

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

Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor. The same Jesus who tells us, “The poor you will always have with you” (Mt 26:11), also promises the disciples: “I am with you always” (Mt 28:20). We likewise think of his saying: “Just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). This is not a matter of mere human kindness but a revelation: contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us.
— Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §5)

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

The signs that accompany Jesus’ preaching are manifestations of the love and compassion with which God looks upon the sick, the poor and sinners who, because of their condition, were marginalized by society and even people of faith. He opens the eyes of the blind, heals lepers, raises the dead and proclaims the good news to the poor: God is near, God loves you (cf. Lk 7:22). This explains why he proclaims: “Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Lk 6:20). God shows a preference for the poor: the Lord’s words of hope and liberation are addressed first of all to them. Therefore, even in their poverty or weakness, no one should feel abandoned. And the Church, if she wants to be Christ’s Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place (cf. Jas 2:2-4).
— Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §21)

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

No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of our “family.” They are “one of us.” Nor can our relationship to the poor be reduced to merely another ecclesial activity or function. In the words of the Aparecida Document, “we are asked to devote time to the poor, to give them loving attention, to listen to them with interest, to stand by them in difficult moments, choosing to spend hours, weeks or years of our lives with them, and striving to transform their situations, starting from them. We cannot forget that this is what Jesus himself proposed in his actions and by his words.” — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §104)

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

The Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges. She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it is translated into gestures of closeness and welcome. The Church appears as a mother of the poor, a place of welcome and justice. — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §75 and 39)

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

Charity has the power to change reality; it is a genuine force for change in history. It is the source that must inspire and guide every effort to “resolve the structural causes of poverty,” and to do so with urgency. It is my hope that we will see more and more “politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots — and not simply the appearances — of the evils in our world.” For “it is a matter of hearing the cry of entire peoples, the poorest peoples of the earth.” — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §91)

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

On the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and, therefore, the suffering of Christ himself. At the same time, we should perhaps speak more correctly of the many faces of the poor and of poverty, since it is a multifaceted phenomenon. In fact, there are many forms of poverty: the poverty of those who lack material means of subsistence, the poverty of those who are socially marginalized and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities, moral and spiritual poverty, cultural poverty, the poverty of those who find themselves in a condition of personal or social weakness or fragility, the poverty of those who have no rights, no space, no freedom. — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §9)

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

All the members of the People of God have a duty to make their voices heard, albeit in different ways, in order to point out and denounce such structural issues, even at the cost of appearing foolish or naïve. Unjust structures need to be recognized and eradicated by the force of good, by changing mindsets but also, with the help of science and technology, by developing effective policies for societal change. — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §97)

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

Let us not forget that "doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights. Even so, we constantly witness among them impressive examples of daily heroism in defending and protecting their vulnerable families." While significant changes are under way in some countries, "the organization of societies worldwide is still far from reflecting clearly that women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men. We say one thing with our words, but our decisions and reality tell another story," especially if we consider the numbers of women who are in fact destitute. —Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §12)

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

The various movements of workers, women and young people, and the fight against racial discrimination, gave rise to a new appreciation of the dignity of those on the margins of society. The Church's social doctrine also emerged from this matrix. Its analysis of Christian revelation in the context of modern social, labor, economic and cultural issues would not have been possible without the contribution of the laity, men and women alike, who grappled with the great issues of their time. (...) Here too, it needs to be acknowledged once more that reality is best viewed from the sidelines, and that the poor are possessed of unique insights indispensable to the Church and to humanity as a whole. — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §82)

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

By his Incarnation, he [Our Lord Jesus Christ] "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Phil 2:7), and in that form he brought us salvation. His was a radical poverty, grounded in his mission to reveal fully God's love for us (cf. Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:9). — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §18)

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

The Gospel shows us that poverty marked every aspect of Jesus' life. From the moment he entered the world, Jesus knew the bitter experience of rejection. The Evangelist Luke tells how Joseph and Mary, who was about to give birth, arrived in Bethlehem, and then adds, poignantly, that "there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7). Jesus was born in humble surroundings and laid in a manger; then, to save him from being killed, they fled to Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-15). At the dawn of his public ministry, after announcing in the synagogue of Nazareth that the year of grace which would bring joy to the poor was fulfilled in him, he was driven out of town

(cf. Lk 4:14-30). He died as an outcast, led out of Jerusalem to be crucified (cf. Mk 15:22). — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §19)

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

God is merciful love, and his plan of love, which unfolds and is fulfilled in history, is above all his descent and coming among us to free us from slavery, fear, sin and the power of death. Addressing their human condition with a merciful gaze and a heart full of love, he turned to his creatures and thus took care of their poverty. Precisely in order to share the limitations and fragility of our human nature, he himself became poor and was born in the flesh like us. We came to know him in the smallness of a child laid in a manger and in the extreme humiliation of the cross, where he shared our radical poverty, which is death. It is easy to understand, then, why we can also speak theologically of a preferential option on the part of God for the poor (...). — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §16)

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

From the beginning of Scripture, God's love is vividly demonstrated by his protection of the weak and the poor, to the extent that he can be said to have a particular fondness for them. "God's heart has a special place for the poor... The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor."

"Each person should ask the Lord for a motherly affection for their neighbor so that we may serve them with all charity, both in soul and body (...)." — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §17 and 50)

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

Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions. Remaining in the realm of ideas and theories, while failing to give them

expression through frequent and practical acts of charity, will eventually cause even our most cherished hopes and aspirations to weaken and fade away. For this very reason, we Christians must not abandon almsgiving. It can be done in different ways, and surely more effectively, but it must continue to be done. (...) Whatever form it may take, almsgiving will touch and soften our hardened hearts. It will not solve the problem of world poverty, yet it must still be carried out, with intelligence, diligence and social responsibility. For our part, we need to give alms as a way of reaching out and touching the suffering flesh of the poor.
— Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §119)

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

Christian holiness often flourishes in the most forgotten and wounded places of humanity. The poorest of the poor — those who lack not only material goods but also a voice and the recognition of their dignity — have a special place in God's heart. They are the beloved of the Gospel, the heirs to the Kingdom (cf. Lk 6:20). It is in them that Christ continues to suffer and rise again. — Pope Leo XIV (*Dilexi te*, §76)

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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The ornamental motifs in this document are based on Daniel Abel's photos (<https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjzDjod>) of the Stations of the Cross in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle church in Quebec City by the French sculptor René Gourdon (<https://bit.ly/400oHmM>).

