



Let us Pray the Way of the Cross Together

8th & 9th Stations

Street of the Monastery of St. Haralampos

We adore you Oh Christ and we praise you,

because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

VIII

Eight Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him

From the Gospel according to Luke. 23:28-31

Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Meditation

Hearing Jesus reproach the women of Jerusalem who follow him and weep for him ought to make us reflect. How should we understand his words? Are they not directed at a piety which is purely sentimental, one which fails to lead to conversion and living faith? It is no use to lament the sufferings of this world if our life goes on as usual. And so the Lord warns us of the danger in which we find ourselves. He shows us both the seriousness of sin and the seriousness of judgement. Can it be that, despite all our expressions of consternation in the face of evil and innocent suffering, we are all too prepared to trivialize the mystery of evil? Have we accepted only the gentleness and love of God and Jesus, and quietly set aside the word of judgement? "How can God be



so concerned with our weaknesses?", we say. "We are only human!" Yet as we contemplate the sufferings of the Son, we see more clearly the seriousness of sin, and how it needs to be fully atoned if it is to be overcome. Before the image of the suffering Lord, evil can no longer be trivialized. To us too, he says: "Do not weep for me, weep for yourselves... if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Prayer

Lord, to the weeping women you spoke of repentance and the Day of Judgement, when all of us will stand before your face: before you, the Judge of the world. You call us to leave behind the trivialization of evil, which salves our consciences and allows us to carry on as before. You show us the seriousness of our responsibility, the danger of our being found guilty and without excuse on the Day of Judgement. Grant that we may not simply walk at your side, with nothing to offer other than compassionate words. Convert us and give us new life. Grant that in the end we will not be dry wood, but living branches in you, the true vine, bearing fruit for eternal life (cf. Jn 15:1-10).



IX

Ninth Station: Jesus falls for the third time



From the Book of Lamentations. 3:27-32

It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when he has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust - there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Meditation

What can the third fall of Jesus under the Cross say to us? We have considered the fall of man in general, and the falling of many Christians away from Christ and into a godless secularism. Should we not also think of how much Christ suffers in his own Church? How often is the holy sacrament of his Presence abused, how often must he enter empty and evil hearts! How often do we celebrate only ourselves, without even realizing that he is there! How often is his Word twisted and misused! What little faith is present behind so many theories, so many empty words! How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to him! How much pride, how much self-complacency! What little respect we pay to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where he waits for us, ready to raise us up whenever we fall! All this is present in his Passion. His betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his Body and Blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces his heart. We can only call to him from the depths of our hearts: Kyrie eleison – Lord, save us (cf. Mt 8: 25).





Prayer

Lord, your Church often seems like a boat about to sink, a boat taking in water on every side. In your field we see more weeds than wheat. The soiled garments and face of your Church throw us into confusion. Yet it is we ourselves who have soiled them! It is we who betray you time and time again, after all our lofty words and grand gestures. Have mercy on your Church; within her too, Adam continues to fall. When we fall, we drag you down to earth, and Satan laughs, for he hopes that you will not be able to rise from that fall; he hopes that being dragged down in the fall of your Church, you will remain prostrate and overpowered. But you will rise again. You stood up, you arose and you can also raise us up. Save and sanctify your Church. Save and sanctify us all.

