God. . . For Christ, desire to enter into complete nakedness and poverty in everything." ~ St. John of the Cross

Lord, the last step is steep descent, an entrance into the darkness of the tomb. I hoped, arriving here at the top, to see a clearer light, to receive the beneficial rays of the sun. Instead, it is still not time for this. However, I choose to remain with you, to descend also in the obscure solitude of the tomb, of the darkness. I am not afraid, because I believe that your love is stronger; I know that you will raise and give new life also to me.

