

# The Holy Exercise Of the Way of the Cross

according to St. Anthony Mary Claret

taken from his book *The Straight and Sure Path to Go to Heaven*

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## NOTICE

The greatest and best of so many devotions practices christian piety, the easiest and least costly way to gain for oneself the inappreciable treasure of the innumerable indulgences destined for those who visit personally in Jerusalem the stations and way that lead Jesus to Calvary. Taking on his already weakened shoulders the wood of the cross and placed in reach of every class of persons without distinction of ages, sexes and conditions, for the most simple reason of not having to abandon for it not their houses, nor their families, nor their jobs, sufficing to practice it with the spirit of faith and compunction; such is the exercise called *Via Crucis*, by express concession and confirmation of Clement XII.

So that all Christians resolve to look at this devotion as an excellent incentive to the love that we ought to have to Jesus who did and suffered so much for us, will it not be enough to remind ourselves that the most holy virgin Mary started it in Jerusalem already on the same day of the greatest catastrophe that mortals have witnessed, and later by having left the victim of sin and of love, her dear Son, in the sepulcher, continuing it afterwards the rest of her life, as Sr. Maria de Agreda affirms? Will the knowledge not oblige us to it, the knowledge that as Ludovico Blosio assures, Christ said to one of his servants these words: *There is no thing so according to my pleasure than seeing that souls meditate with devotion and humility on my passion?* May whichever Christian take it then, with determination, and he will see how certain it is that with it all goods will come to him.

If many are those who come together to do it, it will be [often] the case that a priest goes with them but it not being so, may they ask with fervor to God that he deigns to grant them the spirit of fervor and devotion so to be able to renew the memory of how much his divine Majesty suffered for us in so painful a journey.

Because this practice is so easy, I promise wholeheartedly good christian that, at least on Sundays, as consecrated to God, one will see it as an excellent way to sanctify the feast, as it is already done in various populations; although it would be better that they would walk it also on Fridays and even better every day. The universally renowned blessed Leonardo de Puerto-Mauricio in the course of his missions arrived at a country in which each day almost all the inhabitants walked the *Via-Crucis*. And, may God be praised for it! He found that by this way they were conserved clean from sin, they proceeded in the way of virtue and they stored up for the glory a great fortune of merits. Will it be then in view of this someone does not practice it? And the same blessed says, that the devout meditation on the passion of the Redeemer is more useful and meritorious than fasting on bread and water, than mortification unto shedding blood with disciplines and than praying all the psalms of David. I believe then, and I hope that there will not be anyone who does not consecrate to this at least a little while every day, for the reason that it is as meritorious as easy and put within reach of all: therefore, even when one may be working and without leaving from one's own spot, it can be practiced.

Be advised that there are some priests who by concession of the Holiness of Gregory XVI have faculty to bless images of Christ, before which all the stations can be done and gain the indulgences for those who physically or morally find themselves impeded from visiting the places or churches indicated to the effect.

The prayers that are put in each station are not so necessary that if they are not prayed, they prevent from gaining the indulgences; they have been put only to facilitate this exercise to every class of people; it is enough then that in each station it is meditated what Christ suffered in it, that is what principally is required.

As the first and essential condition to gain these and other indulgences is to be in the state of grace of God, before beginning this and other similar exercises, make sure every Christian prepares himself with a fervent act of contrition; and he will be able to pray it either according to his devotion or as it is put as following; and at the end the offering preceding always the sign of the cross.

## INTRODUCTION

*Make the sign of the cross saying:*

By the sign † of the holy cross, from our † enemies free us, oh Lord our † God. In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit. Amen Jesus.

## ACT OF CONTRITION

My Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, my Creator, Father and Redeemer, in whom I believe and hope, and whom I love over all things, only for being Thou who art immense goodness, infinitely merciful, and by the most precious blood that thou shed for my love on the holy tree of the cross, I say, that I regret having offended thee: I regret, my God, that I don't regret more: and even if there was not a hell to fear nor a glory for which to hope, only for being Thou who art, I repent, I abhor my guilts, and I regret having sinned; and I would want, Lord, that all the evils would come over me and even death, rather than offend thee again: I resolve, Lord, to never sin again, and to separate myself from the occasions of offending thee; and I offer thee my life, deeds and work in satisfaction for all my sins; and just as I ask it, so I hope in thy goodness and infinite mercy that thou wilt pardon me them and wilt give me the grace to amend myself and to persevere unto the end of my life in thy friendship and grace. Amen.

## OFFERING

Sovereign Lord, with all submissiveness, I offer to thy divine Majesty everything I may do, meditate and pray in this holy exercise so that it may be pleasing to thee and be to me some merit; principally for the intention, ends and motives that thy Vicars on the earth have had, in granting all the indulgences that I am trying to gain by thy infinite goodness; and as well as in remission for my sins and for the pains that I merit by them and for the suffrage of the souls of purgatory especially those of my particular obligations, according to the order of charity or of justice that I can and ought, or as it may be more agreeable to thy divine Majesty. Amen.

