

A classical oil painting of Francis de Sales, a French bishop and theologian. He is depicted from the chest up, seated at a desk. He has a full, dark beard and is wearing a dark red or maroon cassock with a white clerical collar. His right hand rests on an open book, and his left hand is also near the desk. The background is a simple, warm-toned interior with a column and a decorative object on a shelf.

edited by Fr Paolo Mojoli sdb

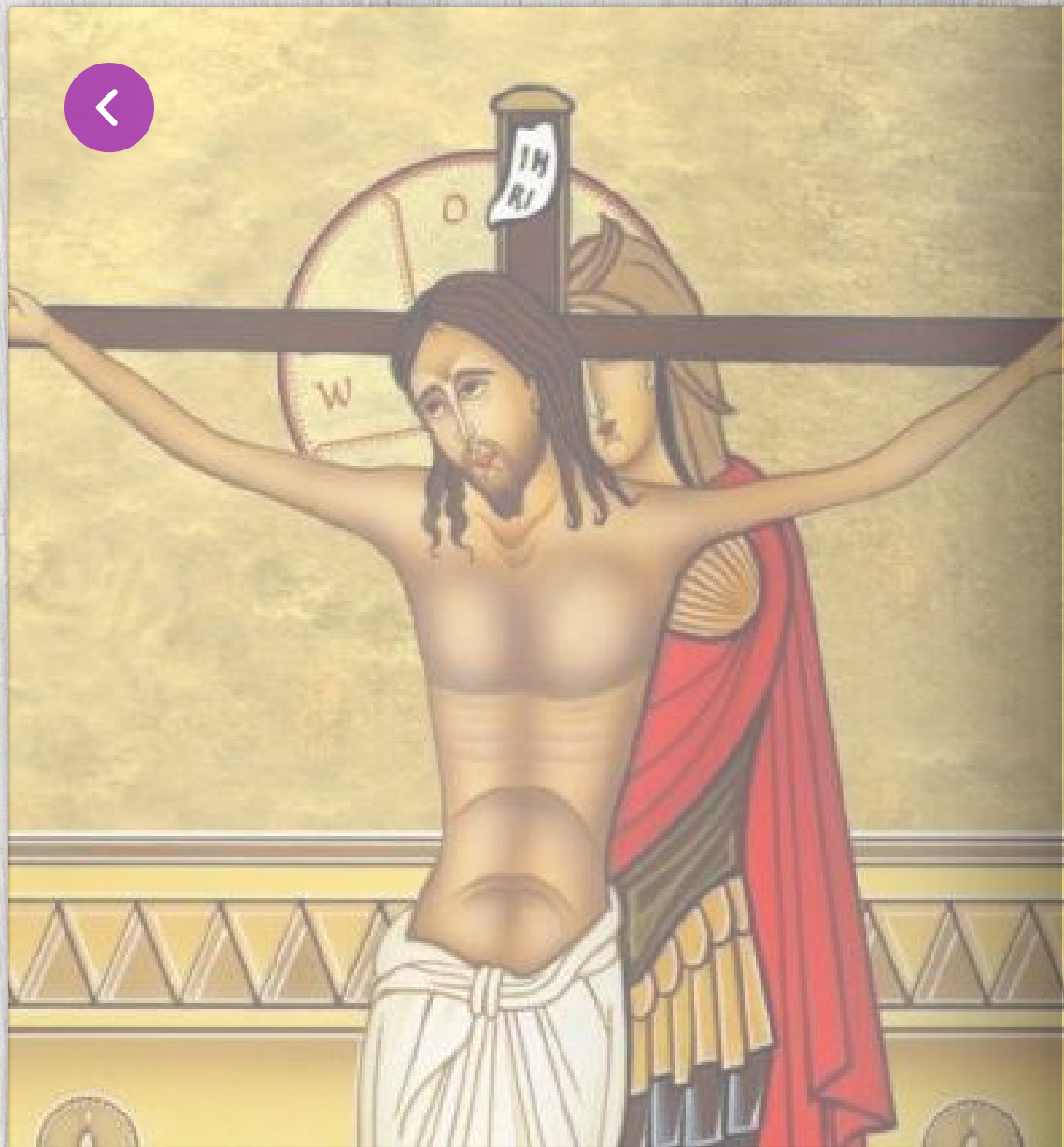
Stations of the Cross

*with meditations by
Francis de Sales*

2022

graphic design by : Elena CRISTINO





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Final prayer





San Francesco di Sales

Introduction

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Paul to the Galatians 2:19b-20).

