The Stations of the Cross

FOURTEEN PAINTINGS BY GIANDOMENICO TIEPOLO
WITH THE PRAYERS OF SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

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How to Pray the Stations

The Stations of the Cross follow Jesus on his last road, from Pilate's court to the tomb, in fourteen halts. The devotion was born in Jerusalem, where pilgrims walked the streets of the Passion, and the Franciscans, keepers of the holy places since 1342, carried it to churches all over the world.

In church, walk from one station to the next; at home, turn one page for each. At every station, say the versicle and its response, read the short meditation that begins "Consider", then the prayer, and end with an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The whole Way takes about half an hour, alone or together, one voice reading and the others answering.

Catholics pray the Stations on the Fridays of Lent and on Good Friday, but any day of the year will do.

The prayers are those of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the method most parishes still use, in the English of the 1889 *Manual of Prayers*. The paintings are the fourteen stations Giandomenico Tiepolo painted at the age of twenty for the Oratory of the Crucifix in the church of San Polo, Venice, between 1747 and 1749.

BEFORE THE FIRST STATION

Make an act of contrition, then say:

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee I repent sincerely for having ever offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou goest to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station I, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the Cross.

My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate; no, it was my sins that condemned Thee to die. I beseech Thee, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in her journey towards eternity. I love Thee, my beloved Jesus; I love Thee more than myself; I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

OUR FATHER · HAIL MARY · GLORY BE TO THE FATHER

SECOND STATION

Jesus Takes Up His Cross

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station II, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how Jesus, in making this journey with the Cross on His shoulders, thought of us, and for us offered to His Father the death He was about to undergo.

My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations Thou hast destined for me until death. I beseech Thee, by the merits of the pain Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy Cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station III, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider this first fall of Jesus under His Cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, His head crowned with thorns, and He had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that He could scarcely walk, and yet He had to carry this great load upon His shoulders. The soldiers struck Him rudely, and thus He fell several times in His journey.

My Jesus, it is not the weight of the Cross, but of my sins, which has made Thee suffer so much pain. Ah! by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love Thee, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Mother

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station IV, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow that Thou didst experience in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Thy most holy Mother. And thou, my Queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me, by thy intercession, a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of thy Son. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station V, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how the soldiers, seeing that at each step Jesus from weakness was on the point of expiring, and fearing that He would die on the way, when they wished Him to die the ignominious death of the Cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the Cross behind our Lord.

My most beloved Jesus, I will not refuse the Cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it. I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains which may accompany it; I unite it to Thy death, I offer it to Thee. Thou hast died for love of me; I will die for love of Thee, and to please Thee. Help me by Thy grace. I love Thee, Jesus my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station VI, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and His face bathed in sweat and blood, presented Him with a towel, with which He wiped His adorable face, leaving on it the impression of His holy countenance.

My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas! my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in Baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins. Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy passion, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Second Time

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station VII, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the Cross, a fall which renews the pain of all the wounds of the head and members of our afflicted Lord.

My most gentle Jesus, how many times Thou hast pardoned me, and how many times have I fallen again, and begun again to offend Thee! Oh! by the merits of this new fall, give me the necessary helps to persevere in Thy grace until death. Grant that in all temptations which assail me I may always commend myself to Thee. I love Thee, Jesus my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station VIII, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how those women wept with compassion at seeing Jesus in such a pitiable state, streaming with blood, as He walked along. But Jesus said to them: Weep not for Me, but for your children.

My Jesus, laden with sorrows, I weep for the offences I have committed against Thee, because of the pains they have deserved, and still more because of the displeasure they have caused Thee, who hast loved me so much. It is Thy love, more than the fear of hell, which causes me to weep for my sins. My Jesus, I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station IX, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider the third fall of Jesus Christ. His weakness was extreme, and the cruelty of His executioners excessive, who tried to hasten His steps when He had scarcely strength to move.

Ah, my outraged Jesus, by the merits of the weakness Thou didst suffer in going to Calvary, give me strength sufficient to conquer all human respect, and all my wicked passions, which have led me to despise Thy friendship. I love Thee, Jesus my love, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station X, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to His torn flesh, and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Saviour thus cruelly treated, and say to Him:

My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment Thou hast felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in Thee, who art so worthy of my love. I love Thee, O Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station XI, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider how Jesus, after being thrown on the Cross, extended His hands, and offered to His Eternal Father the sacrifice of His life for our salvation. These barbarians fastened Him with nails, and then, raising the Cross, allowed Him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

My Jesus! loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Thy feet, that it may ever remain there, to love Thee, and never quit Thee again. I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies on the Cross

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station XII, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how thy Jesus, after three hours' Agony on the Cross, consumed at length with anguish, abandons Himself to the weight of His body, bows His head and dies.

O my dying Jesus, I kiss devoutly the Cross on which Thou didst die for love of me. I have merited by my sins to die a miserable death, but Thy death is my hope. Ah, by the merits of Thy death, give me grace to die, embracing Thy feet, and burning with love to Thee. I commit my soul into Thy hands. I love Thee with my whole heart; I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station XIII, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how, after the death of our Lord, two of His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, took Him down from the Cross, and placed Him in the arms of His afflicted Mother, who received Him with unutterable tenderness, and pressed Him to her bosom.

O Mother of sorrow, for the love of this Son, accept me for thy servant, and pray to Him for me. And Thou, my Redeemer, since Thou hast died for me, permit me to love Thee; for I wish but Thee, and nothing more. I love Thee, my Jesus, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

Giandomenico Tiepolo, Station XIV, 1747 to 1749. San Polo, Venice.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.
R. *Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Consider how the disciples carried the body of Jesus to bury it, accompanied by His holy Mother, who arranged it in the sepulchre with her own hands. They then closed the tomb, and all withdrew.

Ah, my buried Jesus, I kiss the stone that encloses Thee. But Thou didst rise again the third day. I beseech Thee by Thy Resurrection, make me rise glorious with Thee at the last day, to be always united with Thee in heaven, to praise Thee and love Thee for ever. I love Thee, and I repent of ever having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

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After the Stations

After the fourteenth station, say the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be five times in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Domenico tiepolo inventò, pinse, ed incise
Anno MDCCXLIX
In Venezia

ABOUT THE PAINTINGS

Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727-1804), son of Giambattista, painted this Way of the Cross for the Oratory of the Crucifix in San Polo, Venice, in 1747 to 1749; it is still there today. He also etched the whole series, and the prints carried his stations across Europe.

Paintings: Giandomenico Tiepolo, The Stations of the Cross, 1747 to 1749, church of San Polo, Venice. Photographs: Didier Descouens, Wikimedia Commons, licensed CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0); Station XIV cropped. Last page: Giandomenico Tiepolo, title plate of the Via Crucis etchings, 1749, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (public domain). Prayers: Saint Alphonsus Liguori, from *A Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Catholic Laity* (1889).

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