The Via Crucis, also known as the Way of the Cross, is one of the most profound and moving devotions in Catholic tradition. Through its fourteen stations, we delve into the most crucial moments of Christ's Passion, contemplating not only His physical suffering but also the infinite love that led Him to offer Himself for the salvation of humanity. The Tenth Station, in which Jesus is stripped of His garments, is a passage filled with symbolism, humility, and spiritual teaching. In this article, we will explore its origin, its theological meaning, and its relevance to our daily lives in today's world.

The Historical and Biblical Context

The Gospel does not explicitly describe the moment when Jesus is stripped of His garments, but we can infer it from the accounts of the Crucifixion. Saint John tells us: *"When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also His tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be'"* (John 19:23-24).

This passage reveals not only a historical fact but also deep symbolism. Jesus' garments, especially the seamless tunic, represent His unity and integrity. When He is stripped of them, Jesus experiences extreme humiliation, exposing His human vulnerability to the world. This act was not accidental; the Roman soldiers, accustomed to executing the condemned, knew that stripping someone of their clothes was a way to dehumanize them, to reduce them to absolute destitution.

The Theological Meaning: Stripping and Surrender

The stripping of Jesus is not only a physical act but also a spiritual one. In this moment, Christ strips Himself not only of His garments but also of any pretense of earthly glory. It is an act of total surrender, in which He empties Himself to fulfill the will of the Father. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, describes this mystery with profound words: *"He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness"* (Philippians 2:7).

This stripping invites us to reflect on our own lives. What do we need to strip away to follow Christ? Our disordered ambitions, our pride, our material securities? Jesus, by allowing His garments to be taken, teaches us that true freedom and true dignity are not found in what

we possess but in who we are before God.

Furthermore, this act has deep redemptive significance. By being stripped, Jesus assumes the poverty of humanity, sanctifying all forms of destitution and abandonment. In a world where millions live in poverty, the stripping of Christ reminds us that He is present in every person who suffers, in every face disfigured by pain.

The Symbolism of the Seamless Tunic

Jesus' tunic, woven in one piece, is a symbol rich in meaning. In Jewish tradition, seamless tunics were worn by high priests, reminding us that Jesus is the High Priest who offers the perfect sacrifice. Additionally, the tunic represents the unity of the Church, which must not be divided. When the soldiers cast lots to avoid tearing it, we can see a foreshadowing of the unity Christ desires for His people.

This symbolism is especially relevant in our time, where division and fragmentation seem to dominate many areas of life. Jesus' tunic calls us to work for unity, to build bridges instead of walls, and to remember that we are all part of the same body, the Body of Christ.

Relevance in Today's World

In a world marked by consumerism, the pursuit of status, and an obsession with image, the Tenth Station of the Via Crucis confronts us with an uncomfortable but liberating truth: our true identity is not found in what we have but in who we are in God's eyes. Jesus, stripped of everything, shows us that authentic dignity lies in humility and surrender.

This passage also invites us to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Today, as in Jesus' time, there are many people who are "stripped" of their dignity: the poor, migrants, the sick, the persecuted. As we contemplate Christ stripped of His garments, we are called to see His face in each of them and to work for a more just and compassionate world.

Conclusion: An Invitation to Humility and Love

The Tenth Station of the Via Crucis is not only a moment to remember Jesus' suffering but also an invitation to imitate His example of humility and surrender. As we meditate on this passage, let us ask for the grace to strip ourselves of everything that distances us from God and others. May we, like Jesus, learn to empty ourselves so that we may be filled with His love and mercy.

In the words of Saint John of the Cross: *"To reach satisfaction in all, desire satisfaction in nothing. To come to possess all, desire to possess nothing."* May this stripping lead us to the fullness of love, which is the true glory of the Christian.

May the contemplation of this station inspire us to live with greater authenticity, humility, and compassion, following in the footsteps of the One who, stripped of everything, gave us everything.