

The Way of the Cross with Saint Oscar Romero

prepared by St. James Cathedral

INTRODUCTION

**+In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26: 40-41

Jesus said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

December 16, 1979

Let's not forget, dear Christians, that the church was born of sinners. The church is holy, because it has God's Spirit giving it life; but it is sinful and it needs conversion, because we make it up - humans tending toward evil and at times perhaps with a past that shames us. But once we are converted, we try - we try! We don't follow him as yet with perfection, but the effort to follow him is what makes a true disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord,
we are about walk with your Son
on the way of his saving Passion and death.
As we follow in his footsteps,
touch our hearts,
that we may be tireless and fearless witnesses
to his Gospel of justice and peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

THE FIRST STATION: *Jesus is condemned to death*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

John 18: 37-38

Jesus answered Pilate and said, "For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

November 25, 1979

I'm deeply impressed by the moment when Christ stands alone before the world, figured in Pilate. Peter, who has said he will die if need be, flees like a coward, and Christ stands alone.

Let's not be afraid to be left alone if it's for the sake of the truth. Let's be afraid to be demagogues, coveting the people's sham flattery. Christ would rather be left alone, but able to say before Pilate, before the world: *Everyone who hears my voice belongs to the truth.*

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**God of life,
Christ is condemned
when we neglect the good we are able to do
or fail to speak the truth.
Give us the courage of Jesus
that we may hold fast to his Gospel of life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

THE SECOND STATION: *Jesus receives the cross*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 8:34-35

Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

June 19, 1977

We must learn this invitation of Christ: "Those who wish to come after me must renounce themselves." Let them renounce themselves, renounce their comforts, renounce their personal opinions, and follow only the mind of Christ, which can lead us to death but will surely also lead us to resurrection.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**God our Father,
Teach us to know the mind of Christ.
Teach us to renounce ourselves,
to take up our Cross willingly,
and to follow in the footsteps of your Son.
Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns
for ever and ever. Amen.**

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

THE THIRD STATION: *Jesus falls the first time*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:11-12

Jesus said to his disciples, “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you, falsely, because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

February 17, 1980

Christ invites us not to fear persecution. Believe me, brothers and sisters, anyone committed to the poor must suffer the same fate as the poor. And in El Salvador we know the fate of the poor: to be taken away, to be tortured, to be jailed, to be found dead.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**God of perfect peace,
you are always near to those
whom this world condemns.
Give us the strength to walk with the lost and the lonely,
that in them we may see
Jesus on his way of the cross.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

THE FOURTH STATION: *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.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:34-35

Simeon said to Mary, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

[The cry of] Mary, the sorrowing mother, before the power of Pontius Pilate, who has unjustly killed her son, is the cry of justice, of love, of peace, of what God wills, in the face of what God does not will, in the face of outrage, in the face of what should not be... This is the voice of justice, this is the voice of love, this is the cry that the Church takes up from so many wives, mothers, homes, forsaken ones, in order to say: this should not be, return these sons and daughters as the law of God, the law of the Lord, demands. This is what the church is doing: crying out against the sin that enthrones itself in history, in the life of the nation.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord our God,
Console all mothers
who carry in their hearts
the pain and suffering of their children.
May we always cry out in protest
against cruelty and injustice.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

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

THE FIFTH STATION: *Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:26

As they led Jesus away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

February 5, 1978

There is one rule by which to judge if God is near us or is far away, the rule that God's word is giving us today: Everyone concerned for the hungry, the naked, the poor, for those who have vanished in police custody, for the tortured, for prisoners, for all flesh that suffers, has God close at hand.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord God,
teach us to offer our hearts and hands
in the service of others,
of the hungry, the naked, the poor, the imprisoned,
for you wish no one to carry the cross alone.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Christ she saw, for our salvation,
Scourged with cruel acclamation,
Bruised and beaten by the rod.

THE SIXTH STATION: *Veronica wipes the face of Jesus*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:37-40

“Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

February 5, 1978

The guarantee of one's prayer is not in saying a lot of words. The guarantee of one's petition is very easy to know: How do I treat the poor? Because that is where God is. The degree to which you approach them, and the love with which you approach them, or the scorn with which you approach them-- that is how you approach your God. What you do to them, you do to God. The way you look at them is the way you look at God.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**God our Father,
Teach us to see the face of Christ
in the least of our brothers and sisters:
May we welcome all who come to us in need
as readily as we would welcome Jesus himself.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.**

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

THE SEVENTH STATION: *Jesus falls the second time*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 41:8-10

**My enemies whisper together against me.
They all weigh up the evil which is on me:
"Some deadly thing has fastened upon him,
he will not rise again from where he lies."
Thus even my friend, in whom I trusted,
who ate my bread, has turned against me.**

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

December 18, 1977

When we struggle for human rights, for freedom, for dignity, when we feel that it is a ministry of the church to concern itself for those who are hungry, for those who are deprived, we are not departing from God's promise. He comes to free us from sin, and the church knows that sin's consequences are all such injustices and abuses. The church knows it is saving the world when it undertakes to speak also of such things.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Gracious God,
give hope to all who long for justice,
who struggle for human rights, dignity, and freedom.
May we work for peace
and so share in the saving work of Jesus, your Son,
who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.**

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

THE EIGHTH STATION: *Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 23: 27-28

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children."

