



# The Way of the Cross for Congregational Use

Revised by Jeremy Harrington, OFM, and modeled on the traditional Franciscan method as originally arranged by Baldwin Schulte, OFM. © 1994, St. Anthony Messenger Press, then transferred to Liguori Publications. Out of print. Copyright reverted to author. Reprinted with author's permission by and for use by Church of St. Edward the Confessor (Granville, OH). Permission granted February 2021. Hymn lyrics by Flavian Larbes, OFM, 1872-1925, have entered into public domain.

## ✠ Preparatory Prayer

LEADER AND PEOPLE: Lord Jesus, / my savior, / I want to walk with you / on the way of your cross. For love of you, / I am heartily sorry for my sins. I beg of you the grace to make this way of the cross / in the spirit of true penance, / in union with that spirit / with which you yourself went up to Mount Calvary. I offer this devotion in thanksgiving for your love, / and in satisfaction for my sins / and the sins of my brothers and sisters.

*Let us now in contrite sorrow, / Go the way the Savior trod,  
Let us all his anguish borrow / Once to feel the love of God.  
Let us know how Jesus bought us / Free from sin's eternal doom;  
Let us learn how love once sought us, / And may love our souls consume.*

## ✠ I. Jesus Is Condemned to Death

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Jesus was bound and handed over to Pilate. "What am I to do with this man?" Pilate asked. "Crucify him!" they all cried. He said, "Why? What crime has he committed?" But they only shouted the louder, / "Crucify him!" Pilate washed his hands and declared, / "I am innocent of the blood of this just man. The responsibility is yours." Rather than face the truth, / Pilate condemned the God-man to death.

PEOPLE Lord Jesus, / let me not run from my own or others' problems / nor in desperation accept an unjust solution that hurts someone else.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

## ✠ II. Jesus Accepts His Cross

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Jesus was already exhausted from his agony in the garden, / his sleepless night of trial, / the scourging and crowning with thorns. But when handed the cross, he took it. He had emptied himself, / becoming like us in all things but sin. Now he shouldered even the burden of our sins.

PEOPLE Out of love for you, / Jesus, / I will empty myself of selfishness / and make a new attempt to accept my crosses. Forgive my complaining / and my resentment of the sacrifices I must make / to love and serve others.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

### ✠ III. Jesus Falls the First Time

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER The burden was too heavy. The cross forced Jesus down. He stumbled and fell. But he struggled to his feet and tried once more. He did not let difficulties or pain / shake his determination. He forced himself to stand up, / painfully lifted the cross to his shoulder / and tried once more.

PEOPLE Jesus, I fall. I fail. I will accept my weakness and try again, / believing in the strength that you give me.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

*Dearest Mother, thou didst meet him / On his way to death and shame,  
And with bleeding heart didst greet him / Brave to bear with him our blame;  
Mother dear, for us thou gavest / Him to die a victim slain,  
Mother dear, thou noblest, bravest, / Help us live for heaven's gain.*

### ✠ IV. Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Jesus and Mary meet and suffer with one another. There wasn't anything Mary could do to save her son. Like a parent beside the hospital bed of a sick child, / Mary had to stand by helplessly and watch her son's agony. Even when we cannot free others from their burdens, / like Mary we can support and console them by our presence and prayer.

PEOPLE Lord Jesus, / let me be understanding to the sick, / the depressed, / the confused, / even when I do not understand their sickness and pain.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

### ✠ V. Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER As they led Jesus away, / they laid hold of Simon of Cyrene / who was coming in from the field. They put a crossbeam on Simon's shoulder / for him to carry along behind Jesus.

PEOPLE Simon helped reluctantly. Jesus, let me help cheerfully. What we do for our neighbor, we do for you. Your apostles deserted you in time of need. A stranger had to be forced to help you. I make up my mind now / not to disappear when a friend needs me.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

## ✠ VI. Veronica Presents Her Veil to Jesus

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Veronica volunteered to help Jesus. She saw his sweaty, bloody face / and was moved by the terrible pain she saw there. She did not hesitate to get her veil bloody and stained.

PEOPLE Jesus, help me see your image in all the people I meet, / especially those suffering from rejection, / loneliness, / alcohol or drugs. By my own kindness / and by supporting others who help the troubled, / I want to relieve your pain.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

*Jesus sinks to earth downbended, / Crushed and broken 'neath the cross;  
All our sins on him descended, / All our guilt and virtue's loss.  
Like one scorned and lone, unfriended, / Bruised and helpless Jesus lay;  
By his falls our own were mended / And our sins were purged away.*

## ✠ VII. Jesus Falls the Second Time

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Even with Simon's help, / Jesus falls again. In many things we fail, / as individuals, / as families, / as a parish, / as a nation. It takes repeated effort to control our tempers / or to learn the art of prayer / or to rise to the challenge of real self-giving.

