



The Holy See

WAY OF THE CROSS AT THE COLOSSEUM

WORDS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

Good Friday, 29 March 2002

1. *Crucem tuam adoramus, Domine!* – We adore your Cross, O Lord!

At the end of this eloquent evocation of Christ's Passion, our gaze remains fixed upon the Cross. We contemplate in faith the mystery of salvation which it reveals to us. Jesus, as he died, removed the veil from before our eyes, and now the Cross towers over the world in all its splendour. The peace-bringing silence of the One whom human evil hung upon that Tree imparts peace and love. On the Cross the Son of Man has died, taking upon himself the burden of all human suffering and injustice. On Golgotha the One who by his death has redeemed the world dies for us.

2. *"They shall look on him whom they have pierced"* (Jn 19:37).

Good Friday sees fulfilled the prophetic words which John the Evangelist, an eyewitness, relates with meditated precision. To God made man, who out of love accepted the most debasing punishment, multitudes of every race and culture now look. When their gaze is guided by the profound intuition of faith, they recognize in the Crucified One the unsurpassable "witness" of Love.

From the Cross Jesus gathers into one people Jews and Gentiles, manifesting the will of his heavenly Father to make all mankind a single family gathered in his name.

In the acute pain of the Suffering Servant we already hear the triumphant cry of the Risen Lord. Christ on the Cross is the King of the new people ransomed from the burden of sin and death. However twisted and confused the course of history may appear, we know that, by walking in the footsteps of the Crucified Nazarene, we shall attain the goal. Amid the conflicts of a world often dominated by selfishness and hatred, we, as believers, are called to proclaim the victory of Love. Today, Good Friday, we testify to the victory of Christ Crucified.

3. *We adore your Cross, O Lord!*

Yes, we adore you, Lord, lifted up upon the Cross between heaven and earth, the sole Mediator of our salvation. Your Cross is the banner of our victory!

We adore you, Son of the Most Holy Virgin who stands unbowed beside your Cross, courageously sharing in your redeeming sacrifice.

Through the Wood on which you were crucified joy has come to the whole world – *propter Lignum venit gaudium in universo mundo*. Today we are all the more aware of this, as our gaze is already lifted towards the ineffable wonder of your resurrection. "We adore your Cross, O Lord; we praise and glorify your holy resurrection!".

With these sentiments, dear Brothers and Sisters, I extend to you all a cordial Easter greeting, which I accompany with my Apostolic Blessing.