

Jesus Give UP

A Way of the Cross with a Difference

Introduction: Lord Jesus, too often I think of you as someone who suffered and died two thousand years ago or someone who will come to Communion or may be at the end of the world. In fact this is not correct. It is not correct to think of you as past or future. You are here with us and it is with you really present that we are going to make this painful journey. Your life was a life of loving, of giving. At the beginning you gave up all the joys and glory of heaven. All your life was a giving in some way or other and now at its climax you show how to give more completely. Help us to learn from you our duty and the beauty of giving.

1st Station: Jesus Gives up His Freedom

Your hands are tied, Lord. You have guards on all sides. You cannot go where you like, do what you like. You must do what they tell you.

Lord, whoever I am whether a school-child under teachers and parents, a young man or woman under a guardian, an adult working in school or office or factory, a priest or Religious under superiors, I must surrender some of my freedom. I must obey, I must listen to other or I cannot live. Help me to understand that by surrendering my freedom and by obedience I become truly free to know, live and to serve you and because you were obedient even to the death of the cross, I must be obedient in everything.

2nd Station: Jesus Gives up Pleasure

The Cross is a sign of pain. By taking up your cross, Lord, you renounce pleasure and take up pain. Not because pain is good but because it is necessary for your goal- the salvation of mankind.

Lord, I like my pleasures. I find it difficult to give them up. Yet I know that you have called me to follow you, to help you in saving the world, and I know that in doing this I too have to renounce pleasure and take up pain, not just in Lent but right through the year, right through my life. Give me courage to do this Lord.

3rd Station: Jesus Gives up the Ability to Walk Freely

The weight of the cross presses heavily on you. Those legs which had strode so strongly and freely across the hills of Galilee, now cannot support the weight of that shattered body and that great chunk of wood. They buckle- you collapse.

Lord, I do not properly appreciate the wonderful power you have given me of walking upright. I am often lazy and do not use my legs sufficiently. Sometimes I allow my legs to take me to places where I should not go. Let me value and use my legs as I should and if per chance you should let me loose the use of my legs, give me the courage to accept that too as you did.

4th Station: Jesus Gives up His Mother

It was actually from the cross that you formally handed your mother to us. But already in this fourth station we can imagine your crying “goodbye” to your mother, not perhaps in words but through those sad looks.

Our parents, our children, the people we love best, the people closest to us, these are persons who we find it most difficult to give up. Yet Lord, you yourself told us that we have to do this. Separation from one's parents is always painful. Yet young people have to leave home to make their way in the world, to get married, to join the priesthood or religious life; Lord, let

our giving up our loved ones be free from bitterness. Let us learn that each giving up is a coming closer to you, a more intimate experience of you.

5th Station: Jesus is Helped

Lord, your whole life was one of helping others. In your youth you help your mother and foster-father. In your public life you help people by healing them, by calming their worries, by giving them peace, by giving them new spiritual life. Now you, the most completely equipped and self-sufficient human, have to be helped by others.

Lord Jesus it is not easy for us to ask for and receive help, especially if we are independent minded. Yet we need help: we need help so badly from you, we need help from others. Help us not to shrink from asking for help especially in all spiritual and moral problems. And when we are helped, enable us to receive the help gracefully.

6th Station: Jesus Gives up His Beauty

Lord, we do not know how beautiful you were. Certainly from the photographs of the Shroud we can conclude that you have a strong face that depicted a firmness, dignity and yet gentleness. But now- bloody, bruised, scarred, caked with mud and blood and spittle you have certainly realized the prophecy of Isaiah- "There is no beauty in him – nothing that might attract us".

Lord I am often vain about my appearance. I spend a lot of time and even money sometimes trying to preserve or even improve my beauty of face and form. Let me realize that real beauty comes from the heart and the soul. However wretched I may look I will be really beautiful if I am close to you as I will share your beauty which shone through the grime and the muck which veronica wiped away. However beautiful I may appear, my beauty will be hollow, skin-deep, passing, if it does not spring from beauty of soul, leading to peace of mind.

7th Station: Jesus Gives up His Dignity

You were certainly one of the most dignified of men, Lord. Everyone, even Pilate, acknowledged that you are worthy of respect. Yet here you are groveling in the dirt and the slime, kicked by the soldiers, jeered at by the on-lookers- a worm and no man.

