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# THE WAY OF THE CROSS

## Station I

### Jesus is Condemned to Death

SHELTER THE HOMELESS

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to Luke:

*When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, [Jesus] resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem.*

(Lk 9:51-53)

Lord Jesus, at the beginning of your journey to Jerusalem, and thus to death, you were rejected — *they would not welcome you*. Because you were a stranger! Because you belonged to another nation, professed a different religion... You were denied a welcome — a man walking toward death...

All of this, Lord, sounds frighteningly familiar — as if taken straight from our newspapers, reminiscent of the situations on our own streets. We

refuse to welcome people who are looking for a better life, who are sometimes just fending for their lives (under the threat of death), who knock on the doors of our countries, churches, and homes. They are strangers, we see in them enemies, we are afraid of their religion, and even their poverty!

Instead of hospitality — they find death: on the coasts of Lampedusa and the Greek islands, in crowded refugee camps. Refusal to accept easily becomes the real death sentence. On them, and so on you, Lord! In the last few years, you have been sentenced to death in the persons of 30,000 refugees. Sentenced — by whom? Who will agree with this sentence?

I am a stranger — you say to us today — *I have nowhere to rest my head*. I was born in a stable — refused at the inn. I know the bitter taste of fake hospitality — like at the house of Simon the Pharisee, who gave me no water for my feet, nor olive oil for my heat-parched head.

You remind us of the disciples from Emmaus: When they invited a “stranger” to the table, *their eyes were opened and they recognized...* you!

And we ask: Open our eyes! Allow us to recognize you! In the visitors, who suddenly found themselves next to us. In the homeless people sleeping at our train stations, at the gates of our homes, in canals, under bridges. You live in every stranger. And you reign — as a man in need, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Station II**

### **Jesus Takes Up His Cross**

FEED THE HUNGRY

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the holy Gospel according to Mark:*

*Jesus saw the vast crowd. His disciples said, “Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves some-*

*thing to eat.” He said to them in reply, “Give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Are we to buy two-hundred days’ wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?” He asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Five and two fish.”*

(Mk 6:34-38)

What do we need most to face the cross — e.g. the cross of hunger of our sisters and brothers?

We usually think like the apostles: *Two-hundred denarii would not buy enough bread...* Two-hundred denarii! Seven-months salary! How do you get such a sum all at once? This cross surpasses us...

Seemingly helpless, we invent solutions to pass the problems onto others: *Let them go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat.*

But Lord, you say: *Give them some food yourselves!* And you ask: *How many loaves do you have?* You ask not what we do not have, but what we do have! And if we can share what we have: five loaves and two fish... You do not ask whether this is enough *for so many* — You ask if we will share this!

And here we begin to understand. Why is there hunger in the world? Not due to a lack of bread, but to a lack of solidarity. In our world there is no shortage of bread — one-third of food produced goes to waste. At the same time, every six seconds a child dies of hunger, and today — this evening, close to 1 billion people worldwide do not know whether they will have anything to eat tomorrow.

Lord Jesus, we praise you for all those who bring mercy to our hungry sisters and brothers. Thank you for those who vow poverty in order to bring aid to those even poorer than themselves. They show that — in order to help — they do not need large funds so much as a generous heart! Give us such a heart, supportive and capable of sharing, even in its shortages. Restore in us also the understanding of fasting — not as a healthy diet, but as a true practice of love. Finally, we ask for all those, whose cross you

allowed us to realize through contemplating this station — for the hungry and dying of starvation. Living Bread! Help them! And forgive us... Amen.

### **Station III** **Jesus Falls the First Time**

ADMONISH THE SINNER

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to Mark:

*They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. [...] Jesus [...] said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." [And then:] "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home."*

(Mk 2:3-11)

Looking at your fall, Jesus, I think about my own falls — about mortal sins that knocked me off my feet. The very memory of them overwhelms me. I cannot come to you by my own efforts. I am paralyzed — more than that paralytic. At least he let himself be helped — his friends brought him to you. I escape from my sin in solitude, I acknowledge reminders with a shrug or — more often — with aggression.

I thank you that I am here today and that I hear what you say to that paralyzed sinner. First, you say: *son*, and only then: *your sins are forgiven*.

You do not start from the sins. You call me "son" — even though I thought that I no longer have that right: *I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers*. But you say, "Hired worker? No! Never!" — "Here are your ring, sandals, and robe!"

I have experienced it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so many times. Not humiliation, but finding my own dignity! You lifted me off the ground so many times!

