



GOOD FRIDAY THE
PASSION OF THE
LORD

**THE WAY OF THE
CROSS - LED BY HIS
HOLINESS POPE
FRANCIS**

COLOSSEUM ROME,
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**MEDITATIONS AND
PRAYERS**

prepared by

- I a young married couple
- II a missionary family
- III an elderly couple without children
- IV a large family
- V a family with a disabled child
- VI a family managing a home for families
- VII a family with an ill parent
- VIII a couple of grandparents
- IX an adoptive family
- X a widow with children
- XI a family with a consecrated child
- XII a family that lost a child
- XIII a Ukrainian family and a Russian family
- XIV a family of migrants

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Song

The Holy Father:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
R/. Amen.

Opening Prayer

The reader:

Lord Jesus,
on this day hallowed by your Passion,
we lift our voices to you,
confident that you will hear our prayer.
We bless you, for you are the source of our life.
You took upon yourself our sufferings
and by your holy Cross you redeemed the world.
We believe that by your wounds we are healed,
that you do not abandon us in times of trial,
that your Gospel is true wisdom.
We see your tortured body in so many of our brothers and sisters:
in those persecuted, the violence you endured;
in the agony of those put to death, your abandonment.
You who chose to live in a family,
look with kindness upon our families,
hear our prayers,
listen to our complaints,
bless our plans and resolves,
accompany us on our journey,
reassure us in our doubts,
console our hurt feelings,
give us the courage to love,
bestow the grace of forgiveness,
make all families open to the needs of others.

Lord Jesus,
crucified and risen from the dead,
may we not let ourselves be robbed

of the hope of a new humanity,
of new heavens and a new earth,
where you will wipe away the tears from every eye,
where pain and mourning will be no more,
for the old things will have passed away
and we will be one great family
in your home of love and peace.
Amen.

First Station **The agony of Jesus in the garden of olives**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

They went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this chalice from me; yet not what I will, but what you will". (Mark 14:32-36)

Here we are, married for just two years. Our marriage has not yet been through many storms. The pandemic complicated things a bit, but we are happy. Ours seems to be a long honeymoon, despite our daily bickering. Despite our differences. Yet often we are afraid. When we think of couples among our friends who did not make it. When we read in the newspapers that separations are on the rise. When they tell us that surely we will break up because that is how things are nowadays; it is a matter of statistics. When we feel alone because we do not understand each other. When we struggle to make it to the end of the month. When we feel more like strangers living under the same roof. When we wake up at night and feel in our hearts the burden and anguish of being "orphaned". That is because we forget that we are sons and daughters. Because we think that our marriage and our family depend only on us, on our own efforts. We are

coming to realize that marriage is not only a romantic adventure; it is also Gethsemane: the anguish we feel before breaking our body for the other.

Lord Jesus, you experienced fear and anguish.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You prayed in the hour of trial.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You call us to watch and pray with you.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,

among the peaceful olive trees

you accepted in prayer

to suffer for us even to death, death on a cross.

Hear our prayers for newly married couples.

Help them to face hardships in union with you

and grant that we may all remain with you in the hour of trial.

You who live and reign forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

Second Station

Jesus is betrayed by Judas and abandoned by his disciples

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus and kissed him; but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?" And when those who were about him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him (Luke 22:47-50). Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword

will perish by the sword..." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. (Matthew 26:52-56)

We left on mission, Lord, almost ten years ago, because our own happiness was not enough. We wanted to offer our life together, so that others could experience that same joy. We wanted to show Christ's love also to those who do not know him. No matter where. Life in community and our everyday activities have helped us raise our children with an open attitude towards life and the world. Yet it is not easy: we do not hide the anguish and fear of leading an uncertain family life far from our country. Added to this is the terror of war that we have felt so dramatically present in these months. It is not easy to live by faith and charity alone, for often we fail to entrust ourselves completely to God's providence. Sometimes, faced with the pain and suffering of a mother who died while giving birth as bombs were falling, or of a family destroyed by war or hunger or injustice, the temptation is to respond with the sword, to flee, to become despondent, to give up and leave it all behind, thinking it is not worth the effort... But this would mean betraying the poorest of our brothers and sisters, who are your flesh in the world and who remind us that you are the Living One.

