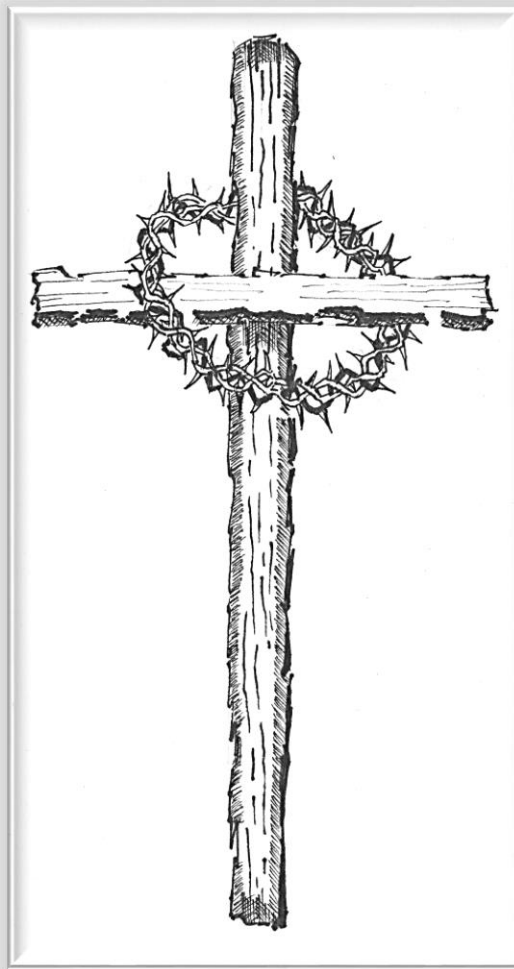


The Way of the Cross
With
Saint Francis de Sales



INTRODUCTION

The following is a reflection on the Stations of the Cross combining various passages from Scripture, excerpts from the works of St. Francis de Sales, and individual prayers. It is our hope, in preparing these 'Stations,' to encourage personal reading and reflection of both Scripture and our beloved saint's writings.

These Stations are personal and are offered as a way of sharing the reality of the Passion of Christ today, in the daily routine and distractions of life. They were written out of a deep love and respect for Jesus as he revealed himself in the loving optimism of St. Francis de Sales.

Salesian wisdom/spirituality calls forth our best and most confident faith in Jesus who loves us and who wishes to perfect the work begun in us when He created us. Francis assures us in true liberty of spirit that we are not all alike nor is there one single approved way of loving God. The following selections are intended to encourage thought, to appreciate the living Word of God as eternally fresh, and to prompt us to pray with confident hearts.

All of us are students of the living Word of God whenever we open the Bible. There are countless stories in Scripture that may apply in a unique way to any of the Stations. The same invitation applies to the readings from St. Francis. Our world is blessed to have so many of his writings. All are rich in wisdom and spiritual advice, as current today as when first written. A fifteenth Station has been added by Pope John Paul II, the Resurrection of Jesus, because we are Easter people who believe that He is risen and is with us always.

Prayers offered here are just "prayer starters," meant to stimulate reflection and to act as a starting point for a private conversation with the Lord. You may decide to read and reflect on these Stations at one sitting or to approach them one or two at a time over the course of Lent.

If read individually, anyone may replace these reflections or any Scripture passage cited with one more suited to his or her spiritual taste. Groups may decide to sing between Stations, perhaps verses from the *Stabat Mater*, or *Jesus, Remember Me*, etc. Some may prefer a muted, recorded chant in the background...or silence.

In our hurried culture, it is strongly recommended that there be sufficient pauses between the readings and the reflections, moments for meditative prayer. Perhaps a silent, well-paced *Hail Mary* or *Glory Be* between readings would be helpful to keep a group together in thought and word.

