



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS WITH OSCAR ROMERO



Source: *Monseñor Romero: El Pueblo Es Mi Profeta*,  
Equipo de Educación Maíz, 1994.

## **First Station: Jesus is Condemned to death**

Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. They brought charges against him, saying, "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Messiah, a king." But they were adamant and said, "He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here." (Luke 23: 1-2, 5-6)

*This is a God who renounces his condition as God, coming down from the happiness of heaven to become a man, a man who doesn't go around mentioning his prerogative as God--"any man", says the Bible today. "Any man" who is tied to the authority of his time and carried to the courts. When Saint Paul says "any man", it occurs to me to think of those people that we are already accustomed to seeing in our newspapers: the handcuffed peasant, the tortured peasant, the laborer whose rights aren't recognized. This is the "any man" that Christ wanted to become.*

*Archbishop Romero, 19 March 1978*

## **Second Station: Jesus takes the cross upon his shoulders**

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19: 16-17)

*We feel in the Christ of Holy Week, with the cross upon his shoulders, that this is the people who are also carrying their cross. We feel the people crucified in this Christ with the open arms crucified, but it is from this Christ that a people crucified and humiliated will encounter their hope.*

*Archbishop Romero, 19 March 1978*

## **Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time**

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. (Mark 8: 34)

*Christ is not an insensitive man. Christ is a real person--of flesh and bones, nerves and muscles, just like us. He is a man who feels just like a person feels when he is carried away by the National Guard and taken to a place of torture.*

*Archbishop Romero, 1 April 1979*

#### **Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother**

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19: 25-27)

*Brothers, the liberation of Christ is tenderness; it's love; it's the presence of a loving mother, Mary. And Mary is the model of those who collaborate with Christ for the liberation of the earth and the acquisition of heaven. Mary, in her song of thanksgiving, proclaims the greatness of God and also proclaims that God rejects the pride of the powerful and exalts the humble.*

*Archbishop Romero, 24 March 1978*

#### **Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus**

As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23: 26)

*Unfortunately, dear brothers, we are the product of an education which is spiritualistic and individualistic, where we are taught "to gain salvation of the spirit, don't worry about others". Like we say to the suffering, "Have patience that you will get to heaven, endure!". No! That can't be. This isn't salvation, not the salvation that Christ brought. The salvation that Christ brings is the salvation from all the slaveries that oppress people.*

*It is necessary that people break the chains that bind them: starting with the many oppressions and slaveries, fears that enslaves their hearts, illnesses that oppress their bodies, sadnesses, preoccupations, terrors that oppresses their freedom and their life.*

*Archbishop Romero, 9 September 1979*

#### **Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them (Matthew 26: 27).

*If we could see that Christ is the needy person, the tortured person, the prisoner, the murderer, the one thrown away with so much indignity on our roads. If we could discover in this rejected one Christ, we would treat this Christ as a medal of gold. We would pick him up with tenderness and kiss him. We would not feel ashamed of him.*

*Archbishop Romero, 16 March 1980*

#### **Seventh Station: Jesus Falls for the Second Time**

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. (John 12: 24)

*Here, Christ is flesh that suffers. Here where Christ is something, he is persecution, where Christ is men who sleep out in the country because they can't sleep in their house, where Christ is sickness that suffers because of the consequences of being so unprotected. Here is Christ with the cross upon his shoulders on the road to Calvary, not meditated in some chapel with the way of the cross or lived outside the people.*

*Archbishop Romero, 5 March 1978*

### **Eighth Station: Jesus consoles the women**

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children. (Luke 23: 27-28)

*The one who lives with the poor, the miserable, the peasant and who defends them and loves them like Christ our Lord, and who preaches the liberation of the poor, of the oppressed, of the one who suffers, this one is the Christ in our midst.*

*Archbishop Romero, 23 March 1978*

### **Ninth Station: Jesus Falls for the Third Time**

He said to his disciples, "Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the person through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. (Luke 17: 1-2)

*No one is vanquished even though he is put under the boot of oppression and repression. He who believes in Christ knows that he is victor and that the ultimate victory will be from truth and from justice.*

*Archbishop Romero, 23 March 1980 (the day before his death)*

*How well Christ identified himself with the suffering of his people! Many shacks, many slums, many imprisoned by suffering, many hungry for justice and peace appear to clamor: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?". He hasn't abandoned us. This is the hour in which the Son of God is carrying all of the load of sins to obey God, asking him to pardon these sins of humanity from whom is derived all injustice, all selfishness.*

*Archbishop Romero, 8 April 1979*

### **Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes**

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be," in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled (that says): "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." (John 19: 23-24)

*This is the commitment of being a Christian: to follow Christ in his incarnation. And if Christ is a majestic God who becomes a humble man and lives with the poor until the death of slaves on a cross, our Christian faith should be lived in the same fashion. The Christian who doesn't want to live with this commitment of solidarity with the poor doesn't deserve to call himself a Christian. Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, believe it brothers, the one who binds himself with the poor has to go through the same destiny as the poor: to be disappeared, to be tortured, to be captured, to appear as dead.*

*Archbishop Romero, 17 February 1980*

### **Eleventh Station: Jesus is Crucified**

They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. (Mark 15: 22-25)

*Rome used to crucify people, but not Roman citizens. Rome used to crucify the people that depended on their empire. And since Palestine depended on Rome (Pilate was the representative of Rome to this oppressed people), Christ had to be humiliated like someone who didn't merit citizenship.*

*Archbishop Romero, 19 March 1978*

### **Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross**

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. (Luke 23: 44-46)

*While we look at Christ nailed to the cross, he invites us to discern from the sacred word a real mystery. If Christ is the representative for all people, we have to discover the suffering of our people in his suffering, his humiliation, his body scarred by the nails of the cross. This is our people tortured, crucified, spat upon, and humiliated for whom Christ our Lord is represented in order to give our very difficult situation a sense of redemption.*

*Archbishop Romero, 24 March 1978*

### **Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross**

Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. (Mark 15: 43-46)

*Mary is the expression of the need of the Salvadoran people. Mary is the expression of the anguish of those who are in prison. Mary is the sadness of the mothers who have lost their children and no one will tell them where they are. Mary is the tenderness that looks with anguish for a solution.*

*Archbishop Romero, 24 December 1978*

### **Fourteenth Station: Jesus is buried**

So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by. (John 19: 42)

*Don't think, brothers, that our dead have left us. Their heaven, their eternal recompense, makes them more perfect in love. They are still loving the same causes that they died for. That means that in El Salvador this liberating force not only counts those who remain living, but also counts those who they wanted to kill who are more present than before in the people.*

*Archbishop Romero, 2 March 1980*