

Scheme III

**THE 'VIA MATRIS'
OUR LADY'S JOURNEY OF LOVE**

INTRODUCTION

L. In the name of the Father,
the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen.

GREETING

L. By sacrificing his life
Jesus Christ
opened the path that leads to the Father
may he support us on our journey.

A. Blessed be the Lord throughout the centuries.

CALL TO PRAISE

L. Blessed be the Lord, Our God
who has established the salvation of the world
in the Cross of Christ.

A. The Lord is just in all his ways,
and holy in all his works.

L. Blessed are you, Holy Mary,
pure Mother of the sacrificial Lamb.

A. Through you we have received
the light of life.

HYMN

In tears you look
At the body of your son
Down from the cross
And once more in your arms
So that man might live
Life died.

Your remember and understand
The prediction of the sword
The nighttime flight
To a foreign land
The child lost
A premonition of Easter.

The sleepless moon
And motionless wind
Watch with you, Mother;
The stunned earth
Prepares a furrow
For the seed of life.

In the hollow silence
You, trusting Mother,
Wait to hear
The murmur of life:
“From the untouched tomb
The Son is reborn!”

Through sacred plan
The death on the hill
Was the birth pains
Of countless children:
To the Lord alone
Be praise forever. Amen.

I
**MARY RECEIVES SIMEON'S PROPHECY
WITH FAITH**

JESUS, A SIGN OF CONTRADICTION

*I, John, your brother
who share with you in Jesus the persecution
and the kingdom and the patient endurance,
I was in the spirit I saw one like the Son of Man,
In his right hand he held seven stars,
and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword,
and his face was like the sun
shining with full force.
(Apoc 1, 9a, 10a, 13a, 16)*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.
R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to Luke (2, 34-35)

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary,
"This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be opposed
so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed
--and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

This is the first of the seven sorrows. Mysteriously it includes and foretells all the others. The Blessed Virgin was told that her Son would be a sign of contradiction so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed (*Lk* 2, 35); that he would meet with hostility; that he would want to save all but his own people would want to kill him. The prophecy upsets Our Lady. Moreover, it fills her with bitterness. Her being is broken. Her beauty is overwhelmed with sorrow. She sighs silently in her heart:

"Call me not beautiful but bitter,
For the almighty has filled me
With great bitterness."

In spite of this she does not give up. The light of a dawn she has never seen rises up from the depths of her bitterness. She is not certain that God will join her to the sufferings of her Son. The tender compassion of the mother will be there to relieve the cruel passion of the Son – this is certain. This sublime hope sustains her; she awaits the sword that will pierce the heart of both the Son and the Mother.

(From the pamphlet *Mater Dolorosa* of Charles, Journey, Bishop)

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary
Keeper of the Word
That judges and saves.

Virgin Mother
A poor woman amongst the poor
You bear in your arms the Son of the Most High
The mystery of ruin and resurrection
The sign of contradiction
That reveals the heart's thoughts
Through the wonder of that hour
Through the pain of that sword
Have your Son grant us
The grace to receive the word of life
And to cling to him
Man's only hope.

A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa,
Dum pendebat filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius.

Or:

A pilgrim in the temple, Holy Mother
You hear and preserve in silence
The prophecy of suffering.

II
MARY FLEES INTO EGYPT
WITH JESUS AND JOSEPH

JESUS, PERSECUTED BY HEROD

*The great dragon was thrown down,
that ancient serpent,
when the dragon saw
that he had been thrown down to the earth,
he pursued the woman
who had given birth to the male child.
But the woman was given
the two wings of the great eagle,
so that she could fly ...into the wilderness,
to her place where she is nourished.
(Apoc 12, 9a, 13-14a)*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.
R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to Matthew (2, 13-14)

An angel of the Lord
appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
"Get up,
take the child and his mother,
and flee to Egypt,
and remain there until I tell you;
for Herod is about to search for the child,
to destroy him."
Then Joseph got up,
took the child and his mother by night,
and went to Egypt.

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

The Virgin learned from Simeon that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and now she knows what it is to flee by night to a land of exile. Oh, what an anguished journey – days and nights in the desert! Won't God perform a miracle for this child who is, after all, his own? But is this fragile little human being who suffers and does not speak his own? Why then does God seem so little concerned with him? Why does he abandon the child when he is surrounded by enemies and entrust him to the care of two poor creatures?