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed with a kiss.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You were abandoned by the disciples.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You experienced loneliness and humiliation.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you responded with love
to Judas's kiss of betrayal.
Hear our prayers.
Grant to missionary families
the courage to bear witness to your Gospel.
Help all of us to answer evil with good,

and to be builders of peace and reconciliation.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/.Amen.

Third Station **Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am!" And they all condemned him as deserving death. (Mark 14:55.61-62.64)

We were engaged just a few months; then life separated us for a long time, forcing us to experience the anxious longing of hearts that beat together from afar. Once reunited, we married immediately, with the haste of those who had waited impatiently for all too long. We left our parents' homes to create a home of our own. We embarked on our journey as spouses, full of the dreams and illusions of youth. Then life showed us our limitations and changed our expectations, leading us on an uphill road until finally we had to face the fact that it would not be possible for us to become parents. Often too, we found ourselves hurt by negative comments and judgements. We were asked a thousand times, "Why don't you have children?", as if our marriage and our love were not enough to make us a family. How many unsympathetic glances we had to endure. Yet we continue to move ahead every day, holding hands, caring together for a community of brothers, sisters and friends that, amid moments of loneliness and consolation, has become over time a home and a family.

Lord Jesus, you suffered unjust condemnation.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You endured innuendos and accusations.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You, though innocent, experienced persecution.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you were condemned unjustly.
Hear our prayer.
Grant that childless couples
may persevere, always holding hands,
in living the sacrament of conjugal love to the full.
Help all of us to endure adversity with gentleness and strength.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Fourth Station Peter denies Jesus

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the maids of the high priest came; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus". But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean". And immediately the cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times". And he broke down and wept. (Mark 14:66-68.72)

When we married, we thought we would not be able to have children. Then, on our honeymoon, the first child arrived and it changed our lives. We had planned to take things slower: to find fulfilment in work, to travel, to try to live as if we were eternally dating. Yet even as we were marvelling at the beauty of this gift, the second child came: a little girl. As we look back on it now, the others arrived the same way, almost without our noticing it. And our dreams? They were shaped by events. Our professional fulfilment? Changed by the facts of life that burst upon us. And then the fear that one day we might be tempted to give up on it all, like Peter, in the face of anxiety, discouragement before yet another unexpected expense, or worry

about tensions with teenage children. Our former desires yielded to our family. It is not easy, to be sure, but it is infinitely more beautiful this way. And despite our worries and our very full days, which always seem to pass too quickly, we would never think of going back.

Lord Jesus, you dried Peter's tears.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You forgive those who acknowledge that they have sinned.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You understand our doubts.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you open your arms to embrace all who beg forgiveness.
Hear our prayer.
Grant that large families
may overcome with joy whatever hardships they may face,
and that all of us may rise again after every fall.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Fifth Station Jesus is judged by Pilate

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?". And they cried out again, "Crucify him!". And Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?". But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!". So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. (Mark 15:12-15)

Our son was already judged before he came into the world. We met doctors who cared for his life in the womb, and doctors who clearly communicated that it was better that he not be born. When we chose life, we also were judged. We were told: "He will be a burden to you and to society". "Crucify him". Yet he had done no wrong. How often the world's judgement is hasty and superficial, and can hurt us even by a glance. We bear the shame of being different; often we elicit more sympathy than real understanding. Disability is not a badge or a label; instead it is the garb of a soul that frequently prefers to be silent in the face of unjust judgments, not out of shame but out of mercy towards those who do the judging. We are not immune from the cross of doubt or from the temptation to wonder how it would be if things had gone differently. Disability is a condition; it does not define us. And the soul, thanks be to God, knows no barriers.

