

**Stations of the Cross with readings from
"The Violence of Love"
by saint Óscar Romero**

On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of his martyrdom (24/03/1980), we offer you a Way of the Cross with reflections of saint Oscar Romero.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez (August 15, 1917 – March 24, 1980), commonly known as Monseñor Romero, was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador. He later became prelate archbishop of San Salvador. As an archbishop, he witnessed numerous violations of human rights and began a ministry speaking out on behalf of the poor and victims of the country's civil war. In 1980, he was assassinated by gunshot while consecrating the Eucharist during mass. His death finally provoked international outcry for human rights reform in El Salvador. Oscar Romero was canonized by Pope Francis on the 14th of October 2018.

**First Station
Jesus is condemned to death**

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And they all condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at the place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

Do you want to know if your Christianity is genuine? Here is the touchstone: Whom do you get along with? Who are those who criticize you? Who are those who do not accept you? Who are those who flatter you? Know from that what Christ said once: "I have come not to bring peace, but division." There will be division even in the same family, because some want to live more comfortably by the world's principles, those of power and money. But others have embraced the call of Christ and must reject all that cannot be just in the world. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 9

Let us pray (Silence)

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

**Second Station
Jesus takes up his Cross**

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

Jesus went out, bearing his own Cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter; and like a sheep that before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

It is very easy to be servants of the word without disturbing the world: a very spiritualized word, a word without any commitment to history, a word that can sound in any part of the world because it belongs to no part of the world. A word like that creates no problems, starts no conflicts.

What starts conflicts and persecutions, what marks the genuine Church, is the word that, burning like the word of the prophets, proclaims and accuses: proclaims to the people God's wonders to be believed and venerated, and accuses of sin those who oppose God's reign, so that they may tear that sin out of their hearts, out of their societies, out of their laws—out of the structures that oppress, that imprison, that violate the rights of God and of humanity. This is the hard service of the word.

But God's Spirit goes with the prophet, with the preacher, for he is Christ, who keeps on proclaiming his reign to the people of all times. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 18

Let us pray (Silence)

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Third Station
Jesus falls the first time

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped; but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and was born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. Come, let us bow down and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, who is the Lord our God.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

For the Church, the many abuses of human life, liberty, and dignity are a heartfelt suffering. The Church, entrusted with the earth's glory, believes that in each person is the Creator's image and that everyone who tramples it offends God. As holy defender of God's rights and of his images, the Church must cry out. It takes as spittle in its face, as lashes on its back, as the cross in its passion, all that human beings suffer, even though they be unbelievers. They suffer as God's images. There is no dichotomy between man and God's image. Whoever tortures a human being, whoever abuses a human being abuses God's image, and the Church takes as its own that cross, that martyrdom. --Oscar Romero *The Violence of Love*, pg. 26

Let us pray (Silence)

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Fourth Station
Jesus meets his afflicted mother

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

To what can I liken you, to what can I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What likeness can I use to comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For vast as the sea is your ruin. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

Mary appears in the Bible as the expression of poverty, of humility, of one who needs everything from God. When she comes to America, her intimate, motherly converse is with an Indian, and outcast, a poor man. Mary's dialogue in America begins with a sign of poverty, poverty that is hunger for God, poverty that is joy of independence. Poverty is freedom. Poverty is needing others, needing brothers and sisters, supporting one another so as to help one another. This is what Mary means and what the Church means in Latin America. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 22

Let us pray. (Silence)

O God, who willed that in the passion of your Son a sword of grief should pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary his mother: Mercifully grant that your Church, having shared with her in his passion, may be made worthy to share in the joys of Christ's resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Fifth Station
The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

As they led Jesus away, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the Cross to carry it behind Jesus. "If anyone would come after me, let that one deny self to take up one's own cross, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

This is the mission entrusted to the Church, a hard mission: to uproot sins from history, to uproot sins from the political order, to uproot sins from the economy, to uproot sins wherever they are. What a hard task! It has to meet conflicts amid so much selfishness, so much pride, so much vanity, so many who have enthroned the reign of sin among us. The Church must suffer for speaking the truth, for pointing out sin, for uprooting sin. No one wants to have a sore spot touched, and therefore a society with so many sores twitches when someone has the courage to touch it and say: "You have to treat that. You have to get rid of that. Believe in Christ. Be converted. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 29

Let us pray. (Silence)

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in Christ's Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Sixth Station

A woman wipes the face of Jesus

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

We have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He was despised and rejected by all, a person of sorrow, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom people avert their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of all humanity. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes, we are healed.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

The world does not say: "blessed are the poor." The world says: "Blessed are the rich. You are worth as much as you have." But Christ says: "Wrong. Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, because they do not put their trust in what is so transitory." Blessed are the poor, for they know that their riches are in the One who being rich made himself poor in order to enrich us with his poverty, teaching us the Christian's true wisdom. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 33

Let us pray. (Silence)

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed your glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Seventh Station

Jesus falls a second time

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

Surely Christ has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

Holy Week is a call to follow Christ's austerities, the only legitimate violence, the violence that he does to himself and that he invites us to do to ourselves: "Let those who would follow me deny themselves," be violent to themselves, repress in themselves the outbursts of pride, kill in their hearts the outbursts of greed, of avarice, of conceit, of arrogance. Let them kill it in their hearts. This is what must be killed, this is the violence that must be done, so that out of it a new person may arise, the only one who can build a new civilization: a civilization of love. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 39

Let us pray. (Silence)

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

There followed after Jesus a great multitude of the people, and among them were women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.”