Lord Jesus, be glorified in every confessional in the world. Full of mercy. Forgiving not 7, not 77, but 777 million times. Never tiring of forgiving. Be like that in every confessor! Make it so that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is an experience of mercy and respect always and for everyone. We ask for those who have been postponing confession for years due to fear, shame, or neglect. Give them your Spirit — who *convince us of sin* — because it is given to us *for the forgiveness of sins*! We also ask for those whose life decisions come between them and sacramental absolution. Act on their consciences; multiply their love; let us accompany them in Church. Let us fall in love with the Church, which is never helpless against sin, even though it is made up of sinners. Holy, Holy, Holy Friend of sinners forever. Amen.

#### **Station IV** **Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother**

COMFORT THE AFFLICTED

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

**From the Book of Job:**

*Satan struck Job with severe boils. Job took a potsherd to scrape himself, as he sat among the ashes. Three of Job's friends heard of all the misfortune that had come upon him. They met and journeyed together to comfort him. But when, at a distance, they lifted up their eyes and did not recognize him, they began to weep aloud. Then they sat down upon the ground with him seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him; for they saw how great was his suffering.*"

(Job 2:7-8, 11-13)

Lord Jesus, you and your Mother did not have much time to stay in silence with each other. You were not given seven days and seven nights. A few

seconds had to be enough, a meeting of eyes. And hearts. Without a word. Without any gestures. A condensed intensity of love!

Like the friends of Job, your Mother had to come, suffer with you, and comfort you. Like them, she too probably barely recognized you, wounded, bloody, just risen from the fall. Tradition has preserved the memory of the place where you fell and where you met your Mother — in the very middle of the channel that runs through Jerusalem and collects all the waste and impurities. Divine Job, the only just one, you did not fall on dung, but into human filth.

You, the First Comforter. How much you needed comfort on your way of the cross! You found this comfort in the silent meeting with your Mother.

Is it not true that we best console the afflicted in *silent company*? Because shared silence is not just not speaking. It is rather common listening and waiting for a response from the Lord. So it says in the Scripture: *It is good to hope in silence for the Lord's deliverance.* (Lam 3:26)

Mary, comforter of the afflicted, we want to learn from your merciful, silent presence with those who suffer. We adore you, Jesus Christ, and you, Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who *comforts us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.* Amen.

## **Station V**

### **Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross**

VISIT THE SICK

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the holy Gospel according to Matthew:*

*Jesus entered the house of Peter, and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, the fever left her. [...] When it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he*

*drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: "He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases."*

(Mt 8:14-17)

You took upon yourself our weaknesses and bore our diseases. Simon, on the contrary, did not want to take on your cross. He did not want to help. He had to be forced...

I have no right to judge him. I am equally eager to escape from the *diseases and illnesses* of others. Is it not because I do not remember that you first took upon yourself all of my diseases and illnesses?

You say about yourself: *I was ill*, but I know you primarily as a Physician — who was sent to the sick, not the healthy. How many times have you already come to me in the case of my illness? How many times have you given me a hand and pulled me up? From diseases more severe than a *fever*: from selfishness, sloth, hard-heartedness. I do not want to deny you what I so often experienced from you.

Lord Jesus, we bless you in all those who help the sick not only as their profession, but as a vocation in the field of health care: in doctors, nurses, all employees of hospitals and clinics. We praise you for each of the hospital chaplains and volunteers who support them. For religious congregations whose charism is serving the sick. For them we ask for new, plentiful vocations. We bless you for doctors on missions and for all the donors who support their work. For ourselves, we ask for sympathy toward every sick person. For readiness to offer willing, unforced help. For generosity in sacrificing time to paying visits (at home, in hospitals, in nursing homes). And in prayer. Amen.

## Station VI Veronica Offers Her Veil to Jesus

VISIT THE IMPRISONED

V. Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

*A woman suffering hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the tassel on his cloak. [...] Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, daughter! Your faith has saved you."*

(Mt 9:20-22)

The Gospels did not record the name of this woman. It was remembered through Tradition: Veronica! This woman — once healed by you of hemorrhage — could not remain indifferent now, as you bleed on your way of the cross. Her act of mercy was reciprocation. You once freed her from hemorrhaging and uncleanness, now she wiped the blood from your face, and at least for a moment, restored its purity.

Covered with blood, sweat, and dirt, the face of the Condemned appeared anew to all, as the dignified face of Jesus of Nazareth!

Is that not how she saw you, with the eyes of the heart, before she reached for her scarf? She saw the prisoner with the face of the Son of God! What does it mean to: *comfort prisoners*? This is not about just any form of comfort. It is about the meeting, which will allow the prisoner to discover in himself again the face of the son or daughter of God — a lasting image of the Son of God — the source of lasting human dignity!

Lord Jesus, you visit us in our every affliction — in our weaknesses, lustfulness, and addictions. And you always see in us daughters and sons of God — even when we see in ourselves only prisoners, enslaved by drugs, alcohol, pornography, emotionality, gambling, computers, cell phones, money, convenience — whatever! To you, the face of each and every one



of us is invariably the face of a child of God. Your gaze restores our sense of dignity! It reaches deeper than the veil of Veronica.

We ask you to help us, like Veronica, to be willing and able to *comfort prisoners*. Lead us to people suffering from any affliction or weakness. Teach us to think with respect of all who are imprisoned — in prisons, detention centers, labor camps. Be our road to them. Amen.

## **Station VII**

### **Jesus Falls the Second Time**

FORGIVE OFFENSES WILLINGLY

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the holy Gospel according to Matthew:*

*A debtor was brought before [the king], who owed him a huge amount. [...] Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. [...] He had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. [...] His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! [...] Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then he handed him over to the torturers.*

(Mt 18:24-34)

Lord, you forgave him so much! You forgave him a debt that exceeds the imagination! Ten-thousand talents, 270 tons of gold!

Forgive me for asking: Could you not have also forgiven him for not sparing his debtor? You forgave his unimaginable sins... Why did you not forgive his refusal to forgive? Is the refusal to forgive offenses so great a sin? Did he not have the right to demand justice?

He did. But that is not wherein lies his sin. The point is not that he himself could not forgive, but that he wasted the love that you so abundantly bestowed upon him. You showed him mercy without limits, not so that he would feel freed from his debt, but so that he would love others with the same love he encountered. So that he would forgive with the same forgiveness he encountered. You demanded nothing of him that you yourself did not first give him. And in excess!

Lord Jesus, we bless your presence and power in all those who forgive. You are the mercy that enables us to *forgive offenses willingly*. We ask you at this station: Destroy in us our old selves! Kill in us the merciless debtor! Teach us to forgive willingly — by way of warning, without waiting for a request and atonement from the wrongdoers. Oh, how incredible is your mercy! I want to trust it — even when you call me to offer it to others, forgiving without hesitation. Amen.

### **Station VIII** **Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem**

INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the Acts of the Apostles:*

*An Ethiopian, a court official of the queen of the Ethiopians, was returning home from Jerusalem, reading the prophet Isaiah in his chariot. [...] Philip said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" [...] Then Philip, beginning with this scripture passage, proclaimed Jesus to him.*

(Ac 8:27-28, 30-31, 35)

Lord Jesus, we recognize the power and mercy of your Spirit, who told Philip to join the man in order to teach him. Mercy, because this man was “strange” and excluded from the community of prayer and worship. Power, which resulted in faith and baptism. We would like to learn from Philip the ability to *instruct the ignorant* — instruction full of humility, stimulating the speaker to pose important questions; instruction focused on you — on the event of your death and resurrection — instruction that leads the listener to recognize in you a Lord and Savior.

You alone also reveal to us the merciful ability to *instruct the ignorant* at this station — You are talking to the women accompanying you: *Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children* (Lk 23:28). You instruct, because you love. You instruct from within your own Passion — forgetting about yourself, surpassing your own suffering.

Lord Jesus, contemplating this station of your way of the cross, we learn that instruction should always be an act of love and mercy. We apologize for those moments in life when we instructed others in anger, in pride — to get our way — when we were stubborn in our convictions. We apologize for wanting to shine our own wisdom, with which we shroud you — the Source of Wisdom and Wisdom Incarnate. We apologize for all the situations where we abused the trust of those, whom you entrusted us in the service of education. We beseech you, Lord, all the teachers, professors, catechists, educators, and above all parents: Fill them with your power and mercy, so that they can lead and instruct those entrusted to them. With wise words and a convincing testimony. Divine *Rabbi* and Witness, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

## Station IX Jesus Falls the Third Time

COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL

V. Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to Mark:

*Jesus said to his apostles, "All of you will have your faith in me shaken." [...] Peter said to him, "Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be." Then Jesus said to him, "[...] This very night [...] you will deny me three times."*

(Mk 14:27, 29-30)

Just before your Passion, Jesus, you showed your disciples doubt as a fall and as the cause of subsequent falls. Doubt, which entails escape, dispersion, treason. Doubt not in oneself, not in one's own strength, but doubt in you — you said: *All of you will have your faith in me shaken.*

Doubt, which takes away my strength and knocks it to the ground. Doubt, whether I will ever rise from the fall. Each of my sins entails another. With each subsequent sin — I increasingly lose hope. Doubt, which tells me: "This is a habit now; it is stronger than you!" This doubt is ultimately doubt in you! That you are not strong enough to lift me up. That you do not want to pick me up. Can you even love someone like me? Doubt in the reality of the Passover. Doubt in the purpose and meaning of my life — in your Providence and mercy.

*Counsel the doubtful!* But what do we advise a helpless person? How do we counsel well a person set in their helplessness and trapped in despair? How do we show that doubt is a lie — about us and about you?

Lord Jesus, we thank you for all the questions that arise in us when we stop at this station. We do not want easy answers... We ask for humble openness to your Spirit — the Spirit of Counsel received at Confirmation

— to His wisdom and insight. May He inspire us with the appropriate questions and the true answers. We praise you for all those who support doubters and do not leave them alone — especially in the doubt of the possibility of repentance and deliverance from weakness. We praise you for their loved ones: family, friends, and mentors; for confessors, spiritual directors, and therapists. For all those who do not lose faith in people. And in you. Amen.

## **Station X** **Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments**

CLOTHE THE NAKED

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the holy Gospel according to Luke:*

*While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, [...] kissed him, [...] and said, "Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him!"*

(Lk 15:20, 22)

When the prodigal son knelt before his father, he was almost naked. He had squandered everything — not only his fortune, but also his self-worth. He was naked like a slave. Bankrupt, who — through his own fault — had his last shirt taken! Naked — like Adam and Eve in paradise when, after committing sin, *their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked*, and hid from you. He probably similarly wanted to hide his nakedness from his father. A sinner — just like them. Embarrassed and humiliated.

This scene, Lord Jesus, helps me see your nakedness on Golgotha differently. They did not expose you against your will. You chose to be united with Adam and Eve, with each of the prodigal sons and daughters — naked and humiliated by sin. On Golgotha, Youyou become naked not in front of torturers, but in front of the Father. The words of the prodigal son: *Father, I have sinned against you... I am not worthy to be called your son* — you make them your own. You say them in your nakedness! You are one with me, stripped by sin.

This unity saves me. Because your Father cannot look calmly at the nakedness of his Child. He clothes you immediately. In the best *ankle-length robe, with a gold sash around the chest* (see: Rev 1:13). Naked in Death — in the Resurrection you are once again dressed in filial dignity. And we are with you.

God, Our Father, you are the first to *clothe the naked*. We ask you, let us imitate you. Teach us to share, when needed, our clothes. Guard us, so that we would like to share like you — with the *best robe* — new, clean and neat clothes, not old, worn and unnecessary. Let us also keep modesty and poverty in our attire, so that we will more easily be able to share what we save. We ask this through him, who accepted our nakedness — to clothe us into a new creations. Amen.

## **Station XI**

### **Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross**

BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the Acts of the Apostles:*

*When they heard [Stephen's speech], they were infuriated, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked up*

*intently to heaven [...] and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he died.*

(Ac 7:54-55, 60)

We bless you, Lord Jesus, for giving such power to people! Power in the form of patience — not so much in the face of suffering, as toward those who cause it. Even toward the persecutors. This patience is not just biting one’s tongue. It is also not idle apathy. Nor stoic calm, with a sense of cool superiority over evildoers. Stephen’s patience, the patience of martyrs, is love for the wrongdoers. It is a strong testimony. It is full of peaceful silence interrupted by prayer for forgiveness. It is the last strong word and act of mercy.

Stephen’s patience represents your patience, Lord; his words are a reflection of your words: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But also at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, he looked up to the sky and saw you! He had you in front of his eyes, not his injustice and not the anger of his foes. This vision captured him and transformed him — likened him to you. The promise of Scripture was fulfilled on Stephen: *We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* Just like that! You revealed yourself to him and likened him to yourself.

Jesus Christ, patient and of great mercy, let us fix our eyes on you like Stephen. Let us discover patience as an act of *great mercy!* Put your finger to our lips when we want to explode with bitterness and resentment, aggression, and complaint. Teach us to pray for our enemies. *Offer no resistance to one who is evil! Turn the other cheek. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles.* Help us to *not be conquered by evil but to conquer evil with good.* Meek lamb led slaughter, *like a sheep silent before shearers* — manifest in us your patience. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

## Station XII Jesus Dies on the Cross

GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

V. Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to John:

*After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." So they put a sponge soaked in vinegar on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth.*

(Jn 19:28-29)

*I was thirsty and you gave me (no) drink...*

What does a dying person desire? What desires does a dying child have? You were offered *vinegar*. The last human gesture toward you. A moment before your death. The last mockery. The last act of hostility. As the Psalmist said: *I looked for compassion, but there was none [...] they gave me poison for my food; and for my thirst they gave me vinegar* (Ps 69(68):21-22). We spared nothing! Not even mockery of your last desire...

It scares me to think that this could happen again, even today. That I can be apathetic, that I can want to flee from the desire of lonely, dying people. Sometimes people close to me who are dying. Or that I can try to dismiss this desire with just anything: expensive gadgets, that are supposed to replace presence.

Lord Jesus, you know the desires of every human heart. You want to saturate them with Living Water — *whoever drinks it will never thirst*. This water, which you give, is the Holy Spirit — he who in the mystery of the Trinity is personal Love. Let us, like you, discover and understand human desires and, also like you, go out to meet them. Let us truly stand with the thirsty man — with a cup of water, and with love, which is the channel of



Living Water. We bless you for all those who accompany you present in the dying. For doctors, nurses, workers in hospices, terminal care branches, and therapeutic care facilities. For all the volunteers and those who financially support hospices. Only you fulfill every human desire forever and ever. Amen.

**Station XIII**  
**Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross and Placed in the**  
**Arms of His Afflicted Mother**

PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

V. Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

R. Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

From the holy Gospel according to Mark:

*Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I have brought to you my son possessed by a mute spirit. [...] He said to them, "This kind can only come out through prayer."*

(Mk 9:17, 29)

We look at you, Mary, sitting at the foot of the cross, the dead body of your son on your lap. Despite your pain, you are abiding in prayer. That is precisely why you are not helpless, not powerless, not defeated, not broken, but instead are strengthened and cooperating in the saving work of your son. You are merciful together with him — the first in a long historical procession of those who *rejoice in the sufferings for their sake, and in their flesh are filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church.* And they do this in prayer!

There is, in fact, a kind of evil, certain demons and temptations, that can *only come out through prayer.* Every other "tool" is ineffective. Only prayer and fasting remain. Your prayer, Mary, on Golgotha is an experience of power, not weakness. It is proof that mercy is never, in any situa-

tion, powerless! Then, when everyone else is surrendering, mercy reaches for the powerful weapon of prayer.

Lord Jesus, we bless and praise you for the people who do not cease in the merciful fight for others, even when everyone else has given up. We thank you for those who, with complete trust in you, pray for the dead — tragically, unexpectedly, in stubbornness, in rebellion, in the refusal to convert. For those who, in stubborn prayer, accompany those who do not want any company, those who wade into evil, who have come to terms with a weakness or do not see any evil that they do. Thank you for those who, through prayer and fasting, support the terminally ill, the dying, and those mourning their loved ones. We thank you for those who continue praying for peace with hope and perseverance when nobody else is concerned anymore. We ask you, ignite in us the charism of merciful prayer for the living and the dead. Amen. Mother of Mercy, pray for us!

## **Station XIV**

### **Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb**

BURY THE DEAD

**V.** Adoramus Te Christe et benedicimus Tibi.

**R.** Quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

*From the Book of Tobit:*

*I, Tobit [...] would give my bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked. If I saw one of my people who had died and been thrown behind the wall of Nineveh, I used to bury him [...] But a certain Ninevite went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them, and I went into hiding [...] All my property was confiscated.*

(Tob 1:3, 17, 19-20)

Is the burial of the deceased really such an important act of merciful love?  
Is it worth risking as much as Tobit to bury the dead? — the king's wrath,  
life, wealth?

How much do we understand this sensitivity — in a world where an increasing number of families do not pick up the bodies of their deceased loved ones from the hospital to bury them; where mothers do not always get to see the body of their infant who died at birth; and where the bodies of children who were aborted are simply thrown away in the trash?

Lord Jesus, we want to help you create a different world. Therefore, we bless you for Joseph of Arimathea, who wanted to be Tobit for you. And for the Tobits of today. We bless you for those who take care of the burial of homeless people. For those who help the poor and lonely people bury their loved ones. For those who care for the forgotten graves of unknown people. Who care for the graves of the enemy — soldiers of the enemy army, members of ethnic or national minorities. May you be blessed for those who care about the biggest burial grounds in the world and keep the memory of places like Auschwitz, Birkenau, Dachau or Buchenwald. Protect us from neglecting this act of love. Urge us, so that we will never neglect the funeral of our loved ones. So that none of our friends will be left alone when mourning their deceased loved ones. Let us remember the dead in personal prayer and during the liturgy, and by visiting gravesites. Amen. Let us have respect toward death! It is the gate of life!