It is not just the heart but the faith of Mary and Joseph that is put to test by this unfathomable mystery. But their faith does not waver. To Egypt, whence God had called his beloved, the people of Israel (*Hos* 11,1) Mary and Joseph return and bring their Baby, a baby more precious than all adopted sons because he is the only begotten Son of the Father, the Word made flesh. But a day will come when the words of Hosea "I have called my son from Egypt" will take on new meaning (*Mt* 2, 15). The poverty will continue but the exile will come to an end.

(From the pamphlet *Mater Dolorosa* of Charles Journet, Bishop).

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary,
exiled Virgin,
in the depth of night
you carried the light
far from its fatherland.

Again, today, Mother
watch over your exiled son without a country
without a name and without a home.
Again, today, Mother
protect your small and defenseless child,
from the death that pursues him.

Again, today, Mother
keep your son who suffers far from home:
who has no work, no strength, no bread.

Help us, Mother,
to see your son Jesus
in our brother, the exile, the emigrant, the refugee:
in this brother Jesus silently asks
to live in the dignity
of his condition as a son of God
and a son of man.

A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti!

Quae maerebat et dolebat,
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati poenas incliti.

Or:

With a troubled heart but strong in faith
Without warning you must flee in the night
With your exiled Baby clinging to you.

III

MARY SEEKS THE LOST JESUS IN JERUSALEM

JESUS SETS ABOUT DOING THE WILL OF HIS FATHER

*You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered
and by your blood you ransomed for God
saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;
you have made them to be a kingdom and priests
and they will reign on earth.
(Apoc 5, 9-10).*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.

R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to Luke (2, 43-45)

When the festival was ended
and they started to return,
the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem,
but his parents did not know it.
Assuming that he was in the group of travelers,
they went a day's journey.
Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.
When they did not find him,
they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

“Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” (*Lk 2, 48*). It is a heartfelt cry – words that bring Mary closer to us, words that are so natural, so human. The words reveal the closeness of his parents, the tenderness Mary feels for Joseph.

“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?” (*Lk 2, 49*). They seem harsh words. But it is not the child who is speaking. They are coming from the mouth of God. Mary and Joseph's concern is legitimate, natural, moving and affectionate but above all human feeling there is the eternal union of the Father and Son. On the level Jesus is speaking these are not the words of a son but the teaching of the Master.

Saint Luke repeats Mary's humble admission: neither she nor Joseph understood what was being said. We know about it because Mary never forgot it. Standing at the foot of the Cross she finally understood what many others will understand later.

(From *Maria Madre di Dio* of Georges Théroutard, Priest).

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary,
Pilgrim Virgin,
Once more, a paschal prophecy,
A mother searching, grieving and fearful:
Reveal to us the mystery of the "three days"
Without the vision of your Son.

Teach us to seek him
With you and like you:
Without stopping,
Watchful
Retracing
Our footsteps.

Teach us to seek him
In the house of the Father
- now not a temple of stone
But the sacred space of those
Who love and worship -,
Where He, divine wisdom,
Hears man
And reveals the mysteries of the kingdom.

A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Quis est homo, qui non fleret
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Or:

Jesus is lost: the path is no longer there
Without him no goal is worth it;
You will find him in the temple with the teachers.

IV

MARY MEETS JESUS ON THE ROAD TO CALVARY

JESUS, THE MAN OF SORROWS

*And God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.
(Apoc 21, 3b-4)*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.

R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to Luke (23, 26-27)

As they led him away,
they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene
and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.
A great number of the people followed him,
and among them were women who were beating their breasts
and wailing for him.

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

Jesus manages the encounter with his Mother without dropping the Cross.

The heart of a son does not harden just as the heart of a man does not harden. One who genuinely "grows" does not forget or erase the signs of creation from his own soul. Nothing that is good should perish – rather it should grow and sublimate itself into feeling and a greater and purer passion.

The Son of Man is present in the Son of God: the Son of Mary is present in the only begotten Son of the Father. The Cross he bears does not suffocate filial sentiments in his heart rather it increases and consecrates them.

Christ loves his mother in each of us who are redeemed by his sacrifice and adopted as "sons of Mary."

