

A ST. JOSEPH WAY OF THE CROSS

Introduction:

While Our Lady walked along, close to her son on the road to Calvary, St. Joseph, you had to have a “Heaven’s Eye” view of the mystery of the Passion of Christ. We invite you now, as the Universal Patron Saint of the Catholic Church to reflect with us on this Way of the Cross. May we honor you, O faithful and righteous St. Joseph as we seek to pray, as it were ***through your eyes, your heart and holy soul***. All Heaven was in awe of Christ’s saving sacrifice, so we unite ourselves with those in the Kingdom, adoring the One who died for us!

I. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Reflection:

There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. Yet, as you know, St. Joseph, from His infancy there were those in the world threatened by Him. You were His protector; the provider for Jesus and Our Blessed Mother. You saved Him from Herod, and now He stands before Pilate. The God of your ancestors who tested Abraham on the mountain by asking him to sacrifice Isaac will soon watch His only-begotten Son die for divine purposes.

Prayer:

St. Joseph, pray that we learn the value of **HOLY SILENCE** as Jesus stands condemned and does not defend Himself. In the Scriptures, St. Joseph, we also have no words spoken by you. Yet your witness speaks, accepting God’s will as Jesus did on that day...

II. JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Reflection:

As foster-father of the savior, St. Joseph, do you recall the first time you handed a wooden beam to Christ in your carpentry workshop? We call on you as a patron of workers. As Jesus took up His cross, you watched the one you raised and mentored in wood-work begin the most important work in

history by accepting His cross. When we reflect on Jesus' invitation for each of us to "take up our cross," may our hearts be brave as we ponder this perfect labor of love!

Prayer:

Lord, may each of us find the grace of ACCEPTANCE in our lives, to unite our will to yours in the journey of discipleship. Free us from our natural aversion to suffering. Good St. Joseph, intercede that we learn to love God's holy will as you did.

III. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Reflection:

When the Child Jesus took His first steps, you and the Virgin Mary took delight, as all parents do. He grasped your hand firmly for guidance, balance, and reassurance. In learning to walk, children also fall. You helped Him back to His feet with gentleness. Under the weight of the cross, when Christ fell, you were aware that the burden He bore was our sins, our faults and falls. St. Joseph, we rely on your strength now on our path of life!

Prayer:

Everyone needs to learn HUMILITY to deal with their own weaknesses, failures and disappointments. St. Joseph, pray with us that this important virtue grow in our hearts as we stumble, and continue to reach toward Heaven for assistance to keep beginning again!

IV. JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Reflection:

Spouse of the Virgin, your chaste love for her was a daily lesson for Our Savior in the home at Nazareth. You can probably still remember the determination in her eyes in your flight to Egypt. On Good Friday, you saw her heart pierced because you knew the profound bond of love between this mother and her son. St. Joseph, pray that we will show concern, kindness and sincere charity when our own loved ones suffer. May our

personal passion experiences (which break our hearts open) seek Divine love to heal them.

Prayer:

St. Joseph, at this moment from eternity you can see the suffering in our world. Pray that we will develop a **COMPASSION** that resembles yours, so that we be more like you, your wife and our savior. When our eyes meet human suffering, may we reach out to relieve pain as Christ's instruments of healing.

V. SIMON HELPS JESUS CARRY HIS CROSS

Reflection:

St. Joseph, you and Jesus relied upon each other in household maintenance tasks as well as the work of your shop. Simon of Cyrene was pressed into service as Christ found Himself weakened under the burden of the cross. May our faith, hope and love become stronger under your protection. And inspire us to always be generous helpers to those in our lives with great burdens and seemingly insurmountable circumstances.

Prayer:

May we continuously develop the virtue of **MEEKNESS** as we find ourselves faced with menial tasks. Perhaps when we are given duties we would not rather tackle, St. Joseph's meekness and Simon's willingness to help will give us a holy perspective to overcome tendencies to be self-serving.

VI. VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Reflection:

This tender moment of encounter on the Way of the Cross has forever given impetus for us to seek the face of Christ. For you, St. Joseph, there has to be a permanent imprint in your memory of that Holy Face! In graceful ways, Lord, show us how to recognize and acknowledge the faces of the suffering among us, even when it's the person in the mirror, and always be grateful in acknowledging our care-givers.

Prayer:

St. Joseph, how often did you wipe the sweat of your own brow in your labors and craft? Did you not also wipe the face of Jesus as a child? Pray that we become especially **SELFLESS** in caring for children, the sick, the elderly and infirm.

VII. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Reflection:

When physical exhaustion meets the force of gravity, we all fall down. St. Joseph you knew well the experience of fatigue and illness. When our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional resources grow tired, pray that we will be lifted up and carry on, making our way as Jesus did the day He sacrificed His very life for us.

Prayer:

Intercede for us, St. Joseph that we acquire the virtue of **PERSEVERENCE** in our lives. In the work of building, you had to keep at a project until it was complete. Your integrity helped you continue, and we all need that in our lives. In walking the Way of the Cross with Jesus, we honor your fathering example which taught the value of seeing a job through.

VIII. JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Reflection:

O Joseph most prudent and valiant, you might have recognized the faces of these women on the Way of the Cross, from your work or pilgrimages to Jerusalem's temple for high holy days. From your place in Heaven, intercede for our mothers, wives, sisters and the women praying with us today/tonight. When they grieve painful circumstances with their husbands, children or grandchildren, pray for gentle endurance.

Prayer:

Our Lord Jesus' profound **EMPATHY** for his disciples who grieve His suffering calls us to reach out to others beyond our own pain and wounds. Your home in Nazareth, St. Joseph was like a textbook of that virtue.

