

## CAFOD Stations of the Cross 2025

### Opening Prayer

As we reflect on the final journey of Jesus, leading to his death on the cross, we do so in solidarity with all those, here at home and across the world, who are suffering today. Through the Cross, Jesus has brought hope and new life. Let us pray together for God to transform our lives and the lives of others:

**Prayer: Lead us as pilgrims on a journey alongside our brothers and sisters as we respond to your Jubilee call. Amen.**

### The first Station: Jesus is condemned to death

*“The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas’. Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ All of them said, ‘Let him be crucified!’... When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd .... Then he released for them Barabbas and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.” Matthew 27:21-26*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
Jesus stands silent and composed as the crowd calls for his death. Pilate finds no guilt in Jesus, yet he is still condemned. In our world today many are condemned to lives of hardship and poverty. In this Jubilee Year, when we are asked to come together and respond to God’s call to create a more just world, do we wash our hands of our brothers and sisters? Or do we seek to act in solidarity?

**Prayer: Jesus, you know what it means to stand alone in front of those who reject you and don’t understand you. Walk with us. When we feel that we can’t make a difference, help us to keep going. Teach us to share your love.**

### The second Station: Jesus carries his cross

*“When they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.” Matthew 27:28-31*

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The guards dress Jesus up as a king, with a crown made of thorns, and mock him. They give him a heavy wooden cross to carry. Jesus knows that the way will not be easy and that it will lead to his death. And yet he shoulders his burden and starts on his way. We all have burdens to carry. We also place burdens on others. What are the global problems, systems and structures that place burdens on people in our world today? In what ways do I place unnecessary loads on other people?

**Prayer: Jesus, your love led you to take up the cross. Walk with us. When we feel afraid, help us to be brave. Give us the courage to speak out to change our world, so that all our sisters and brothers can experience a fair chance.**

### The third Station: Jesus falls for the first time

*“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” James 1:12*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
Burdened by his heavy cross, worn down by fatigue and pain, Jesus falls. Yet he pushes himself up and continues to walk. We pray for all those who continue to persevere in the face of adversity. We pray for strength and determination when we face challenges.

**Prayer: Jesus, you know how it feels to struggle and to fall. Walk with us. Show us how to walk with others to know what it feels like to be in another’s shoes. You reach out to us with caring hands. Show us how to join our hands with communities around the world who are bringing hope to their neighbour.**

### The fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

*“Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” Luke 2:33-35*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***

This was the fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy, the sword that ran through Mary's soul. She who nurtured Jesus as a baby, witnessed his first steps and words, now meets her son on this final journey. What pain Mary must have felt, unable to help or comfort Jesus. Yet she remains present and steadfast, as so many mothers throughout the world do in challenging times. Let us look to the example of Mary, the mother who cares for Christ and for us all, and not turn our faces away from those who are suffering.

**Prayer: Jesus, you looked through the crowd and saw your mother's eyes. Her love gave you the strength to carry on. Walk with us. When we don't want to listen, open our ears to hear. When it would be easier to look away, open our eyes to see.**

#### **The fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene carries the cross**

*"And they compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross." Mark 15:21*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
Simon of Cyrene comes into the city of Jerusalem on the day of Jesus' death. He finds himself in the crowds along Jesus' pathway to Golgotha and is enlisted to help carry his cross. He does not know Jesus but lends his strength to carrying the heavy weight of the wood. Do we look for opportunities to help others, or do we try to keep out of the way, telling ourselves that it is not our responsibility?

**Prayer: Jesus, you know what it means to depend on someone and to need their help. Walk with us. When my friends need help, teach me to work with them to lighten their load. Show me how to listen carefully so that I can offer what they need. We are your global family of many different cultures. Make us one family united in you.**

#### **The sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

*"And the king will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37-40*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
Moved by Jesus' pain, Veronica's love overcomes her fear, and she courageously steps forward to wipe the blood and sweat from Jesus' face. She cannot change his fate, but recognising his dignity, she faithfully performs her small act of compassion. As the guards force Jesus onward, the image of his face is left on Veronica's veil. We too are called to compassion. It is easy to be discouraged by the scale of poverty and need in the world, but each day offers us the opportunity to perform small acts of kindness and generosity. In so doing, we recognise the face of Jesus in our neighbour and he imprints his face on each of us. Do we carry out small acts of generosity and love? Are we attentive to the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters?

**Prayer: Jesus, you know how it feels to be hurt and to cry out in pain and fear. Walk with us. Show us how to walk together with others. Show us how to love the people around us and to be there for those who need us.**

#### **The seventh Station: Jesus falls for the second time**

*"Come to me all you who labour, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light." Matthew 11:28-30*

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Under the weight of the cross, Jesus is once again brought to his knees. After this second fall, Jesus' struggle to rise up again is much harder. We think of all among us who are trying to hold onto hope despite the challenges that they face, those who are striving to make ends meet in a system that is broken and which keeps people poor. How can we live in solidarity with those who feel despondent or invisible?