The Lord Jesus has truly loved “to the end” (Jn 13:1). Following in the footsteps of St Paul’s testimony, bishops and doctor of the Church, St Francis de Sales was deeply touched by this immense love.

Among his many testimonies of faith, hope and charity, we draw inspiration from his Letters in the meditations in these Stations of the Cross.

Why the Letters in particular? The most attentive scholars, fascinated by the figure of this saint, agree in stating that “his correspondence is the most complete story of his life and the most faithful. It is there and only there that the saint manifests himself completely; unbeknown to him, he makes it easy to contemplate and study his absolutely fascinating personality under all aspects”.





In particular, it completely overturns one idea that is still somewhat widespread: the fear that St Francis de Sales is made of sickly sweet and sugary stuff. It is something he has sometimes been unjustly accused of.

Instead, he had the personality of a fighter, struggling nobly for the cause of the One who was crucified, risen, and had conquered every fibre of his being. In any case, despite knowing how to defend himself with the sword, he preferred to conquer hearts by means of Christ's charity, pastoral zeal and mercy.

St Francis de Sales offers the addressees of his Letters, and us as well, not just a formal or intellectual transmission of Faith, but one that completely transforms lives. The “heart” that we will hear him speak of so often in his Letters is in no way merely sentimental. Instead, he brings it back to its biblical value as the vital core of the complete person and of our entire life.





Jesus is condemned to death

Mt 27:4-26



Jesus falls the first time

Is 53: 4



Jesus carries His cross

Jn 19:16-17



Jesus meets His Mother

Lc 2:33-35





Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his Cross

Mc 15:21



Jesus falls for the second time

Col 1:24 - 26



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Ps 26:7 - 9



Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

Lk 23:38-29





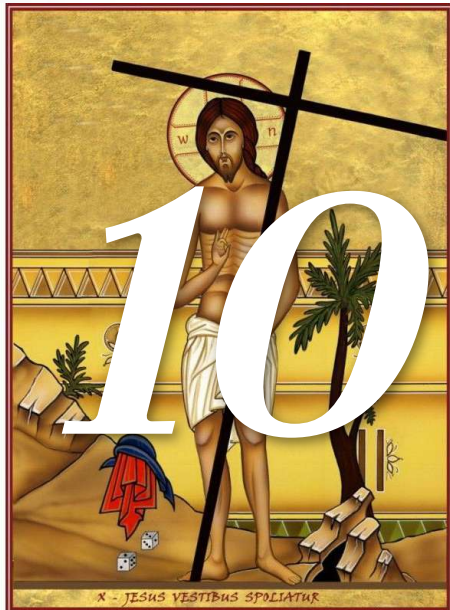
Jesus falls a third time

He 5:7-9



Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Lk 23:33 - 34



Jesus' clothes are taken away

Jn 19:23 - 24



Jesus dies on the Cross

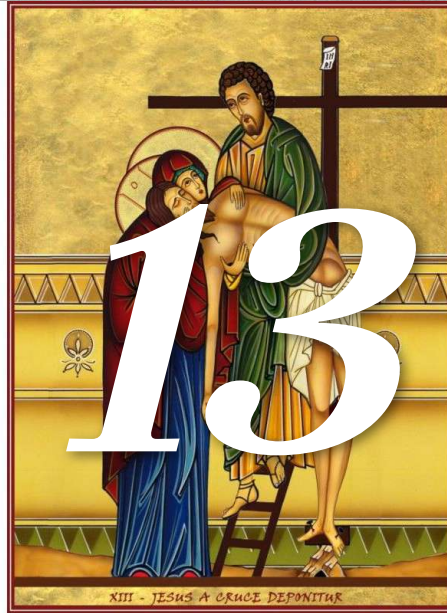
Lk 23:44-46





The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jn 19:31-34



*Stabat Mater dolorosa iuxta crucem
lacrimosa, dum pendebat Filius.*

*Cuius animam gementem, contristatam
et dolentem pertransivit gladius.*

*O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa
benedicta Mater Unigeniti!*

