

## VIA LUCIS

### The Paschal Way of the Light

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The Paschal Way of the Light, or Via Lucis, is a religious practice proper to the Easter season. The features of this devotion resemble the Way of the Cross, or Via Crucis, and can be prayed individually or with others. Instead of the cross, a symbol of the Passion, a Paschal candle or icon of the Resurrection is raised up for all to see. Just as Friday is the special day for the Via Crucis, Sunday is the day for the Via Lucis. The Via Lucis includes fourteen stations for reflection on Christ's Paschal victory, which include events from his Resurrection to Pentecost.

This particular form of the Via Lucis finds its inspiration in Saint Augustine (d. 430), whose Sermons to the People are quoted in each meditation. As we make this spiritual journey, we do so with the risen Lord and are assisted by one of the most beloved preachers of all time.

#### First Station Jesus Rises from the Dead

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

Shall I deliver them from the power of the nether world? shall I redeem them from death? Where are your plagues, O death! where is your sting, O nether world! (Hos 13:14).

#### Meditation

God knew how to catch his enemy. Saint Augustine preaches, "The devil was exultant when Christ died, and by that very death of Christ was the devil conquered; it's as though he took the bait in a mousetrap. He was delighted at the death, as being the commander of death; what he delighted in, that's where the trap was set for him. The mousetrap for the devil was the cross of the Lord; the bait he would be caught by, the death of the Lord. And our Lord Jesus Christ rose again" (Sermon 263.2). The Resurrection shows that Christ has conquered the devil through the cross!

#### Prayer

God the Father of mercies, let me know the power of Christ's victory in my life.

#### Second Station The Disciples Find the Empty Tomb

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

**R/** Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him” (Jn 20:1-2).

### **Meditation**

Saint John’s account of the Gospel begins with the Word and that the Word was made flesh. Now near the end of the Gospel, we remember who Jesus is and why he became flesh. Saint Augustine preaches: “Go back to the Word, go back to In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and consider what it means for that one to rise again; because having raised up his own flesh, he will also raise up yours. The reason, you see, he wished his own to rise again, was to preserve you from failing to believe that yours would rise again” (Sermon 242A.1). The disciples find the empty tomb, and they will come to realize that their own tombs will be empty.

### **Prayer**

Most loving Father, fill me with the truth of Christ’s empty tomb and my own.

## **Third Station** **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

**V/** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

**R/** Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

May the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant, Jesus our Lord, furnish you with all that is good, that you may do his will. May he carry out in you what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever [and ever]. Amen (Heb 13:20-21).

### **Meditation**

Saint Mary Magdalene came to do the will of the God of peace because of the great shepherd of the sheep. Saint Augustine preaches: “Now she recognized the one by whom she was being given the light to recognize him; the one who was previously thought to be the gardener was now seen to be the Christ” (Sermon 246.3). Saint Mary Magdalene receives the light to recognize the Good Shepherd when he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out (Jn 10:3).

### **Prayer**

I praise you, Father, that with Saint Mary Magdalene I can pray: “The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps 23:1).

## Fourth Station

### Jesus Walks with the Disciples to Emmaus

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

“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” (Lk 24:44-46).

#### Meditation

Saint Augustine preaches on how the disciples learn to interpret the Bible through the Death and Resurrection of Christ: “Look, it’s happened, what was written; look, it’s been fulfilled, what was foretold; look, it’s been displayed, what was read. Listen to the words, look at the facts. The truth is complete, the faith sure” (Sermon 229J.4). All the promises of God are fulfilled in the risen Lord Jesus.

#### Prayer

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, open my mind to understand the Bible and find my salvation.

## Fifth Station

### Jesus Reveals Himself in the Breaking of the Bread

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight (Lk 24:28-31).

#### Meditation

Saint Augustine wants his people to realize that what happened to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus happens to us. He preaches, “The Lord made himself present in the breaking of bread. Learn where to look for the Lord, learn where to have him, learn where to recognize him. It’s when you eat him” (Sermon 235.3).

#### Prayer

All-powerful God, may I be made worthy to know your Son, and the power of his Resurrection, when I eat him.

## Sixth Station

### Jesus Appears to the Disciples

*V/* We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R/* Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19).

#### Meditation

Saint Augustine knows that some in the Church are skeptical that Christ could appear to the disciples in a locked room. He preaches, "If you can understand how, it isn't a miracle; and if it doesn't strike you as a miracle, you are on the verge of denying that he even rose from the tomb" (Sermon 247.2). Faith relies on the power of God, who can reach inside even the locked doors of our heart.

#### Prayer

O God, give me the grace to welcome Christ into my heart again and again.

## Seventh Station

### Jesus Confers on His Disciples the Power to Forgive Sins

*V/* We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R/* Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (Jn 20:21-23).

