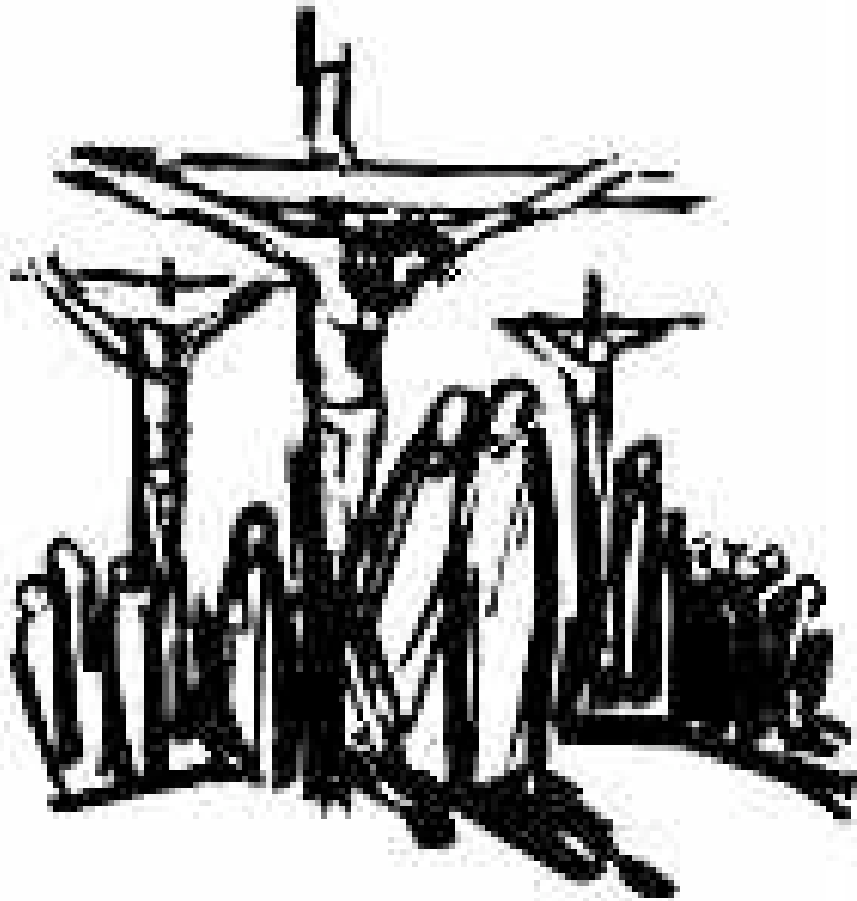


THE SEVEN LAST WORDS of JESUS



**This Lent,
Let us consider and pray about
the last words of Jesus from the cross.**



**Lord, by Your cross and resurrection,
You have redeemed the world.
We pause and remember Your promise to be with us
and to love us with an everlasting love.**



**“Father, forgive them;
for they do not know
what they are doing.”**

Luke 23:34

A Prayer of Reflection

O Jesus, as I reflect on this first word, I think of those who put You on that cross:

They had no idea, dear Jesus, that Your death would not be the end of your influence, but only the beginning. They never imagined that in a few hours You would be raised triumphant, having defeated sin and death. They would never have believed that before long Your name would be proclaimed throughout the world as Lord and Savior. Those who crucified You would have been astounded to know that someday images of Your cross would be found on every continent, gloriously proclaiming Your victory over the powers of darkness.

As You prayed for their forgiveness, Jesus, those who killed You didn't realize that You were dying so they themselves might be forgiven. And, though I was not there on that day, my sin helped put You on that cross. All praise to You, Lord Jesus, for bearing my sin upon the cross, so that I might be forgiven. What can I offer you in response but my gratitude, my worship, my love, and my life in service to you? You deserve it all, Lord, all that I have, all that I am. Lord, help me to forgive others as You forgive me. Amen.