*Quae moerebat et dolébat, Pia Mater
dum videbat nati poenas incliti.*

*Quis est homo, qui non fleret, Matrem
Christi si vidéret in tanto supplicio?*

*Quis non posset contristári, Christi Matrem
contemplári dolentem cum Filio?*

*Pro peccátiis suae gentis vidit Jesum
in torméntis et flagéllis sùbditum.*

*Vidit suum dulcem natum moriéndo
desolátum, dum emísit spíritum.*



Jesus is laid in the tomb

Jn 19:40 - 41

◀ *Jesus is condemned to death*

1



We adore you O Christ and we praise you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mt 27:24-26

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

Do you know what the shepherds of Arabia do when they see flashing lights, hear thunder and realise that the air is filled with lightning? They take shelter with their flocks and herds. When we see persecutions or opposition threatening us, bringing us distress, we need to take shelter along with our affections beneath the holy Cross, firmly believing that "all things" work together "for good, for those who love God" (Rom 8:28).

Our Father, Hail Mary

***At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.***

I - JESUS AD MORTEM DAMNATUS

◀ Jesus carries His cross

2

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.
So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

Jn 19:16-17



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

I love your progress in solid virtue; this progress must be obtained by overcoming difficulties so that you can be trained at the school of the Cross, the only school in which our souls can become perfect. And yet, I cannot but feel a maternal tenderness which makes me want my children to experience good things. Just be courageous my dear Daughter.

Spiritual rosebushes are not like earthly ones: with the latter, the thorns stay while the roses die; with the former, it is the thorns that disappear and the roses remain. passeranno e le rose resteranno.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had passed.**

II - JESUS CRUCEM ACCIPIT



Jesus falls the first time

3

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Surely he has borne
our infirmities
and carried our
diseases;
yet we accounted him
stricken,
struck down by God,
and afflicted.

Is 53, 4



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

Humility and patience. Yes, my ever dear and beloved Daughter. You are surrounded by crosses while your husband is ill. So then, holy love will teach you well that you must remain humbly on your cross in imitation of the great Lover, as someone unworthy to endure anything for love of Him who suffered so much for us; and patiently, as someone who does not want to come down from the cross, except after death, if it pleases the eternal Father in this way. O my dear Daughter, recommend me to that divine crucified and crucifying Love, that He may crucify my heart and all my passions, so that I may no longer love anything else but Him who wanted to be so painfully and lovingly crucified for the sake of our love.

Our Father, Hail Mary

Oh, how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blest,
Of the sole begotten One!

III - JESUS PRIMO SUB CRUCEM CADIT

◀ Jesus meets His Mother

4

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Lk 2:33 - 35



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

For a long time you have desired to serve God and have placed yourselves in the school of the Cross, and therefore, not only do you accept it patiently, but I am sure that you embrace it serenely and lovingly, thinking of the One who bore his and was in turn borne to death, and of the One who, having but one son, but an incomparably lovable son, saw him die on the Cross, with eyes full of tears and a heart full of pain, but a sweet and gentle pain in consideration of our salvation and that of the whole world.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Christ above in torment hangs.
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying glorious Son.**

IV - JESUS MATRI OCCURRIT

◀ *Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross*

5



We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Mc 15: 21

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

*Yesterday I gave a talk on the Passion in front of the Sisters of St Clare who had begged me so much to do so, after having myself witnessed the address given in the city. And when I came to the point where I contemplated how the Cross was loaded onto the shoulders of our Lord and how He embraced it, saying that, in His Cross and together with it He accepted and took all our little crosses on Himself to sanctify them, but especially when I went into detail, saying that He kissed our dryness, our contradictions, our bitterness, I assure you, dear Daughter, I felt very consoled and found it hard to hold back my tears [...].
May our litte crosss always unite us to his big one.*

