



Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

Notre Dame Conference

A Vincentian Way of the Cross

*“Make us responsive to the Christian
calling to seek and find the forgotten,
the suffering and the deprived so that
we may bring them Your love.”*

(Based on a text created by the National Spiritual Committee of the
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul)

Introductory Prayer

Leader: Heavenly Father, we come to ask forgiveness for our role in your daily crucifixion. You sent us Your son as redeemer of the world. He came to bring Good News to the poor; He came to die for each one of us. We know that we are called to love and serve all Your people, especially the poor. When we look into their eyes we see Your suffering Son, Your love and compassion. We ask your forgiveness for the times we have forgotten the suffering Your Son endured for us, and the love You have for all Your children.

All join singing as priest processes to First Station:

*At the cross her vigil keeping,
Mary stood in sorrow weeping,
When her son was crucified.*

First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: On this Friday morning it was not Pilate that condemned You Lord, it was me. They took You away and scourged You. They shouted, "Crucify Him!" That was me Lord, forgive me. This condemnation was unjust. You were beaten, mocked and condemned to die, for me and for the hundreds of millions of people around the world. I hold the lash, I placed the thorns on Your head and I shout, "Crucify Him!" each time I treat others unfairly. Each time I ignore the poor I give another lash. I mock You when I allow the poor to suffer. I condemn You when I do not see You in their eyes. Forgive me Jesus.

Prayer: *Lord through Your condemnation, help us to share our goods with those who have nothing. Help all of us to bring Your love to the poor. They need You, in us, to keep them from the hunger pangs, the loneliness, the suffering and scourging they receive in their poverty. Make our world a place where all people have adequate food, clean water, and access to medical needs. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*While she waited in her anguish
Seeing Christ in torment languish
Bitter sorrow pierced her heart.*

Second Station: Jesus Takes His Cross

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: I see You struggling with Your heavy cross, Lord. I ignore You and walk with the crowds. The poor are all around, their hands outstretched. I look at the guards laughing. I see the strain of Your cross. I see the heavy cross dropped on Your shoulders. I see the poor carrying their cross. I see them mocked and jeered at and made to walk down that lonely road before the crowd. I see it and I watch silently for I know this has to be done. I want to take the cross from You, but I watch. You do this for me. I hear You calling, "Feed my lambs, tend my sheep."

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I beg You to forgive me for all those times I have added to the weight of Your cross. Forgive me when I close my eyes to the pain of the poor and the weight of their cross. Help me to always see Your pain in their eyes. Forgive me Lord when I gossip and judge and find excuses. Help me to lighten Your load, to take the weight off Your cross, by lightening the crosses of others. Forgive me Jesus. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

With what pain and desolation,

With what noble resignation,

Mary watched her dying son.

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: The weight is unbearable. As You stumble towards Calvary, I can feel every rock under Your feet, and the pains from Your beating. You stumble and fall under the weight of the cross. It struck You on the back. You know how often I fall trying to help the poor and trying to follow You. Yet, You are always there to lift me up. You fell, O Jesus, because your human body was weak. I too am weak, so sometimes I fall. But I will always rise and keep trying to please You, because I love You. You fell because of me. The guards are now kicking You. You carried the weight of my sins on Your cross. Thank you, Jesus. I am sorry.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, so bloody was your scourging that without a miracle, how could You carry the cross to Calvary? The prophets foretold that You, our Saviour, would hang from the wood. Such was God's plan: His beloved Son was to die crucified. Jesus, You carried the weight of my sins with Your cross, help me to carry the weight of the cross the poor have to bear. Help me to be present to others so that we can carry their crosses together, with Your help. Forgive me and help me to love more. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Ever patient in her yearning,
Though her tear-filled eyes were burning,
Mary gazed upon her son.*

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Grieving Mother

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus, our brother, we are moved by Mary's love for You. We are amazed by Mary's love for us. Consider this meeting between mother and son ... their tender love for one another, their hearts torn asunder. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became like so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly. The heart of Jesus remains united, even in suffering, with the heart of Mary. We call on You to help us Jesus, as we serve You in the poor. We look for You in their eyes. We can't even imagine the pain that was in Mary's heart, or in Yours. Help us to better serve the poor. Thank you, Jesus. I am sorry.

Prayer: *Father, Mary's mission was to give Christ to the world. Sweet Jesus, by the compassion which You felt for Your most holy mother at this meeting, have compassion on me and grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for her. O Mary, my queen, overwhelmed with sorrow, intercede for me, that, through the sufferings endured by your Son, I may obtain a continual and tender remembrance of the passion of Jesus. My beloved Jesus, I love You above all things. I am truly sorry for having offended You, and I repent with my whole heart. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Who, that sorrow contemplating,
On that passion meditating,
Would not share the Virgin's grief?*

