Your Way of the Cross
Dear Friend of the Missions,

Amid all the troubles of life we know God’s help is always at hand. Hence, we look forward with faith to sharing personally in our Lord’s victory over sin and death.

Whatever we may be called upon to endure here on earth is as nothing compared to the joy and glory that will be revealed in us. Like Christ’s five wounds, our own will shine forth as marks of our fidelity and constancy.

The sacred passion and death our Savior endured for us is a sign of His great love. It shows us the way to follow since there is no other path to God except by sacrifice, which shows our love.

The stations, Christ’s way of the cross, are also our way to salvation. We must apply the spiritual power of Christ’s passion in all aspects of our own life. Think often and pray at least one station a day, not necessarily in Church, but wherever you happen to be.

As you know, our Lord doesn’t expect an eloquent prayer. In fact, we need not use words. A silent lifting of our heart to Him suffices. So let us make Christ’s way of the cross a part of our life.

In your prayers we ask your intercession for our friar missionaries and for all your fellow associates of Franciscan missions.

Yours ever gratefully,

The Franciscan Friars
Heavenly Father, out of Love for us you sent your own Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, as our Savior. In Him we are redeemed and saved.

Despite our weakness and sinfulness we wish to imitate Him. Send your Holy Spirit, we implore you, to assist us as we make the way of the cross.

We invoke the aid of our Blessed Lady, and that of all the other saints that we may be enabled to follow Christ and to make His way of the cross our way of life and love. Amen.
1. Jesus is Condemned to Death

*And they all gave their verdict; he deserved to die.* Mk 14:64

Found guilty though innocent, unjustly judged, our Master accepted a perverse human verdict. He knew God has the last word. We, too, must imitate Christ, pray for the wicked, and leave the rest to God.

*Lord Jesus, may we deliver ourselves up with patience and love to the many little deaths that fidelity in your service may require of us.*

2. Jesus Accepts the Cross

*Pilate handed him over to be crucified.* Jn 19:16

All of us who follow Christ will have our own cross to bear. By imitating our Lord the cross we carry becomes a means of salvation and final victory both for ourselves and for others as well.

*Strengthen us, Lord Jesus, to carry our cross with faith and trust, and without complaining of its weight.*
3. Jesus Falls the First Time

*I looked: there was no one to help.* Is 63:5

Even our blessed Lord staggered and fell under the weight he was bearing. He had no one to aid Him. Christ is with us when we stumble; He is eager to help us. Turn to Him now and ask His aid.

*Be with us always, Lord Jesus; despite the weakness of the flesh may we never waiver in our loyalty to You.*

4. Jesus Meets His Mother

*Woman, this is your Son.* Jn 19:26

Our Lord gave His holy Mother a part in His suffering so she might fully share His victory and glory. Our Lord, Jesus, gives us this same chance to join Him in sorrow so we may share their great joy.

*Lord Jesus, may your Mother and ours remain always a sure hope and comfort for us, your pilgrim people.*
5. Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus

_They seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, and made him shoulder the cross._ Lk 23:26

Simon resisted until he learned how easy the yoke, how light the burden when carried for Christ. Never let our natural, human fear of pain keep us from the tasks we meet on our journey to eternal life.

_May we be generous, Lord Christ, in coming to the aid of our fellow pilgrims during our earthly journey._

6. Veronica Wipes Jesus’ Face

_In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me._ Mt 25:40

Veronica’s instinctive act of pity will be recalled forever. Anything we do for anyone else Christ counts as done for Him. So never hesitate to do good to others whether they deserve it or not. God will never forget.

_Dear Lord, may we never turn a cold shoulder, but always a smiling face to those who look to us for comfort._
7. Jesus Falls a Second Time

*He was praying all the time for sinners.* Is 53:12

Christ’s weakness made Him fall again, but He went on. When we weaken, when we falter and fall, our Savior knows from His own experience how hard our way is. He will be our strength, our helper in every difficulty.

**Gird us with new strength, dear Christ, for the steep climb and the hard stretches along the road to our glorious resurrection.**

8. Jesus Speaks to the Women

*Weep rather for yourselves and for your children.* Lk 23:28

Jesus did not think of Himself; he thought of others, of the sufferings His people would yet have to endure. When we act like Christ and think first of others, our own trials seem somehow easier to bear.

**Lord Jesus, may the assurance that our Father in heaven will some day wipe our tears away, sustain us in the dark and painful hours of life.**
9. Jesus Falls a Third Time

_They leave me lying in the dust of death._ Ps 22:15

His final fall reflects the frailty of Christ’s human nature. Yet, He went on. We often have proof of our weakness, too. Yet, we show fidelity to God by going on in spite of our infirmity.

**Help us, dear Lord, to pick ourselves up each time we fall. Conscious of our weakness, may we stretch a helping hand to all who share our human frailty.**

10. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

_They shared out his garments by casting lots._ Mt 27:35

Our Lord’s clothing was taken away. So in spirit must we also separate ourselves from our material possessions. Eventually, we must part with them. Be generous always with the gifts God gives you for a time.

**Dear Jesus, stripped of your garments in the passion, bless all our efforts at purification and renewal.**
11. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

*They crucified him there and the two criminals also.* Lk 23:33

Fastened hand and foot, moving only with pain, how humiliating to be nailed at last to your cross! Our Lord cries out to our Father, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” Mt 27:46

We give you thanks and praise, dear Savior, for submitting willingly to suffering and death for our sake. We bless your precious cross by which the joy and salvation came into the world.

12. Christ Dies on the Cross

*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.* Lk 23:46

All of us must someday die. With God’s help we will meet death as Jesus did. Final bodily defeat is turned by God into our first moment of triumph. Having died with Christ we will rise and reign with Him.

We are yours, Blessed Savior, whether we live or whether we die. In baptism we have agreed to be yours in time and in eternity. May we be made dead to sin and alive to God with you.
13. Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Now let God rescue him if he wants him. Mt 27:43

Christ’s death is ultimate proof of His humanity. Unless He was human, He could not have died. Unless He was also God, His death could not save us. “Ours were the sufferings He bore.” Now we must be dead to sin.

Lord Jesus, you are the Resurrection and the Life. May we stand before the world as your witnesses, vivid signs of the living God.

14. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb. Mt 27:60

We see Christ’s body laid to rest, but no grave can hold the Lord of the Universe. He rises again to new life with God living always to intercede for us while we continue His work here on earth.

Lord Jesus, may we always continue in the strength which comes from our hope in your mercy, goodness and love for us.
V. We adore you, O Christ, and praise you;
R. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Let us pray. You, O God, overcame death through your only-begotten Son who opened for us the gates of life eternal. Help us, then, to carry out in our lives the desires you inspire in us. This we ask through the risen Christ, our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for all the ages.

Amen.

Christ is Risen 
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

“Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy because they had refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. And he said to them ‘Go out to the whole world; proclaim the good news to all creation.’”

Mk 16:14-16
The Franciscan Way

Our Franciscan missionaries also follow Christ’s way of the cross as their way of life in the missions assigned to our Franciscan Province of the Immaculate Conception in Central America.

Christ, having risen from the dead, now reigns immortal. Now He can suffer only in His members — the poor and the neglected all over the world, especially in our missions in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The message of hope and consolation God gave us in Christ must be proclaimed everywhere. We cannot keep this good news to ourselves. Your continued help by prayer, example and sacrifice makes this possible. God Himself will be your reward.

Any offering, however small, that you send today will aid your Franciscan missions.