**Stations of the Cross 2025: Leader’s Notes**

This Stations of the Cross takes us on a prayerful journey of transformation in solidarity with people experiencing poverty around the world. As we walk through the Stations, we take time to pray and reflect on where we see Christ in our world through a mixture of stories and scripture.

This resource is flexible. It can be used for parish gatherings, where this is possible, but is also suitable for online use.

**Options**

* Online.
* The leader could share their screen with the PowerPoint™ resource.
* In a church, as you follow the traditional Stations on the wall.
* You may wish to print out the pictures from the accompanying PowerPoint™ to place on the wall next to the traditional image.
* In a church, seated.
* If you have a large group, or people with mobility issues, it may be best for the readers to walk around the church’s Stations while the rest of the group remains seated throughout the church.
* If there is a suitable wall or screen, project the accompanying PowerPoint™ at the front of the church so people can reflect on the images.
* In a room.
* Set out the chairs in a circle and create a focal point in the middle with a candle, a cross, white and purple cloths.
* You could light a tea light as you start each Station so that the room gets lighter as you move towards the resurrection.
* Project the PowerPoint™ onto a wall or screen so that people can reflect on the images, or
* Print out the photos in the PowerPoint™ and arrange them around the room.

**What you will need**
At least three printouts of these Leader’s Notes, for the leader and two other readers.

* A minimum of 2 readers, or in a large group you could have two different readers for each Station for variety of voices. Different participants could read each closing prayer in turn or everyone can read the prayers together.

**Optional extras**

* A screen to show the PowerPoint™.
* Props such as a candle, tea lights, cloths, a cross.

**Things to bear in mind**

* The leader reads the title of each Station as well as the text designated ‘leader’ within the Station. You may wish to have two leaders, reading the Stations in turn.
* Run through the responses and perhaps a Taizé chant with the group before starting, especially if they do not all have a printout, so that they know what is happening.
* Make sure there is a pause between the readings so that people have time to reflect.
* Be clear about the structure and who is reading what.

**Opening reflection**

Leader: 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, and we can glimpse this too in the lives of Lokho and her community in Kenya.

Let us pray together for God to transform our lives and the lives of others:

Hope is a kernel of light and strength
which dwells in our hearts
in expectation of good things to come.
**Light up our lives with your love
so that we may be signs of hope.**

Hope shines brightly,
but the burdens of life
can dampen its glow.
**Light up our lives with your love
so that we may be signs of hope.**

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

**Light up our lives with your love
so that we may be signs of hope.**

Renew our faith
and move us to action
as we commit to building a better world.
**Light up our lives with your love
so that we may be signs of hope.**

Amen.

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

**Reader:** “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*

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

**All: 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. When it did not rain for almost three years in Marsabit, Kenya, Lokho’s cows and goats died and she had no other way to feed her family.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

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.

The burden of hunger is one that too many people must bear. Before Lokho’s community were given tools and seeds to plant their own kitchen garden, and shade nets to protect their crops from the harsh sun, it was difficult for them to get enough to eat and feed their families, because the animals that they relied on had died during the drought.

As Lokho explains: “The drought contributed to loss of life, especially for the livestock. People starved because they could not get food. You might sometimes have food in the house, but then there is a serious shortage of water in the area.”

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

During the long drought, Khera walked for seven hours to find water. She explains:

“I carried between 20 and 120 litres… It was very hard. I felt so exhausted. I started to get sick. The sun was scorching, burning. I had pain in my legs and my back. But in the drought season that is what we had to do.

Khera’s fear is that the drought will come again, but since she has joined in with other women farmers, they work together to face their challenges.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

Lokho’s youngest daughter, Gurati, was born towards the end of the long drought. Lokho sold her last two remaining goats so that she had money to care for her child. It was a worrying time.

With the vegetables that they grow in the kitchen garden, Gurati is now thriving.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

Wakera is an expert in growing food in harsh climates. He has shared his skills with the women in Lokho’s community and has given them seeds and tools to plant their own kitchen garden, as well as shade nets to protect the precious plants.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

In Lokho’s community in Kenya neighbours rely deeply on each other for support as she explains:

“I feel the way my neighbours feel. I feel happy to help because if a person is hungry, whenever he gets something to eat and feels satisfied, then that person definitely becomes happy, so I am happy.”

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

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.

Many people are falling under the weight of the cost of living and of increasing inequality in our world. The number of low and middle-income countries in debt crisis has more than doubled since 2015. In many countries debts are being repaid at the expense of hiring doctors and teachers, building schools, hospitals and sewage systems, preparing for floods or coping with drought.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

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.

As we recall this exchange, we remember the many societies where women face huge challenges. Today, women represent the majority of the world’s poorest people. Globally, they are less likely than men to be involved in decision making, to own land or property, or to have access to education, technology and employment.

In the most difficult times Lokho says, “I feel bad and turn to God through prayer. I pray for a better life in which to raise my children. I pray for good health and peace of mind… Since we believe the provider is God, I rely on God.”

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**

Reader: “For nothing will be impossible with God.” *Luke 1:37*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by difficulties: illness, caring responsibilities, loneliness, anxiety, our own moments of weakness and failure. Sometimes the challenges facing us and our global family – hunger, climate change, poverty and injustice – can feel overwhelming, impossible to address.

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**

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

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

Around the world, people who are poor or marginalised continue to be stripped of what is theirs. The climate crisis wipes away homes, crops and lives. Conflict strips away peace and the chance to learn and live freely. Repaying debts means that countries cannot invest in the services that their people need. Too many people are prevented from the opportunities that they need to flourish.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

These last words of Jesus challenge us. They call us to see his face in all those who thirst for a fairer world and to stand alongside them raising our own voices for change. They invite us to make the connections between how we live as individuals and nations and the causes of hunger and poverty in our world, particularly in this Jubilee Year.

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**

Reader: “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*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

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**

Reader: “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 Joses saw where he was laid.” *Mark 15: 45-47*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **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.

**The fifteenth Station: Jesus rises from the dead**

Reader: “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” *Luke 24:5*

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: **because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Jesus is alive. He has conquered death and is here among us.

His resurrection opens the way of hope and assures us that injustice, pain and death can be overcome.

We are surrounded by signs of new life in the resurrection. We can see it in the hope for the future that Lokho’s community possess as they rebuild after the long drought.

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.

Show us how to live out your love

so that our sisters and brothers,

here and around the world,

may know the joy of new life.

May we all be changed by living in your light. 