

Way of the Cross

The Way of the Cross is an invitation to bear witness to the suffering, death, resurrection and glory of Jesus Christ. It is by this Paschal Mystery that God chose to Create Hope. Our witness to this hope is needed, now more than ever, in a world where hope is in short supply. The Hope to be found in the Way of the Cross is not a naïve or passive hope. Neither is it the hope of the powerful or the privileged. It is a hope that requires much to create. It is a hope born from sacrifice. God creates hope by joining us in our human suffering and weakness. All the pain and sin of the world were taken into the body of Jesus and nailed to a cross. This supreme sacrifice creates hope for a better world because the logic of this sacrifice is not death, but life.

Together in prayer, let us meditate on the Paschal Mystery and the way in which it continues to be lived and witnessed to by our sisters and brothers near and far throughout the world. Let us open our hearts and minds to those who have the courage to create hope by following the Way of the Cross—the way of Christ and His teaching. May our way of the cross today create hope for a better world. May it create hope for restored creation and for humanity's efforts to build a world of justice and peace. As we walk and journey together in community, let us be reminded that death and defeat are not the end. There is only fullness of life and victory in Christ, who is alive amongst the people.



1st STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

[Pilate] took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."
— Matthew 27:24

Meditation

Jesus is the face of the poor. If we are called to see the face of Christ in others, especially those impoverished by systems of cruelty and injustice, how can we who often benefit from those same systems wash our hands off their blood? With the power and privilege we have, we often benefit from the suffering of others without being held accountable.

Quote

"Where the poor are concerned, it is not talk that matters; what matters is rolling up our sleeves and putting our faith into practice through a direct involvement, one that cannot be delegated. At times, however, a kind of laxity can creep in and lead to inconsistent behaviour, including indifference about the poor. It also happens that some Christians, out of excessive attachment to money, remain mired in a poor use of their goods and wealth. These situations reveal a weak faith and feeble, myopic hope."
— Pope Francis, message for World Day of the Poor, 2022

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, remove from our eyes the veil of sin—avarice, pride, and indifference—so that we may see your face in those who suffer because of our actions. May you be the beacon of hope in the midst of social despair. May you be our guiding light in the work to dismantle systemic oppression.



2nd STATION

Jesus carries his cross

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Then he said to them all, *"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*— Luke 9:23

Meditation

To follow Christ is to choose hope. As disciples of Christ, we are to choose Him and what he stands for. Peace, justice and openness to one another are a few of many valuable things our Lord tells us to live by. For the greatest commandment is to love God and our neighbour. May our choices be rooted by Christ's love and compassion for his people and creation. In our current climate crises, how can our choices and consumption lead to a hopeful tomorrow?

Quote

"Hope is not something that is given to you, it is something you have to earn, to create. It cannot be gained passively, through standing by and waiting for someone else to do something. Hope is taking action. It is stepping outside of your comfort zone."
— Greta Thunberg, Swedish environmental activist

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, guide us in our decisions and policy-making at all levels, so that our societies may follow your example of what it means to love God and to love others.



3rd STATION

Jesus falls for the first time

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases....
— Isaiah 53:4

Meditation

Weighed down by the cross, Jesus experiences human frailty and resilience. He falls, gets up, and walks again. How many times are those living in poverty, especially in the Global South, failed and let down repeatedly by governments, corporations and society? Yet, they remain resilient in times of difficulty! How can we learn from the resilience of the partners of Development and Peace — Caritas Canada and inspire ourselves in their ways of hope?

Quote

"You are social poets, because you have the ability and the courage to create hope where there appears to be only waste and exclusion. Poetry means creativity, and you create hope. With your hands you know how to shape the dignity of each person, of families and of society as a whole, with land, housing, work, care, and community." — Pope Francis, message to the 4th World Meeting of Popular Movements, 2021

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, give us the wisdom and inspiration to be advocates for the poor in creative and innovative ways. May we be humbled and strengthened by your resilience and never accept defeat. May the challenges we face in standing with the poor not deter us, but instead propel us towards a future of hope and social change.



4th STATION

Jesus meets his mother

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

This child is destined... to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too. — Luke 2:34-35

Meditation

As Mary attempts to move towards her Son, her heart is broken. She is unable to embrace Him because of the cross and the crowd. But no embrace is necessary as theirs is the limitless connection between mother and child. Despite her immense suffering, Mary remains there. How do we care for our future generations as a

mother cares for her children? How do we create hope for our youth and children whose future is imperilled by climate change?

Quote

"If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us." — Pope Francis, Christus Vivit: Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People, 199

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, may your Mother be an inspiration for us. May we continue to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Global South, especially with young advocates for justice and peace.



