

2018

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# EXTREME WAY OF THE CROSS



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# THE 2018 EXTREME WAY OF THE CROSS

## The Way of (Beautiful) Life

The EXTREME WAY OF THE CROSS has for many become a way of life. A way to develop yourself creatively. A way out of the old life and into a new one.

Setting off on this route today, promise yourself a change. Don't think you need to go fast. Or that it shouldn't be too hard. Or that you have to do it. Set off from the place you know and go to the place you are just about to discover. From yourself that you know to the new transformed you. Don't waste time. Set off to find a better time. Search for a better you.

Rev. Father Jacek WIOSNA Stryczek, EWC founder

### **FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH**

**I was a prosecutor, judge and district attorney in one.**

**Julia, a teacher**

For twenty years I had a problem with a certain person. I'm not quarrelsome so we didn't have arguments. But we were full of grudges and always ready to get offended. I decided to change my approach completely. I told myself that I would look for something good in her. I was like a metal detector. I would capture the smallest friendly gesture or word. I looked carefully and realized that I didn't know this person at all. I didn't listen carefully, because I knew what she would say in advance. It was so easy for me to pass the verdict in this one-man jury. I was the prosecutor, judge and district attorney in one. The crucial moment came when we were working together. We were responsible for a company event. It turned out that her feistiness and my composure were a perfect combination. We won together.

**Sensitivity begins when you start to listen.**

**Piotr, a sales director**

I'm learning sensitivity all the time. I am a man and it doesn't come to me naturally. I used to think that people could achieve anything that I did if they wanted to. When someone asked for help, I would see problems and didn't know what to do. I wondered why they couldn't manage themselves? As a result, I did nothing. I ran away.

The breakthrough came when I had to face a very difficult situation concerning a person who is close to me. I remember this meeting. I didn't know what to do. I'd been looking for solutions for some time.



At some point I started listening. I asked questions to keep up the conversation, but mostly I listened. As a result, I heard a lot and could discover anew this person who is important for me. It was a breakthrough on my male road to sensitivity. I understood that sensitivity shouldn't be mistaken for willingness to help. Sensitivity begins when you start to listen to what the other person is trying to cope with. When you stop comparing.

**Jesus was asked which was the first of all commandments. He replied "This is the first: Listen...". (Mark 12:29-30)**

*Jesus, you weren't heard but sentenced. They didn't want to meet you, only to judge you. You did nothing bad. You were just different than they'd thought. Jesus, teach me openness.*

## **SECOND STATION: JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS**

**I know that full commitment, dedication and reliability really develop you.**

**Paweł, an entrepreneur**

My professional career began just after I graduated from secondary school. Having worked for two years as a salesman, I became a deputy shop manager. I was 21 years old. A big change and a big challenge. I remember how I slept at the back of the shop to finish everything I had to do. In the morning I didn't want to waste time commuting. I stayed in the shop to work more. Full commitment. I was working for my future. It paid off. I gained experience, valuable references that I could show to other employers. After a few months I took a risk. I applied for the position of deputy manager in a big newly opened shop. New products, standards, training, recruitment of staff. I was ambitious. I wanted to develop. It wasn't easy, but I knew that I was developing my career. After less than two years, I decided to make another drastic move. Work took up a lot of my time. I stopped doing sports, I ate unhealthy food, I felt bad. I understood that this job was taking something away from me. I received a job offer from a friend to work as a warehouseman in a furniture warehouse. Moving furniture, a dozen or so tonnes every day. A blue collar job, hard work, lower pay. But the vision of a new experience, getting fitter and having more free time were enough to motivate me. Many people treated it as a step backwards. But I decided that I would face this situation with maximum commitment, do my best and get fit. After a few months, my body changed. First of all, however, I was promoted to the position of the chief buyer for the warehouse. A cool office job. I had achieved my objective because I assumed that I wouldn't work long as a warehouseman. But I would meet my responsibilities with full commitment so as to be noticed and appreciated. Now I run my own business successfully. I value my experience. I know that full commitment, dedication and reliability really develop you. They make you more flexible, but also build your image. Once you've achieved them, it's easier to find a job, get a pay raise or a promotion. You can do more, it's easier to move around in the world.