**Prayer: Jesus, you stumbled and fell. You lost strength and became tired. And yet you carried on. Walk with us. When we find it hard to keep going, give us the strength we need to finish our work as well as we can and show love to others.**

#### **The eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

*"And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'" Luke 23:27-28*

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As Jesus draws closer to the place of execution, he encounters the women of Jerusalem weeping for him. There is a shared empathy here as Jesus recognises their difficulties and tells them not to weep for him, but for themselves and their children. What causes us to weep? Which situations in the world make us cry out to God?

**Prayer:** Jesus, you cared and spoke out, even on the road to your death. You knew and felt the struggles of others. Walk with us. As we hear the stories of our sisters and brothers who live in poverty, give us the courage to raise our voices, so that together we can work for change.

#### **The ninth Station: Jesus falls for the third time**

*"For nothing will be impossible with God." Luke 1:37*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***

Jesus falls a third and final time. He must surely now be completely drained, and yet he finds the strength to rise and continue on his path to Calvary. Love gave Jesus the strength to stand again and continue onwards. We pray for ourselves, and for all those who need strength and courage, that in the face of our struggles, Christ's love will urge us on.

**Prayer:** Jesus, you felt the darkness around you, the crowds surrounded you. You fell once more. Walk with us. When we lose hope, when everything is just too difficult, show us how to reach out to each other and hold hands, so that none of us have to do everything on our own. Help us to know that you walk alongside us even when we feel most alone.

#### **The tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments**

*"The soldiers took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic..." John 19:23-24*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***

Jesus has nothing left. Arriving at his place of execution, even his clothes are taken from him. He holds nothing back. Pope Francis urges us to "refuse to turn a blind eye to the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of our human dignity." Hearing these words, how am I challenged? What am I being called to do for those who have been stripped of so much?

**Prayer:** Jesus, you sacrificed everything and endured mockery for our sake. Walk with us. When we value possessions more than people, or look down on someone who is different or has less, show us your face in theirs.

#### **The eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross**

*"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" Luke 23:33-35*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***

The soldiers drive the nails into Jesus' hands and feet. Yet even in this moment he shows his compassion, praying for those who crucify him. Jesus continues to be crucified in all who suffer in our world. He is present in those whom society marginalises: people who are hungry or homeless, refugees or asylum seekers. He is hurt in the exploitation of our common home, the earth and its resources. As followers of Jesus, may we show his compassion and so be a source of hope for all our brothers and sisters, our global family, and our common home, the earth.

**Prayer:** Jesus, you cry out in pain. Walk with us. Challenge us – when we hold people back, when we don't treat them with respect. Help us to remember that everyone is equal, that we are all made in the image of God.

### **The twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross**

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished’, and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

*John 19:28-30*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
Just before he dies on the cross Jesus cries out that he is thirsty. We can hear him continue to say these words to us, through our brothers and sisters who each day must strive for enough water or enough food to eat. Through all those who thirst for a fairer world, where everyone has enough and is able to reach their full potential. Jesus dies with his arms outstretched on the cross, embracing all humanity. Do we allow ourselves to be caught up in this loving embrace? Having experienced this great love, how do we share it with others in our world?

**Prayer: Jesus, you know what it’s like to feel alone, lost and afraid, betrayed and abandoned. Walk with us. and show us how to walk with others, who live in fear and face death through hunger, thirst and conflict. Show us how to pray for sisters and brothers that we have never met, but who are always loved by you.**

### **The thirteenth Station: Jesus’ body is taken down from the cross**

“Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.” *John 19:38*

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The bodies of those crucified were usually left on the cross to decay. Joseph of Arimathea has been a secret follower of Jesus, but now he finds the courage to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus’ body. He acts despite the fear he must have felt, in order to ensure the lifeless body of his teacher is, at least now, treated with dignity and gentleness. We pray that at times of difficulty we too will have the courage to take action, to face our fears and to do what is right, treating others as we would wish to be treated.

**Prayer: Jesus, you knew what it meant to have friends, who risked their own lives to take your body from the cross. Walk with us. Show us how to be friends to those close to us and to those far away. Teach us to see you in everybody, to be kind, loving and strong. To be like you.**

### **The fourteenth Station: Jesus’ body is laid in the tomb**

“Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.” *Mark 15: 45-47*

*We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world***  
There has been little time to prepare Jesus’ body for burial. Joseph has to move quickly to place it in the tomb before the Sabbath begins. We too must act quickly if we are to protect our common home, the earth, for future generations. In this Jubilee Year we are called to address the inequality that is all around us. We pray that we may have a sense of urgency and hope, even in dark times, as we seek to make a difference. Despite the time constraints, Joseph tries his best to give Jesus dignity in death. He wraps the body in a simple linen cloth and rolls the stone over the door. Have there been times when have we failed to uphold the dignity of our brothers and sisters around the world? How could we make sure we reflect the fact that each person is made in God’s image and likeness in the way that we treat one another?

**Prayer: Jesus, as you were sealed in the tomb those who loved you felt sad and alone. They did not know what to do. Walk with us. Guide us in difficult times, so that we can share you with our sisters and brothers when they feel sad and alone.**

### **Closing prayer**

As we reflect on Jesus’ final journey, we pray for the strength to live each day as people transformed through God’s love. May we radiate God’s love to all our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

**Prayer: Jesus, you share your life, your light and your peace with us all. Walk with us. Amen.**

### **Sign of the Cross**