Lord Jesus, you looked with love upon your enemies.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You did not fear those who can kill the body but not life.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You judge with merciful love.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you were judged in the eyes of the world.
Hear our prayers
for families with suffering children.
Grant them consolation in their struggles.
May all of us choose, cherish and love life,
always and in every situation.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Sixth Station
Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Pilate, after having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!". And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. (Mark 15:15.17-19)

Our house is large, not only in terms of space, but above all for the wealth of humanity it contains. From the beginning of our marriage, it was never just the two of us. Our vocation to accept suffering was, and still is, anything but sad – even after forty-two years of marriage, three biological children, nine grandchildren and five adopted children who are not self-sufficient and have serious mental health issues. We do not deserve a life so full of blessings. Those who are convinced that it is inhumane to abandon a suffering person find themselves moved by the Holy Spirit to act and not to remain indifferent and aloof. Suffering changed us. Suffering brings us back to what is essential; it sets life's priorities in order and it makes us appreciate the dignity of every man and woman. Along the way of the cross experienced by those who are scourged and crucified in our world, we discovered at their side and beneath the weight of their cross, that the true King is the one who gives of himself and is given as food, body and soul.

Lord Jesus, you were scourged in body and spirit.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

Though innocent, you experienced suffering.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You were humiliated, insulted and crowned with thorns.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you endured suffering and contempt.

Hear our prayer.
Grant that our families
may learn to welcome those who are suffering,
and that all of us may accept our responsibility
to care for those experiencing pain and sorrow.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Seventh Station Jesus carries his cross

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

When they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20)

One morning, like many others, my wife passed out twice. We rushed to the hospital and discovered a disease in her brain that was already spreading. Then, the operation, rehabilitation, and continuing care. Today our daily life is completely changed. The Lord speaks to us through events we do not always understand, takes us by the hand and guides us to develop our better selves. My wife had a job, a position, a “garment” to wear, and she suddenly found herself completely changed. Naked, defenceless, crucified. And I with her. As a result of this disease, this cross, we became a pillar on which our children know they can lean. It was not like that before. I could almost say that now, with her eyes beholding their raw pain, she is fully a mother and wife. Without frills, in the simplicity of a new and more difficult life. Feeling helpless, pinned down by incessant worry, has also forced me, who was so stubbornly proud, to discover in other families the wonderful gift that they are: those who try to make you laugh, who help you with the cooking, who take your children to catechism, who listen to you, who give you an understanding look and who, despite equally if not more complicated situations, are constantly concerned for you.

Lord Jesus, you did not seek worldly honours.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You bore the burdens of all men and women.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You embraced the heavy wood of the Cross.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you made the instrument of death
an inexhaustible fountain of life.
Hear our prayers.
Grant that children may care for their parents,
watching over them with gratitude,
and that all of us may learn from you
the joy of loving and of generous self-giving.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Eighth Station **Simon the Cyrenean helps Jesus to carry the cross**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

We retired two years ago, and just as we began to think about how we could use our newfound energy, we learned that our son-in-law had lost his job. During the pandemic, we watched helplessly as our eldest daughter's marriage went through a crisis. Then our grandchildren began to fill our home with liveliness and chaos – and not just on Sundays – in a way that had not happened since our own three children were small. We put a child seat in the car, and bought a blackboard in order to write down our five grandchildren's appointments in case we forgot something. While we don't have the strength we used to, our wealth of experience makes us approach

life more calmly than when we had the energy to be rushing about. We feel the weight of the cross of insecurity about the future of family and work. At this time of life, when we would naturally worry about our own flagging strength and the undeniable fear of death, an unexpected cross has been placed upon our shoulders. We are slowing down and in the evenings, we laugh but we also find ourselves weeping with compassion. Yet being “oxygen” for our children’s families is a gift that brings back the feelings we had when they were little. You never stop being a mother and a father.

Lord Jesus, you endured the weight of the cross.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You place us under the judgement of your cross.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You ask us to take up our cross and follow you.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you call us to carry each other’s burdens.
Listen to our prayers.
Grant that our families may learn
to share their joys and their fears,
so that all of us can practise genuine fraternity.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Ninth Station **Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children”. (Luke 23:27-28)

Now there are four of us. For many years there were two of us, and we faced the cross of loneliness and the realization that we would become parents in a way far different from what we had always imagined. Adoption is the story of a life marked by the pain of loss healed by acceptance. But the pain never fully heals. Adoption is a cross that parents and children carry together on their shoulders, bearing it, trying to alleviate the pain but also embracing it as part of the child's life. Still, it hurts to see children suffer because of their past. It hurts to keep trying to love them without being able to make a dent in their pain. We have adopted one another. Every single day, though, we wake up knowing it was worth it; that all our efforts are not in vain; that this cross, for all its pain, hides a secret happiness.