Depending on your preferences, or those of a group, alternate readings from the Scripture and St. Francis de Sales may help stimulate a rhythmic flow leading to reflective individual prayer. If the Stations are prayed by a group, perhaps those assembled can take turns reading the prayer reflections aloud. As St. Francis reminds us so often, it is always permissible to stay with thoughts that are spiritually helpful to us, to pick one or two blossoms to take with us from this garden ... no hurry. Do not think of this as a task to be accomplished, but more as an oasis of graced time shared with Our Lord at a pace that

suits our own hearts and needs.

Be blessed in your reading and your reflections. Trust completely in the Lord's love for you. Let us all be who we are—always being called to be by the One who knows us best.



I.

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?’ The crowd all said, ‘Let him be crucified!’ But he said, ‘Why? What evil has he done?’ They only shouted the louder, ‘Let him be crucified!’ Matthew 27:23

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM “THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE”

“Consider how uncertain is the day of your own death.”

“My soul, one day you will leave this body. When will it be? In winter or in summer? In the city or in the country? By day or by night? From sickness or by accident? Will you have time to make your confession or not?” IDL, Pt 1, 5th Meditation on Death

PRAYER: Jesus, you are wholly innocent and yet be-trayed by people who know you, who've heard you speak, who've felt your healing and compassion. What are they thinking? In the roar of this moment, they do not think. They react. When I react and refuse to think, jumping to conclusions, saying hurtful things, when I am unforgiving and unloving, I too side with darkness. My sins cloud the reality of the kingdom you want us all to be part of. Forgive me, I need you so.

II.

JESUS ACCEPTS HIS CROSS

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

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

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Your mind must be the same as Christ's. Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, and taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-7

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM "THE SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FOR LENT"

"Our Lord so loved patience that He wished to become its mirror and pattern."

"He endured scourging and ill treatment with sorrowing patience; He [endured] so many blasphemies, so many [insults], without saying a word. [The person] who desires to be humble must be patient enough to endure the contempt, the censure, the [misunderstanding] that the humble suffer. Likewise, he who desires to be patient must be humble, because one cannot long [tolerate] the...adversities of this life without the humility which makes us gentle and patient."

PRAAYER:

Jesus, you know my pride, my quick temper and impatience, my need to assert myself, to offer advice, to speak more than to be silent. You know I'm often irritable and confused. And I'm afraid of pain and loneliness. There are crosses in my life that I could carry more quietly. Help me accept the cross that is most unwanted, most unexpected, the one that hurts and scares me most. Help me to shoulder that cross and follow you.

III.

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, ‘All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.’ At this, Jesus said to him, ‘Get away, Satan! It is written: ‘The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.’ Matthew 4:8-10

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM “THE SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FOR LENT”

“How frightful and dangerous are the falls from the mountains. As soon as one begins to fall, one rolls inexorably to the very bottom of the precipice.”

“Such have been the falls of several who fell away from the service of God. Frightening indeed that after a good beginning, even after having lived thirty or forty years in this holy service....one flings himself into the abyss and loses all.” P. 192

PRAAYER:

Jesus, your fall is accidental, caused by pain, the weight on your shoulders, the blood-soaked stones beneath your feet. I fall, however, when I choose myself and not you, when I want my way, my terms, my “rights”. My sin pushes you to your knees in an agony of injustice. You are all good and I, who claim to love you, live as though I can choose to be good selectively, when it costs me little. The tempter knows me well. Help me not to look away from the shame of this revelation—and to mend my selfish habits.

IV.

JESUS MEETS MARY, HIS MOTHER

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law, Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: ‘Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation which was prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.’ The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Luke 2:27-35

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM “THE SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FOR LENT”

“The sacred Virgin knew that Our Lord, in giving her St. John for her son, was giving her as Mother to all Christians...”

