



# Let us Pray the Way of the Cross Together

## 10th, 11th & 12th Stations

Chapel of the Franks & Golgotha

*We adore you Oh Christ and we praise you,*

*because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*



## Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

### From the Gospel according to Matthew. 27:33-36

*And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there.*

### Meditation

Jesus is stripped of his garments. Clothing gives a man his social position; it gives him his place in society, it makes him someone. His public stripping means that Jesus is no longer anything at all, he is simply an outcast, despised by all alike. The moment of the stripping reminds us of the expulsion from Paradise: God's splendor has fallen away from man, who now stands naked and exposed, unclad and ashamed. And so, Jesus once more takes on the condition of fallen man. Stripped of his garments, he reminds us that we have all lost the "first garment" that is God's splendor. At the foot of the Cross, the soldiers draw lots to divide his paltry possessions, his clothes. The Evangelists describe the scene with words drawn from Psalm 22:19; by doing so they tell us the

same thing that Jesus would tell his disciples on the road to Emmaus: that everything takes place “according to the Scriptures”. Nothing is mere coincidence; everything that happens is contained in the Word of God and sustained by his divine plan. The Lord passes through all the stages and steps of man’s fall from grace, yet each of these steps, for all its bitterness, becomes a step towards our redemption: this is how he carries home the lost sheep. Let us not forget that John says that lots were drawn for Jesus’s tunic, “woven without seam from top to bottom” (Jn 19:23). We may consider this as a reference to the High Priest’s robe, which was “woven from a single thread”, without stitching (Fl. Josephus, a III, 161). For he, the Crucified One, is the true High Priest.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were stripped of your garments, exposed to shame, cast out of society. You took upon yourself the shame of Adam, and you healed it. You also take upon yourself the sufferings and the needs of the poor, the outcasts of our world. And in this very way you fulfil the words of the prophets. This is how you bring meaning into apparent meaninglessness. This is how you make us realize that your Father holds you, us, and the whole world in his hands. Give us a profound respect for man at every stage of his existence, and in all the situations in which we encounter him. Clothe us in the light of your grace.







# XI

## Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

### From the Gospel according to Matthew 27:45-50,54

*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Elijah". And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him". And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit". When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

### Meditation

In Greek and Latin, the two international languages of the time, and in Hebrew, the language of the Chosen People, a sign stood above the Cross of Jesus, indicating who he was: the King of the Jews, the promised Son of David. Pilate, the unjust judge, became a prophet despite himself. The kingship of Jesus was proclaimed before all the world. Jesus himself had not accepted the title "Messiah", because it would have suggested a mistaken, human idea of power and deliverance. Yet now the title can remain publicly displayed above the Crucified Christ. He is indeed the king of the world. Now he is truly "lifted up". In sinking to the depths, he rose to the heights. Now he has radically fulfilled the commandment of love, he has completed the offering of himself, and in this way, he is now the revelation of the true God, the God who is love. Now we know who God is. Now we know what true kingship is. Jesus prays Psalm 22, which begins with the words: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:2). He takes to himself the whole suffering people of Israel, all of suffering humanity, the drama of God's darkness, and he makes God present in the very place where he seems definitively vanquished and absent. The Cross of Jesus is a cosmic event. The world is darkened when the Son of God is given up to death. The earth trembles. And on the Cross, the Church of the Gentiles is born. The Roman centurion understands this and acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God. From the Cross he triumphs – ever anew.



## Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, at the hour of your death the sun was darkened. Ever anew you are being nailed to the Cross. At this present hour of history, we are living in God's darkness. Through your great sufferings and the wickedness of men, the face of God, your face, seems obscured, unrecognizable. And yet, on the Cross, you have revealed yourself. Precisely by being the one who suffers and loves, you are exalted. From the Cross on high you have triumphed. Help us to recognize your face at this hour of darkness and tribulation. Help us to believe in you and to follow you in our hour of darkness and need. Show yourself once more to the world at this hour. Reveal to us your salvation.



## Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

From the Gospel according to Matthew 27:45-50,54

*And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews". Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are*





*the Son of God, come down from the Cross". So also, the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the Cross and we will believe in him".*

## Meditation

Jesus is nailed to the Cross. The shroud of Turin gives us an idea of the unbelievable cruelty of this procedure. Jesus does not drink the numbing gall offered to him: he deliberately takes upon himself all the pain of the Crucifixion. His whole body is racked; the words of the Psalm have come to pass: "But I am a worm and no man, scorned by men, rejected by the people" (Ps 22:7). "As one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised... surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:3f.). Let us halt before this image of pain before the suffering Son of God. Let us look upon him at times of presumptuousness and pleasure, in order to learn to respect limits and to see the superficiality of all merely material goods. Let us look upon him at times of trial and tribulation and realize that it is then that we are closest to God. Let us try to see his face in the people we might look down upon. As we stand before the condemned Lord, who did not use his power to come down from the Cross, but endured its suffering to the end, another thought comes to mind. Ignatius of Antioch, a prisoner in chains for his faith in the Lord, praised the Christians of Smyrna for their invincible faith: he says that they were, so to speak, nailed with flesh and blood to the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1). Let us nail ourselves to him, resisting the temptation to stand apart, or to join others in mocking him.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you let yourself be nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of your body and your dignity. You allowed yourself to be nailed fast; you did not try to escape or to lessen your suffering. May we never flee from what we are called to do. Help us to remain faithful to you. Help us to unmask the false freedom which would distance us from you. Help us to accept your "binding" freedom, and, "bound" fast to you, to discover true freedom.