*Jesus, Your 33 years of life. So little or so much? During the day You taught, You prayed at night. Once You fell asleep from exhaustion in a boat when a storm was raging around. Jesus, don't let me waste my life or pretend that I live to cultivate my own laziness. Help me to be fully committed. I want a full, real life. Jesus, be with me.*



## THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

**In silence, in my own emptiness, I set off on long journeys from which I never return the same.**

**Tomek, a monk**

Over the last seven years I've spent nearly 100 days in solitude and silence. Each of these days had one clear aim - to get to know God and myself better. The first days healed my relationship with my parents and took it to a higher level. Several months later, during the next period of silence, I decided to abandon my present life and try a new way in a monastery. The following days brought new discoveries and challenges. In silence, in my own emptiness, I set off on long journeys from which I never return the same. Despite the fact that I am physically in the same place, I feel like a traveller discovering new lands.

The last 8 days of silence have brought another discovery. It was the 6th day, around 4am. I woke up and couldn't fall sleep again. I decided to go outside. It was a starry night, there was a light breeze, it was quite chilly. There was a small, stylish church nearby which had been intriguing me for some time. When I was staring at it in pervading silence, I experienced the presence of God as I had never sensed it before. God who is not out there, far away, in heaven or even in church. It is God who is in me. That close. And maybe that's why it was so difficult for me to find Him there. God who is not only present now but has been throughout my whole life. Especially when things got difficult. This experience has changed me completely. Previously, I would look to others to prove my own worth. And now I've started to develop myself and my relationships based on truth. I've become expressive. I've been born again. I have a real life.

*Jesus, You fell under the weight of the cross. Though You were surrounded by people, You were alone on Your path. Your burden, Your suffering, Your mission. Your own way. Jesus, teach me to make important decisions alone. Help me to live my life truly.*

## FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

**We learn to be happy with the happiness of family members who pursue their own desires which are beyond our comprehension.**

**Gosia and her family**

Mary sees her Son on the Way of the Cross - and I see Her. I'm also a mother. I can imagine how She must have suffered.

We mothers and women tend to write scenarios in our mind how to make our loved ones happy. How to protect them from dangers, hardships and suffering. For their good, of course. How many times have you heard: "For the sake of your relationship, marriage, for your own sake, you should do this and that..."

I remember how my husband after his first solitary Extreme Way of the Cross said he wanted to do all the other routes by himself. One night route once a month. I had agreed when other people were walking at the same time. It helped me to realize that so many others would be doing it then. But when



he said he was going to walk alone, my imagination immediately conjured up the many dangers that would await him.

At the time I was working on myself and practising a positive attitude, saying yes. So I agreed. With each subsequent month, with each subsequent route my fears decreased and my husband grew stronger. He returned altered from those trips. They had a positive impact on our entire family. From that time, I grew calm and open to various needs of my husband - for example, a solitary bicycle trip - 700 km to the seaside. Friends didn't understand. My friends assumed that I was experiencing an internal tragedy. My husband's colleagues didn't understand how he could leave me alone with three young children.

Such openness to the needs of each family member has become natural. I go to trainings, women's outings, I face my own challenges. Our children have their dreams which gradually come true: a trip to the capital, climbing a mountain peak, holidays by the sea ... Our life has become more colourful, happier. We learn to be happy with the happiness of family members who pursue their own desires which are beyond our comprehension. And we don't have to do everything together.

*"Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?'"(Luke 1:34) - Mary, this was the beginning of your opening up to the unknown. God says: "My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8). Mary, how much you had to open up to accommodate the extraordinary path that your Son took. Today, help us to accept that our loved ones are different from us and let us rejoice in their happiness.*

## **FIFTH STATION: SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS**

**Listening to my wife's needs, I understood that this was a new dimension of conjugal love. I'm not afraid of losing something so that my wife could gain. This is the best time in my life.**

**Piotr, husband and father of two**

I thought that conjugal love was about getting along well with my wife and wisely raising our children. Five years after our wedding, I'm discovering what conjugal love means. When my wife went back to work a few months ago after the birth of our second child, we began to talk a lot about her involvement and professional development. I understood that doctor's work is very different from my office work where the atmosphere is great and I have a very good position. My wife repeatedly emphasised that she wanted to demonstrate commitment at work and significantly improve her qualifications. However, it required a change in the functioning of our family. I had to reorganise my life in order to spend much more time with our children when my wife worked longer or was on a night shift. It was a breakthrough for me. The external situation somehow forced an internal revolution. Like Simon, who helped Jesus to carry the cross. Forced to do it, he could rebel or help the best he could. Listening to my wife's needs, I understood that this was a new dimension of conjugal love. I'm not afraid of losing something so that my wife could gain. This is the best time in my life. I love to see sparks in my beloved wife's eyes which stand for commitment and professional involvement. I'm hungry for her successes. I've never thought that you could love like that. At the same time, I've managed to reorganise my lifestyle. I didn't have to give up my hobbies, social commitments or professional development. I just work differently than before, I optimise a lot and my games with children are just as developing as business meetings.



*Jesus, you taught us the commandment of mutual love. Now giving has ceased to be the ideal of love. It's been replaced by reciprocity. Self-sufficiency is no longer needed. Reciprocity is better. It was natural to combine Simon's and Your strength to carry the cross. Reciprocity. Jesus, open me up to true love in reciprocity.*

## **SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS**

**I really wanted to be the best of listeners and a person with whom you could discuss different topics.  
Iwona, a medical analyst**

For a long time I've been trying to work on how to perceive the needs of others. I call this work "mindfulness trainings". When I graduated, I met Basia. A friend from my group at university was renting a room from her. Basia was a retired professor of the Jagiellonian University. When we met, I listened to her. I was attentive. And she told me about herself, also about her hobbies and about science, for example about quantum physics.

When my friend moved out, Basia was left alone in a huge flat. I decided to visit her once or twice a week, sometimes do the shopping for her ... But first of all, to listen. It was good practice for me. Before seeing her, I sometimes studied physics. I knew that these two hours a week meant a lot to both of us. I really wanted to be the best of listeners and a person with whom you could discuss different topics. My visits to Basia lasted about 3 years. These were not limited to listening, but also helping her like during her sudden hospital stay.

I know that I appeared at a time when she needed it most. And I myself stopped focusing on my own needs. Listening to her, working with her, I transformed. I owe it to Basia. Thank you, Basia.

*Jesus. You were a teacher. You could just limit yourself to talking. And yet at the home of Maria and Martha, at Simon Pharisee's, or during an attempted stoning of a woman You were all ears. In an ordinary manner, just like during every real meeting You participated in the exchange of thoughts. You built relationships, friendships. And today You teach us about deep, friendly relationships.*

## **SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

**Victory, even in a small thing, may be done in a big way.  
Mateusz, a project manager**

When I was 15, I joined the Volunteer Fire Department in my village.

There was a man there who did a lot for us, young people. He offered to prepare us for a regional firefighting competition. We started training in winter to be ready for September. He introduced elements of wrestling and karate to our exercises to make us stronger and more flexible. In summer we did interval training. Were we provincial amateurs? The competition mean a lot to us. We were determined to win.



His involvement was contagious. I did my best and became the team commander. I never complained at trainings. This shaped me mentally.

I remember the day of victory: our team of 15-year-olds approached the winners in the senior category who also included professional firemen. It was great to feel that we were perfectly coordinated, fast, calm. That we had outclassed the other teams. To this day, I bear in mind how futile it is to complain. Because victory, even in a small thing, may be done in a big way. With no complaining, without focusing on problems. With the attitude that victory awaits after the hardships.

*Jesus, Your life was no bed of roses. You became a refugee as a child. Your stepfather died relatively early. You had to support Your family Yourself. And though You did good things, You still had many enemies. Jesus, teach us determination. Courage to overcome difficulties. Help us to train so that we can practise in small things in our daily lives to win the main prize in the future.*

## **EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

**I've managed to understand that what I feel is not bad or good in itself... It's just information that has to be understood and handled in an appropriate manner.**

**Ania, a doctor**

Emotionality is a powerful force. It's good to use it well ... When I imagine the scene of Jesus meeting the weeping women, it seems to me that they just couldn't do it.

In secondary school I had a teacher who I now think got rather carried away by her emotions and never tried to get to know them better or to work on them. The atmosphere in her lessons depended on her current mood which was unpredictable and completely independent of us. Immediately after she entered the classroom we could read how it would be that day – tension and irritation which predicted unpleasant comments and difficult questions to us, or a smile that gave hope for relative peace. We had problems learning this subject, we received "punishments" and "rewards" regardless of how well we were prepared for the lesson or how we behaved.