“She loved this holy Apostle with great love, but not in the same way she loved her divine Son. Him she loved...also as her God. What great love that Virgin’s most holy heart had for that of Our Lord! [The] pain in leaving Him and seeing Him die, the pain of being deprived of His bodily presence, was unspeakable.” p.198

PRAYER:

Holy Mary, how did you endure this, remembering Simeon’s mysterious words, the baby you had cradled, the child who ran to you in laughter and tears, the boy who worked happily beside his foster father, the youngster you found in the Temple astonishing his elders with wisdom beyond his years? This amazing man you knew in your deepest heart

to be God's own self in human form. His body was entrusted to you to love and protect. Holy Mary, thank you for being my spiritual mother. Help me in moments of darkness and dread to place my hand in yours and walk the path ahead, especially when I'm fearful...

V.

SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, 'You too were with Jesus the Galilean.' But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, 'I do not know what you are talking about!' As he went out to the gate another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarean.' Again he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man!' A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, 'Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.' At that he began to curse and to swear, 'I do not know the man,' and immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: 'Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.' He went out and began to weep bitterly. Matthew 26:69-

75

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM "THE SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FOR LENT"

"[When] our Lord announced to His Apostles how He was to suffer death, St. Peter, quick to speak but faint-hearted and cowardly in acting, boasted: 'For my part, I will never abandon You....'

“The more our Lord expounded on the greatness of His afflictions, the more did St. Peter passionately insist that he would do as much. But how well he realized how completely deceptive had been his words when he found himself, at the time of his Savior’s Passion, craven with fear and timidity.... It would have been much better for poor St. Peter to keep humble, relying on the power of Our Lord, than to trust vainly in the fervor he felt at the time.” p. 23

PRAYER:

I ponder the name “Simon” in this account. A total stranger, called out of the shoving crowd, commanded by soldiers to help a condemned man bear the weight of a heavy cross. Did you hear this man’s name, Lord? Did you think, perhaps, as the cross was placed on this Simon’s shoulders of the journey ahead for your cherished Peter? When I betray you, Lord, recall the dream you have for my soul and expand my vision to recognize, thank and forgive the Simons in my life.

VI.

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Pharisee invited him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment... [Jesus] said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’ Luke 7:36-38,48,50

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM THE "TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD"

"When we see our neighbor, created to the image and likeness of God, should we not ...give him a thousand blessings?"

"Why? [Because] it is for love of God who made him in God's own image and likeness and thus capable of sharing in God's goodness.... [It] is because of our love of God that we offer our goodwill, our service, our helping hands to make God's love visible to others through us."

Bk10, ch11

PRAYER:

Throughout these forty days, upon rising, I will take time to thank God for the gift of my life. I will focus on the wonder of breath, of breathing, and pray that my mind and heart will be open to the unfolding day. With my Lord's help, I will strive to be kind and encouraging, to keep critical remarks unspoken, to be more life-giving. I do not know the crosses that others bear, but will recall the kindness of St. Veronica and offer what I can in blessing to someone else, even if only momentarily. Thank you, Lord, for placing so many opportunities to be truly aware of the needs of others in my small life.

VII.

JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Jesus--fully aware that he had come from God and was going to God, the Father who had handed everything over to him—rose from the meal and took off his cloak. He picked up a towel and tied it around himself. Then he poured water into a basin, knelt and began to wash his disciples' feet and dry them with the towel he had around him. John 13: 3-5

Pause for a moment before continuing.

FROM THE "TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD"

"See, then, how the eternal Father draws us: even as he teaches us he gives us delight and does not impose a band of necessity upon us."

"He injects spiritual delights and pleasures into our hearts. They are like holy enticements whereby he gently draws us on to take and taste the sweetness of his doctrine." Book 2, Ch. 12

PRAYER:

Jesus, you fall a second time and I recall that you knelt deliberately before your disciples that last evening, serving them for the last time by washing their feet—such a personal act. They were mystified and upset by what you were attempting to show them. You were calling them—us—to imitate you in *all* things, even to forfeiting our egos, our roles, even our choices, expectations and preferences. Through vivid example you teach that we are to serve our human family, regardless of the cost to our dignity and social status. I am as mystified as your disciples because you urge me to hollow out my heart to make room for people I barely know—or care to know. How can I do this? And yet, when I forget myself and inwardly kneel beside you in service to another, I feel your strength. Help me to kneel beside you today and every day....