PEOPLE Jesus, help me to keep on trying. When I fail, / give me the grace to accept your healing in the sacrament of penance. Never let us, / your pilgrim people, / grow weary of trying to follow in your footsteps.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

## ✠ VIII. Jesus Speaks to the Weeping Women

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER A great crowd of people followed him, / including women who beat their breasts and lamented over him. Jesus turned to them and said: / "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children."

PEOPLE Jesus, / merely to feel sorry for the poor or starving / is not enough. We need your help to change our world / so that all people can live decently / and have enough to eat. We weep for our own sins of excess and selfishness / and resolve to change our lives.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

### ✠ IX. Jesus Falls the Third Time

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Totally exhausted, / Jesus falls to the ground for the third time. What a terrible burden our sins must be! It took complete trust in his Father / and great power of will / for Jesus to get up once more.

PEOPLE Lord Jesus, / following you sometimes calls for all the energy we have. But if we trust in you, / we will be made strong, / in spite of our weakness. St. Paul begged three times / that the thorn in his flesh be taken away. Jesus, you answered him as you answer us, / "My grace is enough for you."

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

### ✠ X. Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER The soldiers roughly tear off Jesus' clothing, / though it is matted in his wounds. His persecutors have taken advantage of his weakness. They refuse to treat him as a human being.

PEOPLE Lord Jesus, / never let us take advantage of others / or try to use them for our selfish purposes. Do not let us rob the poor and helpless of their dignity. As your people, / your Church, / let us always stand up for the oppressed. We ourselves pledge / to treat everyone as a child of God.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

### ✠ XI. Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER The pain bolts through the body of Jesus / as nails are driven into his hands and feet. His thanks for announcing the good news of the kingdom of God / was crucifixion as a criminal. It was a convenient way to get rid of him / and his challenge to goodness.

PEOPLE If we want, / Jesus, / we can shut you out of our lives. We can ignore your call to love. As individuals or as a community, / we can pretend not to hear your invitation / to take up our cross and follow you / in the way of generous self-giving.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.                      PEOPLE     Have mercy on us!

*Now love's sacrifice is ended, / Jesus bows his head to die.  
Now God's wrath toward mercy bended / Hears his Son's appealing cry;  
Now redemption's task is finished, / All our foes now vanquished lie;  
Grace shall never flow diminished, / Hope now lifts our souls on high.*

## ✠ XII. Jesus Dies on the Cross

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER Writhing in agony on the cross, / Jesus pleaded, / "Father, / forgive them; / they do not know what they are doing." Turning to the thief he declared, / "This day, you shall be with me in paradise." In pain Jesus cried out, / "My God, / my God, / why have you forsaken me?" Then he said, / "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," / and gave himself up to death.

PEOPLE Nothing was too much for Jesus to do for us. Love knows no half measures. Lord Jesus, help us to trust our loving Father and to be good to others / despite what is done to us.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

## ✠ XIII. Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER When the body of Jesus is lowered from the cross, / it is laid in Mary's arms. How immense her sorrow! As a mother, she remembers holding him as a child / and fleeing from Herod to protect him. She recalls the prophecy, / "And your own soul a sword shall pierce." Her mother's heart cannot understand the reason, / but Mary still has hope. She trusts in the promise made to her by the angel, / that her son would save his people, / would save you and me.

PEOPLE Sorrowful Mother, / help us to listen to the words of your son. Be with us at the hour of our death.

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

*From our pilgrimage returning, / Let us sing the Savior's praise.  
Our salvation saw his earning, / Thankful hearts to him we raise.  
And his cross let us now borrow, / Brave to walk the self-same way,  
Cross brings crowning on the morrow / When we pass to heaven's day.*

## ✠ XIV. Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

LEADER We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

PEOPLE Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

LEADER "They took the body of Jesus / and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices." This lifeless body will soon rise victorious over sin and evil.

PEOPLE Jesus, in baptism we went down into death with you, / and rose with you to a new life of grace. May this new life in us grow each day / so that we may conquer our selfishness, welcome and forgive all human beings, / and work to make the world a better place for all. May we so live in your resurrection / that your kingdom may be visible to all the world. Dying you destroyed our death, / rising you restored our life. Come, Lord Jesus!

LEADER Lord Jesus Crucified.

PEOPLE Have mercy on us!

## ✝ Concluding Prayer

LEADER AND PEOPLE: Crucified Savior, accept this short meditation on your passion and death / as a sign of my love and gratitude. You sent your Holy Spirit / as your first gift to those who believe. Help me to welcome the Spirit into my life, / so that I may follow in your footsteps / and the victory of your resurrection may grow in me. Together with my fellow believers, / let me come frequently to the table of the Lord, / and receive your most holy body and blood. I ask you to bless the good resolutions I have made.

Jesus, for you I live;

Jesus, for you I die;

Jesus, I am yours in life and in death. Amen.

