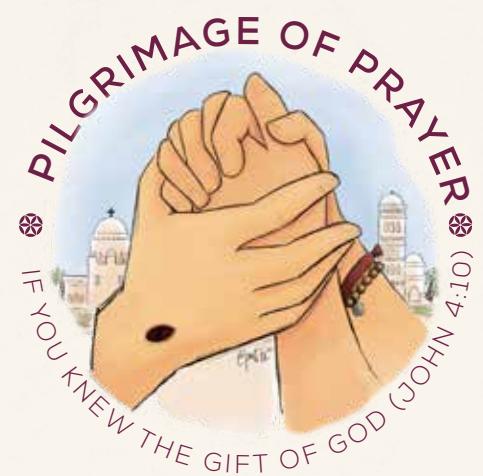


Day 3

1st Station: Antonia Fortress, Church of the Flagellation



Pope Benedict XVI – The Way of the Cross & Hope

... Jesus's journey along the way of the cross: a journey seemingly hopeless, yet one that changed human life and history, and opened the way to "new heavens and a new earth" (cf. Rev 21:1)... the Church commemorates with deep spiritual union the death of the Son of God on the cross; in his cross she sees the tree of life, which blossoms in new hope.

The experience of suffering and of the cross touches all mankind; it touches the family too. How often does the journey become wearisome and difficult! Misunderstandings, conflicts, worry for the future of our children, sickness and problems of every kind...The Way of the Cross... invites all of us, and families in particular, to contemplate Christ crucified in order to have the force to overcome difficulties. The cross of Christ is the supreme sign of God's love for every man and woman, the superabundant response to every person's need for love.

At times of trouble, when our families have to face pain and adversity, let us look to Christ's cross. There we can find the courage and strength to press on; there we can repeat with firm hope the words of Saint Paul: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom 8:35,37). In times of trial and tribulation, we are not alone; the family is not alone. Jesus is present with his love, he sustains them by his grace and grants the strength needed to carry on, to make sacrifices and to overcome every obstacle...

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20120406_via-crucis-colosseo.html



Let us Pray the Way of the Cross Together

I

FIRST STATION – Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you Oh Christ and we praise you,

because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

From the Gospel according to Matthew 27:22-23,26

Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Meditation

The Judge of the world, who will come again to judge us all, stands there, dishonored and defenseless before the earthly judge. Pilate is not utterly evil. He knows that the condemned man is innocent, and he looks for a way to free him. But his heart is divided. And in the end, he lets his own position, his own self-interest, prevail over what is right. Nor are the men who are shouting and demanding the death of Jesus utterly evil. Many of them, on the day of Pentecost, will feel “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37), when Peter will say to them: “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God... you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law” (Acts 2:22ff.). But at that moment they are caught up in the crowd. They are shouting because everyone else is shouting, and they are shouting the same thing that everyone else is shouting. And in this way, justice is trampled underfoot by weakness, cowardice, and fear of the diktat of the ruling mindset. The quiet voice of conscience is drowned out by the cries of the crowd. Evil draws its power from indecision and concern for what other people think.



Prayer

Lord, you were condemned to death because fear of what other people may think suppressed the voice of conscience. So too, throughout history, the innocent have always been maltreated, condemned and killed. How many times have I preferred success to the truth, my reputation to justice? Strengthen the quiet voice of my conscience, your own voice, in my life. Look at me as you looked at Peter after his denial. Let your gaze penetrate my heart and indicate the direction my life must take. On the day of Pentecost you stirred the hearts of those who, on Good Friday, clamored for your death, and you brought them to conversion. In this way you gave hope to all. Grant me, ever anew, the grace of conversion.