VIII.

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

[Jesus told them this parable] "The reign of God can be likened to ten bridesmaids who took their torches and went out to welcome the groom. Five of them were foolish, while the other five were sensible. The foolish ones, in taking their torches, brought no oil along, but the sensible ones took flasks of oils as well as their torches." Matthew 25:1-4

Pause for a moment before continuing.

FROM THE "TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD"

"We have two principal ways of exercising our love for God ... the first is affective and the second effective ..."

"By the first we have affection for God and what he loves; by the second we serve God and do what he ordains. The first joins us to God's goodness; the second enables us to fulfill his will. The first enables us to find pleasure in God; the second makes us pleasing to God." TLG Bk 6, Ch. 1

PRAYER:

Who were these women of Jerusalem, Lord? Do I have a spark of their courage? These nameless women knew their love for you was returned and yearned to be near you in your suffering. These helpless, faithful disciples, offering only their tears, came despite danger, humiliation and scorn--for love of you. Faith in your divine words was the oil in their inner lamps, unquenchable faith. Did the light of that faith strengthen you, even for a moment? O Jesus, when I am tested, make my faith as complete as these weeping sentinels on Calvary who loved you so.

IX.

JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A good man produces goodness from the good in his heart; an evil man produces evil out of his store of evil. Each man speaks from his heart's abundance. Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not put into practice what I teach you? [Anyone] who has heard my words but not put them into practice is like the man who built his house on sand, without any foundation. When the torrent rushed upon it, it immediately fell in and was destroyed. Luke 6:45-49

Pause for a moment before continuing.

FROM "THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE"

"Consider various parts of your [resolutions]."

"The first is that you have given up, cast away, detested, and renounced forever all mortal sin; the second, that you have dedicated and consecrated your soul, heart, body, and all their faculties to God's love and service; the third, that if you happen to fall into any evil deed, you will immediately rise up again by the help of God's grace. Reflect carefully within your soul on how holy, reasonable, and desirable this [resolution] is." IDL, Pt.5

PRAYER:

As you fell that last time Lord, did you glimpse the avalanche of sin rushing through the future centuries? I shudder to think you felt even the weight of my neglected resolutions. Empty promises, shallow commitments, the memory of which torment me now. Forgive me, my dearest Lord, as I resolve to get up and begin again.

X.

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

[Jesus taught] "To you who hear me, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you. When someone slaps you on one cheek, turn and give him the other; when someone takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. ... Do to others what you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you. Even sinners love those who love them."
Luke 6: 27-33

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM "THE LENTEN SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES"

"All are sinners, but not all are to be silent and refrain from teaching God's word, but only those who live a life wholly contrary to this divine word."

"Yet even if this word is preached to us by evildoers, we ought not reject it, but accept it... Let us not consider the goodness or its absence in one who is our preacher or teacher, but only what he says to us. God's word is not made good or bad because of him who explains or teaches it." pp. 148, 150

PRAYER:

Your Church, our church, has suffered deeply from the sins of some who once publicly consecrated their lives to you, and who were welcomed into religious life. Their very clothing signified perpetual vows of fidelity. Many who wear these garments of consecration endure scorn because of the failings of those who rejected the two great commandments...Despite these terrible falls from grace, you, Lord, have the words of eternal life, there is no one else. In this holy season, I promise to be more faithful to your Gospel. Perhaps in some small way to atone for the pain of all who have been harmed by those who should have loved them.

XI.

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK

When they brought Jesus to the site of Golgotha (which means 'Skull Place'), they tried to give him wine drugged with myrrh, but he would not take it. Then they crucified him and divided up his garments by rolling dice for them to see what each should take. It was about nine in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription proclaiming his offense read, 'The King of the Jews.'

