

Everyone's Way Of the Cross

INTRODUCTION

CHRIST SPEAKS:

These fourteen steps
that you are now about to walk
you do not take alone.

I walk with you.

Though you are you,
and I am I,
yet we are truly one –
one Christ.

And therefore,
my way of the cross
two thousand years ago
and your “way” now
are also one.

But note this difference.
My life was incomplete until I
crowned it by my death.
Your fourteen steps
will only be complete
when you have crowned them
by your life.

STATION 1

JESUS IS CONDEMED

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

In Pilate's hands, my other self,
I see my Father's will.
Though Pilate is unjust,
he is the lawful governor
and he has power over me.

And so the Son of God obeys.

If I can bow to Pilate's rule
because this is my Father's will,
can you refuse obedience
to those whom I place over you?

I REPLY:

My Jesus, Lord
Obedience cost you your life.
For me,
It costs an act of will – no more –
And yet how hard it is for me to bend.

Remove the blinders from my eyes
that I may see that it is you whom I obey
in all who govern me.

Lord, it is you.

“At the cross her station keeping, Mary stood in sorrow weeping, When her Son was crucified.”

STATION 2

JESUS TAKES HIS CROSS

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

This cross, this chunk of tree,
Is what my Father chose for me.

The crosses you must bear
are largely products of your daily life.
And yet my Father chose them, too, for you.
Receive them from his hands.

Take heart, my other self,
I will not let your burdens grow
one ounce too heavy for your strength.

I REPLY:

My Jesus, Lord,
I take my daily cross.
I welcome the monotony that often marks my day,
discomforts of all kinds, the summer's heat, the winter's cold,
my disappointments, tensions, setbacks, cares.

Remind me often that in carrying my cross,
I carry yours with you.
And though I bear a sliver only of your cross,
you carry all of mine, except a sliver in return.

“While she waited in her anguish, Seeing Christ in torment languish, Bitter sorrow pierced her heart.”

STATION 3

JESUS FALLS

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

The God who made the universe,
and holds it in existence by his will alone,
becomes a man
too weak to bear a piece of timber's weight.

How human in his weakness is the Son of God.
My Father willed it thus.
I could not be your model otherwise.

If you would be my other self,
You also must accept without complaint your human frailties.

I REPLY:

Lord Jesus, how can I refuse?

I willingly accept my weaknesses,
my irritations and my moods, my headaches and fatigue,
all my defects of body, mind, and soul.

Because they are your will for me, these "handicaps" of my humanity,
I gladly suffer them.

Make me content with all my discontents,
but give me strength to struggle after you.

"With what pain and desolation, With what noble resignation, Mary watched her dying Son."

STATION 4

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

My mother sees me whipped,
She sees me kicked and driven like a beast.
She counts my every wound.
But though her soul cries out in agony,
no protest or complaint escapes her lips
or even enters her thoughts.

She shares my martyrdom – and I share hers.
We hide no pain, no sorrow, from each other's eyes.
This is my Father's will.

I REPLY:

My Jesus, Lord,
I know what you are telling me.
To watch the pain of those we love is harder than to bear our own.

To carry my cross after you, I too, must stand and watch
the sufferings of my dear ones – the heartaches, sickness,
and grief of those I love.

And I must let them watch mine, too.

I do believe – for those who love you all things work together unto good.

***“Ever patient in her yearning, Though her tear filled eyes were burning,
Mary gazed upon her Son.”***

STATION 5

SIMON HELPS JESUS

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

My strength is gone;

I can no longer bear the cross alone.

And so the legionnaires make Simon give me aid.

This Simon is like you, my other self.

Give me your strength.

Each time you lift some burden from another's back,

You lift as with your very hand

the cross's awful weight that crushes me.

I REPLY:

Lord, make me realize that every time I wipe a dish,

pick up an object off the floor, assist a child in some

small task, or give another preference in traffic or

the store; each time I feed the hungry, clothe the naked,

teach the ignorant, or lend my hand in any way –

it matters not to whom – my name is Simon.

