

INTRODUCTION

By his Holy Cross, Jesus Christ has redeemed the world. The steps he took on the way to Calvary were not only for you or for me, but also for all humanity. The more profoundly we are able to walk these steps with our Lord, the more his passion, death, and resurrection bear fruit in our lives. Jesus' Way of the Cross inspired many early Christians to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and follow in his last steps. This practice grew into the devotion of the Stations of the Cross as we know it today. The faithful can now go to their own local church or other place of prayer and make a pilgrimage of prayer and meditation following images that recount Jesus' way to Calvary.

And yet, as Blessed Basile Moreau, the saintly founder of Holy Cross wrote:

Human life is like a great Way of the Cross. We do not have to go to the chapel or church to go through the different stations. This Way of the Cross is everywhere and we travel it every day, even in spite of ourselves and without being aware of it.

Drawing upon this conviction that we each walk the Way of the Cross in our own lives, the following fourteen stations unite the steps of ordinary people with the steps of Jesus. As we enter into their steps, we are drawn ever more fully into Christ's. The meditations and prayers of this booklet are written by members of Holy Cross religious communities from around the world whose lives and mission are rooted in the belief, *Ave Crux, Spes Unica*, "Hail the Cross, our Only Hope." Praying these stations together, we awaken to a deeper awareness of the transforming power of the Cross and the true hope it brings to us all.

OPENING PRAYER

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

All: Amen.

Leader: Lord Jesus,
by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.
As we retrace your saving steps to Calvary,
reveal to us how your Cross has become the new tree of life for all creation.
May your mother, Our Lady of Sorrows,
who walked those painful steps with you,
accompany us.
May she guide us along your way that leads through sacrifice and death to true life.
Make known in our minds and hearts the power of your Cross,
our only hope.

All: Amen.



THE FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Die

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: **Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world!**

Leader: The crowd can be fickle, loving in one breath and condemning with the next. Today's hero—whether rock star, candidate, or quarterback—rides into town amidst the din of a million delirious voices shouting hosannas of praise.



Yet with any sign of weakness, real or imagined, adulation turns to anger; sweet voices become shrill. Disappointed masses rage in judgment, often destroying the one they so recently adored.

All: Jesus, as our Messiah, you faced the weakness of human power and endured torture while offering no resistance. Pilate proclaimed your innocence, yet sent you to the slaughter. Your silent acceptance of that horrific end was the full flowering of divine love in our weary human flesh.

Lord Jesus, at times we join our voices in adulation of the false gods of our world; help us always to turn back again to you. In our own moments of suffering, may we come to witness to the same love you have revealed to us in your passion.

Leader: Hail the Cross,

All: Our only hope.