With him they crucified two insurgents, one at his right and one at his left. People going by kept insulting him, tossing their heads and saying 'So you were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Save yourself now by coming down from the cross!' The chief priests and the scribes also joined in and jeered: 'He saved others but he cannot save himself! Let the 'Messiah,' 'the king of Israel' come down from that cross here and now so that we can see it and believe in him!' Matt 15:22-32

Pause for a moment before continuing

FROM "THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE"

"[Devotion] does not consist in the sweetness, delight, consolation, and ...tenderness of heart that move us to tears and sighs...when we perform various spiritual exercises."

"[Similarly], some men think about God's goodness and our Savior's passion, feel great tenderness of heart, and are thus aroused to utter sighs, tears, and prayers, and acts of thanksgiving so ardently that we say their hearts have been filled with intense devotion. But when a test comes, we see how different it is. [So] also these tender tears fall on a vicious heart but do not penetrate inside and are therefore completely useless..." IDL, Part 4, 1

PRAYER:

When I hold tightly to resentments and grudges, when I take some pleasure in the misfortune of another (assuring myself that they 'deserve' it), when I weary of giving to another charity, when I avoid a good work because someone I don't like might be present, when I indulge myself with too much television, food, excuses, I cannot rightly call myself your disciple. Help me to start again, heart to heart, with less emphasis on outward devotion than on being truly, humbly obedient to all you place before me--regardless of the cost.

XII.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

It was now around midday, and darkness came over the whole land until mid-afternoon with an eclipse of the sun. The curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two. Jesus uttered a loud cry and said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

After he said this, he expired.

The centurion, upon seeing what had happened, gave glory to God by saying, ‘Surely this was an innocent man.’” Luke 23:44-45

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM “THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE”

“[It] is certain that on the tree of the Cross the Heart of Jesus, our beloved, beheld your heart and loved it.”

“By the love he bore it he obtained every good that you shall ever have, among others *our resolutions*. [We] may all say with the prophet Jeremias, ‘O lord, before I was you beheld me and called me by my name.’ ... [Our] Lord’s bounty is fruitful and heavy with you and he plans to bring you forth to salvation and make you his child; he prepared on the tree of the cross whatever was necessary for you....”

Pt 5, 4th consideration: The Love that Jesus Christ has for us.

PRAYER:

I marvel that it was a Gentile soldier--a man sworn to unquestioning obedience—who was the first to publicly identify you as innocent, as the Son of God. What happened to him after that horrible day, Lord? Was his life forever changed by being with you, forever knowing he had presided over your execution? Will I meet this man one day in your kingdom and hear his story? Two thousand years later, we remain awed by the power of your life that overcame the horror of your death. Like that centurion, I gaze at you on the cross, overcome by the power of Love Incarnate to change hearts, to heal broken hearts, to forgive without measure, to engender faith—to work miracles.

XIII.

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK

As it grew dark (it was Preparation Day, that is, the eve of the Sabbath), Joseph from Arimathea arrived—a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin. Pilate released the corpse to Joseph. Then, having bought a linen shroud, Joseph took him down, wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of rock. Finally he rolled a stone across the entrance of the tomb.

Mark 15:40-47

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM THE “SERMONS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES FOR LENT”

“At the Last Supper, after he had given the incomparable pledge of his love for us, the most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, he said: ‘Father, I beseech you that all those whom you have given me may be one, as you and I are one.’”

“To show that he was not speaking only for the Apostles alone...but for all the rest of us, he added: ‘I do not pray for them alone (those he had just mentioned), but for all those who will believe in me through their word.’” p.83

PRAYER:

O Heavenly Father, help me once more to remember in prayer all who preach and teach in your name.

I entrust my whole life, my will, my entire being to the love of the Trinity, trusting that

my soul will live forever in your care. Jesus showed the world that no life is beyond the sight and care of God. Losses, illness, obstacles and troubles notwithstanding, the sacrament of Baptism empowers me through the Holy Spirit to live faithfully, to love wholeheartedly and generously. My frailty is but a useful tool for God's cherishing strength.

XIV.