From primary school I have an experience of a completely different attitude of a teacher who was our tutor. You couldn't say that she was unemotional or that she was always nice and smiling. And yet we trusted and loved her. She managed to persuade us to do numerous extracurricular activities - competitions in which we took part as the whole class and as individuals, writing our own newsletter, organising class events. We were also invited to meetings at her home for which everyone had to bring a small gift... She was honest and genuine with us. She was happy and sad with us. She said what she thought, both when it was nice and unpleasant for us. At the same time, she was caring and attentive to us - just like a mother. As a result, this one year was the most intense and fruitful period for me of the time I spent at school.

I ran away from my emotionality for a long time, afraid of its potentially destructive influence. Now I am constantly learning to tame it; recognise my feelings and look for their causes. I've managed to understand that what I feel is not bad or good in itself. It's just information that has to be understood and handled in an appropriate manner.



*Jesus. Although in religious movies they show You almost like a motionless mummy, You were similar to us in everything. Also in Your emotionality. Your art of managing emotions is very evident: Your joy about love in Cana, compassion in the presence of the sisters of the dead Lazarus. And above all, controlled anger at the peddlers in the temple. Anger, which was a prophetic sign, a symbolic event. Jesus, be our master in taming emotions.*

## **NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME**

**I fall, but I get up, dust myself off and go on. Sometimes it hurts, it's hard, but that's no reason to give up. You're not born a hero, you become one by your choices, minor ones at first.**

**Gosia, a project manager**

What makes Jesus get up from the third fall? I think that such things don't happen by themselves. You have to practise them every day.

At the age of 39, after the birth of my third child I didn't have time to go to aerobics classes, so I started to run. I spontaneously signed up for a programme in which I had to take on an annual challenge - running daily at a set distance and time. In the first month, you had to run 2 km every day. I didn't want to waste time walking so I started running the first day. After covering the distance I thought that I would faint of exhaustion. I didn't give up and the next day I did it again. Over the following months, the distances increased. Time limits also appeared. I went on running despite my limitations. In the rain, in the cold, with a hurting knee, with a coming flu, despite problems with my sinuses, with stomach flu ... And so for 218 days. Until I got ill. The doctor gave an antibiotic and told me to stay in bed. I obeyed. I didn't finish the challenge. It was a fall that hurt a lot. But I decided to run again. Today I've run for 462 consecutive days. In this time I again took on the annual running challenge. During the last months I ran 7 km a day, and in the last stage I had to do 10 km in an hour every second day. And I managed. I am one of less than 2% of people who have finished the challenge.

Why am I writing all this? Because I noticed that my untiring perseverance in running has changed my approach to everything. I don't give up so easily, I look for solutions. Defeats are not final for me.

I fall, but I get up, dust myself off and go on. Sometimes it hurts, it's hard, but that's no reason to give up. You're not born a hero, you become one by your choices, minor ones at first.

*Jesus. Your whole life. Day by day. Every day, every moment moulded You. You formed. You discovered Your identity, Your mission and Your future. And at the same time You worked on Yourself to overcome all difficulties. When it was necessary, You were ready. Jesus, take us a preparatory training for real life.*

## **TENTH STATION: JESUS' CLOTHES ARE TAKEN AWAY**

**Taking away clothes, striping, ripping off. Nudity. There is nothing to hide behind. There is no veil nor any help and others can see your total helplessness.**

**Monika, a psychologist**



It was in a physics lesson, I was sitting in the last row by the wall. Right after the bell I read a text message from my mother and quickly ran out of the classroom. My parents had decided to split up. I ran away so that no one would see my tears. I didn't know these people well yet, and the last thing I wanted to do was reveal my pain to them. I was 16 when my familiar world collapsed. I was starting secondary school in a completely new city, away from home which just fell apart. I had no adult who would hug and support me. I couldn't get it from my parents anymore. I remember terrible helplessness at that time: I had no influence on this decision and on the fact that the safety of my growing up was taken away from me. And the loneliness and the impression that I had no place to shelter, hide, nothing to veil myself with. As if someone had taken away my clothes. I thought that everyone knew about it. That anyone could look through me and read my dramatic story like in an open book.

