



STATIONS OF THE CROSS RENEW THE EARTH

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION TO ACCOMPANY JESUS ON HIS JOURNEY AS WE PRAY
FOR RENEWAL OF OUR EARTH AND FOR THOSE FORCED TO FLEE FROM ITS DESTRUCTION

“One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world...”

Laudato Si by Pope Francis



INTRODUCTION

The effects of climate change impact all of us. For some, the change is gradual and not totally apparent. For others, the effects are immediate and disrupt livelihoods in a matter of hours, minutes, or seconds. No matter the speed, these environmental disasters occurring across the globe have forced millions of people to leave their home behind and seek refuge elsewhere.

The Stations of the Cross is an ancient tradition and a spiritual pilgrimage of accompanying Christ in his passion. While Christ's Passion existed in history, the Passion continues to play out in modern times. Our sisters and brothers fleeing the damage done by climate change make great sacrifices along their journey to find safety.

We invite you to pray with these Stations of the Cross as a way to walk with Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem, and also to walk with those who have been displaced by the effects of climate change around the world.

OPENING PRAYER: *Lord Jesus, today we join you in your Passion, accompanying you through your greatest trial. Grant us the courage to keep our eyes open, our ears listening, and our senses aware of what you experience. May we recognize how your Passion continues in the plight of our sisters and brothers who seek refuge during these unsettling times, fleeing violence, conflict, persecution, and environmental destruction. May we stay by your side, even if we fall with you. Animate our steps with your love and hope, although we may not be certain where the journey will end. Remove all fear and help us to become aware of your presence in all things. Amen*



I - JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Reflection: Over 123 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide. From Syria to Venezuela, Afghanistan to South Sudan, armed conflicts and religious, political, and social persecution continue to displace people from their homes. Despite the desperate situations of our brothers and sisters fleeing in search of safety, countries across the globe continue to restrict asylum and limit refugee admissions. 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 displaced brothers and sisters worldwide, 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: In 2024, 45.8 million people were displaced globally because of weather-related disasters, including 11 million Americans. By 2050, as many as 216 million people could be displaced globally due to climate-related reasons. How do we respond to such a crisis? Do we take up this cross? Or do we turn away?

Lord, you could have run away from those who sought to persecute you, but you willingly carried your cross. May we willingly pick up the challenge to examine our lives and find the courage to put down the things that are destroying your creation and your people.

III - JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Reflection: In the wake of a disaster, many of us would hope to receive some sort of assistance or legal protection. For people who have been displaced for climate-related reasons, few legal protections exist for them. In fact, they are not legally considered refugees.

“There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever.” [an excerpt from *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis]

Lord, you were driven through the streets as a criminal, your true identity ignored. May we see your face in those driven from their homes by environmental forces, and be their voice in a world that does not recognize their rights or dignity.

IV - JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

Reflection: Every year in the Central Sahel, a region in Africa hard hit by the impacts of climate change, 7 million people are facing food insecurity, with 12.6 million children under 5 experiencing acute malnutrition. Due to the effects of a changing climate, mothers and fathers face the stress of providing food for their children when there is so little to find.

Lord, your mother accompanied you in your suffering and death. How many parents would rather die than watch their children suffer? Like Mary, we must not turn away from you. Help us to act in love to ease the pain of the millions of mothers who watch their children needlessly suffer.

V - SIMON OF CYRENE BEARS THE CROSS

Reflection: As our sisters and brothers respond and adapt to the difficulties caused by warmer temperatures and extreme weather, do we sit by idly? Should we not shoulder some of the burden?

"We call on everyone, whatever their belief or world view, to endeavor to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behavior and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us," [an excerpt from a joint message by Pope Francis, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Portal Welby, and Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew]

Lord, what does it mean to bear the cross for you? Simon's day, plans, and life were disrupted when he was called upon to help you. Help us to be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to help our brothers and sisters suffering from climate disaster, even when our own plans and comforts may be the cost.

VI - VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Reflection: For those who live in wealthy countries, access to amenities and abundant resources can put a temporary band-aid on the inconveniences caused by climate change. But such comfort can come at a high cost for our sisters and brothers around the globe. According to the United Nations, the 15 countries most vulnerable and least adapted to climate change are currently in a state of conflict or social fragility. Despite being the least responsible for global warming, they accounted for only 0.3% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2023.

Lord, your disciples fled for fear of their own safety. A few women, powerless to help but boldly courageous, accompanied and comforted you. Give us the courage to stay by our vulnerable sisters and brothers who did not create the problem, but will reap its tragic consequences.

VII - JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Reflection: "It is becoming clear that the frequent droughts that we are experiencing in many parts of our country are as a result of global climate change and environmental degradation. Here in Kenya, it seems our model of development has led to a culture of degradation of our environment and the depletion of our natural resources," [[letter from Kenyan bishops](#), 2021]

Are we aware of our daily actions that result in excess, waste, and destruction? While the results may seem small within our own vicinity, they join the billions of actions around the world that take place each day.

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.

VIII - JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN

Reflection: Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate shocks. Those who live in rural areas are more likely to depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Climate change significantly impacts their ability to provide for their families, as it disrupts agriculture, water supply, and other essential resources. This increased burden often forces girls to leave school to help their families, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. Moreover, climate change acts as a "threat multiplier," exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and increasing the risk of gender-based violence.