Our Father, Hail Mary

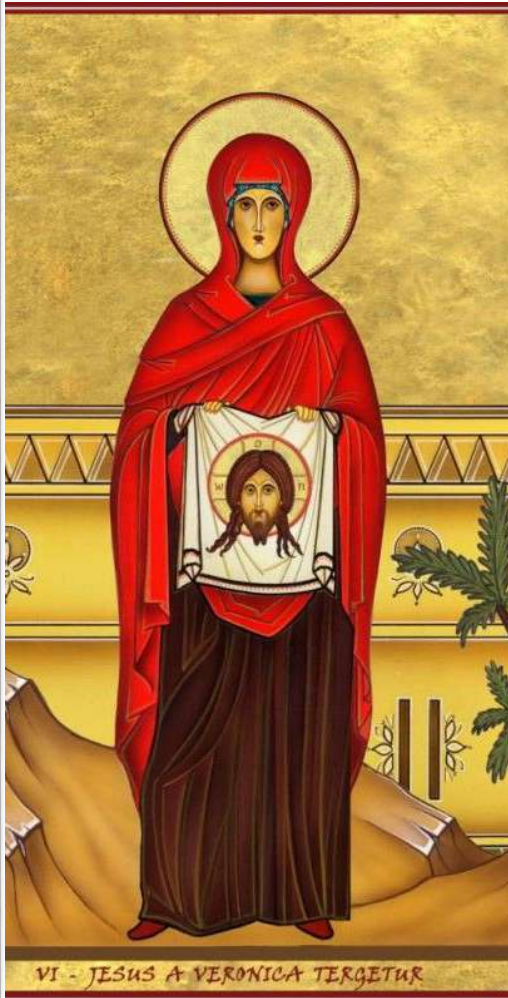
**Is there one who would not weep,
Whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?**

V - JESUS A CYRENEO ADIUVENTUR



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

6



We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry
aloud,
be gracious to me and
answer me!
'Come,' my heart says, 'seek
his face!'
Your face, Lord, do I seek.
Do not hide your face from
me.
Do not turn your servant
away in anger,
you who have been my
help.
Do not cast me off, do not
forsake me,
O God of my salvation!

Ps 27:7 - 9



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

**Remembering that outward cross
that you wore on your heart when I had the joy
of seeing you, I will tell you to love your cross
very much, my dear Lady, for, if you observe it
through eyes of love, it is all gold.**

**And although on the one hand you see the
Love of your heart dead and crucified among
the nails and thorns, on the other hand you
will find a number of precious stones, enough
to make the crown of glory that awaits you, so
long as, while waiting to take possession of it,
you lovingly bear the crown of thorns with
your King, who was willing to suffer so much
to enter into his happiness.**

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?**

VI - JESUS A VERONICA TERGETUR

◀ Jesus falls the second time

7

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints.

Col 1: 24 - 26



VII - JESUS SECUNDO CADIT

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

The other day, when the good woman from the nearby city came here, I was able to find out about the many sorrows you live amidst, dearest Sister, my Daughter. And certainly, I felt compassion at them, but more than that, consolation, because I am sure that God will hold you with His holy hand and lead you through the way that He Himself has opened for you to high perfection, because I want to believe,

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender Child,
All with bloody scourges rent.**

VII - JESUS SECUNDO CADIT

◀ Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

8



We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed."'

Lk 23:28- 29

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

Madam, if God has made you stronger and more courageous in the face of adversity, glory be to His Goodness. He is always ready to help the souls who hope in Him. Therefore, always hope in Him, Madam, and in order to hope in Him, always be completely His. Sacrifice your heart often to His love on the altar of the Cross, on which He sacrifices His own for love of you. The Cross is the royal door that leads to the path of holiness: whoever seeks it elsewhere will find not even a speck of it. Madam, I will not tell you not to take account of afflictions, for your spirit, which is always ready to respond would tell me that they necessarily make themselves known through the atrocious pain they cause you: I will tell you to look at them only through the Cross. In this way, they will seem small to you, or at least, they will seem so pleasant to you that you will love them more than any consolation you could have without them.

Our Father, Hail Mary

For the sins of His own nation,
Saw Him hang in desolation
Till His spirit forth He sent.