IX. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Reflection:

Holy Joseph of Nazareth, from your place in the Kingdom you can be a spiritual benefactor to our fallen world. As an angel once discouraged you from divorcing Mary quietly, bring a message of healing to those whose falls are so numerous that they despair. They may even be tempted to divorce themselves from our Lord, convinced that they are an impossible cause.

Prayer:

True **CHARITY** ministers to those most in need; the broken, addicted ones and souls who feel totally lost. May God's love, through the power of Christ's passion, reach deeply into their hearts and restore the gift of hope. St. Joseph, be their help as you were for Jesus and His mother.

X. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Reflection:

From swaddling clothes to His first cloak, to His prayer shawl at the synagogue, St. Joseph you were there when our Jesus was clothed in various ways throughout His life. Now as His death nears, we see Him stripped of His garments as an additional humiliation for those being put to death by crucifixion. With eyes of faith, help us now to see this action as a revelation of the Body of Christ so that all His wounds from the scourging and Precious Blood can be more clearly seen. How awesome that nothing can strip Jesus of His role as our savior!

Prayer:

MODESTY is a virtue that expresses respect for the human body. While those who crucified Jesus had no regard for His dignity, wishing to shame

Him by tearing off even the purple robe that mocked His kingship, He will soon be clothed in a glory that no eye had yet seen!

XI. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Reflection:

This was a familiar sound to you, St. Joseph: of pounding nails. Yet this use of nails and wood is the antithesis of the craftsmanship you developed and taught Jesus in His youth. Now, on Good Friday, three nails driven in arrogance with punishment as a motivation will pierce His hands and feet and be driven through His flesh into the wood of the cross. When forces of evil try to reverse the good we try to accomplish, when our best intentions are met with cynical, vengeful hammers help us recall how Jesus, the innocent Lamb allowed Himself to be crucified to bring about eternal victory. In our most agonized moments, St. Joseph, solace of the afflicted, we beg you to pray for us!

Prayer:

Lord give us a love of **JUSTICE** in the face of systems that seem like the odds are most against any change for the good. As a carpenter, St. Joseph, you also know how to remove nails from wood from wood that needs to be dis-assembled, recognizing what causes a project to come out poorly. Bless our Church and her work for peace and justice!

XXI. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Reflection:

O, St. Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, Jesus and your wife were with you when you passed into eternity. On Good Friday, from Heaven you observed, as the 3:00 o'clock hour struck, the last breath and heartbeat of your dear foster-child, your Lord, our Lord. Sacred Scriptures tell us Jesus surrendered His spirit, He gave Himself to the saving Will of the Father, to His last breath.

Death is a great teacher, we find...and St. Joseph, we ask you to be a patron of the dying, that when our moment comes we may not be afraid but see

Heaven's plan for us completed. Dying in peace means that we have entrusted everything to the Lord who made us and continues to make us...until our final hour comes.

Prayer:

As we praise Jesus for His death may we know through Holy **WISDOM** that our lives are transitory, and then we'll be prudent in the way we spend every breath, every heartbeat. St. Joseph, help us direct our thoughts to the goal of being with Christ-and you, forever!

XIII. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Reflection:

Where else would we first place His now-lifeless body than into the arms of His Sorrowful Mother? St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Family, you know that our faith does not promise that we will never suffer. But you are an example of the way that all things can work together for the purpose of God's holy will. When Christ's body was removed from the cross, the reality of His temporary departure began to sink in for His mother, Apostles and disciples. The centurion spoke truth which we all need to hear: "Surely this was God's Son!" We also need to be sure that Jesus' Way of the Cross makes a way for us to share in His dying and rising. St. Joseph, when we wait in times of great sadness, loss and suffering, embrace us in your fatherly care as your heart and soul looked with awe on this Pieta scene of Holy Mother and sacrificed Son!

Prayer:

Let us prayerfully ponder what St. Joseph "took" as he watched the scene at Calvary. He had **FAITH** in divine providence during his earthly life, and now sees from a place of glory the Father's plan take a dramatic turn: the death of Jesus. O Savior, you described yourself as the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and the End. Lord, now teach us to finish our "race" well.

XIV. JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Reflection:

Good, upright and just St. Joseph. As God's Son has completed His saving sacrifice, the tools of those who crucified Him are inanimate witnesses to the mystery of redemption. The saw that cut the wood of the cross...the hammer...the nails... might be used again for other crucifixions. But never again will they be part of accomplishing anything with so much eternal significance!

We who bury and entomb our dearest ones also join the waiting, praying community at Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. Three days will bring the victory. But millions of bodies still lie in wait of the promised, final resurrection day.

St. Joseph, pray with us that our Way in this life will be profoundly transformed by this Way of the Cross. May we be tools in the hand of the Master Craftsman (who created the World), His Son (whom you trained in the home of the Holy Family), and the Spirit (who raised Him on the third day).

Prayer:

In the profound silence that followed Christ's death on that Good Friday afternoon, a stone would seal the tomb. The grave was provided by another Joseph, of Arimathea. Give us **TRUST**, Lord, that we will imitate and incorporate into our daily lives your greatest attribute, your **MERCY**. Burying the dead is a corporal work of mercy. As Christ's words: 'It is finished' speak of His supreme act of self-gift out of perfect love for us, may we remember that in Him...dying always leads to rising. For this we earnestly, continuously hope! In Jesus name... Amen!

St. Joseph...pray for us!!

CONCLUSION: **Year of St. Joseph Prayer**

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which

you embraced the Child Jesus,
we humbly beg you graciously to regard
the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood,
and with your power and strength
to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family,
defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ;

O most loving father, ward off from us
every contagion of error and corrupting influence;

O our most mighty protector,
be kind to us and from heaven,
assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus
from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church
from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity;
shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection,
so that, supported by your example and your aid,
we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness,
and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.