And the kindness I extend to them I really give to you,

“Who, that sorrow contemplating, On that passion meditating, Would not share the Virgin's grief?”

STATION 6

VERONICA HELPS JESUS

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

Can you be brave enough, my other self,
to wipe my bloody face?

Where is my face, you ask?

At home whenever eyes fill up with tears,
at work when tensions rise, on the playgrounds,
in the slums, the courts, the hospitals, the jails –
wherever suffering exists – my face is there.
And there I look for you to wipe away my blood and tears.

I REPLY:

Lord, what you ask is hard.

It calls for courage and self-sacrifice, and I am weak.

Please, give me strength.

Don't let me run away because of fear.

Lord, live in me and act in me and love in me.

And not in me alone – in all of us – so that we may reveal no more
your bloody but your glorious face on earth.

***“Christ she saw for our salvation, Scourged with cruel acclamation, bruised
and beaten by the rod.”***

STATION 7

JESUS FALLS AGAIN

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

This seventh step, my other self, is one that tests your will.
From this fall learn to persevere in doing good.

The time will come when all your efforts seem to fail
and you will think, "I can't go on."

Then turn to me, my heavy-laden one, and I will give you rest.

Trust me and carry on.

I REPLY:

Give me your courage, Lord.

When failure presses heavily on me and I am desolate, stretch out
your hand to lift me up.

I know I must not cease, but persevere in doing good.

But help me, Lord.

Alone there's nothing I can do.

With you, I can do anything you ask.

I will.

***"Christ she saw with life-blood failing, All her anguish unavailing, Saw him
breathe his very last."***

STATION 8

JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

How often had I longed to take the children of Jerusalem
and gather them to me.
But they refused.

But now these women weep for me and my heart mourns for them –
mourns for their sorrows that will come.

I comfort those who seek to solace me.

How gentle can you be, my other self? How kind?

I REPLY:

My Jesus your compassion in your passion is beyond compare.

Lord teach me, help me learn. When I would snap at those
who hurt me with their ridicule, those who misunderstand,
or hinder me with some misguided helpfulness,
those who intrude upon my privacy –
then help me curb my tongue.

May gentleness become my cloak.

Lord make me kind like you.

“Mary, fount of love’s devotion, Let me share with true emotion, All the sorrow you endured.”

STATION 9

THE THIRD FALL

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

Completely drained of strength I lie, collapsed, upon the cobblestones.

My body cannot move.

No blows, no kicks, can rouse it up.

And yet my will is mine. And so is yours.

Know this, my other self, your body may be broken,

but no force on earth and none in hell can take away your will.

Your will is yours.

I REPLY:

My Lord, I see you take a moment's rest

then rise and stagger on.

So I can do because my will is mine.

When all my strength is gone and guilt and self-reproach

press me to earth and seem to hold me fast,

protect me from the sin of Judas – save me from despair!

Lord, never let me feel that any sin of mine is greater than your love.

No matter what my past has been I can begin anew.

“Virgin, ever interceding, Hear me in my fervent pleading: Fire me with your love of Christ.”

STATION 10

JESUS IS STRIPPED

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

Behold, my other self,
the poorest king who ever lived.
Before my creatures I stand stripped.
The cross – my deathbed –
even this is not my own.

Yet who has ever been so rich?

Possessing nothing, I own all – my Father's love.

If you, too, would own everything,
be not solicitous about your food, your clothes, your life.

I REPLY:

My Lord, I offer you my all –
whatever I possess, and more, myself.

Detach me from the craving prestige, position, wealth.

Root out of me all trace of envy of my neighbor who has more than I.
Release me from the vice of pride, my longing to exalt myself,
And lead me to the lowest place.

May I be poor in spirit, Lord, so that I can be rich in you.