5th STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. — Luke 23:26

Meditation

Simon of Cyrene's gesture is a symbol of solidarity. He carries the cross of our Lord and assists him, alleviating his pain for a few moments. How can we bear the crosses of others? When we see images in the media of our sisters and brothers suffering from war, hunger and every manner of indignity and injustice, even a simple act of generosity can help to lift their cross briefly. How can we, like Simon of Cyrene, be signs of hope by choosing to help those who suffer carry their cross?

Quote

"People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do." — Dorothy Day, Servant of God and founder of the Catholic Worker Movement

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, teach us to build global solidarity, so that we may lighten the burden of communities affected by poverty. Let the cross not be a symbol of burden, but rather a symbol of hope, a sign of victory and a sign for assistance.



6th STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' — Matthew 25:40

Meditation

The Lord's face is covered in blood. Veronica witnesses the pain and is moved by it. She confronts the soldiers and wipes the Lord's face. Are we quick to aid those who are in pain and suffering? If we see the face of Christ in others, do we defy the soldiers and offer compassion, like Veronica did for Christ?

Quote

"In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by helping and loving the poor, we love and serve Christ." — Pope Francis, Lenten message, 2014

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, open our eyes, so that we can see your face in our sisters and brothers. Help us to see more clearly the men, women and children impoverished by war, famine and abuses of power. Through your suffering on the Way of the Cross, help us rediscover the worth and beauty of our dignity, and that of others, as human beings created in your image and likeness.



7th STATION

Jesus falls for the second time

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. — 1 Peter 2:21

Meditation

After much exhaustion and pain, Jesus falls for the second time. Yet, he gets up and continues his way, faithful to his covenant with the Father. Today, communities fall under the weight of the crosses of poverty and climate change. As all creation feels the impact, the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are heard as one voice.

Quote

"As an integral ecology emphasises, human beings are deeply connected with all of creation. When we mistreat nature, we also mistreat human beings. At the same time, each creature has its own intrinsic value that must be respected." — Pope Francis, message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, 2016

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, throughout your earthly ministry and your Passion, you have given us the most beautiful proof of your love. No matter how many times we fall, may you continue to help us carry our crosses, the burdens and consequences of our actions that cause climate change.



8th STATION

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." — Luke 23:28

Meditation

Jesus tells the women to be concerned for themselves and their children. Women play a key role in society, especially in the Global South. In what ways can we bear witness to the hopes that are found in the voices of women around the world? In what ways can we better support women in the role of community decision-making, as agents of global and social change?

Quote

"... women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men. We say one thing with words, but our decisions and reality tell another story. Indeed, 'doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights'." — Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 23

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, you are the model of bridging people together and removing barriers. You often encountered women in their suffering and pain. They accompanied you in your ministry and were the first to proclaim the Good News of your resurrection. Turn our gaze to the hope found in women who are leaders and changemakers in society.



9th STATION

Jesus falls for the third time

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Meditation

Jesus reaches his physical limit and falls for the third time. His body is giving out and exhausted. He cries to the Father for strength to continue the mission. After falling so many times, how many times can we get back up? It is in the Lord that we can find strength and resilience. We see the Lord's resilience exemplified in those who continue to stand up in the face of injustice in the world, despite being continually beaten down. Their hope that things can be different is their strength and when we join ourselves to their struggles, we participate in that hope.

Quote

"Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." — St. Francis of Assisi

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Ensemble, prions

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to the resilience of others, especially that of our sisters and brothers in the Global South who are constantly faced with the devastating effects of social and environmental calamities. May their resilience continue to be a source of inspiration and commitment for more justice and peace in the world.



10th STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." — John 19:23-24

Meditation

Jesus is stripped of his clothes and humiliated. Many of our sisters and brothers in the Global South are stripped of their livelihoods, their homes and their families, simply for profit. How can we create hope in the face of such realities? We can continue to support laws and regulations that would secure the dignity of

every person and their quality of life. Do we take such action to stop those who would strip others of their dignity?

Quote

"Only conversion of heart can make our world, which is full of terror and violence, more humane. And that means patience, justice, prudence, dialogue, integrity, solidarity with victims, the needy, and the poorest, limitless dedication, love even unto death for the sake of the other." — Pope Francis, Foreword to DoCat: What to do (a catechism for youth), 2016

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, create in us a new heart. Create in us a heart that is willing to listen and take action to protect the rights and dignity of the human person. Help us create a culture that will uphold opportunities that allow our sisters and brothers in the Global South to live in fullness, rather than being disposed of as objects.



11th STATION

Jesus is nailed to the cross

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." — Luke 23:34

Meditation

The hands of Jesus that once healed are now pierced and powerless. In countries of the Global South, many activists are cruelly persecuted, tortured and silenced and made to feel powerless to stand up for the poor. Some are continuously threatened and intimidated. Their voices are silenced and their hands are tied. They feel as if they cannot do anything.