**“Truly I tell you,
today you will be with me
in Paradise.”
Luke 23:43**

A Prayer of Reflection

Nothing suggests that the man to whom You offered hope had done much to deserve Your favor. He hadn't followed You. He hadn't left everything behind to be Your disciple. He wasn't suffering for the sake of righteousness, but because of his crimes. Even he admitted that he had been justly condemned! Did he know who You really were? Did he even realize what he was asking You? Rather, he was merely a dying man with a desperate plea, "Jesus, remember me!"

Lord, I'm not much different from the one who cried out to You in desperation. I might not realize my sorry state. I might live as if I'm in control. But, in truth, I have nothing to offer You except my simple, childlike faith, my trust that You can save me, my fervent hope that Your mercy outweighs my sin.

Jesus, remember me! Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom! Amen.

“Woman, here is your son.”
John 19:26



A Prayer of Reflection

Jesus, here at the foot of Your cross, in the midst of injustice, inhumanity, and incomprehensible brutality, is a mother remaining near her beloved Son even when what she was seeing must have pummeled her heart with unspeakable grief . . . a Son caring for His mother in His last minutes of life, making sure she'll be in good hands after His death. And even if Mary somehow understood that this was part of God's plan, her anguish in watching You suffer must have been unbearable. But she remained there with You because she loved You. Mary draws me in. She engages my heart. Seeing through her eyes, I realize how much I am horrorstruck by what You experienced on the cross, and I am awestruck by Your sacrifice, and how much I love You, plain and simple. So, my Lord, though I cannot literally come before Your cross, nevertheless I stand before You now, utterly horrified, utterly grieved, utterly humbled, utterly grateful, utterly filled with love for You and I realize that in the giving Your mother to the care of John, she became our mother too. Amen.



**“My God,
my God,
why have You
forsaken me?”**

Mark 15:34

Prayer of Reflection

Lord Jesus, by Your prayerful use of the first verse of Psalm 22, You invite us to consider Your cry, "Why have you forsaken me?" Before You took our sin upon Yourself, you'd never known what separation from God was like. Yet on the cross, You suffered far worse than unbearable physical pain. You received what sin deserves. You chose to be rejected by the Father, so that we might be accepted. Here is the wonder of grace revealed: the sinless Son of God becoming as if He were sin, being forsaken by the Father.

Dear Lord, You didn't deserve what You experienced on the cross. You didn't . . . but I did. I deserved the cross. I earned the rejection You received. But in Your unfathomable love, You took my place and gave me Your place. All praise, glory, and honor be to You, Lamb of God. You took away the sin of the world as You took away my sin. Amen.

**"I am thirsty."
John 19:28**



Prayer of Reflection

Lord Jesus, this request makes perfect sense. Given all You had endured, no doubt Your thirst was burning bitterly. And, as John points out in his gospel, Your request enabled the fulfillment of the psalm that spoke of vinegar being offered to the one drowning in troubles (Psalm 69).

Your first miracle in the Gospel of John involved turning water into wine, providing liquid refreshment at a wedding (John 2). And then You had a conversation with a Samaritan woman after You had asked her for a drink. You told her that You offered living water that quenches all thirst (John 4). Not long thereafter, You invited all who are thirsty to come to You and drink (John 7).

Now, on the cross, You are thirsty, Lord. You who had the power to turn water into wine have chosen not to quench Your own thirst. You who offered fresh, living water, chose to drink the rancid vinegar of death. You Who invited the thirsty to come now, suffer severe dehydration.

Thank You, dear Jesus, for being thirsty, so that I might be satisfied. Thank You for being empty, so that I might be filled. Thank You for dying, so that I might live through You. Amen



"It is finished."

John 19:30

Prayer of Reflection

I wonder, Lord Jesus, how you said these words, "It is finished." I expect that, in part, You spoke in exhausted relief, sensing that Your body was about to expire. Your time of torture had almost ended. In moments Your pain would be over, finished. You knew what the Father had called You to do, and You did it in obedience to Him. Now You had finished Your task. You had born the guilt of humankind, that You had erased the stain of sin, that You had crushed the head of the Serpent? You said, not, "I am finished," but "It is finished." It, the grand work of redemption.

