

JPIC COMMISSION USG-UISG

Way of the Cross for LENT 2025



PILGRIMS OF HOPE IN A WOUNDED WORLD



Prepared by

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PILGRIMS OF HOPE IN A WOUNDED WORLD:

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Introduction

Dear brothers and sisters, The Way of the Cross, or the Stations of the Cross, is a profound journey reflecting on the Passion of Christ. As we gather today to walk the Way of the Cross during this Jubilee Year 2025, we journey as pilgrims of hope in a world that yearns for healing and renewal. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si* that "hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems." Aligning with the Jubilee theme "Pilgrims of Hope," we contemplate each station through the lens of our current environmental and socio-political challenges, guided by the insights from Pope Francis' encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*. Today, we follow Christ's path to Calvary with open hearts, recognizing in his suffering the pain of our common home and all who dwell in it. Each station invites us to contemplate both the passion of Christ and the passion of our world, challenging us to become agents of hope and transformation.

As we embark on this spiritual pilgrimage, we recognize that "we are one single human family" (*Laudato Si'*, 52). Our journey mirrors the struggles of many who face environmental degradation and social injustices. Through these stations, let us open our hearts to the cries of the earth and the poor, seeking transformation and hope.

Let us pray:

Loving God, as we begin this journey with your Son, open our eyes to see the connections between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Transform our hearts that we may become pilgrims of hope in a world marked by indifference and destruction. Unite our suffering with Christ's redemptive love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

They led Jesus off to the high priest ... the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus in order to have him executed. But they could not find any ... The high priest put a second question to Jesus saying, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? I am, said Jesus ... You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding? Their verdict was unanimous: he deserved to die. (Mk 14:53, 55-56, 61-62, 64).

Reflection: Today, unjust systems and structures continue to condemn the innocent. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis observes that "economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain." (LS 56). We witness this condemnation in the displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands, in the exploitation of workers, and in the marginalization of the poor. Climate change delivers its harshest sentence to those who have contributed least to its causes.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, condemned though innocent, teach us to recognize and dismantle unjust systems. Help us to stand with those who suffer under the weight of economic and environmental injustice. As pilgrims of hope, may we work for a world where truth and justice prevail. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Second Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

The soldiers dressed Jesus in his own clothes. They led him out to crucify him. They enlisted a passer by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. (Mk 15:20-21).

Reflection: Christ embraces his cross willingly, bearing its weight with courage and determination. In our world, millions bear the cross of environmental degradation—communities facing water scarcity, farmers confronting unpredictable growing seasons, families displaced by rising seas. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudate Deum* that "the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point." (LD 2). Like Christ, we must embrace our responsibility to carry the cross of ecological conversion.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give us the strength to shoulder our responsibilities toward creation. When we are tempted to look away from the suffering of our common home, inspire us with your courage. Guide us as pilgrims of hope to embrace the cross of ecological conversion with determination and love. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted ... But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities ... (Isaiah 53: 4-5).

Reflection: The weight of the cross proves too much, and Jesus falls. Our global community similarly stumbles under the weight of division, conflict, and environmental crisis. The pandemic exposed deep inequalities in our healthcare systems. Armed conflicts rage across continents. Climate summits fall short of meaningful action. As Pope Francis laments in

Laudate Deum, "sadly, the climate crisis is not exactly a matter that interests our world." (LD 3). Yet even in falling, Jesus shows us that the journey continues.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when we fall under the weight of global challenges, grant us the humility to acknowledge our limitations and the strength to rise again. As pilgrims of hope, may we learn from our failures and continue our journey with renewed determination. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"Simeon said to Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel... and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'" (Luke 2:34-35).

Reflection: In this profound moment of sorrow, Mary stands as witness to her son's suffering. In our world, mothers watch their children suffer from diseases caused by pollution, hunger resulting from climate-induced crop failures and the trauma of displacement due to natural disasters. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si* that "Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power (LS 241). Like Mary, we are called to witness this suffering with compassion and to respond with loving action.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, through the intercession of your mother, teach us to stand in solidarity with all who suffer the effects of environmental degradation. May our hearts be pierced by the pain of our common home, moving us to act with maternal tenderness toward all creation. As pilgrims of hope, may we find strength in our shared vulnerability. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. (Mathew 27:32).

Reflection: Simon's unexpected participation in Jesus' journey reminds us that we are all called to share one another's burdens. Working together in solidarity is critical because we are all interconnected and interdependent. In our global community, this means acknowledging that

wealthy nations must assist developing countries in adapting to climate change and transitioning to clean energy. As Pope Francis states in *Laudato Si*, "This means that developed countries must help pay the ecological debt by significantly limiting their consumption of non-renewable energy and by assisting poorer countries to support policies and programmes of sustainable development." (LS 52).