Lord Jesus, you received the look of the women of Jerusalem.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You washed away people's tears and consoled their hearts.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You endured the way of the cross with courage.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you went to meet the cross
with open eyes and a ready heart.
Hear our prayer.
Grant that parents and their adopted children
may grow together as welcoming families
and that we all help bring joy to our neighbour.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Tenth Station Jesus is crucified

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews". (Luke 23:33-38)

We are a mother and two children. For over seven years now, we have been a chair with three legs instead of four: good and beautiful, even if a little unstable. Every family, even the most lopsided, hurting, strange and incomplete, finds its deepest meaning beneath the cross. Ours too. We have experienced, not without tears and pain, that Jesus, embracing the wood of the cross, looks at us and never abandons us.

His is not simply the generic love of a creator for his creatures. He also commends us to a friend, a mother, a son, a brother. And to a Church that, for all her faults, stretches out a hand and, however impossible it may seem, at times bears the burden for us, allowing us occasionally to catch our breath. Love multiplies because it is freely given, even at those times when I am tempted to ask the question: "If he saved others... if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one", could he not have saved my husband too? But Jesus' wounds on the cross become a treasure, a source of new and closer bonds and relationships. Love becomes real, because, in the abyss of our pain and amid our hardships, we know that we have not been abandoned.

Lord Jesus, you stretched out your arms on the cross.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You refrained from saving yourself in order to save us.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You forgave your murderers.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
with your arms outstretched on the cross,
you embrace all who are alone or abandoned.
Hear our prayers.
Grant that families suffering the loss of a parent
may know your closeness in their sorrow,
and that all of us may learn to weep with those who weep.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Eleventh Station **Jesus promises the Kingdom to the good thief**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. One of the criminals said to him, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power". And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise". (Luke 23:33.42-43)

Only now can we laugh as we recall all the expectations we had for our son. We raised him to be happy and to have a fulfilling life. We had hoped that he would follow his grandfather's footsteps. Yes, perhaps, we wanted a very different life for him: a family, a job, children, grandchildren. In short, a "normal" life. We had already lived his life for him. But then you came and you upset everything. You swept away our dreams for something greater. You made sure that his life did not take the usual path and you called him to yourself. But why? Why him? Why our son? At first, we did not take it well. We argued with him. We turned away from him. We believed that our coolness would make him retrace his steps. We tried to plant doubt in his mind about whether he was taking the wrong path, like those two thieves. But we came to realize that no one can fight with you. We are a glass of water and you are the sea. We are a spark and you are the fire. And now, like the good thief, we too ask you to remember us when you come into your Kingdom.

Lord Jesus, you died as a criminal.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You transformed the cross into a royal throne.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You opened for us the doors of the paradise lost.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you revealed to us the mysteries of your kingdom,
where the greatest is the one who serves.
Hear our prayers.
Guide parents to encourage the vocation of their children
and help all of us to be your faithful disciples.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Twelfth Station **Jesus entrusts his Mother to the beloved disciple**

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his home. (John 19:25-27)

There were five of us in our family: myself, my husband and our three children. Five years ago, life got complicated. A diagnosis that was hard to accept, a form of cancer that showed every minute on the face of our youngest daughter. An illness which didn't stop her from smiling, but which

made the horrible injustice we were experiencing all the more painful. Then, to add insult to injury, my husband died suddenly after six years of marriage, thus plunging us into a period of excruciating loneliness, during which, two years later, we accompanied our little girl to her grave. Five years have passed since the beginning of this turn of events, which we have been absolutely unable to grasp rationally, yet we are certain that the Lord was, and continues to be, present in this great cross. "God does not call those who are strong, but he strengthens those whom he calls". That is what a nun told us one day, and those words have changed our outlook on life in recent years. The biggest falsehood we had to fight was the thought that we were no longer a family. I know no other way to deal with my heartbreak and my searing pain, other than to entrust myself to the Lord who walks beside me on this earthly journey. Many times, during my daughter's chemo sessions, I felt like Mary beneath the cross; and it is that experience that makes me feel today – even if only a little – like the mother of my Lord.

Lord Jesus, you knew the pangs of love.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You did not give death the last word.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You gave us your own Mother as a testament.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
before your dying breath, you gave us your Mother
and commended us to her care.