Having to choose between the Cross and his Mother would be inhuman – even for Christ. On the Cross he loves and embraces the joy of all his "brothers" and therefore the joy of all the "sons" of Mary. He takes away nothing from his Mother: he opens up in her heart a motherhood that embraces everyone. The Mother and the Cross are not two separate or separable things: they are the one and irreplaceable manifestation of his charity.

(From *La via crucis del povero* of Don Primo Mazzolari, Priest)

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Virgin Mother
on the road to Calvary
you met Jesus carrying his Cross;
his face was disfigured,
and exhausted, his features tortured;
his voice uncomplaining
his gaze loving.

you meet him and understand:
you mount the hill of sacrifice at his side
with him you share his passion
for the salvation of mankind.

Teach us, Blessed Virgin,
to recognize your Son's face
in the face of people
who are oppressed, outcast or derided;
let us walk beside these people
until their faces light up with hope
and through the Cross
their pain turns into joy.

A. Amen.

Or:

L. Hail,
Virgin of the encounter
and of the look
faithful disciple
Mother with the pierced heart.

Be close to us, your children,
in our ascent of Mt. Calvary;
and when our strength fails
or doubt rends our heart
or darkness hides the path
look at us with the eyes
of a mother and a sister

so that strengthened by your gaze
we may continue our journey of discipleship
towards Christ's resurrection.

To you, Virgin Mother,
strong in suffering
goes our praise and eternal love.
A. Amen.

V

MARY STANDS AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

JESUS, THE LAMB LIFTED UP ON THE CROSS

*And the one who was seated on the throne said,
"See, I am making all things new."
Also he said,
"Write this, for these words
are trustworthy and true."
Then he said to me,
"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give water
as a gift from the spring of the water of life.
Those who conquer will inherit these things,
and I will be their God and they will be my children."
(Apoc 21, 5-7)*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.
R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to John (19, 25-27)

Meanwhile, standing near 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 beside her,
he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."
Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

Jesus saw his mother crushed under the weight of great suffering and standing next to her he saw his beloved disciple. He said to the mother: "Woman, behold your son" (*Jn* 19, 26).
I give you as a son the disciple I love above all others, he will be with you.
You must understand that giving you this disciple is part of a wondrous mystery. He is an image of the Church, the stainless Virgin. I am entrusting to you the Church in the person of this disciple. Love the church as you love me; strengthen her with your advice, revive her with your counsel, teach her with your example. Protect her with your prayers and lead her, virtue filled, to me.
(From the tract *On the Triumph of Christ* by St. Lawrence Giustiniani, Bishop)

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary,
Virgin of the Cross
you are obedient and faithful mankind
standing next to the tree of life
you are docile to the Word
strong in discipleship
open to the Spirit.

Mother, reveal to us
the mystery of your Son's hour:
the hour of glory in ignominy,
of kingship in service,
of our life in his death.

It is also your hour, Mary:
the hour of giving birth,
the hour of faith and suffering in the Spirit
the hour of new birth
the dying Jesus says:
"Woman, behold your son,"
and the Church sings:
"My beginnings are in you."
A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Sancta Mater, istud agas
Crucifix fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

Tui Nati vulnerati, tam
Dignati pro me pati,
Poenas mecum divide.

Or:

Close to the Cross, your soul transfixed,
Overcome with redemptive suffering, you
Stand next to your Son and suffer with love.

VI

MARY RECEIVES THE BODY OF JESUS
FROM THE CROSS ON TO HER LAP

JESUS, A VICTIM FOR RECONCILIATION

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered
to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!
(Apoc 5, 12)*

- V. We praise you, Holy Mary.
R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

- R. From the Gospel according to Matthew (27, 57-59)

When it was evening,
there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph,
who was also a disciple of Jesus.
He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus;
then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.
So Joseph took the body
and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

Mary's unreserved "yes" is redemption: she received on her knees the dead Redeemer. This silent image shows that the whole passion was not in vain: Mary is there as the representative of humankind which gratefully accepts this blessing from heaven – even if it is given in the midst of infinite suffering.

Ultimately the body of her Son will not be buried in cold, insensitive matter – we should remember that "matter [*materia*]" comes from "mother [*mater*]." He will be embraced in her maternal bosom and this will bear fruit: a prototype of created love that reaches its culmination in a visible creature: the Virgin Mother.

