

The 7 Last Words from the Cross.

The Word of Forgiveness:

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

This is interpreted as Jesus' prayer for forgiveness for those who were crucifying him: the Roman soldiers, and apparently for all others who were involved in his crucifixion. Yet, it also includes all of us – those for whom He was suffering ... for whose sins He was atoning.

The Word of Salvation:

Today you will be with me in paradise.

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One who supports Jesus' innocence asks Jesus to remember him when he comes into his kingdom. It is God's response to the repentant sinner who recognizes in Jesus his redeemer.

The Word of Relationship:

Behold your son: behold your mother.

Jesus entrusts Mary, his mother, into the care of "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It is the foundation of the Christian community. We are not saved as rugged individuals. We are called to community and communion through, with, and in Jesus Christ.

The Word of Abandonment

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

This is a quote from King David in Psalm 22:1. It is understood as the cry as that of one who was truly human and who felt forsaken. Jesus came as true God and true man. In His humanity He felt our desolation in the face of suffering and sin.

The Word of Distress

I thirst.

This statement of Jesus is interpreted as fulfillment of the prophecy given in Psalm 69. But it also shows God's desire for our salvation. Our redemption is so close, He can almost taste it.

The Word of Triumph

It is finished.

This word is seen as a cry of victory, not of dereliction. Jesus has completed what He came to do. He loved His own, and He loved them to the end.

The Word of Reunion

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

This is more of an announcement than a request. Jesus shows His absolute trust in God, and gives us a model of prayer when we are afraid, sick, or facing death.