VIII - JESUS PIIS MULIERIBUS OCCURRIT

◀ *Jesus falls a
third time*



9

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus[a] offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Heb 5:7 - 9

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

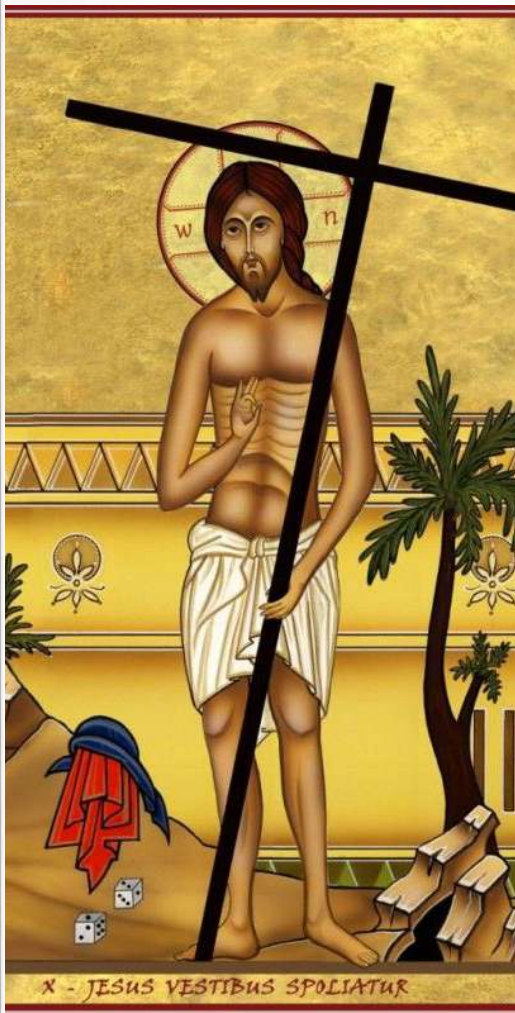
What a grace it is to be not only at the foot of the Cross, but on the Cross, or at least somewhat crucified with Our Lord! Be courageous, my dear Sister; make a virtue of necessity and do not miss the opportunity to give God a great proof of your love for Him in the midst of tribulations, as He gave you a great proof of His in the midst of thorns.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**O thou Mother: fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord.**

IX - JESUS TERTIO CADIT

◀ Jesus' clothes are taken away



10

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'

Jn 19, 23 - 24

From St Francis de Sales' Letters

Live in peace, with a great love for the will and providence of God; live with our crucified Saviour in the centre of your heart. Some time ago, I saw a young girl carrying a bucket of water on her head, at the centre of which she had placed a piece of wood. I wanted to know why, and she told me that she had put it there to break the movement of the water and thus prevent it from spilling. So, I said, from now on we must put the Cross at the centre of our hearts to draw our affections to this wood and by means of this wood, so that they will not spill over on other things such as anxieties and disturbances of spirit.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.**

X - JESUS VESTIBUS SPOLIATUR

◀ *Jesus is nailed to the Cross*

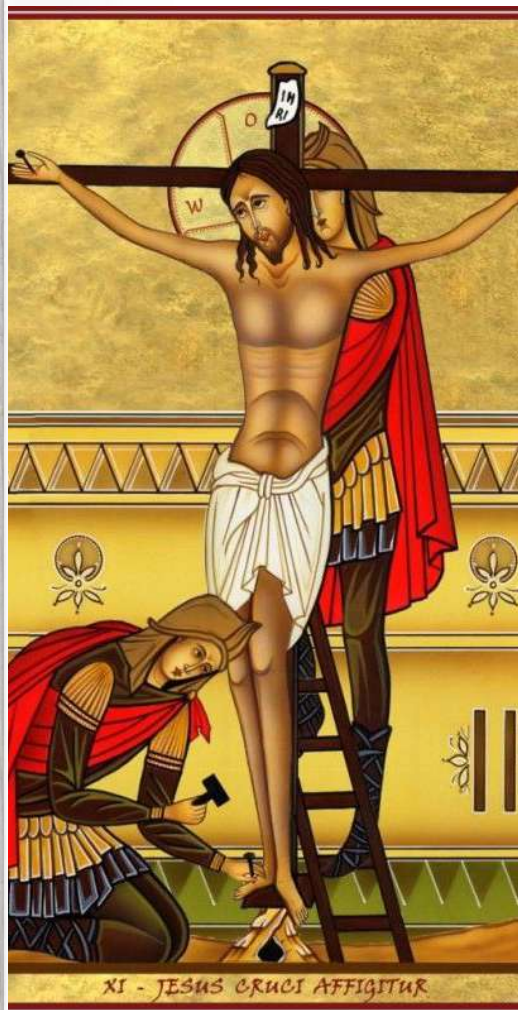
11

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

When they came
to the place
that is called The Skull,
they crucified Jesus
there with the
criminals,
one on his right and
one on his left.