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

The Church cannot be deaf or mute before the entreaty of millions of persons who cry out for liberation, persons oppressed by a thousand slaveries. But the Church tells them what is the true liberty they must seek: the freedom that Christ began on earth when he rose and burst the chains of sin, of death, and of hell. It is to be like Christ, free of sin, to be truly free, with true liberation. Those who put their faith in the Risen One and work for a world more just, who protest against the injustices of the present system, against the abuses of unjust authorities, against the wrongfulness of humans exploiting humans, all those who begin their struggle with the resurrection of the great Liberator—they alone are authentic Christians. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 41

Let us pray. (Silence)

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children’s children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Ninth Station

Jesus falls a third time

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

I am the one who has seen affliction under the rod of God’s wrath; God has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. God has besieged me and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; God has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. Though I call and cry for help, God shuts out my prayer. God has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes. “Remember, O Lord, my affliction and bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!”

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

A Church that doesn’t provoke any crises, a Gospel that doesn’t unsettle, a word of God that doesn’t get under anyone’s skin, a word of God that doesn’t touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed—what Gospel is that? Very nice, pious considerations that don’t bother anyone, that’s the way many would like preaching to be. Those preachers who avoid every thorny matter so as not to be harassed, so as not to have conflicts and difficulties, do not light up the world they live in. They don’t have Peter’s courage, who told that crowd where the bloodstained hands still were that had killed Christ: “You killed him!” Even though the charge could cost him his life as well, he made it. The Gospel is courageous, it’s the Good News of him who came to take away the world’s sins. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 44

Let us pray. (Silence)

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the Cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his garments

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing."

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

A Christian community is evangelized in order to evangelize. A light is lit in order to give light. A candle is not lit to be put under a bushel. It is lit and put up high in order to give light. That is what a true community is like. A community is a group of men and women who have found the truth in Christ and in his Gospel, and who follow the truth and join together to follow it more strongly. It is not just an individual conversion, but a community conversion. It is a family that believes, a group that accepts God. In the group, each one finds that the brother or sister is a source of strength and that in moments of weakness they help one another and, by loving one another and believing, they give light and example. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 97

Let us pray. (Silence)

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Eleventh Station

Jesus is nailed to the cross

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was numbered with the transgressors."

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

Those who, in the biblical phrase, would save their lives—that is, those who want to get along, who don't want commitments, who don't want to get into problems, who want to stay outside of a situation that demands the involvement of all of us—they will lose their lives. What a terrible thing to have lived quite comfortably, with no suffering, not getting involved in problems, quite tranquil, quite settled, with good connections politically, economically, socially—lacking nothing, having everything. To what good? They will lose their lives. "But those who for love of me uproot themselves and accompany the people and go with the poor in their suffering and become incarnated and feel as their own the pain and the abuse—they will secure their lives, because my Father will reward them." Brothers and sisters,

God's word calls us to this today. Let me tell you with all the conviction I can muster, it is worthwhile to be a Christian. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 127

Let us pray. (Silence)

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: so clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the cross

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished!" And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And he bowed his head, and handed over his spirit.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

God is not failing us when we don't feel his presence. Let's not say: God doesn't do what I pray for so much, and therefore I don't pray anymore. God exists, and he exists even more, the farther you feel from him. When you feel the anguished desire for God to come near because you don't feel him present, then God is very close to your anguish. When are we going to understand that God not only give happiness but also tests our faithfulness in moments of affliction? It is then that prayer and religion have most merit: when one is faithful in spite of not feeling the Lord's presence. Let us learn from that cry of Christ that God is always our Father and never forsakes us, and that we are closer to him than we think. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 131

Let us pray. (Silence)

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; who lives and reigns now and for ever. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.

Thirteenth Station

The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is in tumult; my heart is poured out in grief because of the downfall of my people. "Do not call me Naomi (which means Pleasant), call me Mara (which means Bitter); for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

People do not mortify themselves during Lent out of a sick desire to suffer. God did not make us for

suffering. If we fast or do penances or pray, it is for a very positive goal: by overcoming self one achieves the Easter resurrection. We do not just celebrate a risen Christ distinct from us, but during Lent we prepare ourselves to rise with him to a new life and to become the new persons that are what the country needs right now. Let us not just shout slogans about new structures; new structures will be worthless without new persons to administer the new structures the country needs and live them out in their lives. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 187

Let us pray. (Silence)

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. Amen.

Fourteenth Station Jesus is laid in the tomb

V: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

R: Because by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

A Reading from the Scriptures

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

A Reflection from the writings of Oscar Romero:

God in Christ dwells near at hand to us. Christ has given us a guideline: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat." Where someone is hungry, there is Christ near at hand. "I was thirsty and you gave me to drink." When someone comes to your house to ask for water, it is Christ, if you look with faith. In the sick person longing for a visit Christ tells you, "I was sick and you came to visit me." Or in prison. How many today are ashamed to testify for the innocent! What terror has been sown among our people that friends betray friends whom they see in trouble! If we could see that Christ is the needy one, the torture victim, the prisoner, the murder victim, and in each human figure so shamefully thrown by our roadsides could see Christ himself cast aside, we would pick him up like a medal of gold to be kissed lovingly. We would never be ashamed of him. How far people are today— especially those who torture and kill and value their investments more than human beings—from realizing that all the earth's fiscal millions are good for nothing, are worthless, compared to a human being. The person is Christ, and in the person viewed and treated with faith we look on Christ the Lord. --Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, pg. 202

Let us pray. (Silence)

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden, and rested on the Sabbath day: Grant that we who have been buried with him in the waters of baptism may find our perfect rest in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Almighty God, you called your servant Oscar Romero to be a voice for the voiceless poor, and to give his life as a seed of freedom and a sign of hope: Grant that, inspired by his sacrifice and the example of the martyrs of El Salvador, we may without fear or favor witness to your Word who abides, your Word who is Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be praise and glory now and for ever. Amen.

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.