There is no way I can fully grasp what "It is finished" meant to You, Lord. But I can feel relieved for You that Your suffering is over. And I can be astounded by Your faithful obedience to the Father. Most of all, I can marvel with gratitude over what You did on the cross. Because You finished that work, dear Jesus, my life has begun. Amen.

**“Father, into your hands
I commend my spirit.”
Luke 23:46**



Prayer of Reflection

As I reflect upon this final word of Jesus from the cross, I am struck, Gracious Father, by the fact that this is my prayer too. To be sure, my situation is far from that of Your Son. And I'm hopeful that I still have many more days before my life's end. But, even still, at the end of all my striving, all my thinking, all my efforts, all my attempts to figure everything out, all my deeds, both good and bad, what do I have left but to trust You?

I think of the moving words of the hymn "Rock of Ages":

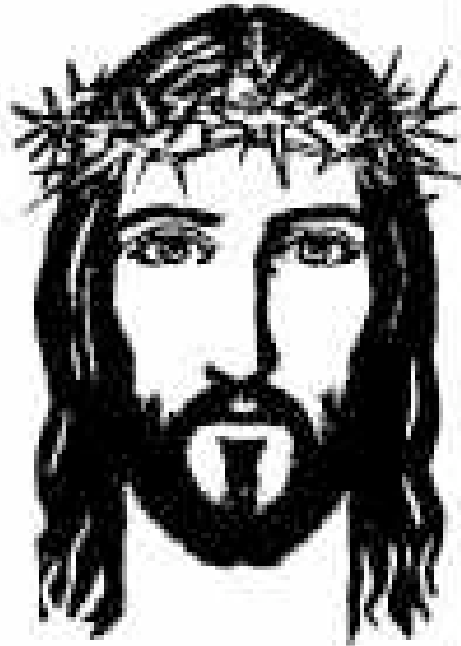
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Save from wrath and make me pure.

So, like Jesus, I commend my spirit to You today, to rely on You, to believe in You, to live for You, until that day when I stand before You, with nothing in my hand but the cross.
Amen.

LITANY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Response after each invocation: Have mercy on us

**God the Father of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Jesus, the Eternal Wisdom,
The Word made flesh,**



**Hated by the world,
Sold for thirty pieces of silver,
Sweating blood in Your agony,
Betrayed by Judas,
Forsaken by Your disciples,
Struck upon the cheek,
Accused by false witnesses,
Spit upon in the face,
Denied by Peter, .
Mocked by Herod,
Scourged by Pilate, .
Rejected for Barabbas,
Loaded with the cross,
Crowned with thorns,
Stripped of Your garments,**

**Nailed to the tree,
Reviled by the people,
Scoffed at by the malefactor,
Wounded in the side,
Shedding Your last drop of blood, .
Forsaken by Your Father,
Dying for our sins,
Taken down from the cross, .
Laid in the sepulchre,
Rising gloriously,
Ascending into Heaven,
Sending down the Paraclete, .
Jesus the Innocent Lamb of God, sacrificed for us,
Jesus our Mediator,
Jesus our Redeemer,
Be merciful, Spare us, O Lord.
Be merciful, Graciously hear us, O Lord.**



For our sake, O Jesus! You did permit Your whole sacred Body to be ignominiously tortured: Your head with thorns; Your face with spittle; Your cheeks with blows: Your mouth with vinegar and gall; Your ears with impious blasphemies; Your back with scourges; Your hand with a reed; Your whole body, with the cross; Your hands and feet with nails; Your side with a spear. O almighty Savior! Who did suffer for us, and by Your sufferings, did make us free! O You, Who out of love for us did humble Yourself with us, that thus You might exalt us! have mercy on us!

Greek Liturgy for Good Friday

While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5.6-8



We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
Help us to have a deep horror for sin
and sorrow for those sins we have committed.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!