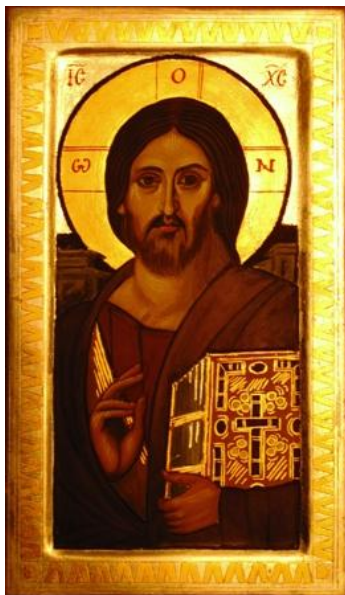


THE JESUS PRAYER – a jubilee mercy prayer



Known as the “Jesus Prayer” or “Prayer of the Heart,” disciples would repeat to the rhythm of their breath the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” In time, the prayer was shortened to, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy” or simply, “Jesus, mercy.”

How to pray the Jesus Prayer:

Begin with 5 minutes and gradually increase to 15 or 20 minutes as you become disciplined with the prayer. Perhaps set a timer to free yourself from watching the clock. Use prayer beads to help remain grounded and faithful to the prayer. You could try rosary beads, but many prefer a set with 33 beads ... one for every year that Jesus lived his human life on earth.

Some advice to link your prayer to breathing:

“Sit down alone and in silence. Lower your head, shut your eyes, breathe out gently and imagine yourself looking into your own heart. Carry your mind, that is, your thoughts, from your head to your heart. As you breathe out say, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.’ Say it moving your lips gently, or simply say it in your mind. Try to put all other thoughts aside. Be calm, be patient, and repeat the process very frequently.” (Philokalia)



“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”



**A
Revolution
of
Tenderness**

Pope Francis

“Blessed are the Merciful Matt. 5:7

www.prayerandspirituality.com



THE PENAL CRUCIFIX – A symbol of the Father's Mercy

Penal Crosses or more correctly Crucifixes were made in Ireland from the 17th and 18th Centuries. They were a form of folk craft produced by local people as a prayer resource for those making the pilgrimage to Lough Derg. Pilgrims purchased these small hand carved crucifixes to bring to Lough Derg as part of their experience of the pilgrimage. Gazing at the symbols of the passion as part of the stations on the island made these small crosses very precious reminders of the experience of the three days of fasting and prayer that all pilgrims embraced as part of their spiritual journey at St Patrick's Purgatory.

That these crosses were made at the time that Roman Catholicism was under threat and persecution in Ireland makes them all the more important as part of the story of faith and Christianity in Ireland. Pilgrims took home their own crosses with a deep sense of gratitude to God for the blessing of completing their own personal pilgrimage. Lough Derg was a place to experience the Mercy of God. Families treasured their

cross within their own immediate home circle often using the symbols of the passion displayed on each cross as way to teach and appreciate the full story of what Jesus, God's Son had endured in His love for the world as he died upon the cross. What a marvellous symbol for us to rediscover in this special Jubilee Year of Mercy.



Authentic true Crucifixes dating from Penal times are indeed rare. Many are in museums. They number around 170 known examples. In some places families have passed on such crosses and they are often produced at wakes for the dead or even as devotional death crosses. Examples are found all over Ireland but especially in the North West in the locality of Lough Derg and along pilgrim routes in Tyrone, Armagh and Louth.

One such example from Dundalk is now in the Philippines.

Another known as the "Murray Cross" is held in the O'Fiaich Library Armagh. Recently copies have been produced by moulding peat dust and also there have been some castings in metal or resins as commercial undertakings. In many cases tourist have taken these home as part of their visit to Ireland. They have a special place in our faith story. It would be wonderful to have penal crosses in homes once more as a focus for prayer, contemplation and learning about our Christian faith.



SYMBOLS OF THE PASSION & DEATH OF JESUS.

The Inscription – INRI is from the Latin notice Pilate wrote "IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM", in English it means *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*.

The Crown of Thorns – Recalls the Crown of Thorns placed on Christ's head by the roman soldiers who tortured him.

The Chalice / Cup – Recalls the sacrifice of the Last Supper. Just as the chalice is representative of the Last Supper, so it also reminds us of the Eucharist where we share in the Resurrection through the body and blood of Christ today.

A Hammer – The tool used to nail Christ to the cross.

Some Cords / Whip – Reminds us of Christ's Scourging at the Pillar.

Wounds – Representing the wounds Christ suffered on the cross—the nails in his hands and his feet.

Lance – Representing the spear or lance that the soldier used to pierce Jesus' side.

A Ladder – Representing the ladder used to remove Jesus from the cross after His death.

A Bowl – Representing of water used to wash Christ's feet on the Last Supper.

Some Nails – Representing 3 the roman nails that were used on Christ's hands and ankles.

A Cockerel and Pot - Representing the rooster that crowed 3 the times the night Peter denied Christ just as Jesus foretold. Also recalls the story in Ireland then of the rooster that Judas's wife was cooking in a pot. According to this, Judas came home and told his wife that he wanted to take his own life in fear that Christ would come for him for he had betrayed him to the Temple soldiers. His wife replied that the possibility of Jesus rising from the dead and coming to get him was as likely as the rooster in the pot coming back to life – which of course it did !! Sadly Judas then left and hung himself.