Then Jesus said,
'Father, forgive them;
for they do not know
what they are doing.'

Lk 23:33 - 34



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

The best crosses are the heaviest ones, and the heaviest ones are the ones that are most repugnant to the lower part of our hearts. The crosses found on the street are excellent, but more excellent still are the ones found at home. And when they are more troublesome they are better than hairshirts, disciplines, fasts, and anything else that has been invented by austerity. In these is revealed the generosity of the children of the Cross and the inhabitants of the holy mountain of Calvary.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Holy Mother, pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Savior crucified.**

XI - JESUS CRUCI AFFIGITUR



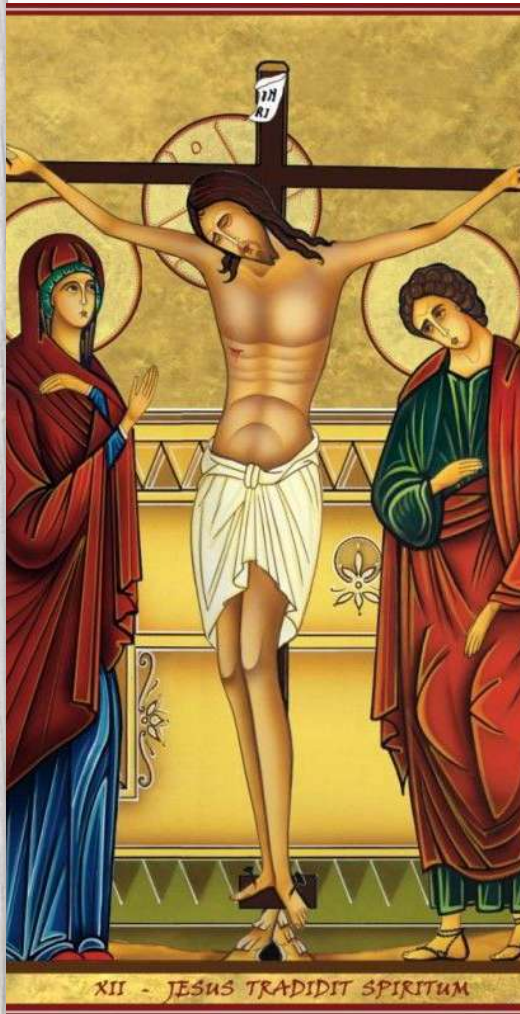
Jesus dies on the Cross

12

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed;[b] and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

Lk 23:44 - 46



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

But let us speak a little about this heart of my dearest Daughter: is it not surprising that this heart allows itself to be so deeply disturbed when faced with a little daughter who is a bit stubborn and rash, as if it were faced by armed enemies? But do not be upset at all, my dearest Daughter! There is no more unbearable annoyance than one made up of small but pressing and continuous disturbances.

Our Lord allows us to be unable to overcome these little inconveniences so that we may learn humility and understand that if we have been able to overcome certain great temptations, we owe it not to our own strength, but to the special assistance of His divine Goodness.

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torment died.**

XII - JESUS TRADIDIT SPIRITUM

◀ *The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross*

13

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

Jn 19:31 - 34



From St Francis de Sales' Letters

The crosses we make or invent for ourselves are always a bit too delicate: there is something of ourselves in them, so they are a little less crucifying.

So humiliate yourselves then, and joyfully receive the ones that are imposed on you without your asking for them. The duration of the Cross gives it value, for there is no punishment harsher than one that continues for a long time. "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10)