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: O how we can see the complete helplessness of our precious Jesus. Simon did not want to carry Your cross and I know that sometimes I do not want to do the work I am called to do. Sometimes the load is heavy and I just can't make it. I think of my dear Jesus and the load becomes lighter. Just as Simon picks up the end of Christ's cross, I too feel my load lightening. Jesus, sometimes I am such a burden to You and I make Your cross so heavy. I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *Father, I offer my life because of the Salvation of Jesus and to help complete this salvation in the work of the poor. So heavy was the cross of Christ. O my suffering Jesus, pour blessings and Your wisdom on me. Father bless me, that I may help the poor with the strength of Simon, as he helped Christ carry His cross. Allow me to help Jesus serve the poor and allow me to serve the poor in Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Christ she saw, for our salvation,
Scourged with cruel acclamation,
Bruised and beaten by the rod.*

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: As the crowd watched, a woman pushed through the guards and sought to comfort You by wiping Your blood-stained face with her veil. Veronica was so tender and brave. The guards were angry and beat You even more. You accepted this and thought not of Yourself, but of the women of Jerusalem. You left the imprint of Your face with Veronica. Your beautiful face is now bloody and mangled, yet still You love and think of others. Help me to reach out to your poor and wipe their face. Give me the courage to help them in their pain. Let me wipe Your face in the poor. I love you Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *Father, I offer my service and love for You because of Your Son. O, Jesus, I have hurt You so many times. I need Your strength and love to bring to the poor I serve. Veronica gave You the best she could, but I could give more and do not. I take and ask for more while Your poor suffer. Help me not miss opportunities to serve You. Help me to give more, my Saviour. In Your name, Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

Christ she saw with life-blood failing,

All her anguish unavailing,

Saw him breathe his very last.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: O Jesus, fallen under the cross. The soldiers fear that You may die under its weight and from the shedding of so much blood. They continue to lash and kick You. The cross with its heavy weight is crushing You, but still You love. Sometimes I crush You, Jesus, and You still forgive my sins. Jesus, let me help You lift Your cross by serving and loving others. I adore You, O Christ, let me bear Your heavy cross, let me protect You from those continuous beatings. Let me no longer make more wounds. I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *Father, we Your people, continue our search for a future and abiding city. The road is long and rugged, not always easy to follow. When we fall, we must rise again, like our Savior on the way to Calvary. Lord, how your Mother agonized when she saw You ripped and bleeding. How strong You were. How strong Mary was, never stopping in spite of the pain she felt for You. How many times have I turned from You Lord in my judgement of others, and how many times have I caused others to turn away. Help me to pick myself up when I fall, and send Your Holy Spirit to support me. In the holy name of Jesus, Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Mary, fount of love's devotion,
Let me share with true emotion,
All the sorrow you endured.*

Eighth Station: Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Even in His pain and agony He stopped. The women were crying and weeping. He thought not of Himself but of others. The women accepted Him and did not reject Him. He tried to tell them that He was dying for them and all of us. This was His role. We are the ones to be wept for as we reject Him when we do not love each other. We add to His pain when we boast, gossip and forget to love. We should always call Him and serve his poor and not turn from Him. I love you Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *My dear Lord and Savior, how long the walk was. How often I see the faults of others and not my own. I am a sinner and I beg Your forgiveness. Lord, forgive me and teach me to forgive others. Heal my blindness, let me see the goodness and not always look for faults. Let me cry for my own sins and the pain I have caused You and continue to cause. Help me to wipe the tears of the poor by serving You in them. Through Your loving presence and saving blood. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Virgin, ever interceding,
Hear me in my fervent pleading:
Fire me with your love of Christ.*

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls a Third Time

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: O Jesus, how much agony for You to fall again. You were close to the end of that rocky road and the weight of the cross once again collapsed on you. The weight of my sin is on You. You suffered such extreme cruelty for me. Sometimes I am cruel to those whom you ask me to serve. You feel the pain when I do not serve You in them. I fumble and sometimes don't take those last steps. The poor suffer because of this. By Your passion You redeemed me. I love you Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *My beloved Jesus, I love You more than myself. Yet even in that love, I cause You pain. Guide me, and be with me, so that I may never separate myself from You again. Help me to never take my hand away from those in need. Your blood has conquered evil. Wash me with Your blood so that I may be pure to serve You in the poor. Help me to carry Your cross and love more, through Your cleansing power. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

Mother, may this prayer be granted:

That Christ's love may be implanted,

In the depths of my poor soul.

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: This was the place of the skull, Golgotha. Jesus is completely stripped of any pride. His garments are stripped away. His inner garments adhere to His torn flesh as they are roughly removed, causing excruciating pain. His honor was shattered in the courtyard by the soldiers' taunts; His strength was left behind in every step of the death-march. The thought of You in such pain, with blood-clotted skin exposed for those to taunt and laugh, while Your mother watched in pain, causes us to cry silently for Your suffering. I love you Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *My innocent Jesus, You endured this shame for me. Help me to strip myself of all false shame, conceit and pride, and of all affection for the things of this earth, so that I may place all my love in You. Help me to humble myself to serve the poor; to clothe the naked. Help me, Jesus, to strip away my self-centeredness. My beloved Jesus, I love You above all things. Jesus, I too, have stripped You, by gossiping, by my prejudice against others, by stripping others of their dignity, and by not accepting them as You do. I am truly sorry for having offended You, and I repent with my whole heart. Grant that I may never cease to love You, and do with me as You will. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*At the cross, your sorrow sharing,
All your grief and torment bearing,
Let me stand and mourn with you.*