## FIRST STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this first station that it is the house of Pilate, as after the Redeemer of the world having been cruelly scourged, that iniquitous judge pronounced the sentence of death against the Author of Life; and here you shall say the following prayer:

O most gentle Jesus, who with infinite humility and submissiveness wanted to suffer like a vile slave, bound with strong chains in the presence of the sacrilegious people, and to keep the unjust sentence of death that that iniquitous judge pronounced against thy divine Majesty; grant me Lord, that with thy example I may mortify my pride; and suffering with humility the affronts of this life, I may be free from the chains of sins with which my souls is bound, so that free of them by thy grace I may go to enjoy thee in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

*This part from the Our Father until the end, is repeated in each station.*

## SECOND STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this second station that it is the place in which they burdened the weak and delicate shoulders of Jesus with the heavy weight of the cross; and here is said the following prayer:

O supreme King of glory, who suffered being delivered to the will of the Jews, so to be cruelly tormented and hearing the furious shouts of thine enemies, thou accepted the heavy weight of the cross, I ask thee, Lord, that with thy grace, I may resign my will to thine, and may carry joyfully the cross of penance, so that doing it truly of my sins, I may arrive to enjoy thee for ever in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

## THIRD STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this third station, that it is the place in which Jesus walking with the cross on his back crying and sighing, fell to the ground under the enormous weight of it; and here direct him the following prayer:

O most loving Jesus, who tired and fatigued with the cross, fell to the ground overwhelmed by its most heavy weight, so that we may know the gravity of our guilts, figured in that wood; I ask thy divine clemency that thou give me the grace with which I may arise from guilt and firm and constant in the fulfillment of thy commandments, I may not cease ever to mortify my body and may my employment be [time be spent] to love thee always in this life so to enjoy after the gentle fruits of the most holy cross in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### FOURTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this fourth station, that this is the place in which, our beloved Jesus, walking with the cross on his back, encountered his most holy Mother sad and afflicted, and those two fine lovers seeing each other, felt their hearts ran through with sorrow and bitterness; and here say the following prayer:

O sovereign Lady and Mother, the most sad and afflicted of women, for the cruel sword of sorrow that ran through thy heart seeing Jesus thy son, the light of his eyes eclipsed, his face disfigured, tormented by the heavy load of the cross and made the disgrace of men: obtain for me most afflicted Mother, now that my guilts were the cause of so many pains and sorrows, that I may weep them bitterly, so that purified with confession and penance, I may be admitted in thy company in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### FIFTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this fifth station, that this is the place in which the Jews made Simon of Cyrene help Jesus carry the cross, not out of mercy that they had for his Majesty but for fear that he would die on the way oppressed by the cross and hear pray to him the following prayer:

Oh most loving Jesus, who for love of me carried the very heavy cross through the way of Calvary, and wanted that in the person of Cyrene we would help thee carry it, so that in this way we would participate in the treasures of the cross; give me the grace, Lord, so that with much devotion and fervent spirit I may embrace the cross of self-denial and quit my vicious customs, so that by so following thy steps, I may obtain the eternal joys of glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### SIXTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this sixth station, that it is the place in which that holy woman named Veronica met with our most merciful Jesus, who seeing his Majesty so fatigued, and his face so disfigured with the sweat, dust, spit and beatings he received, was moved to mercy and compassion, and removing her headdress cleaned him with it; and here pray the following prayer:

Oh most beautiful Jesus, who having thy face disfigured with the filthy spit, that devout woman cleaned thee with her headdress, leaving stamped on it thy most holy face; I ask thee, Lord, that thou stamp in my soul the image of thy face, and give me thy favor and grace so to conserve it always with works of perfect charity, so that in this way I may present it in thy eternal glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### SEVENTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this seventh station, that it is the place of the judgment gate in where for a second time the Lord fell to the earth, for being already totally collapsed and injured by the enormous weight of the cross; and here pray to him the following prayer:

Oh most holy Jesus, by that great fatigue that thy delicate body felt, that not able to resist the most heavy weight of the cross, thou wert made to fall to the earth for a second time: I ask thee, Spouse of my soul, that thou illuminate my understanding, so that I may know the immense weight of the sins I commit, and that thou give me the grace so that they don't drag me to an eternal pain, before the desire to love thee, serve thee, and praise thee in this life and in glory may live always in me. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### EIGHTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this eighth station, that it is that place in which some merciful women, seeing that Jesus in spite of his innocence was taken publicly to be crucified, crying bitterly, and the Lord consoled them saying to them: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not cry for my death, cry for you and for your children;” and here pray the following prayer:

Oh divine and sovereign Master, who walking the way of Calvary, in the middle of that immensity of pain, taught those merciful women that would be hurt by thy sorrows, that they would weep for themselves and for their guilts; grant me, Lord, that with fervent tears of contrition I may cry my sins, and with them my soul may be purified from the many in which it has incurred with sinful works so that with my spirit purified, I may be always in thy friendship and grace and may enjoy thee eternally in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### NINTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this ninth station, that it is the place in which the Lord fell for a third time to the earth by the great weight of the cross, even to knocking his holy mouth on it; and that straining himself to arise, it was not possible for him, before he fell again; and here say the following prayer:

Oh most benign Jesus, who suffered the Jews to trample on thy holy Person, by making thee stumble for a third time to the earth; give me the grace, my Lord and God, that I may suffer the injuries of my enemies and may for thy love deny myself; so that bearing with patience the works and adversities of this life, I may arrive to enjoy thee in the delights of glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

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#### TENTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this tenth station that it is the place of mount Calvary, at which our redeemer Jesus having arrived, they removed his clothes with cruelty and gave him to drink wine mixed with gall and vinegar; and here say the following prayer.

Oh most merciful Jesus, who suffered and tolerated the sacrilegious Jews to tear off thy holy and royal clothes, with which thy wounds were renewed, being naked before all; I ask thy divine goodness that for these sorrows and pains and for how they afflicted thee by offering thee wine mixed with gall, grant me, Lord, that I may not drink the delights that mixed with the gall of guilt the world offers me; and instead naked of my own love I may pursue what he suffered for me being naked on the tree of the cross, so to see him after in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### ELEVENTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this eleventh station that it is the place in which our merciful Jesus was stretched over the cross and nailed to it in feet and hands and in which his most holy Mother and our Lady hearing the first strike of the hammer, was left anguished for the sorrow it caused her; and here pray the following prayer:

Oh most clement Lord, for that immense love that embraced thy heart, and with which thou suffered to be stretched on the cross, and thy most holy feet and hands nailed to it, I ask thee, my God, that for thy ineffable charity, may I not stretch my feet and hands to some wickedness again: rather my heart pierced with thy divine love, may I live always crucified in thy holy service by way of thy infinite mercy and grace, and may reign after with Thee in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### TWELFTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this twelfth station, that it is the place in which our lord Jesus Christ now already crucified, they let the cross fall suddenly in the hole of a rock and in which seeing him so maltreated his merciful Mother, was left submerged in a sea of sorrows, for how the sight of her beloved Son anguished her; and here pray the following prayer:

Oh divine Jesus, spouse of our souls, who nailed on the holy cross between two thieves was lifted and raised to the sight of all the world and suffered atrocious torments; I ask thee, Lord, to cure the evils of my soul, and that I, despising the world with its vanities and madness, my spirit may be lifted to the contemplation of eternal and divine things and may only love thee, and for love of thee abhor the world and myself until seeing thee in glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### THIRTEENTH STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this thirteenth station that it is the place in which the Queen of the angels received in her arms the body of her most loving son our savior, the deceased Jesus, when Joseph and Nicodemus took him down from the cross; and here pray the following prayer:

Oh sovereign Queen of the angels and most sorrowful Mother, for that immensity of pain that inundated thy heart when from the arms of the cross thou received in thine [arms] thy most holy Son, dead to the violence of so many torments; I ask thee, most merciful Mother, that thou deign to receive in thy arms my soul when it is separated from the body, and to present it to thy most holy Son, so that remembering what his divine Majesty and Thou, Lady suffered for it, he may judge it not as my guilts



deserve, but as the infinite merits of his blood shed for love of me, and those of thy immense pains, so to afterwards accompany thee in the joys of the glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*

#### LAST STATION

Consider, Christian soul, in this last station, that it is the place of the burial of Christ our savior; and here say the following prayer:

Oh divine and sovereign Redeemer of our souls, who with infinite love wanted to suffer for all of them so many pains and torments, even to die disgracefully on a cross between two thieves so to erase with thy divine blood the sentence of death that was already written for our guilts, and finally to be buried so afterwards to resurrect to immortal life, we ask thee, Lord, that by the infinite merits of thy most holy passion, death and burial, thou mayest make that all the delights of this world may be buried for us in perpetual oblivion, and the memory of thy most holy passion and death, and the desire to love thee and serve thee in this life may be always alive in our hearts, so that after [this life] to be able to resurrect in thy eternal glory. Amen.

*Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and then say:*

Lord, I sinned; I regret having offended thee; mercy my most sweet Jesus: I resolve with thy grace to never sin again. Amen.

*Then kiss the earth with the intention of adoring Christ our lord with this action of humility saying:*

We adore you, Christ and we bless you, because by the holy cross, you redeemed me a sinner and all the world.

Blessed and praised may be the passion and death of our lord Jesus Christ and the pure and immaculate conception of the most holy Mary, our lady and mother, conceived without original sin in the first instance of her being: *and all respond: Amen.*