Our Father, Hail Mary

**Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live.**

XIII - JESUS A CRUCE DEPOSITUR

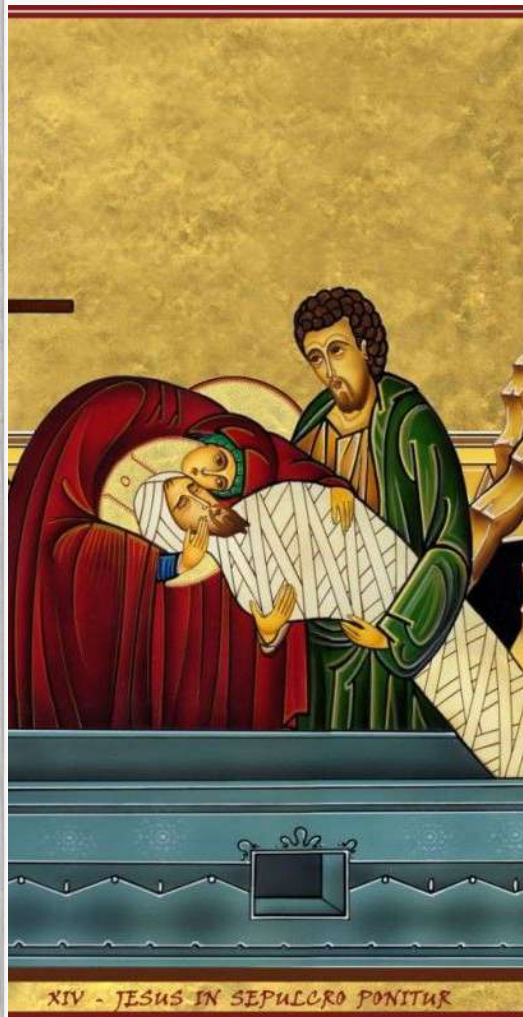
◀ Jesus is laid in the tomb

14

We adore you O Christ and bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have
redeemed the world.

They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.

Gv 19: 40 - 41



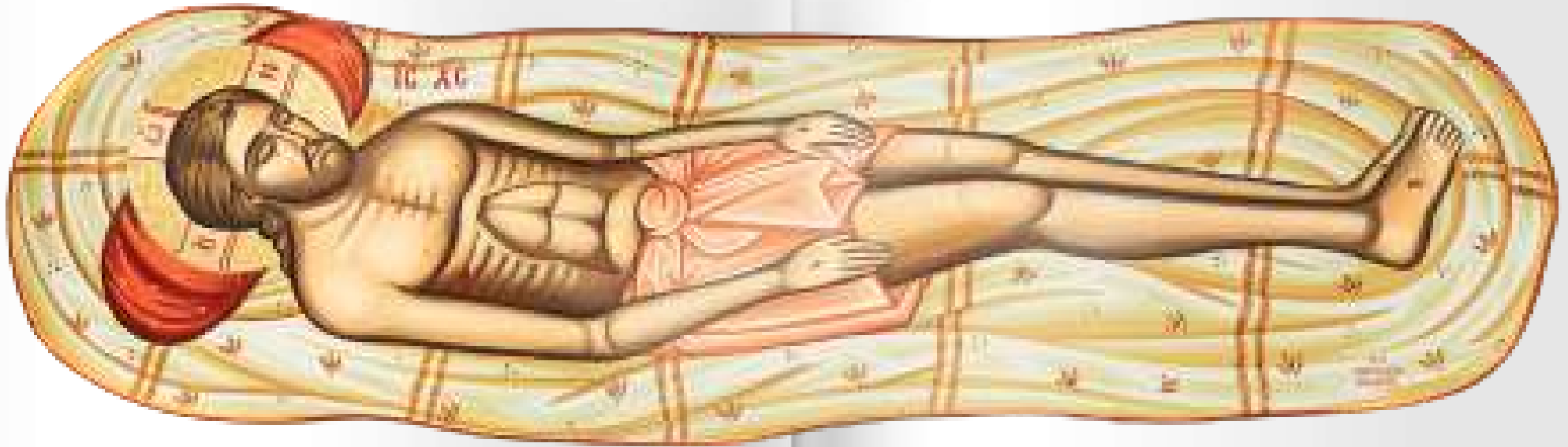
From St Francis de Sales' Letters

No one ever knew with certainty what wood our Lord's Cross was made of; and I think it happened so that we might love all the crosses He would send us equally, whatever wood they were made of, and not say: "This or some other cross is not worthy of being loved because it is made of this or some other wood".