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus willingly offers to His Eternal Father the sacrifice of His life for our salvation. He is thrown on the cross, pulled and stretched to make His body fit. He did this willingly for me. Can you feel the pain as they, we, puncture His hands and feet? My suffering Jesus, what my sins have done to You! My beloved Jesus, I love You above all things. I am truly sorry for having offended You, and I repent with my whole heart. May I never offend You again. I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *Dear suffering Lord, what pain You endured for me. My sin is what made You suffer. You did this all for me. I am not worthy of the suffering You and your mother Mary, whose heart must have been wrenched, endured for me. Help me to be worthy of this love. Help me to bring this love to the poor. Help me to help You in the poor. You forgave those who were there to inflict the pain. You forgave those two criminals beside You. And You forgive me, whom You suffered and died for. Let me forgive all those who trespass against me. In Your passion Lord. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Fairest maid of all creation,
Queen of hope and consolation,
Let me feel your grief sublime.*

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Jesus was crucified with two criminals. Pilate had a sign posted saying, "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews." Jesus hangs on the cross. His blood runs in streams down His torn and battered body. Finally, He says, "**It is finished.**" Then, He bows his head and dies for our sins. Mary, and the faithful women, stand in silence. "Silence in the presence of the Lord God!" (Zep. 1:7) I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *My dying Jesus, I happily kiss the honoured cross on which You died for love of me. Have mercy on me, my Jesus, for what my sins have done to You and others. Your death is my hope and salvation. Let Your holy passion be a constant reminder to me to love and serve your precious lambs, my Good Shepherd. Help me to live only for You and to serve You in the poor. And when I die, help me to die embracing Your feet and burning with love for You. My beloved Jesus, I love You above all things. Let me always be a friend and servant to all. Let me always do the will of the Father. May I never fail you again, Jesus. I bow before You in love and thanksgiving. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Virgin, in your love befriend me,
At the Judgement Day defend me,
Help me by your constant prayer.*

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken from the Cross

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: Mary looked up and saw her dead Son, and the men came to take Him down. The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in His mother's arms. The crowd has gone. With boundless grief she receives the lifeless body of her Divine Son. It is very silent. Just one of Jesus' friends, his mother and her Son. His life ended so cruelly. He died for me. I am numb. How could it be? I am so unworthy and yet You died for me, Lord. I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *O Mother of Sorrows, give me a share in your most holy sorrow in the suffering of your Son that I may fully realize what my sins have caused. Lord, your passion has ended, but I know it starts all over when I choose sin over You. I inflict pain when I say no to serving You. Accept me as Your servant; have compassion on my infirmities. In Your mercy permit me to love You, for I long only for You, nothing more. My beloved Jesus, I love You above all things. I am truly sorry for having offended You, and I repent with my whole heart. May I never offend You again. Grant that I may never cease to love You, and do with me what You will.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

*Savior, when my life shall leave me,
Through your mother's prayers receive me,
With the fruits of victory.*

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Buried in the Tomb

Priest: We adore You O Christ and we bless You,

All: *Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.*

Leader: The lifeless body of Jesus is carried to the tomb. His mother arranges it with overwhelming sorrow. Then they all withdraw, and the tomb is sealed. This had to be. He died for me. It is done. He could have completely destroyed those who battered, bruised and violently crucified Him, but He followed the will of His Father. He said, "Yes" and chose to die for me. Mary also said, "Yes". Jesus poured out His loving mercy on the soldiers and on me. He wants us to pour out our mercy too. He wants us to say, "Yes" to Him who is in the poor. I love You Jesus. Forgive me.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, give me Your merciful heart so that I may forgive others, love others, and serve You always. Help me to forgive those who have done me wrong or offended me. Help me not to offend others. Protect my tongue which is so powerful; place Your loving breath on it so that I may speak only loving words. Bless my hands so that they may serve You lovingly. In Your great mercy, receive my immortal soul, so that on the last day I may rise in glory with You and join You in Your Kingdom, where I may love You and praise You forever. My beloved Jesus, I love you. Come into my life and give me courage, generosity, wisdom and self-control. Jesus, You ransomed me with Your precious blood, purify my conscience and help me to serve you and to worship the living God. Amen.*

Our Father Who art in Heaven ... Amen

Let me to your love be taken,

Let my soul in death awaken,

To the joys of Paradise.

Concluding Prayer

Lord, teach me the lessons contained in my daily Cross, the wisdom of its necessity, the beauty of its variety and the fortitude that accompanies even my smallest Cross.

Mary, my mother, obtain for me the grace to be Jesus to my neighbor, and to see Jesus in my neighbor.

Amen

Mary, my mother, obtain for me the grace to be Jesus to my neighbor, and to see my neighbor in Jesus.