A few years later, I was a team leader at a retreat and in charge of a group meeting. One of the girls didn't have her Holy Bible, so I lent her mine. At one point, I saw she was really moved. Only after a few days did she dare to say that she had discovered my notes in one of the books and an arrow with the words "parents' divorce". It turned out that she was facing a similar problem herself. Before she went away on holiday her parents had announced that they had decided to split up. Like me a few years earlier she was ashamed of this story and had no one to talk to. She was paralysed by fear of being trivialised or ridiculed. I did what my friends had once done for me: I surrounded her with wordless care. Without any unnecessary comments, judgments and comforts, just me by her side.

*Jesus, You silenced a storm on a lake, but allowed Yourself to be stripped off Your clothes. You were strong, You were mighty. You could raise the dead. And yet You allowed Yourself to be humiliated. Or maybe it was the other way round. You allowed people to discover the truth about You. To see who You really were. Not in the glory of Palm Sunday, but in the nakedness of the cross. Jesus, I want to be closer, closer to You.*

## **ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

**I had a dream that my child wouldn't limit me, but help me develop. Awaiting him or her, I happily imagined how we would climb mountains together, reach the peak and gaze at the horizon.**

**Marcin, a scientist and a physiologist**

When my wife and I shared with the world the great piece of news that we would soon become parents for the first time, we started receiving condolences. People sympathised with us saying that now everything that was good would come to an end as our baby would be born. For me, this event was to mark the end of mountain treks. A few years earlier, I had become extremely keen on mountains. I started to climb and scaled more and more difficult peaks, including Matterhorn which I conquered three times.

Now I was going to be a father and according to what the others said, it meant the end of this hobby and my freedom. But I had a dream that my child wouldn't limit me, but help me develop. Awaiting him or her, I happily imagined how we would climb mountains together, reach the peak and gaze at the horizon. I wanted to show him or her my mountain world and to teach them about the beauty that enchanted me. If I'd told people about it before the birth of my first child, they would have looked at



me with scorn. But desires have great strength if you try to follow up on them. After the birth of my child, in order to be with him, but also to train, I invented special exercises. For example, I did push-ups or crunches with my baby - he was lying on the mat or sitting in my lap, and I was doing exercises. For him, this regular coming close and moving back was great fun and for me it was good exercise. From the beginning, we also went on family trips to the mountains. First, the three of us, and after the birth of my second child, the four of us. Several years passed. One day all the four of us were going down: me, my wife and our children - our five-year-old son and two-year-old daughter. It was already dark. We had headlamps on our heads and the starry sky above us. On the way, we met friends who'd once predicted "the end of the mountains" and easy-going life for me. They didn't know that we started our trips to the mountains when the baby was only 6 weeks old, and since then we'd been on at least several dozen family expeditions. My younger daughter keeps asking: when are we going to the mountains?

*Jesus. You were nailed to the cross. Your movements, Your possibilities were limited. But they didn't take away Your freedom. You could still love and love You did. You could build relationships and talk from the cross with Your Mother. You could still do a lot. We think that by limiting possibilities our freedom is limited. We become slaves to our notions of inability. Jesus, help us forget that things can't be done. And open the world of freedom to us. Freedom to love.*

## **TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS**

**I discovered that when taking risks I genuinely risked. But only by risking can you change yourself.**

**Marcin, an engineer**

For me Matterhorn is a mountain which I've always dreamed about, it's a symbol. Height of 4,478 metres above sea level and 1,400 m of vertical climbing. I identify it with a change in my life. I went to scale this mountain in the year when I got a new job and became very involved in it. And also when I became a father. A trip to the Alps one month after the birth of my child was a difficult decision. On each side I heard voices of doubt, offensive comments and attempts to stop me at home. My wife believed in me. By climbing Matterhorn, I chose risk, knowing that the trip to the mountains would change me.

Climbing this peak was not easy but I will always remember the descent.

The descent from a shelter located at 4,000 metres began with an abseil and then we were to traverse a snowy slope using a fixed line. I was the first to grab the line and drive both my feet into the snow. However, something went wrong ... My legs began sliding down the icy snow, and the steel line was slipping away from my already exhausted hands. After a while, I was sliding down the snow-rock slope. In several seconds I gained speed and although I tried to grab whatever I could, the momentum began to turn me sideways. I kept fighting and after 30 metres I managed to slow down on larger rocks. I was bruised but alive. If I hadn't stopped, my descent would have ended in my death.