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

The Church has placed itself at the side of the poor and has undertaken their defense. The church cannot do otherwise, for it remembers that Jesus had pity on the multitude. But by defending the poor it has entered into serious conflict with the powerful who belong to the moneyed oligarchies and with the political and military authorities of the state. This defense of the poor in a world deep in conflict has occasioned something new in the recent history of our church: persecution.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord God,
the women of Jerusalem grieved for Jesus
and he grieved for them.
May we always reach out to the poor and the suffering
with compassion;
may we always place ourselves at the side of the poor.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

THE NINTH STATION: Jesus falls the third time

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 53: 4-5

It was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

September 25, 1977

Let us not tire of preaching love; it is the force that will overcome the world. Let us not tire of preaching love. Though we see that waves of violence succeed in drowning the fire of Christian love, love must win out; it is the only thing that can.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord God,
how hard it must have been for Jesus
to struggle to his feet after a third fall.
Yet it was love that drove him on--
love for you, for all creation, and for each one of us:
love that flowed from the peace in his heart.
Give us a share in that peace and love.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Mother, may this prayer be granted:
That Christ's love may be implanted
In the depths of my poor soul.

THE TENTH STATION: *Jesus is stripped of his clothing*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 22: 16-19

Many dogs have surrounded me;
a band of the wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet
and lay me in the dust of death....
These people stare at me and gloat;
they divide my clothing among them.
They cast lots for my robe.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

December 1, 1977

Brothers and sisters, at this moment Christ the Redeemer needs human suffering, needs the pain of those holy mothers who suffer, needs the anguish of prisoners who suffer tortures. Blessed are those who are chosen to continue on earth the great injustice suffered by Christ, who keeps on saving the world. Let us turn that injustice into redemption.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord our God,
teach us to see in the sufferings of our lives
a sharing in your saving work,
turning injustice into redemption.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

THE ELEVENTH STATION: *Jesus is nailed to the cross*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15: 25-27

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

November 20, 1977

The church is calling to sanity, to understanding, to love. It does not believe in violent solutions. The church believes in only one violence, that of Christ, who was nailed to the cross, taking upon himself all the violence of hatred and misunderstanding, so that we humans might forgive one another, love one another, feel ourselves brothers and sisters.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Gracious God,
We implore your mercy:
bestow the gift of peace on our troubled world.
May we who look upon the image of Christ crucified
work to put an end to hatred,
violence, and injustice.
We pray in the name of Christ our Lord.**

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

THE TWELFTH STATION: *Jesus dies on the cross*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 15: 33-37

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ...[Then] Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

March 16, 1980

Nothing is so important to the church as human life, as the human person, above all, the person of the poor and the oppressed who, besides being human beings, are also divine beings, since Jesus said that whatever is done to them he takes as done to him. That bloodshed, those deaths, are beyond all politics. They touch the very heart of God.

PRAYER

Our Father....

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

THE THIRTEENTH STATION: *Jesus is taken down from the cross*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 16: 42-45

When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.... [And Pilate] gave the body to Joseph.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

December 1, 1977

Even when all despaired at the hour when Christ was dying on the cross, Mary, serene, awaited the hour of the resurrection. Mary is the symbol of the people who suffer oppression and injustice. Theirs is the calm suffering that awaits the resurrection. It is Christian suffering, the suffering of the church, which does not accept the present injustices but awaits without rancor the moment when the Risen One will return to give us the redemption we await.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord, as we recall the compassionate love and unfailing hope of the Mother of your Son, may we make up in our own lives whatever is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the good of the Church and the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Savior, when my life shall leave me,
Through your mother's prayers receive me
With the fruits of victory.

THE FOURTEENTH STATION: *Jesus is laid in the tomb*

V/. **We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.**

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 16: 46-47

Having bought a linen cloth, Joseph took Jesus down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses watched where he was laid.

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

December 1, 1977

Brothers and sisters, the church is not mistaken. The church awaits with certainty the hour of redemption. Those who have disappeared will reappear. The sorrows of the mothers will be turned into Easter. The affliction of this people, which knows not where it goes amid so much affliction, will become Easter resurrection if we join ourselves to Christ and hope in him.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

**Lord God, teach us to wait.
Give us the faith and hope
of the disciples who placed your Son's body in the tomb.
In the midst of affliction,
may we look forward with certainty
to the hour of redemption.
In your name, we pray. Amen.**

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

THE FIFTEENTH STATION: *Jesus is raised from the dead*

V/. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R/. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28: 1-7

As the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

MEDITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

March 23, 1980

Easter is a shout of victory! No one can extinguish that life that Christ resurrected. Not even death and hatred against him and his Church will be able to overcome it. he is the victor! Just as he will flourish in an Easter of unending resurrection, so it is necessary also to accompany him in Lent, in a Holy Week that is cross, sacrifice, martyrdom... Happy are those who do not become offended by his cross!

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord our God, by our baptism
you have given us a share
in your Son's death and resurrection.
Teach us to keep on rising from the dead,
leaving behind the old life
of selfishness and sin,
and living the new life of love and service.
We pray in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

The words of Archbishop Romero are from *The Violence of Love*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998 and *Voice of the Voiceless: The Four Pastoral Letters and Other Statements*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.