The image of the *Pietà* is not transitory – it is lasting. It is a mysterious image: the maternal embrace of the dead Son derives its fruitfulness from the lifeless body lying in the arms of its mother.

(From *Via Crucis* for the Marian Year, 1988. Meditations of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Priest)

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary
on your virginal lap
lies the lifeless body of your Son:
you are living compassion,
your maternal arms still embrace
every lost brother
every wounded human being
every murdered son.

Teach us, Mother,
genuine pity
that is born of love;
the immense compassion
that knows no barriers;
the watchful compassion
that sees the suffering of man
and raises pleading eyes to heaven.

A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.

Iuxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare
In planctu desidero.

Or:

The living Word that does not speak,
The motionless hand that heals
The exhausted eye – you receive all in your bosom.

VII

MARY PLACES THE BODY OF JESUS IN THE TOMB AND AWAITS THE RESURRECTION

JESUS, FIRST FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION

*And there will be no more night;
I am the root and the descendant of David,
the bright morning star.
(Apoc 22, 5a. 16b)*

V. We praise you, Holy Mary.
R. Faithful Mother at the foot of your Son's Cross.

GOSPEL READING

R. From the Gospel according to John (19, 40-42)

They took the body of Jesus
and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths,
Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified,
and in the garden there was a new tomb
in which no one had ever been laid.
They laid Jesus there.

Moment of silence.

WORD OF THE CHURCH

Jesus is dead.

Mary holds him in her arms, lifeless, disfigured, cold. Is this not that terrible hour when all hope vanishes? How can one imagine a Jesus who no longer speaks, who no longer looks at his friends, who no longer lays hands on the sick to heal them ...?

It is over.

All they talk about in hushed voices is burial and tomb. Faith and hope, sorrowfully, keep watch in Mary's soul. She is waiting for what comes next, for the moment when all is truly broken. For the apostles there is total collapse. Up to his very last breath they were hoping he would somehow save himself. Jesus cannot be life if he is dead!

In those incomprehensible times in our lives when all seems ended and Jesus seems dead it is Mary who gives us strength and hope; often it is in exactly those times that the definitive spring of life is near.

(From *Via Crucis* of René Voillaume, Priest)

ANGELIC SALUTATION

L. Hail Mary.

A. Holy Mary.

PRAYER

Holy Mary,
new Eve in a new garden,
where the holy body of your Son lies:
you are the Virgin of dawn
the living vigil of everlasting Easter.

Confirm in us, Mother
certainty and hope
that for every just man killed
there will always be a “third day” with God;
the morning star will always appear
in the world’s night;
the Spirit of life will always
represent the divine image
in the disfigured face of man.

A. Amen.

Or:

L. Blessed Virgin,
mother of expectation
teach us to believe in the reassuring word
from the grain of wheat
buried in the ground
will be born
for you and for everyone
the Fruit of the Father’s Love:
Christ, your Son, who conquers death.

To you, O Virgin
mother of immense suffering
and immense peace
goes our eternal and grateful praise.

A. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
Da per Matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriae.

Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.

DISMISSAL

ADMONITION

L. Our Lady's path
did not end in the darkness of the tomb.
with living faith
the Mother believed her Son
who foretold his resurrection from the dead.

At the end of the "Via Matris"
we salute the Virgin
of faith, expectation and hope
and we turn our eyes
to the light of Easter.

ACCLAMATION

A. Blessed are you, Queen of Martyrs:
Joined to the passion of Christ
You have become our mother
A sign of hope on our journey.

Or:

Rejoice, Daughter of Zion, exult Israel,
Rejoice with all your heart
Daughter of Jerusalem:
The Lord has revoked the condemnation,
And has scattered the enemy,
You will not see misfortune.

PRAYER

L. Let us pray.

We have followed in faith
the Virgin Mother's sorrowful journey,
send down upon us, O Lord,
your abundant gifts:
consolation and forgiveness,

serenity and peace,
joy and certain hope
that we will join the glory of the Risen Christ.
He lives and reigns throughout the centuries.

A. Amen.

BLESSING

If the presider is a priest or a deacon he will bless the others with these words:

L. With the resurrection of his Son
God has scattered the darkness of the world
may he light your hearts with the light of Easter
and establish them in peace.

A. Amen.

L. May Mary protect us
And graciously lead us along the path of life.

A. Amen.

Note: Some Bible texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>