I'll never forget it. This excursion was not audacity but coming into contact with the forces of nature. The mountains require humility. They are bigger ...

I discovered then that by taking risks I genuinely risked. But only by risking can you change yourself.



These few seconds of the descent have changed me more than I could have imagined. The risk allowed me to rethink each dimension of my life: as a husband, father, employee and social worker. I now perceived my worth in relation to people and God.

*Jesus. You told us to turn the other cheek. On the one hand, if someone hits us once, then seeing that we are hurt, they will stop. But on the other, once they hit us, why not do it again?... Risk is the essence of our path through the cross to Resurrection. Jesus says: "Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it..." (Luke 9:24). Jesus, help me to look for life, real life, more than for safety...*

## **THIRTEENTH STATION: THE BODY OF JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

**For Granny, heaven is not green pastures but the certainty that she will meet her relatives and will again enjoy her relationships with them.**

**Michał, a programmer**

My grandmother was born on 19 December 1917, and in December 2017 she celebrated her 100th birthday. Yes, my grandmother is 100 years old and still in relatively good health. For most people 100 years is just a number. But for me it's amazing - my grandmother was born 2 months after the October Revolution, she was less than 22 years old when the Second World War started and in 1989 she was already a 72-year-old senior. Grandma loves beads, preferably big, red ones. She's spent virtually all her life in the countryside, running a farm with grandfather. Surrounded by close family, friends, acquaintances, she lived in a small community. A year after the death of my grandfather with whom she had been married for 50 years, she moved in with my parents.

For 15 years, grandma has often repeated that she wanted to die. She repeats it almost every day, even when she prays. And she prays often and loudly. At first we found it strange and incomprehensible. We said: "Grandma, don't say that, you shouldn't say that, after all you are healthy and you have everything." We didn't understand her.

Years passed. We got used to her talking about dying. She would just say one thing and we would reply with our standard response. One day, at one of the formation meetings, someone asked a priest what hell is. I had the impression that this priest destroyed our view in a moment. He said that hell is lack of relationships. I still wonder if it is lack of opportunities to build relationships, inability to establish or develop them. Anyway, the result is total spiritual emptiness. Loneliness that you can't imagine. It's not only lack of relationships with other human beings but above all, with God.

This concept is very different from the vision of a dark hole which is full of fire, blood and physical pain. I thought about it for a long time. The real breakthrough came a few weeks later. I went to visit my parents and grandma. When she began her "I want to die" I suddenly understood the meaning of what the priest and grandmother were saying. I realized that many people who were very close to grandma were no longer alive. Her husband, daughter, parents, siblings, friends have all passed away. They died a long time ago, and she hasn't built so many and such strong relationships. And she misses them very much. Because of her lost relationships, her life has begun to resemble hell. Although she is surrounded by a supportive family, I think she feels lonely. She often mentions that she had a good, though hard life. She never complained.



For Granny, heaven is not green pastures but the certainty that she will meet her relatives and will again enjoy her relationships with them. She often says that people who are there assure her that they are waiting for her.

Now, when my grandmother begins to repeat her motto, I say: "I know, grandma, I know you want to die, but I also know that God will decide when to let you go." Or maybe I should put it like this: I know grandma that God will decide when to let you reunite with your loved ones. When you will meet them again.

*Jesus. You immersed yourself in the void. Probably there was nothing there except desires. We read: "But God resurrected Him having broken the ties of death" (Acts 2:24). And then: "Go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead'" (Mt 28: 7). Wait a minute. Jesus, have you risen from the dead or have you been resurrected? Or both? Your love for Father and Father's for You worked like a magnet. The attraction was two-sided. That is resurrection. It comes from the strength of relationships. Jesus, help me build strong and true relationships.*

## **FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB TO RISE FROM THE DEAD**

**I've noticed that when I talk to someone, I tend to nod, throw in my thoughts, comments. I then have the impression that I can't focus on what the other person is saying, on understanding them.**  
**Paweł, an entrepreneur**

For a long time I've been working on building a space of silence within myself. Silence for prayer, silence when someone speaks. Silence when you don't have to speak, because presence is enough. I've noticed that when I talk to someone, I tend to nod, throw in my thoughts, comments. I then have the impression that I can't focus on what the other person is saying, on understanding them. I was present in my godmother's dying. Malignant cancer, many months in hospital. Later at home. I was a teenager. I was very moved. I couldn't understand the illness. I didn't know how to behave. However, I felt I had to be near her. The fact that I didn't know what to say meant that I heard more. I remember conversations about the meaning, the pain, about getting ready to die, about fear. I heard more. I was present. It was important to me and I remember it to this day.