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to recognize when we are called to be Simon for others. Give us the generosity to share resources, technology, and support across borders. As pilgrims of hope, may we willingly carry one another's burdens in our common journey toward ecological healing. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." (Matthew 10:42)

Reflection: It has been said that we are the last generation who can address climate change before it's too late. The compassion and courage of Veronica inspire us to bold actions to protect God's creation. Veronica's compassionate act stands as a testament to the power of small gestures. In our environmental crisis, we might feel overwhelmed by the scale of the problem, but Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si* that "all of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." (LS 14). Around the world, individuals and communities perform acts of environmental compassion—planting trees, cleaning beaches, reducing waste, advocating for sustainable policies. Each act, like Veronica's, brings comfort and bears witness to hope.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, inspire us to acts of compassion, however small they may seem. Help us to see your face in the beauty of creation and in those who suffer from environmental degradation. As pilgrims of hope, may our simple acts of care create ripples of healing throughout our common home. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities". (Isaiah 53:5).

Reflection: Jesus falls again, his strength further depleted. Similarly, our global community faces repeated setbacks in addressing the climate crisis. Species extinction continues at an alarming rate. Extreme weather events increase in frequency and intensity. Political will wavers. Pope Francis warns in *Laudate Deum* that "we have not reacted adequately to these disasters, and the conditions do not exist for progress of another type." (LD 5). Yet like Jesus, we must find the strength to rise and continue our journey.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when we are discouraged by repeated failures in caring for our common home, give us perseverance. When ecological devastation seems overwhelming, remind us that you rose from your falls. As pilgrims of hope, may we find courage in your resilience and continue our work for environmental justice. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But, Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children'". (Luke 23:27-28).

Reflection: Even in his suffering, Jesus directs attention to the future suffering of others. Today, we must weep for the world we are leaving to our children. Pope Francis asks us, what kind of world do we want to leave for future generations? It is no longer enough...simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations...Leaving a habitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us." (LS 160). Today, we mourn the destruction caused by the climate crisis and are deeply concerned about the future of the earth which our children and their children will inherit. Indigenous communities, frontline environmental defenders, and youth climate activists often serve as today's "daughters of Jerusalem," calling us to recognize the consequences of our actions for future generations.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give us the wisdom to listen to the prophetic voices in our midst. Open our hearts to the concerns of young people who will inherit the earth we leave behind. As pilgrims of hope, may we take responsibility for our actions and work for a sustainable future. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter." (Isaiah 53:7)

Reflection: Jesus' third fall reveals the depths of human weakness and the heights of divine determination. Our world faces its own third fall in the intertwined crises of biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change. Pope Francis observes in *Laudato Si* that "the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." (LS 21). The throwaway culture has reached its logical conclusion, and we stumble under the weight of our own consumption. Yet even at this critical juncture, Christ's resilience offers hope. The cries of the poor and the earth, that we hear on a daily basis, motivate us to get up from our fall and remain steadfast in our response as Christians.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, at the brink of ecological collapse, give us the strength to rise once more. Help us to embrace simpler lifestyles and sustainable practices. As pilgrims of hope, may we find in your determination the courage to continue advocating for our common home, even when it seems futile. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right and knelt before him and mocked him saying, "Hail King of the Jews." (Mathew 27:28 – 29).

Reflection: Jesus is stripped of dignity and possessions, exposed in his vulnerability. Today, we witness the stripping of forests, the degradation of soil, the pollution of waters, and the exploitation of natural resources. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si* that "Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever" (LS 33). Indigenous communities are stripped of their lands, farmers of their livelihoods, and future generations of their inheritance. In this stripping, we see the naked truth of our unsustainable systems.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, stripped and vulnerable, help us to recognize the dignity inherent in all creation. Give us the courage to challenge systems that exploit and destroy. Teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Help us to protect all life as we journey together working for the common good. As pilgrims of hope, may we work for an economy that respects the limits of our planet and the rights of all creatures. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left." (Luke 23:33)

Reflection: The nails pierce Christ's hands and feet, binding him to the wood of the cross. Like the nails in his hands and feet, each careless decision, each outright illegal action, each marginalization of the poor and vulnerable, is a wound to God's creation - a break in of our connection to God. Today, communities around the world are nailed to the consequences of environmental degradation—unable to move, trapped in cycles of poverty and pollution. Pope Francis observes in *Laudate Deum* that "the effects of climate change lead to the loss of livelihoods, forcing many to leave their lands, with the added difficulty of accessing natural resources, including water." (LD 5). These modern crucifixions demand our attention and our action.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, nailed to the cross, we see in your suffering the pain of those most affected by environmental destruction. Give us the courage to stand at the foot of modern crosses and work to relieve this suffering. As pilgrims of hope, may we commit ourselves to climate justice and ecological restoration. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened and the curtain of the temple was torn in the middle, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, "It is finished. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Then bowing his head, he died. (Luke 23: 44 – 46).