#### Meditation

Saint Augustine extols God's work of forgiveness in the Church. He preaches, "It is by the Holy Spirit which he has given to his faithful that sins are forgiven, not by human merits; the Lord said somewhere, after he had risen from the dead, Receive the Holy Spirit, and after saying, Receive the Holy Spirit, he immediately added, Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them (Jn 20:22-23); that is, it's the Spirit who forgives" (Sermon 99.9).

#### Prayer

Most merciful Father, I give thanks that you have sent your Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins, my sins, in the Church.

## Eighth Station

### Jesus Confirms Thomas in Faith

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

I believe I shall enjoy the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord, take courage; be stouthearted, wait for the Lord! (Ps 27:13-14).

#### Meditation

Assuming the voice of Christ, Saint Augustine elaborates on the risen Lord's words to Thomas the Apostle: "Come," he says, "come, touch this and believe. You said, Unless I touch, unless I put my finger in, I will not believe. Come, touch, put in your finger, and do not be unbelieving, but trusting (Jn 20:27). Come, put in your finger. I was aware of your wounds; I preserved my scars especially for you" (Sermon 258.3). Christ keeps his wounds, now glorified, especially to heal us who have wounds in our heart.

#### Prayer

O God, give me the grace to wait for Christ my risen Lord with courage.

## Ninth Station

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples on the Shore of Lake Galilee

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you! (Ps 67:4).

#### Meditation

Saint Augustine compares the risen Lord Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the shore with their original call on the shore. At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus had invited them to become fishers of men. At the time of the Resurrection, their vocation would be vividly seen in their catch of 153 large fish, symbolic of the plenteous redemption of the world. Saint Augustine comments on this catch after the Resurrection: "So the nets are cast, big fish are caught; who, after all, is going to be small there, where they will all be the equals of the angels of God?" (Sermon 248.3).

#### Prayer

O God, expand my heart so that all my life I may praise you for the Resurrection.

## Tenth Station

### Jesus Confers Primacy on Peter

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins (1 Pt 4:8).

#### Meditation

Saint Peter knew from his own experience that love covers a multitude of sins; his primacy of serving all of Christ's flock sprang from love. The risen Lord asked Saint Peter if he loved him. Saint Peter's love speaks for all of us sinners in the flock. Saint Augustine preaches, "Love three times confessed the one whom fear had three times denied. That's why the Lord questioned him three times, so that a threefold confession might cancel the threefold denial" (Sermon 229P.2). Let love make its confession now.

#### Prayer

O God, I love you. I love you. I love you.

## Eleventh Station

### Jesus Entrusts His Disciples with a Universal Mission

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:16-20).

#### Meditation

Do you see how the Gospel's universality is fulfilled in our life? Saint Augustine preaches, "You heard what he said to his disciples after the resurrection; he sent them to preach the gospel, and it happened; the gospel was preached, it came as far as us. And lo and behold, their sound went out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world (Ps 19:5). Steadily, step by step the gospel came as far as us, and to the ends of the earth" (Sermon 233.1). The Lord fulfills his promise.

#### Prayer

Most loving Father, I praise you for your Son's promise to be with us always, and its fulfillment.

## Twelfth Station

### Jesus Ascends into Heaven

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

Then he led them [out] as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God (Lk 24:50-53).

#### Meditation

The Lord's Ascension shows how he protects us from on high. Saint Augustine preaches, "The reason he rose again was to show us an example of resurrection, and the reason he ascended was to protect us from above. So we have our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ first hanging on the tree, now seated in heaven" (Sermon 263.1). The Lord reigns from his holy throne.

#### Prayer

Heavenly Father, may your Son's Ascension bring hope to me and to all.

## Thirteenth Station

### Mary & the Disciples Await the Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1:13-14).

#### Meditation

On the disciples gathered together in prayer after the Ascension, Saint Augustine preaches, "Their expectant hopes were not in vain, because the one who made the promise was not deceitful; what they were waiting for arrived, and found the vessels for its reception clean and purified" (Sermon 266.2). By God's grace, we too can be found to be clean and purified.

#### Prayer

O God, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth, the face of my life, made from dust.

## Fourteenth Station

### Jesus Sends the Spirit Promised by the Father to His Disciples

*V*/ We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

*R*/ Because by your holy Resurrection you have given light to the world.

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim (Acts 2:1-4).

#### Meditation

The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life. He gives life to us. Saint Augustine preaches, "What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the body of Christ, which is the Church" (Sermon 267.4). Where we see Christians living by the light of the Resurrection, we see the working of the Holy Spirit.

#### Prayer

Lord God, I praise you for the Paschal Way of the Light. Fill me with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit so that I may always live for you through your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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