Lord, even in the midst of intense suffering, you focused not on your own plight but on your mission to comfort your people. We know that women and girls have gifts that can transform our world, if only we give them the chance. Help us to emulate your kindness and prevent the tragic violence that affects so many innocent lives.



IX - JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Reflection: "[W]e are all too slow in developing economic institutions and social initiatives which can give the poor regular access to basic resources. We fail to see the deepest roots of our present failures, which have to do with the direction, goals, meaning and social implications of technological and economic growth." [an excerpt from Laudato Si by Pope Francis]

Lord, again and again you collapsed under the burden of your cross. Again and again we fail to heed your call to be good stewards of Creation, to love the poor and serve our neighbors. Open our eyes to "see the deepest roots of our present failures," to pick ourselves up and carry on despite our weakness.

X - JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Reflection: "Global humanitarian needs are at an all-time high and continue to grow. Crises are driven by fragility and conflict, amplified by climate change. Some 299.4 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2024, a significant increase from previous years. Climate change is a fundamental driver of many armed conflicts around the world, exacerbating resource scarcity, displacement, and social tensions." [Global Humanitarian Overview, 2024]

Lord, the current situation is stripping away what little belongs to those experiencing poverty, just as you were finally stripped of your bloodied garments. Many fail to recognize the problem or make light of it, reminding us how Pilate clothed you in a royal cloak as a mockery. Move us with empathy so that we may never be indifferent to those in need.

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 effects of climate change, violence, and war. We call to mind the image of Jesus Christ wounded by the nails, suffering 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 their 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. Wealthy countries, with their high rates of consumerism, have up to 5.5 times the environmental impact as the world average. This excessive consumption drives climate change, leading to more frequent and severe weather-related disasters.

As we witness the death of Jesus, we too must take responsibility for our contributions to the death and destruction of our common home.

We must consider our role in perpetuating these injustices. Do we continue to consume without regard for the impact on our global neighbors, or do we take up the cross of responsibility and solidarity?

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. Today this darkness lives on as cycles of violence, oppression, and climate disasters continue. And yet, even in the midst of darkness, we bear daily witness to God's presence in people driven from their homes by conflict, natural disaster, economic injustice, or violation of their human rights. Every day we see the resiliency of refugees to rise above their circumstances, however distressing they may be.

Lord, in these dark moments, may we not despair. Rather than isolating ourselves in our hurt, may we reach out and find support in each other as we mourn our losses. As a community of mutual support, we can find a way forward.

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 take the first lonely steps without Jesus by their side. Each year, millions of our brothers and sisters take their own lonely steps into 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, these are incredibly difficult and frustrating times for our sisters and brothers who have been displaced. May you provide light and hope to those searching and waiting for a place to feel safe and secure. May your love, through our solidarity, be a balm for those who weep and provide them with the peace of knowing that they are not alone.

CLOSING PRAYER: *O Lord Jesus, we leave you today in the darkness of the tomb, but we wait in the hope of Your Resurrection. Imbue us with the Spirit of your Life, that we too may be resurrected in You, that your creation may be renewed. Help us to always see you in the most vulnerable and marginalized among us, especially migrants and refugees. Protect them on their journeys just as you have protected us on ours. Teach us to stand together as One People under you, Our One Lord and migrant God, Jesus Christ. Amen.*



REFERENCES

2024 Global Report on Internal Displacement

<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2024/>

A Year of Turmoil: Conflicts, Crises and Displacement in 2024

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/year-turmoil-conflicts-crises-and-displacement-2024>

Armed Conflict Survey 2024: Editor's Introduction

<https://www.iiss.org/publications/armed-conflict-survey/2024/editors-introduction/>

Assessing the U.S. Climate in 2024

<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/national-climate-202413>

Country Rankings

<https://gain-new.crc.nd.edu/ranking/vulnerability>

Explainer: How gender inequality and climate change are interconnected

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

Global Humanitarian Overview 2024

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfrsp>

Kenyan bishops urge decisive action on climate change-induced drought

<https://www.examiner.org.hk/2021/11/19/kenyan-bishops-urge-decisive-action-on-climate-change-induced-drought/news/international/>

Laudato Si

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Over 122.6 million people globally are forcibly displaced, show latest UNHCR data

<https://www.unhcr.org/bg/18727-mid-year-report-2024.html>

Progress of Major Emitters Towards Climate Targets | 2024 Update

<https://newclimate.org/resources/publications/progress-of-major-emitters-towards-climate-targets-2024-update>

Regional report on food and nutrition security for West Africa and the Sahel 2024

www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/RRSAN2024-IB-EN.pdf

Report to Congress on Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2024

<https://2021-2025.state.gov/report-to-congress-on-proposed-refugee-admissions-for-fiscal-year-2024/>

Rural Communities

<https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights/regions/rural-communities>

Wave of increased food insecurity hits West and Central Africa

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148516>

World Migration Report 2024: Climate impacts by 2050

<https://www.thinkglobal.org/world-migration-report-2024-climate-impacts-by-2050/>