Hear our prayer.

Grant that families experiencing the death of a child
may cherish the grace received in the gift of their life.

May all of us, strengthened by the Spirit, be conformed to your will.

You who live and reign forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

Thirteenth Station Jesus dies on cross

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.

R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And one of the bystanders ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down". And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. (Mark 15:34.36-37)

Death everywhere. Life that seems to lose its value. Everything changes in a few seconds. Our life, our days, the carefree winter snow, bringing the children to school, work, embraces, friendships... everything. Everything suddenly loses meaning and value. "Where are you Lord? Where are you hiding? We want our life back as before. Why all of this? What wrong did we do? Why have you forsaken us? Why have you forsaken our peoples? Why did you break up our families like this? Why do we no longer have the desire to dream and to go on living? Why has my land become as dark as Golgotha?" We have no tears left. Anger has given way to resignation. We know that you love us, Lord, but we don't feel this love and it drives us to desperation. We wake up in the morning and feel happy for a few moments, but then we suddenly think how difficult it will be to reconcile ourselves to all this. Lord where are you? Speak to us amid the silence of death and division, and teach us to be peacemakers, brothers and sisters, and to rebuild what bombs tried to destroy.

Lord Jesus, you loved us to the end.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

By dying, you destroyed death.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

Breathing your last, you gave us life.

R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:

Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
your pierced side
became the wellspring of reconciliation for all peoples.
Hear our humble prayer.
Grant that families devastated by tears and blood
may believe in the power of forgiveness
and make us all builders of peace and harmony.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Fourteenth Station
The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb

V/. Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi.
R/. Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.

Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher. (Matthew 27:59-61)

Now we are here. We have died to our past. We wanted to live in our own land but war prevented that. It is difficult for a family to have to choose between its dreams and its freedom, between its hopes and survival. We are here after travels in which we witnessed the death of women and children, friends, brothers and sisters. We are here, the survivors. We are perceived as a burden. At home, we were important, but here we are numbers, categories and statistics. And yet we are much more than just migrants. We are persons. We came here for the sake of our children. Each day we die for them so that they can try to live a normal life, without bombs, without bloodshed, without persecution. We are Catholics but even this seems less important than the fact that we are migrants. If we do not give up, it is because we know that the great stone at the entrance of the tomb will one day be rolled away.

Lord Jesus, you were lowered from the cross by kindly hands.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You were buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

You did not know the corruption of the tomb.
R/. Dona nobis pacem.

All:
Our Father...

Lord Jesus,
you descended into hell
to free Adam and Eve and their children from their ancient captivity.
Hear our prayers for the families of migrants.
Rescue them from the deadly pain of isolation,
and grant that all of us may see you in every person,
in every one of our beloved brothers and sisters.
You who live and reign forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Final Prayer

The Holy Father:

Merciful Father,
you make your sun rise on both good and bad alike.
Do not abandon the work of your hands,
for which you did not hesitate
to deliver your only Son,
born of the Virgin
and crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He died and was buried in the heart of the earth.
He was raised from the dead on the third day,
and appeared to Mary Magdalene,
to Peter and to the other apostles and disciples.
He lives forever in holy Church,
his living Body in the world.

Keep alight in our families
the lamp of the Gospel,
which illumines our joys and sorrows, our struggles and our hopes:
May every home reflect the face of the Church,

whose supreme law is love.
By the outpouring of your Spirit,
help us to cast aside the old man,
corrupted by illusory passions.
Clothe us in the new man,
created in justice and holiness.
Take us by the hand, like a Father, lest we stray from you.
Turn our rebellious hearts to your own heart,
so that we may learn to pursue plans of peace.
Inspire adversaries to shake hands,
and taste mutual forgiveness.
Disarm the hand of brother raised against brother,
so that where there is hatred, concord may flourish.
Grant that we never act as enemies of the cross of Christ,
so that we may share in the glory of his resurrection.

He lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

APOSTOLIC BLESSING

The Holy Father:

The Lord be with you.
R/. And with your spirit.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.
R/. Now and forever.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

May Almighty God bless you,
the Father (+) and the Son (+) and the Holy Spirit.
R/. Amen.