

## Way of the Cross for Priests

(Leader and Leader 2 could be the same person or two different people)

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

All: Amen.

### **Opening Prayer**

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, You entrusted Your Church to the apostles, Your first priests, and willed that they and those who would follow after them should take up their Cross and follow You. To this day, this sacrificial nature of Your Holy Priesthood remains unchanged.

Leader 2: Grant, O Lord, that, through the merits of these prayers and meditations on Your passion and death, Your priests may come to love You more deeply and follow You more faithfully.

We ask this through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, the first to make this Way of the Cross with You.

All: Amen.

### **The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Jesus stood before Pilate an innocent man yet he was condemned to death. The pure Lamb of God is led to the slaughter and remained silent. He is intent on the mission and does not count the cost.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, graciously help our priests to avoid false judgments that are hurtful to your Church. Grant that they may never wash their hands of innocence, as did Pilate. We ask for the gift of courage for all priests. Please grant priests the grace to be faithful to their lofty mission.

### **The Second Station: Jesus Carries his Cross**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Jesus, already tired and broken, picked up the heavy cross to begin the journey to Calvary. Love compels him. The weight of love is heavier than the cross that tears into his shoulder.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please help our priests when they are exhausted and overwhelmed by life and by their respective duties. For all priests, we ask for the gift of personal holiness that they may radiate the love the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Grant that love and mercy flow freely from the heart of priests.

### **The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Jesus falls down under the weight of the heavy cross, yet he finds the strength to get up and begin again. His Heart is fixed on the goal but his broken body is in agony. Trembling, he perseveres, ever faithful to his yes.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, in your mercy please help our priests to keep going even when they feel they can't take another step because the weight of suffering presses upon us. May their yes to follow Christ be unwavering. For all priests we ask for the gift of perseverance, patience and prayer.

**The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his Mother**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Mother Mary was always there for her Son Jesus, especially in His darkest hour. Her maternal love strengthened Him each step of the way. Mother and Son, their two hearts beat in unison always.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please help our priests to accompany others in their darkest hour. For all priests, we implore the gift of compassion, courage and patience toward all suffering people. Please grant that Mary strengthen priests in their hours of suffering too.

**The Fifth Station: Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Simon was just one of the crowd, a man observing the horror and mystery that unfolded before him. He did not plan to become part of the drama that day. He was pressed into service. Imagine the transformation of his heart drawn into such an intimate encounter with the Suffering Servant.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, strengthen our priests to be ready and willing to help anyone who is struggling and in need of assistance. Please heal them of fear or indifference to the poor and grant them the grace of encountering Jesus in his suffering people. For priests, we pray for the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

**The Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

At the time when Jesus was suffering intensely, the attentive Veronica reached out to the Lord, offering Him an act of kindness. Veronica consoled His aching heart. In the midst of the maddening scene, love prevailed.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please help our priests to become vessels of divine mercy. We pray that priests are always willing to engage in acts of mercy, especially for people who are faltering on the way. In the midst of life's turmoil, grant that love prevail always.

**The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Jesus falls again but this time even harder. He gets up again, but it is more difficult because his physical strength is waning. Yet, He valiantly carries on. His Sacred Heart is engulfed in the vehemence of divine love. He came to save sinners.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please bless our priests with hope that counteracts discouragement. All people fall and sometimes very often. Repeatedly getting up and starting again is difficult. For all priests, we pray for the grace of hope and joy that strengthens. Grant hearts to be engulfed in the passion of divine love.

### **The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

In the midst of His excruciating pain, Jesus makes the effort to comfort the women who were weeping along the road to Calvary. They are the only ones with whom He speaks along the Via Dolorosa. He exercised a special esteem for all the women He met.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please aid our priests not to be so absorbed in personal suffering that they miss the suffering of others in our midst. For all priests we pray that they never walk past those who are weeping along the wayside. Help priests to offer solace and speak words of encouragement whenever needed.

### **The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

The end of the journey is near and Jesus falls again. He struggles to get up and continues one last time. The finish line is in sight but the flesh is so very weak. Yet, He will drink the chalice.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please help our priests to pick up our heavy crosses and to persevere when our struggles weigh us down. For all priests, we ask for the grace of complete dependence upon Christ's strength, and not their own. Please grant the clergy increasing trust in divine providence.

### **The Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of his Garments**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Jesus had nothing, not even his clothes—he was stripped of everything in the end. He willed it for love of you and me. Until the end of time, we will gaze upon the One who allowed himself to be stripped naked.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, your Son's nakedness covered ours. His Blood became our imperishable garment of salvation. We hurt when we are stripped of anything but Jesus was stripped of

everything. For all priests we beg for the grace of spiritual poverty, simplicity, purity and hearts willing to be vulnerable.

**The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

The pain intensified with each blow of the hammer to the nail that pierced His sacred hands and feet. Each blow is a vivid reminder of the sin of the world that weighs upon Him. He took it upon Himself because He loves. This is the fire He longed to start.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, you so loved the world that you sent your Son Jesus to save us. How can we possibly thank you for such an ineffable Gift? Graciously help our priests to be lifted up with Jesus onto the wooden bed of divine love with arms outstretched to embrace the whole Church with mercy.

**The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

It is finished. He suffered inestimable, complete torment on the cross. He surrendered all: "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit." Yet, he extended mercy, full pardon, and forgiveness to those who condemned and crucified Him. He even promised Paradise to the "good thief" before he breathed his last.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, graciously grant our priests the grace to forgive as Christ forgives. For all priests, we implore the grace of surrender to the divine. Help them to echo the words of Jesus, "Father, Into Your hands." Guide all priests to place everything into your hands and hang onto Jesus only.

**The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

The Lord's lifeless, battered body was laid in his Mother's arms. Imagine the perfect sorrow of Mary as she embraced and kissed her Son, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. The sword of Simeon's prophecy had thoroughly pierced her Immaculate Heart. Did she despair? No! Yet, what perfect maternal sorrow and faith!

Leader 2: Eternal Father, please bless our priests with a new awareness of the inestimable value of Marian devotion and consecration. For all priests, we implore that they take Mary as their spiritual mother and consecrate their priesthood to her. Grant that priests are held in Mary's protective, maternal love.

**The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You;

All: Because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Then, the earth quaked. Silence ensues and darkness engulfs. For Jesus, the tomb was a place of transition – a place between death and new life. He was doing a new thing since nothing would ever be the same again.

Leader 2: Eternal Father, sometimes we feel lost and afraid when we are in a place between darkness and light, between death and new life. Shake us up and out of our self-made tombs so that we can become a new creation in Christ. For all priests, we implore the gift of sanctifying transformation.

### **Concluding Prayers**

Our Father,  
Hail Mary,  
Glory Be

Leader: Almighty and Eternal Father, we, Your children, lift up to You our prayers for our priests. We beg You to bless them and fill them with strength and perseverance as they take up their cross each day. Grant them to be faithful disciples of Christ the High Priest. Lead them as they lead us that we may all attain to eternal salvation. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen