

EVERYONE'S WAY OF THE CROSS

By Clarence Enzler

Introductory Prayer

Christ Speaks: These fourteen steps that you are now about to walk. I walk with you. Though you are you and I am I, yet we are truly one – one Christ and therefore my way of the cross two thousand years ago and your “way” now are also one. But note this difference. My Life was incomplete until I crowned it by my death. Your fourteen steps will only be complete when you have crowned them by your life.

*Keep in mind that Jesus Christ
Has died for us
and is risen from the dead.
He is our saving Lord,
he is joy for all ages.*

I Station: Jesus Is Condemned

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: In Pilate's hands, my other self, I see my Father's will. Though Pilate is unjust, he is the lawful governor and he has power over me. And so the Son of God obeys. If I can bow to Pilate's rule because this is my Father's will, can you also submit, even in the face of injustice??

We reply: My Jesus, Lord, obedience cost you your life. For me it costs an act of will – no more – and yet how hard it is for me to bend.

Remove the blinders from my eyes that I may see that it is you whom I obey in all who govern me. Lord, it is yours.

*By our sins we have condemned you,
Jesus, let us now befriend you,
Sorrowing and penitent.*

II Station: Jesus Takes His Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: This cross, this chunk of three, is what my Father chose for me. The crosses you must bear are largely products of your daily life. And yet my Father chose them, too, for you. Receive them from his hands. Take heart, my other self, I will not let your burdens grow one ounce too heavy for your strength.

We reply: My Jesus, Lord, I take my daily cross. I welcome the monotony that often marks my day, discomforts of all kinds, the summer's heat, the winter's cold, my disappointments, tensions, cares. Remind me often that in carrying my cross, I carry yours with you. And though I bear a sliver only of your cross, You carry all of mine, except a sliver in return.

*Sinless Lord, the Cross that you bear
Is the burden we all should share,
Sinners, all deserving death*

III Station: Jesus Falls

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: The God who made the universe, and holds it in existence by his will alone, becomes a man, too weak to bear a piece of timber's weight.

How human in his weakness is the Son of God. My Father willed it thus. I could not be your model otherwise.

If you would be my other self, you also must accept without complaint your human frailties.

We reply: Lord Jesus, how can I refuse? I willingly accept my weaknesses, my irritations and my moods, my headaches and fatigue, all my defects of body, mind and soul. Because they are your will for me, these “handicaps” of my humanity, I gladly suffer them. Make me content with all my discontents, but give me strength to struggle after you.

*Jesus, we behold your first fall.
Teach us that for us, if we fall,
We should never give up hope.*

IV Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: My mother sees me whipped. She sees me kicked and driven like a beast. She counts my every wound. But though her soul cries out in agony, no protest or complaint escapes her lips or even enters her thoughts. She shares my martyrdom – and I share hers. We hide no pains, no sorrow, from each other's eyes. This is my Father's will.

We reply: My Jesus, Lord, I know what you are telling me. To watch the pain of those we love is harder than to bear our own. To carry my cross after you, the sufferings of my dear ones – the heartaches, sicknesses, and grief of those I love. And I must let them watch mine, too. I do believe – for those who love you all things work together unto good.

When we see your Son, our Brother,
Make us feel, O Mary Mother,
Deep compassion in our heart.

V Station: Simon helps Jesus

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: My strength is gone; I can no longer bear the cross alone, and so the legionaries make Simon give me aid. This Simon is like you, my other self. Give me your strength. Each time you lift some burden from another's back, you lift as with your very hand the cross' awful weight that crushes me.

We reply: Lord, make me realize that every time I wipe a dish, pick up an object off the floor, assist a child in some small task, or give another preference in traffic or the store; clothe the naked, teach the ignorant, or lend my hand in any way – it matters not to whom – my name is Simon. And the kindness I extend to them I really give to you.

*Make us understand, O Jesus,
By your pains, your will to need us
Taking up our Cross with you.*

VI Station: Veronica Helps Jesus

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: Can you be brave enough, my other self, to wipe my bloody face? Where is my face, you ask?

At home whenever eyes fill up with tears, at work when tensions rise, on playgrounds, in the slums, the courts, the hospital, the jails – where suffering exists – my face is there. And there I look for you to wipe away my blood and tears.

We reply: Lord, what you ask is hard. It calls for courage and self-sacrifice, and I am weak. Please, give me strength. Don't let me run away because of fear.

Lord, live in me, act in me, love in me. And not in me alone – in all of us – so that we may reveal no more your bloody but your glorious face on earth.

*For our neighbour show compassion;
For our Saviour, ease his passion;
Draw his image in our heart.*

VII: Jesus Falls Again

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: This seventh step, my other self, is one that tests your will. From this fall learn to persevere in doing good.

The time will come when all your efforts seem to fail and you will think, “I can’t go on”.

Then turn to me, my heavy-laden one, and I will give you rest. Trust me and carry on.

We reply: Give me your courage, Lord. When failure presses heavily on me and I am desolate, stretch out your hand to lift me up. I know I must not cease, but persevere in doing good.

But help me, Lord. Alone there’s nothing I can do. With you , I can do anything you ask.

I will.

*Jesus, as we see you falling,
We can hear your Spirit calling,
Urging us to persevere.*

VIII Station: Jesus Consoles the Women

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: How often had I longed to take the children of Jerusalem and gather them to me. But they refused.

But now these women weep for me and my heart mourns for them – mourns for their sorrows that will come. I comfort those who seek to solace me. How gentle can you be, my other self? How kind?

