

Use these Stations of the Cross to accompany Jesus on his journey, as we watch and pray over displaced people around the world.



I - JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Reflection: Over 5.6 million people have fled Syria since 2011, 6.6 million more are displaced inside Syria, as war continues. The international community has not yet succeeded in creating the necessary conditions to halt the tide of bloodshed despite the desperate pleas of a majority of Syrians for an end to the conflict. Dare we wash our hands of their plight like Pilate, or shall we immerse ourselves in solidarity — remembering that these injustices can be addressed?

Lord, may we not wash our hands of our brothers and sisters in Syria, and may you rain down upon them with all of the love and peace you were denied in your condemnation.

II - JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Reflection: Fr. Pedro Arrupe S.J., who was so “struck and shocked by the plight” of the Vietnamese boat people in the wake of the Vietnam War that he was moved to found Jesuit Refugee Service. Fr. Arrupe allowed himself to be moved by the suffering of others, and took up the challenge — however burdensome — of helping others. He did not turn away. By whose suffering have we been struck? By what injustice have we been shocked? Will we choose to take up the challenges of our times?

Lord, may we be “struck and shocked by the plight” of our brothers and sisters worldwide and follow in the steps of Fr. Arrupe as we humbly bear the cross that awareness brings.

III - JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Reflection: Cristina is a migrant JRS met at the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Mexico. After coming to the desperate realization that she could not afford basic necessities in Mexico, Cristina decided to flee to the U.S. in the hopes of securing work. Her coyote said it would take only five hours to cross the desert, so she brought no food or water for the passage. Her group was caught the second night, and she fell and injured her leg while trying to escape. The border patrol ran by her, and she was not seen while they gathered the other migrants and began to leave. She knew that she was well hidden, but how would she find her way out of the desert? The guides had run away, she was injured, and had no food or water. She called for help, and when they did not hear her, she struggled to her feet and hobbled after them. She would become one of the hundreds of migrants who die in the desert every year.

Lord, we pray for vulnerable migrants that you may grant them strength and safety in their journeys, and we pray for open hearts to understand their desperate motivations.

IV - JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

Reflection: Every year, millions of women give birth to children while on their journey of displacement - in transit, in camps, in urban areas. These women are often without the necessary medical interventions, the comforts of home, or a family they can call upon. But each of these women feels the same labor pains and love of their children as Mary did and as other women around the world do.

Lord, we pray for all of the displaced mothers throughout the world. In their strength and vulnerability, may they feel your presence as they do their best to mother during their displacement.



V - SIMON OF CYRENE BEARS THE CROSS

Reflection: More than 4.8 million Venezuelans have left their country in the last few years, fleeing from a humanitarian crisis and a lack of access to food, water, education, and healthcare. It is the most significant displacement in our hemisphere. In the midst of these challenges, we must do everything we can to help carry their burden. JRS is currently investing in education, psychosocial support, and livelihoods.

Lord, may you remind us that you have called us to carry your cross and ease the burdens of your people just as you called Simon.

VI - VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Reflection: When Veronica sees Christ's bloody face, she makes the bold choice to reach out and embrace him in his vulnerability and suffering. When have we lacked the courage to reach out to connect with the suffering of our displaced brothers and sisters as Veronica did?

Lord, open our eyes to see your suffering face in our brothers and sisters in need, and grant us Veronica's courage to help.

VII - JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Reflection: Often refugees arrive in exile without shoes, hungry, and without a clear plan. But they did not undergo this experience in order to get a shirt or a meal. Their human experience calls for respect. They are traumatized by violence, feeling lonely and rejected. They are exhausted from the journey and from losing their place in a stable society.

Lord, as we see your full humanity and suffering, may we see the full humanity and suffering that our displaced brothers and sisters.



VIII - JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN

Reflection: In his compassion, Jesus asks the women to weep for the most vulnerable members of society in his time — women and children. Today, conditions have not changed, and of the 70.8 million refugees and displaced persons in the world, half are women and girls. Positive changes have been made, but women still face the most poverty, lack equal access to education, and are at greater risk for human trafficking.

Lord, we pray for women and children around the world. You asked us to weep for their oppression, and we pray that we may see their gifts, their strengths, and their plight as you do. We pray for the wisdom to break down the structures that oppress people based on gender, and we ask that you protect this overwhelming majority of the displaced population.

IX - JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Reflection: The majority of refugees do not live in camps, but in urban settings. Cities like Johannesburg and Bangkok host thousands of refugees. Often barred from legal employment and social services, urban refugees are forced to hide in the shadows.

Lord, may the eyes of urban refugees throughout the world call out to us, and may we respond as we have responded to your suffering.



X - JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Reflection: Every year, thousands of asylum seekers flee to the United States after facing great persecution in their homelands, only to be interned and stripped of their possessions and dignity. In the United States, over 396,448 immigrants and refugees were detained in 2019.

Lord, help us to recognize the humanity of those seeking a better life in the United States and help us to create a country where they are not stripped of their possessions and judged as criminals.

XI - JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Reflection: Just As Jesus' hands and feet were pierced with nails, many people throughout the world have been pierced by the violence of conflict and war. We call to mind the image of Jesus Christ disabled by the nails, living in solidarity with innocent victims of violence.

Lord, as we see you wounded on the cross, help us to recognize the wounds of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. We pray for peace and healing.

XII - JESUS DIES

Reflection: An increasing number of people are being displaced by natural disasters and environmental destruction. Many of us in the United States contribute to that destruction without even thinking about it. Just as we are all responsible for putting Jesus to death, we must too take responsibility for our contributions to the destruction of the environment and climate.

Lord, forgive us for what we have done to contribute to displacement through environmental destruction, and help us to heal the earth so that no more of our brothers and sisters are displaced by its destruction.

XIII - JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

Reflection: Christ is taken from the cross and darkness settles upon the world, for the Son of God has been slain by the peoples' hands. Today this darkness lives on as cycles of violence and oppression continue. And yet, even in the midst of darkness, JRS bears daily witness to God's presence in vulnerable and forgotten people driven from their homes by conflict, natural disaster, economic injustice, or violation of their human rights. Every day we see the strong determination of refugees to rise above their circumstances, however tragic they may be.

Lord, we pray that you continue to give hope and strength in darkness to our sisters and brothers who have been forced to flee their homes.

XIV - JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Reflection: The hope and light of the world has been laid to rest, and the women of Galilee and faithful followers ache with despair. Each year, millions of vulnerable brothers and sisters seek refuge in new lands that are not always friendly to their arrival. Wherever this suffering is present in the world, there the cross of Christ is mysteriously present. It is by this cross that light pierces through the darkness as those suffering wait in hope for the joyful coming of the Lord.

Lord, may you provide light and hope to refugees and displaced people as they wait to learn of their fate.