***“Mother, may this prayer be granted, That Christ's love may be implanted,
In the depth of my poor soul.”***

STATION 11

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

Can you imagine what a crucifixion is?

My executioners stretch my arms;
they hold my hand and wrist against the wood
and press the nail until it stabs my flesh.
Then, with one heavy hammer smash,
they drive it through – and pain bursts like a bomb
of fire in my brain.

They seize the other arm; and agony again explodes.

Then raising up my knees so that my feet are flat
against the wood, they hammer them fast, too.

I REPLY:

My God, I look at you and think: Is my soul worth this much?

What can I give you in return?

I here and now accept for all my life whatever sickness,
Torment, agony may come. To every cross I touch my lips.

O blessed cross that lets me be – with you –
a co-redeemer of humanity.

“At the cross, your sorrow sharing, All your grief and torment bearing, Let me stand and mourn with you.”

STATION 12

JESUS DIES

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

The cross becomes a pulpit now – “Forgive them, Father ...
You will be with me in Paradise ...
There is your mother ... There is your Son ...
I thirst ... It is complete.”

To speak I have to raise myself by pressing on my wrists and feet,
and every move engulfs me in new waves of agony.

And then, when I have borne enough,
have emptied my humanity,
I let my mortal life depart.

(GENUFLECT)

I REPLY:

My Jesus, God, what can I say or do?

I offer you my death with all its pains, accepting now
the time and kind of death in store for me.
Not by a single instant would I lengthen my life's span.

I offer you my death for my own sins
and for those of all humanity.

My God! My God! Forsake us not.
We know not what we do.

***“Fairest maid of all creation, Queen of hope and consolation, Let me feel
your grief sublime.”***

STATION 13

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

The sacrifice is done.

Yes, my Mass is complete; but not my mother's and not yours, my other self.

My mother still must cradle in her arms
the lifeless body of the son she bore.
You, too, must part from those you love,
And grief will come to you.

In your bereavements think of this:
A multitude of souls were saved
by Mary's sharing in my Calvary.
Your grief can also be the price of souls.

I REPLY:

I beg you, Lord, help me to accept the partings that
must come – from friends who go away,
my children leaving home, and most of all,
my dear ones when you shall call them to yourself.

Then, give me grace to say:
“As it has pleased you, Lord, to take them home,
I bow to your most holy will.
And if by just one word I might restore their lives against
Your will, I would not speak.” Grant them eternal joy.

“ Virgin, in your love befriend me, At the Judgment Day defend me, Help me by your constant prayer.”

STATION 14

JESUS IS BURIED

V: We adore you O Christ and we praise you!

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

CHRIST SPEAKS:

So ends my mortal life.

But now another life begins for Mary,
and for Magdalen, For Peter,
for John, and you.

My life's work is done.

My work within and through my church must now commence.

I look to you, my other self.

Day in, day out, from this time forth,
Be my apostle – victim - saint

I REPLY:

My Jesus, Lord, you know my spirit is as willing
as my flesh is weak.

The teaching you could not impart, the sufferings you could not bear,
the works of love you could not do in your short life on earth,
let me impart, and bear, and do through you.

But I am nothing, Lord, Help me!

“Savior, when my life shall leave me, Through my mother’s prayers receive me, With the fruits of victory.”

CONCLUSION

CHRIST SPEAKS:

I told you at the start, my other self,
my life was not complete
until I crowned it by my death.
Your “way” is not complete
unless you crown it by your life.

Accept each moment as it comes to you,
with faith and trust
that all that happens has my mark on it.
A simple fiat, this is all it takes;
A breathing in your heart,
“I will it, Lord.”

So seek me not in far off places.
I am close at hand.
Your workbench, office, kitchen,
These are altars where you offer love.
And I am with you there.

Go now! Take up your cross
and with your life
complete your way.

“ Let me to your love be taken, Let my soul in death awaken, To the joys of Paradise.”