We reply: My Jesus, your compassion in your passion is beyond compare.

Lord, teach me, help me learn. When I would snap at those who hurt me with their ridicule, those who misunderstand, or hinder me with some misguided helpfulness, those who intrude upon my privacy – then help me curb my tongue. May gentleness become my cloak. Lord, make me kind like you.

*As the holy women weeping,
So our tears for Jesus keeping
For ourselves and all mankind.*

IX Station: The Third Fall

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Christ Speaks: Completely drained of strength I lie, collapsed, upon the cobblestones. My body cannot move. No blows, no kicks, can rouse it up. And yet my will is mine. And so is yours.

Know this, my other self, your body may be broken, but no force on earth or in hell can take away your will. Your will is yours.



We reply: My Lord, I see you take a moment's rest then rise and stagger on. So I can do because my will is mine. When all my strength is gone and guilt and self-reproach press me to earth and seem to hold me fast, protect me from the sin of Judas – save me from despair! Lord, never let me feel that any sin of mine is greater than your love. No matter what my past has been I can begin anew.

*Now three times we see your stumble;
Let our human power crumble:
Make us put our trust in you.*

X Station: Jesus Is Stripped

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ speaks: Behold, my other self, the poorest king who ever lived. Before my creatures I stand stripped. The cross – my death bed – even this is not my own. Yet who has ever been so rich? Possessing nothing, I own all – my Father's love. If you, too, would own everything, be not solicitous about your food, your clothes, your life.

We reply: My Lord, I offer you my all – whatever I possess, and more, my self.

Detach me from the craving for prestige, position, wealth.

Root out of me all trace of envy of my neighbour who has more than I. Release me from the vice of pride, my longing to exalt myself, and lead me to the lowest place.

May I be poor in spirit, Lord, so that I can be rich in you.

*Lord, we strip our souls before you;
Sorry, humbled we adore you;
Take our sins and grant us grace.*

XI Station: Jesus Is Crucified

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: Can you imagine what a crucifixion is? My executioners stretch my arms; they hold my hand and wrist against the wood and press the nail until it stabs my flesh. Then, with on heavy hammer smash, they drive through – and pain bursts lika a bomb of fire in my brain.

They seize the other arm; and agony again explodes. Then raising up my knees so that my feet are flat against the wood, they hammer them fast, too.

We reply: My God, I look at you and think: Is my soul worth this much? What can I give you in return?

I here and now accept for all my life whatever sickness, torment, agony may come. To every cross I touch my lips.

O blessed cross that lets me be – with you – a co-redeemer of humanity.

*Victim of the nails and hammer,
We acknowledge on our altar,
Hid beneath the bread and wine.*

XII Station: Jesus Dies

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: The cross becomes a pulpit now –
“Forgive them Father You will be with me in
Paradise
There is your Mother There your son
.I thirst It is complete.”

To speak I have to raise myself by pressing on my wrists and feet,
and every move engulfs me in new waves of agony.

And then, when I have borne enough, have emptied my humanity, I
let my mortal life depart.

We reply: My Jesus, God, what can I say or do?

I offer you my death with all its pains, accepting now the time and
kind of death in store for me. Not by a single instant would I
lengthen my life’s span.

I offer you my death for my own sins and for those of all humanity.
My God! My God! Forsake us not. We know not what we do.

*Dying Jesus, let us ponder
Your last seven words, and wonder
At the love of God made Man.*

XIII Station: Jesus Is Taken Down

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ Speaks: The sacrifice is done. Yes, my Mass is complete; but not my mother's and not yours, my other self.

My Mother still must cradle in her arms the lifeless body of the son she bore. You, too, must part from those you love, and grief will come to you.

In your bereavements think of this: A multitude of souls were saved by Mary's sharing in my Calvary. Your grief can also be the price of souls.

We reply: I beg you, Lord, help me accept the partings that much come – from friends who go away, my children leaving home, and most of all, my dear ones when you shall call them to yourself.

Then give me grace to say: "As it has pleased you, Lord, to take them home, I bow to your most holy will. And if by just one word I might restore their lives against your will, I would not speak." Grant them eternal joy.

*Mary, from the Cross you take him;
Cold and dead, his foes forsake him;
Let us still keep faith with you*

XIV Station: Jesus is Buried

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Christ speaks: So ends my mortal life.

But now another life begins for Mary, and for Magdalen,
for Peter and for John and for you.

My life's work is done. My work within and through my
church must now commence.

I look to you, my other self.

Day in, day out, from this time forth, by my apostle – victim – saint.

We reply: My Jesus, Lord, you know my spirit is as willing as my
flesh is weak.

The teaching you could not impart, the sufferings you could not
bear, the works of love you could not do in your short life on earth,
let me impart, and bear, and do through you.

But, I am nothing Lord. Help me!

*Buried in the tomb, then rising,
We, too, Lord, by our baptising,
Share your hope of victory.*

Concluding prayer

Christ Speaks: I told you at the start, my other self, my life was not
complete until I crowned it by my death. Your “way” is not
complete unless you crown it by your life.

Accept each moment as it comes to you, with faith and trust that all
that happens has my mark on it. A simple fiat, this is all it takes; a
breathing in your hear, “I will it, Lord.”

So seek me not in far off places, I am close at hand. Your workbench,
office, kitchen, these are altars where you offer love. And I am with
you there.

Go now! Take up your cross and with your life complete your way.