Our Father, Hail Mary

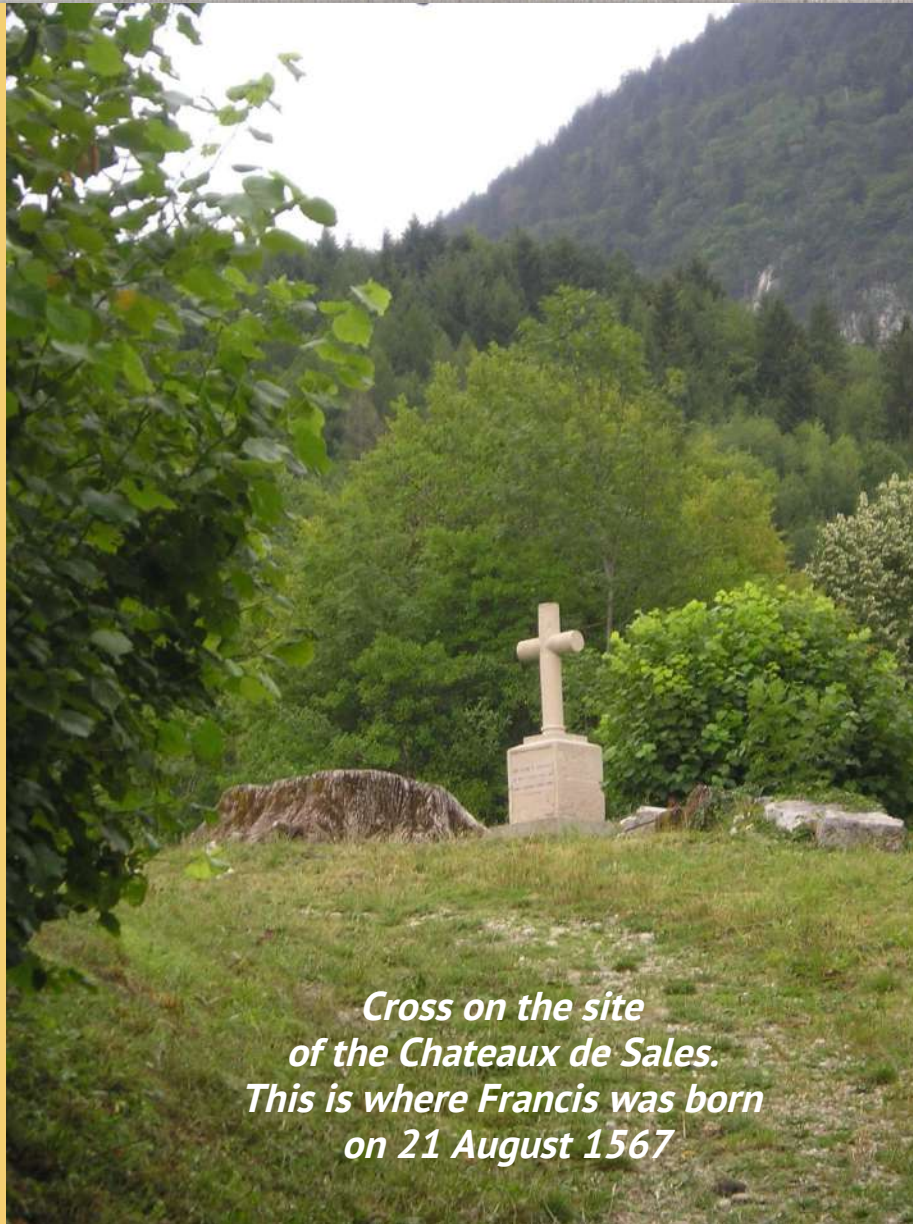
**By the Cross with thee to stay;
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.**

XIV - JESUS IN SEPULCRO PONITUR



*Lord Jesus, once more
you are in the hands of men,
but this time, they are the loving
hands of Joseph of Arimathea and some
pious women from Galilee, who know that your
body is precious. Their hands represent the hands
of all who never tire of serving you and making visible the
love of which human beings are capable.*

*It is this love that
makes us hope in the possibility
of a better world. We need only be willing
to let ourselves be met by the grace that comes
from you. O God, eternal light and endless day, fill with
your blessings those who devote themselves to your praise
and to the service of those who suffer in the countless places
of human pain and sorrow. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*
Pope Francis



*Cross on the site
of the Chateaux de Sales.
This is where Francis was born
on 21 August 1567*