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Afterward, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus (although a secret one for fear of the Jews) asked Pilate's permission to remove Jesus' body. Pilate granted it, so they came and took the body away. Nicodemus (the man who had first come to Jesus at night) likewise came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes which weighed about a hundred pounds. They took Jesus' body, and in accordance with Jewish burial custom bound it up in wrappings of cloth with perfumed oils. In the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. [They] buried Jesus there.... John 19:38-42

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM "THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE"

"Oppose vigorously any tendency to sadness. ... Even though everything turns and changes around us, we must always remain... aspiring toward God..."

"Everything may be in confusion not only around us, but within us as well. Our soul may

be overwhelmed [yet despite all] our spirit, our higher will...must unceasingly look and tend toward the love of God.... ‘Whether we live or whether we die, if we are of God, who shall separate us from this love and charity of God.’ No, nothing shall ever separate us from this love. Neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor death, nor life, nor present sorrow, nor fear of future troubles...[nothing] must ever separate us from that holy charity which is founded in Jesus Christ.” IDL, Part 4:12,13

PRAYER:

Joseph and Nicodemus carried your body from Calvary to a nearby garden and placed your body in a new tomb. With broken hearts and prudent fear of the unknown future, their thoughts must have been racing. Scripture reveals that they were attracted to you during your life, yet remained ambivalent. Perhaps the injustice of the crucifixion moved them to act. They may have questioned you in life, Lord, but in the aftermath of your death they were prompt to see to your proper burial.

How many times—in the midst of turmoil or crisis--have I struggled with anxiety and dread of what would happen next if I acted? Fear can be immobilizing. Yet I am encouraged to remember that at your birth and at your death, men named “Joseph” attended you, Jesus. They were as human as I am. And both these men named Joseph committed themselves to do what they felt compelled to do for love of God alone. Help me to do the same...

XV.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

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

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained.’

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name. Jn 20:19-

23,30-31

Pause for a moment before continuing.



FROM "THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE"

"Great occasions of serving God are rare but little ones are common."

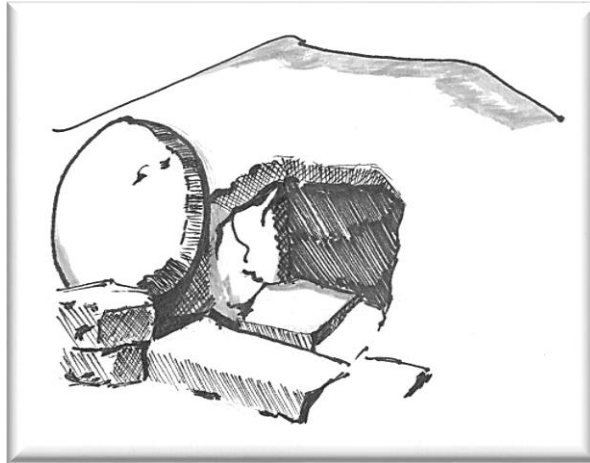
"He who will be faithful in little things, says the Savior himself, he shall be established over many things¹. Do, then, all things in the name of God² and all things will be done well. Whether you eat or whether you drink³ whether you sleep or whether you recreate..., provided you know well to manage your affairs, you will gain much in the sight of God doing all these things because God wills that you do them."

IDL 3, Ch35; ¹Mt.25:21; ² Col.3:17; ³1Cor 10:31.

PRAYER:

Risen Lord, you returned to those who loved you so imperfectly, reassuring them that they were indeed specifically chosen to be your disciples. You loved them, despite their faults. How unworthy they must have felt, embarrassment and shame mingling with astonishment and wonder. You mastered death and were now present before them again blessing them with the gift of your Holy Spirit, grounding them forever after in unshakeable faith.

We are their heirs in faith. Their heroism continues to inspire people of every age, every continent, to believe in you and the heaven that awaits all who give you their hearts. Merciful Lord, help me to live this glorious Easter faith, confident that, whatever the future holds, you will never abandon those whose hearts are safely and eternally in your care. Amen



Live + Jesus!

Sources Used

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