Lord I am very sensitive about my dignity. If anyone says a word to offend me I get annoyed and demand apologies. If anyone abuses and insults me I am furious and only too willing to retaliate. Lord Jesus let me understand from the indignities that you suffered that I become more dignified the more I resemble you; that real worth means Christ-likeness, and that if I am close to you, no insults will be able to disturb my peace. And help me respect others' dignity.

8th Station: Jesus Gives up His Friends

Surely Lord one of the bitterest blows you must have suffered was lack of consolation and comfort from your own dear ones in those last hours of agony. Simon, a stranger helps you carry your cross; Veronica another stranger wipes your face; and now these women weep in sympathy at your sufferings.

Lord, friendship and friends are some of the biggest blessings you give us. Yet sometimes it may be necessary for me to give up a friend if he or she tends to lead me on the wrong path or if I have a bad influence on him or her. Lord, let me value and use my friends properly, and give me the courage to give them up if necessary.

9th Station: Jesus Gives up the Use of His Mind

By now your vitality is low, Lord. You cannot think clearly; you cannot see clearly; you stagger and fall. You have such a fine clear intelligent mind. Now as it were, you give up the use of your mind.

Lord Jesus, my mind is really my finest gift- that which distinguishes me from animals, which enables me to be like God. Yet often I misuse my mind by thinking bad thoughts of bitterness, of envy, of anger, of lust. Even more often I waste my mental powers by indulging in trifling conversations, by reading silly, stupid and possibly dangerous books. Help me, Lord, to use my mind well by reading the right books and having the right conversations and especially by getting to know you better through mental prayer and careful reading of the Word of God.

10th Station: Jesus Gives up His Possessions

I do not suppose you possessed much in this world, Lord. Possibly your clothes were your only possessions. Now you give up even these.

Lord, I am often attached too much to my possessions, to my wealth, to clothes, books, jewellery, stereo set, T.V., cell phone... Help me to realize that though these may be useful and even necessary, too much attachment to them will be harmful and keep me from you- my only real worth-while possession. Help me to be detached from creatures so that I may be really free to leap to my Creator.

11th Station: Jesus Gives up His Rights

A criminal nailed to the cross has no rights. He has forfeited all his rights. You Lord, forfeited nothing but you gave up everything freely.

Lord, I have rights. I have a right to my freedom, to my good name, to a just wage, to choose my way in life, to be married. Yet it is good and proper that I should surrender some of these rights for a greater or lesser time. Let me do it freely as you did and joyfully to save the world.

12th Station: Jesus Gives up His Life

As the last drop of blood and water flowed from your side, as the last anguished cry was wrung from your lips, you have given up everything- your strength, your body, mind and soul.

Lord, in the collections in the Church we give some money. We are willing, most of us, to give a little. Some of us may give more but how few, how very few of us are willing to give all. Lord, help us to respond to your generosity to us by being ready to give all for you, to do anything for you

13th Station: Jesus Gives up the World

When you were on the cross, Lord, you may have been dying in agony, shattered, beaten, but at least you were ours. We had you, give what comfort we could. Now you are gone and what is left? Strangely something more precious than your bodily, physical presence, I do not mean your shattered corpse but your spiritual presence through your Spirit you continues and perpetuates your work.

Help me to appreciate your Spirit and rely on Him and to seek His aid.

14th Station: Jesus Gives up Failure

Lord Jesus, if I would be honest I would have to say that your Life on earth was a failure. You failed to convert your own people, the Jews; you failed even to convince or to train properly your own closest disciples. What is left now? No records, no glory, only a criminal's

death on the cross. But Lord, death and failure could not hold you. On Sunday morning you will rise again, triumphant over sin and failure and all the evil that man encounters.

Lord Jesus, often we are discouraged. Sometimes we are near to despair. We are oppressed and depressed by our sins, by the evil of the world; by debts and expenses; by cruelty, injustice and disaster. We feel like giving up; our whole life seems to us a failure. Then, Lord, let us think of this fourteenth station and remember that we have victory when we dedicate our life to you and live in accordance to your will. For you paid the price for us. Your victory is OURS!

Conclusion

Lord Jesus, we have accompanied you on your painful way of the Cross. Let us hope that we are aware now that being a Christian is not easy. Being a Christian is not basting a Christian name, going to church and saying certain prayers. Being a Christian means being a Christ Person. It means getting close to you, imitating you in your life of loving, of giving, of serving, or renunciation. If we make no attempt to do this- however Christian our names may be, however high our status in or outside the Church, we are not Christians. In so far as we do this we are Christians. Help us, Lord to be your true disciples.