

ST. ERCONWALD'S CHURCH - STATIONS OF THE CROSS
CAFOD - LENT 2021

As we reflect on the final journey of Jesus, leading to his death on the Cross, we also contemplate the lives of our sisters and brothers around the world living in extreme poverty. People like those living in drought-stricken Ethiopia. Let us pray together for God to transform our lives and the lives of others:

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we hear your call to all who thirst for a brighter future: Come to the water. Pour out your Spirit upon us and lead us to walk alongside one another. Let a desire for change well up within us. May we overflow with compassion and love. And as a stream wears away stone, may we reshape our world together to reflect your kingdom of hope for all. Amen.

BEFORE EACH STATION:

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

AT EACH STATION

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. Teach us to share your love.

AT THE END OF EACH STATION:

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me, as you will.

FIRST STATION: *Jesus is condemned to death*

In our world today many are condemned to lives of hardship and poverty. Ethiopia has one of the lowest worldwide carbon footprints and yet is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

What is our response? Do we wash our hands of our brothers and sisters or seek to act in solidarity?

SECOND STATION: *Jesus carries his Cross*

The burden of carrying water over long distances is one that too many people must bear, including children.

We all have burdens to carry. We also place burdens on other people. In what ways do I place unnecessary burdens on other people?

THIRD STATION: *Jesus falls for the first time*

Abdella, a young farmer who lives in northeast Ethiopia, one of the hottest parts of the world, must spend ten hours every day on the long walk to collect water for his family.

In what way do my choices cause others to stumble?

FOURTH STATION: *A mother meets her son*

So many mothers throughout the world grieve; with empty hands unable to feed their hungry children or get medicine and care for their families.

Let us look to the example of Mary and not turn our faces away from those who are suffering.

FIFTH STATION: *Simon of Cyrene carries the Cross*

Abba Tesfalem lives in northern Ethiopia, in an area prone to severe droughts. There is very little paid work available and it is often a struggle to support his family. At one point he was forced to take a loan just to buy bread for them to survive.

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?

SIXTH STATION: *Veronica wipes the face of Jesus*

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.

Do we look for opportunities to do small acts of generosity and love? Are we attentive to the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters?

SEVENTH STATION: *Jesus falls for the second time*

We think of the people of Ethiopia, many of whom have faced poor harvest after poor harvest due to droughts. They show great resilience and strength in continuing to work for a better future.

How can we live in solidarity with those who feel despondent or invisible?

EIGHTH STATION: *Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem*

As we recall this exchange, we remember the many societies where women face huge challenges.

What causes us to weep? Which situations in the world make us cry out to God?

NINTH STATION: *Jesus falls the third time*

Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by difficulties: illness, caring responsibilities, loneliness, anxiety, our own moments of weakness and failure.

We pray for ourselves, and for all those who need strength and courage, that in the face of so many struggles, Christ's love will urge us on.

TENTH STATION: *Jesus is stripped of his garments*

The refugees of our world have been stripped of their homes, their families, their communities, and their hopes for the future. Often they face the added difficulty of being met with hostility and mistrust when they try to make a new home in a safer place.

Do we recognise the dignity of all human life?

What am I being called to do for those who have been stripped of so much?

ELEVENTH STATION: *Jesus is nailed to the Cross*

Jesus continues to be crucified in all who suffer in our world. He is present in those whom society marginalises.

As followers of Jesus, may we show his compassion and so be a source of hope for all our brothers and sisters.

TWELFTH STATION: *Jesus dies on the cross*

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, in our brothers and sisters who each day must strive for enough water simply to survive.

These last words of Jesus challenge us. They call us to see his face in all those who thirst and reach out to them in love. [PAUSE]

THIRTEENTH STATION: *Jesus' body is taken down from the Cross*

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.

We pray that at times of difficulty we too will choose to do what is right. That we will commit to compassion and uphold dignity.

FOURTEENTH STATION: *Jesus' body is laid in the tomb*

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. He wraps it a simple linen cloth and rolls the stone over the door.

We too must act quickly if we are to protect our common home, the earth, for future generations. We pray that we may have a sense of urgency and hope, even in dark times, as we seek to make a difference.

FIFTEENTH STATION: *Jesus rises from the dead*

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.

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 of creation.

For the intentions of the Holy Father: Our Father Hail Mary Glory be

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all wholeness, heal our hearts of all that prevents us responding to our brothers and sisters, excluded by poverty and prevented from living a full and healthy life. This Lent, may we: implore justice through our prayers, stand in solidarity through our fasting, and reach out through our giving. Send your life-giving power to revive the weary, restore the broken and renew the face of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.