Quote

"We need to listen to the voices of our partners, the poor and people's movements around the world, ensuring that our dialogues and cooperation are done with true equality and mutuality. These include our ecumenical, interfaith and non-faith communities with whom we can work for the Common Good. We must also work to divest from colonialist attitudes and take responsibility and make amends when we fail to do this." — Development and Peace — Caritas Canada 2022 Orientation Assembly, Second orientation: Living Synodality

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, make us aware of the sufferings of those who have been wrongly persecuted for righteousness. May you continue to give us the grace and inspiration to be able to face difficulties in defending our sisters and brothers in the Global South. Bless our voices and our hands, that they may not be used to silence, but to heal and bring freedom.



12th STATION

Jesus dies on the cross

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. — 1 John 3:16

Meditation

Mary, the apostle John and many others watched as Jesus, mocked and stripped of his dignity, breathed his last. As followers of Jesus, we are called to put our lives at the service of our sisters and brothers. In what ways do we live in solidarity with one another in our local communities? Similarly, in what ways do we live in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Global South?

Quote

"Poverty doesn't only consist of being hungry for bread, but rather it is a tremendous hunger for human dignity." — St. Theresa of Calcutta

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, show us how to live our lives fully in the service of our sisters and brothers. Through your crucifixion, we are reminded of your promises of the resurrection that is to come. We are reminded that hope is created out of times of darkness and suffering.



13th STATION

Jesus is taken down from the cross and handed over to his mother

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. — Acts 13:29

Meditation

The Mother who brought Jesus into the world now holds his lifeless body. Many of those who are persecuted for standing up to injustice do not return home alive to their families.

Quote

"The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she 'groans in travail' (Rom 8:22)." — Pope Francis, Laudato Si', 2

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, as your body is removed and prepared to be laid to rest, we remember those who have died for the sake of the poor. May their souls rest in your peace and may injustices be rectified in their honour. May the impact that they had on their communities inspire us for hope and change.



14th STATION

Jesus is placed in the tomb

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. — Philippians 2:7-8

Meditation

The tomb is the ultimate sign of Jesus sharing our human nature at its lowest, hardest level. His obedience, even to the point of death, shows how powerful the call to faithfulness really is. Like Jesus, many women and men throughout the world have been willing to die and be laid in the tomb. They make this ultimate choice rather than giving in before forces that would destroy the faith, the poor and the planet.

Quote

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours." — St. Theresa of Avila, patron saint of sufferers

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, as your body lays lifeless in the tomb, you remind us of the true cost of our faith. Do not let us turn away from the suffering of our sisters and brothers. Help us to be courageous when faced with the true cost of responding to their needs.



15th STATION

Jesus is Risen

Celebrant

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

All

Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." — John 20:21-22

Meditation

The Scripture has been fulfilled. Jesus has conquered death. He is risen. He is alive among us. The Hope of humanity is restored through the Easter promise. How can we bring the Good News of God's love to people who have been forgotten or neglected?

Quote

"So there's need for artistry, poetry, creativity. And that isn't just idle words or pretty words. That means changing the basic things which are leading to our hopelessness, and those are the selfishness and the self-centeredness that are built into our economic, social and political systems."— Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

PRAYER

Celebrant

Let us pray in silence for a moment.

Let us pray together

Lord Jesus, accompany us on the paths of solidarity and fraternity through the Holy Spirit. Fill us with the breath of new life, so that we may find innovative and creative ways to uplift our sisters and brothers who are the most impoverished in your world. As witnesses to your Resurrection, may we Create Hope for the whole human family.

CONCLUSION AND SENDING ON MISSION

Throughout the Way of the Cross, we have entered into the mystery of God's love manifested in his Son Jesus. We have witnessed the self-giving of Jesus and the supreme act of his sacrificial love. The resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead has reconciled, renewed and regenerated us in the Love of God. This new birth, the gift of God's mercy, brings us the assurance of our salvation and our own resurrection.

This assurance creates in us a living hope that enlivens our minds, hearts and souls. It makes us disciples of Jesus whose mission is to nurture hope in our sisters and brothers facing poverty, injustice, natural or human disasters, armed conflict, climate change and other calamities.

Just as the apostles were sent into the world to bring the Good News and to be the hands and feet of Christ, we are sent in our turn to love our sisters and brothers throughout the world in a spirit of solidarity, mutual aid and fraternity. May the power of the Word of God the Father, the self-giving of his Son Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit accompany us in this mission entrusted to us.

"That is the hope that inspires Christians. We know that every effort to better society, especially when injustice and sin are so ingrained, is an effort that God blesses, that God wants, that God demands of us."

—St. Óscar Romero, Servant of God

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