Reflection: In Christ's final breath, we witness both the depths of suffering and the heights of love. With every climate catastrophe, there comes death: death of people who drown in floods, of people who die because their crops have failed, or who succumb to heat exhaustion. Climate change itself is already causing the extinction of many plants and animals. Pope Francis warns in *Laudato Si* that "Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us." (LS 33). Yet in Christ's death, we find the mystery of transformation. His surrender teaches us that letting go of unsustainable ways is not the end, but a necessary passage to new life. We need to surrender ourselves to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit while also opening our hearts to offer some part of ourselves to serve

all of creation, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and those who will come after us. That is the key to turning toward ecological conversion.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in your death, you teach us how to surrender what must die in our societies and economies. Help us to release our attachment to unsustainable lifestyles and systems. As pilgrims of hope, may we trust that beyond the necessary deaths of our time lies the possibility of resurrection and renewal. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

“Later Joseph of Aramathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away”. (John 19:38).

Reflection: Tender hands carefully lower Jesus from the cross, treating his body with reverence and care. This act of compassion reminds us of our call to treat all life with similar reverence. Pope Francis emphasizes in *Laudato Si* that "when we fail to acknowledge the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities...it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected." (LS 117). Today, there are signs of this reverence in growing movements for environmental protection, sustainable development, and ecological spirituality. Many thousands of people around the world have stood up, used their voices and their bodies, while suffering threats, intimidation, violence and torture. Thousands have died as they worked for the people and the environments that they cared deeply about.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach us to handle all life with the tenderness shown to your body. Help us to recognize the sacred in all creation and to respond with care and compassion. As pilgrims of hope, may we cultivate reverence for life in all its forms. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.
Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

“So, Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone in from to the door of the tomb and went away”. (Mathew 27: 59 – 60).

Reflection: Jesus is laid in the earth, his body entrusted to the darkness of the tomb. In this profound moment, we are reminded of our own connection to the earth—from dust we came and to dust we shall return. Pope Francis tells us in *Laudato Si* that "we have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air, and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." (LS 2). The tomb symbolises death and the end of life. But we have hope and expectation that the Earth and all creatures and species can be restored to the fullness of life again, through the love and efforts of all who are concerned for Mother Earth.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as you were placed in the earth, help us to recognize our deep connection with the soil beneath our feet. Teach us to honor this relationship through sustainable practices and ecological awareness. As pilgrims of hope, may we trust that even in the darkest places, new life is stirring. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Fifteenth Station: The Resurrection of Jesus

Leader: *We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.*

All: *Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.*

Scripture:

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome ... came to the tomb. 'Who will roll the stone back from the entrance of the tomb for us?' ... But looking up they saw that the stone had been rolled back, and upon entering the tomb they were amazed to see a young man sitting ... clothed in a white robe. He said to them, "Do not be terrified. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen. (Mark 16: 1 – 6).

Reflection: The tomb could not hold Jesus; death gave way to resurrection. This final station reminds us that our journey as pilgrims of hope is always oriented toward new life. Pope Francis assures us in *Laudato Si* that "the Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us." (LS 12). The resurrection gives us hope that ecological conversion is possible, that sustainable systems can emerge from the ashes of exploitation, that humanity can learn to live in harmony with creation.

Prayer: Risen Lord, fill us with the hope of your resurrection. When we face environmental challenges that seem insurmountable, remind us that new life can emerge from the most desperate situations. As pilgrims of hope, may we witness to the possibility of ecological resurrection in our communities and in our world. Amen.

Leader: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Have mercy on us, Lord

All: Have mercy on us.

Concluding Prayer

Loving God, as we complete this Way of the Cross, we recognize that our journey as pilgrims of hope continues. The passion of Christ and the passion of our earth are intertwined, calling us to compassion, conversion, and action. In the words of Pope Francis, "All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start."

Grant us the wisdom to see the connections between all forms of suffering in our world, the courage to make the changes necessary for healing, and the perseverance to continue working for justice even when progress seems slow. May the hope of resurrection sustain us as we work to restore our common home and build a civilization of love.

We ask this through Christ, our crucified and risen Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May almighty God bless you, the Father who created this beautiful world, the Son who redeemed it through his suffering, and the Holy Spirit who renews it day by day. Go forth as pilgrims of hope, to love and serve the Lord in all creation.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

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