Recently, my friend suggested that we go on EWC together. His son had been born with an incurable disease. I'm my father, I can't imagine what he must have felt. I didn't know what to say. We only exchanged a few words before and after the Way of the Cross. I kept on thinking what to say all the way. I searched for answers, words of consolation. Emptiness and silence. However, I felt it was not important. It was more important is that he wasn't alone. That we were together.

*Jesus, resting in the silence of the grave. Jesus, listening to the pain of the whole world. Jesus, opening graves and freeing the dead from hopelessness. Jesus, the new beginning of our life. Jesus, put Your ear to my heart.*



## A DAY AFTER EWC: RESURRECTION

**Having slept and rested after EWC, go back in your thoughts to what you have discovered. Also reflect on what you'd like to change in your life and what you can do. Dare to draw up a development plan.**

**Rev. Father Jacek WIOSNA Stryczek, EWC founder**

Every day I want to live better, I want to make a small progress in improving the quality of my life. I don't want to live according to patterns and stereotypes.

Piotr, leader of the Male Side of Reality

During the last holidays we talked about managing money with friends. It turned out that I hadn't reflected on it and I felt that it was time to do something about it. I spent a few months studying about home finances. I read all available blogs, I tested financial applications. I listened to podcasts, I made a reading list for myself. I sorted out bank accounts, I called friends who are experts in this field. I took a big step forward. I created a professional home budget. We now have financial goals with my wife, both personal and family, short-term and long-term ones. I'm signing up for an investment course. In a few months I will know more.

It's the same with bringing up children. It's very easy to get into the rut here. From the very beginning, my wife and I wanted to participate in the Holy Mass with our children. We have young children: 3.5 and 2 years old. It's difficult for them to keep calm for the entire mass and we respect it. For three years, we have been looking for the best way of attending the Mass.

We've tested several dozen different tricks: we went to church in the morning, at noon and in the evening. We fed our children during the Mass, we took a bag of toys, we walked around the church. We sat in front of the altar and in the choir, we sat where it wasn't easy to leave, we stayed outside the church. We calmed down the children by going for a longer walk before the Mass. We explained to them what is happening in the various stages of the Mass. We are constantly looking at our children and constantly learning them. In some time from now we'll certainly discover new possibilities of attending the Mass together. It's important to us that faith should inspire our children.

This is our way of life - we look for the truth. We work on improving the quality of our lives. We understand what Jesus said: we need to be born again. We practise it.

*Jesus. You are the Way, the Truth and the Life. I am here because I want and desire a beautiful life. Help me turn the EXTREME WAY OF THE CROSS into a way of a beautiful life. I am here because I want a beautiful life.*



## CONCLUSION

**With each passing year, the EXTREME WAY OF THE CROSS is becoming what it was supposed to be. Expedition for a new life. Difficulties and adversities are simply tools to help you in the change. In finding a new space of life. New ideas for life. Remember. It's your life. Nobody will live your life for you. Choose a beautiful life.**

**Rev. Father Jacek WIOSNA Stryczek, EWC founder**

The Extreme Way of the Cross is a way of a breakthrough. It helps you find a new, better life.

Rev. Father Jacek WIOSNA Stryczek is the founder of Szlachetna Paczka scheme, EWC, Community of Open Personalities.

Community of Open Personalities is a community where the Szlachetna Paczka Scheme and the Extreme Way of the Cross were born.

The Male Side of Reality is part of Community of Open Personalities. It is a community of men and a path of comprehensive development of masculinity leading to a change in the quality of life. Together with Rev. Father Jacek WIOSNA Stryczek and the Szlachetna Paczka Scheme, it is the driving force behind EWC.