

stone, give us a heart of flesh, a heart capable of seeing. Lay low the power of ideologies, so that all may see that they are a web of lies. Do not let the wall of materialism become insurmountable. Make us aware of your presence. Keep us sober and vigilant, capable of resisting the forces of evil. Help us to recognize the spiritual and material needs of others, and to give them the help they need. Lift us up, so that we may lift others up. Give us hope at every moment of darkness, so that we may bring your hope to the world.

### **Ninth Station:** Third Fall of Jesus

From the Book of Lamentations. 3:27-32

It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when he has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust-there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

### **Meditation**

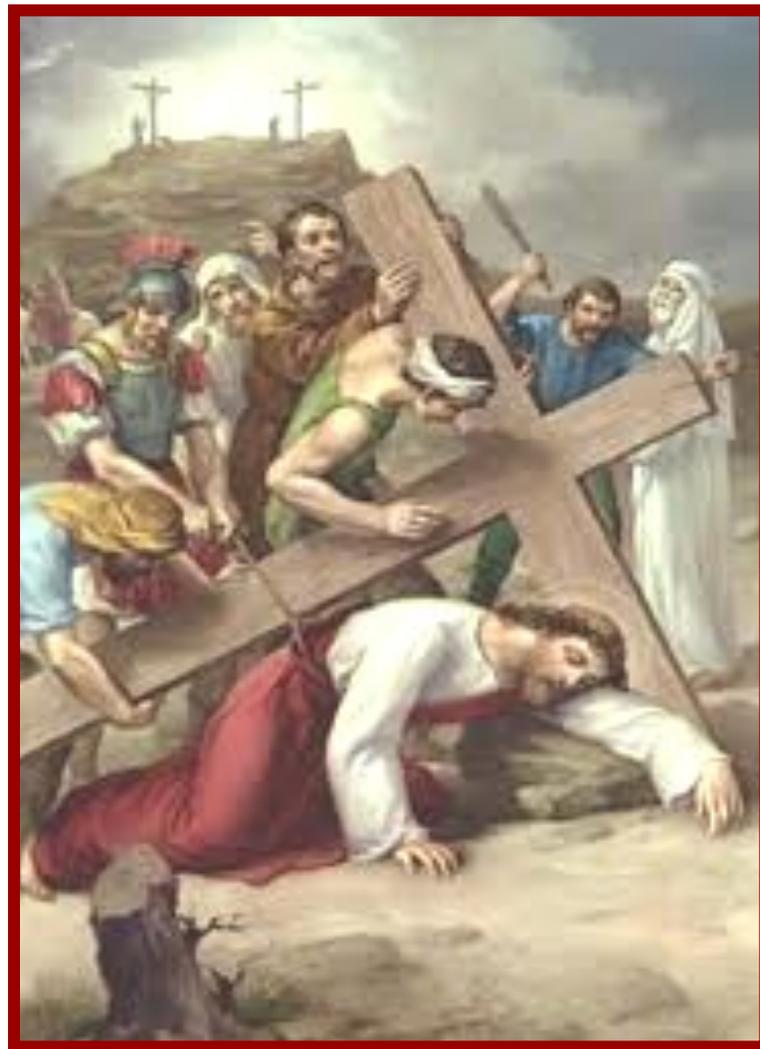
What can the third fall of Jesus under the cross say to us? We have considered the fall of man in general, and the falling of many Christians away from Christ and into godless secularism. Should we not also think of how much Christ suffers in his own Church? How often is the holy sacrament of his Presence abused, how often must he enter empty and evil hearts! How often do we celebrate only ourselves, without even realizing that he is there! How often is his Word twisted and misused! What little faith is present behind so many theories, so many empty words! How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to him! How much pride, how much self-complacency! What little respect we pay to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where he waits for us, ready to raise us up whenever we fail! All this is present in his Passion. His betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his Body and Blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces his heart. We can only call to him from the depths of our hearts: Kyrie eléison, Lord, save us (cf. Mt 8: 25).

### **Prayer**

Lord, your Church often seems like a boat about to sink, a boat taking in water on every side. In your field we see more weeds than wheat. The soiled garments and face of your Church throw us into confusion. Yet it is ourselves who have soiled them! It is we who betray you time and time again, after all our lofty words and grand gestures. Have mercy on your Church; within her too, Adam continues to fall. When we fall, we drag you down to earth, and Satan laughs, for he hopes that you will not be able to rise from that fall; he hopes that being dragged down in the fall of your Church, you will remain prostrate and overpowered. But you will rise again. You stood up, you arose and you can also raise us up. Save and sanctify your Church and sanctify us all.

\* (excerpted from: //www.adoremus.org)

## **Meditations on the falls of Jesus during His Passion**



**Those who pray the Way of The Cross often  
will have a special glory in heaven.**

## Meditations on the Falls of Jesus during His Passion

\*On March 24, 2005, the then Cardinal Ratzinger preparing for the re-enactment of the Passion of Jesus on Good Friday held at the Roman Coliseum, prepared the following meditations on the fall of Jesus for the third, seventh and ninth Station of the Cross. A month later, he was selected as the future Pope Benedict XVI.

### **Third Station:** First Fall of Jesus

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. 53: 4-6

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

### **Meditation**

Man has fallen, and he continues to fall: often he becomes a caricature of himself, no longer the image of God, but a mockery of the Creator. Is not the man who, on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among robbers who stripped him and left him half-dead and bleeding beside the road, the image of humanity par excellence? Jesus' fall beneath the Cross is not just that of the man Jesus, exhausted from his scourging. There is a more profound meaning in this fall, as Paul tells us in the Letter to the Philippians: "though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men...He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8). In Jesus' fall beneath the weight of the Cross, the meaning of his whole life is seen: his voluntary abasement, which lifts us up from the depths of our pride. The nature of our pride is also revealed: it is that arrogance which makes us want to be liberated from God and left alone to ourselves, the arrogance which makes us think that we do not need His eternal love, but can be the masters of our own lives. In this rebellion against truth, in this attempt to be our own god, creator and judge, we fall headlong and plunge into self-destruction. The humility of Jesus is the surmounting of our pride; by His abasement He lifts us up. Let us allow Him to lift us up. Let us strip away our sense of self-sufficiency, our false illusion of independence, and learn from Him, the One who humbled Himself, to discover our true greatness by bending low before God and before our downtrodden brothers and sisters.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, the weight of the cross made you fall to the ground. The weight of our sin, the weight of our pride, brought you down. But your fall is not a tragedy, or mere human weakness. You came to us when, in our pride, we were laid low. The arrogance that makes us think that we ourselves can create human beings has turned man into a kind of merchandise, to be bought and sold, or stored to provide parts for experimentation. In doing this, we hope to conquer death by our own efforts, yet in reality we are profoundly debasing human dignity. Lord help us; we have fallen. Help us to abandon our destructive pride and, by learning from your humility, to rise again.

### **Seventh Station:** Second Fall of Jesus

From the Book of Lamentations. 3: 1-2,9,16

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has blocked my way with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes.

### **Meditation**

The tradition that Jesus fell three times beneath the weight of the Cross evokes the fall of Adam, the state of fallen humanity, and the mystery of Jesus' own sharing in our fall. Throughout history the fall of man constantly takes on new forms. In his First Letter, Saint John speaks of a threefold fall: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. He thus interprets the fall of man and humanity against the backdrop of the vices of his own time, with all its excesses and perversions. But we can also think, in more recent times, of how a Christianity which has grown weary of faith has abandoned the Lord: the great ideologies, and the banal existence of those who, no longer believing in anything, simply drift through life, have built a new and worse paganism, which in its attempt to do away with God once and for all, have ended up doing away with man. And so man lies fallen in the dust. The Lord bears this burden and falls, over and over again, in order to meet us. He gazes on us, He touches our hearts; He falls in order to raise us up.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, you have borne all our burdens and you continue to carry us. Our weight has made you fall. Lift us up, for by ourselves we cannot rise from the dust. Free us from the bonds of lust. In place of a heart of