

## WAY OF THE CROSS

**Africa: Faith and Hope - Lent 2017**



**Palm Sunday procession in a refugee camp in Juba, South Sudan**

This way of the cross wishes to help us contemplate the suffering of our Lord Jesus in union with the African Continent. Knowing that where the cross is present the resurrection will follow and it is for this reason that our brothers and sisters in faith are the example of faith and hope for all of us. On a global scale the African continent experiences the biggest growth of Catholics and the joy they spread for redemption and salvation is example for us all.

## First Station

### JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

#### Sierra Leone

The Ebola virus arrived suddenly, like a death sentence. The experience in the Waterloo camp was terrible. They would not let us leave it because of the danger of infection that was all around us. “Let nobody leave, whoever does leave will no return again.” When I learnt that two girls I had known had died, Agia and Mabinti, I went to see what was happening in Waterloo. I saw for myself the destruction – children weeping in their homes, with no one to console them, because their parents were dead and no one was allowed to enter their home because of the Ebola outbreak. It was an invisible enemy, threatening everything and everyone around it. People did not talk to one another, did not touch one another; we couldn’t even give the sign of peace during Holy Mass... Ebola was separating us from one another. It was as though we were all condemned to death.



#### PRAYER:

Jesus, how you must have felt alone and abandoned when you were sentenced to death!. Condemned, although innocent, like so many victims of diseases and epidemics. Ebola has passed now, thanks be to God, but there are other diseases still causing havoc. Help those who suffer Lord, to discover a Christian meaning to their suffering, which is sometimes a long *via crucis* of pain and loneliness. Let them know, Lord Jesus, that, united to your *Via Crucis* in their suffering, they can redeem the world together with you.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Fr. Maurizio Boa / Maria Lozano**

## Second Station

### JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

#### Zimbabwe

The Cross of Jesus came as a result of him having done anything wrong, instead it was because of some greedy, power hungry people. Those who never accepted the good for others. Despite all this, Jesus still accepted the pain and suffering for the good of others. In Zimbabwe many a people work up to the reality of the cross, as most people are suffering. Cash Crisis which results in long winding queues at Banks, food prices ever on the rise which makes the majority live below the poverty-datum-line, to hospitals with no essential medicines and specialist staff gone to greener pastures, to roads not serviced nor repaired, lack of clean water supply and electricity hardly available. Unlike Jesus, each one is concerned about their own cross, no time to carry the cross for others. No one wants to carry the trouble of the neighbour.



**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, out of Love you carried the cross for us. We commend to you all the suffering Citizens of Zimbabwe, the many economic refugees who are living away from home, those unjustly imprisoned for a crime they know not or on trumped up charges, the sick who are in Hospitals without proper care and the hungry who are going without food every day. Help us to be like you, to be able to carry each other's troubles, to stand by the suffering and to give a voice to the voiceless. Amen

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Fr. Felix Mukaro**

## **Third Station**

### **JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME**

#### **Chad**

Chad is suffering from a socio-economical crisis which is affecting the entire population beginning with the poor and those on the margins of society, the sick and young people but also civil servants and as a consequence of this the middle class without forgetting the ongoing conflict of farmers and breeders who are victims in their villages everyday.



#### **PRAYER:**

Lord, we entrust our country to you and all those who have fallen victim to the consequences of disrespect for the common good. For the families who have accumulated debt in order to pay for food, for their children, the sick who no longer have the means to care for themselves, graduates who are unemployed and out of sheer despair burn their diplomas and young people whose academic future is affected by the deterioration in school education we ask you lord to help us find the strength not to lose heart and rise up again.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Fr. Séraphin Adiringar Allataroum**

## Fourth Station

### JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER

#### Democratic Republic of Congo

Luke 2:35 “ A sword will pierce through your own soul”

In his ascent towards Golgotha on the road to Calvary Jesus met his mother. Her pain is unimaginable watching her son dying helplessly on the cross and who could imagine Jesus, seeing his beloved mother forlorn that he was unable to console her. This is the daily situation people face in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the east of the country in Rutshuru, Masisi, Beni and in many other parts there are thousands of inconsolable mothers who witness their children being brutally slaughtered, slain and dismembered.

No one could imagine the pain and suffering of children forced to witness the rape of their own mothers, witnessing their mothers being disemboweled and their fathers throats slit and dismembered after which it is their turn to endure the same brutal fate. The suffering is unbearable. Everyday is Calvary. There are countless numbers of heartbroken mothers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are countless numbers of children who have been ripped apart from the love and affection of their parents. Who could possibly console them?



**PRAYER:** Lord, along the way of the cross, a sword of sorrow pierced your beloved mother’s heart upon seeing how disfigured you were. Thousands of mothers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, suffer the grief of witnessing their children who are murdered or forced into armed militias. Lord, touch the hearts of those who kill, who inflict violence and who destroy innocent people’s will to live. Help bring about their conversion. Help us connect with suffering mothers and unite us all together with the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**P. Jérôme PALUKU**

## 5th Station

### SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS

#### Mozambique

The sufferings of Jesus continue still in the people of today, who are struggling for survival. The struggle for power has brought “warfare” between the two principals parties, leaving many dead and refugees in the central zone of the country.

The Mozambican state is in debt as a result of corruption at the highest levels. Now this debt is having to be repaid in the form of welfare cuts, rapid price rises in basic foodstuffs, making life still more difficult for those families already suffering precarious economic conditions. Daily life in our country is characterised by young people with very few prospects for the future, children without schooling, mothers abandoned and forced to work hard to feed their children. The capacity of the people to endure suffering is almost limitless. Yet who can help, who can alleviate, who can find a solution for this situation? The Church in Mozambique, represented by its bishops, has on many occasions raised its voice to denounce the situations of injustice in the country.



#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you accepted the help of Simon of Cyrene on your Way of the Cross. Please bless and strengthen all those who seek selflessly to help others in their physical or spiritual suffering and all those who devote their lives, their time and their energies in the service of their fellow men. We ask this of you, who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

#### Sister Duvita Pahino

## 6<sup>TH</sup> Station

### VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS South Sudan

We contemplate Jesus as a holy woman named Veronica, seeing him bathed in sweat and blood, wipes his face and the impression of his face is left on the cloth.

Lord Jesus, we see the impression of your suffering face on the faces of our suffering brothers and sisters in South Sudan as we follow you along the Way of the Cross. Those innocently killed in the war conflict, those wounded in body and soul, those hungry and displaced, those full of fear and desperation – all reflect your suffering face.



#### **PRAYER:**

May our eyes not be blind, O Lord! Let us see your Face.

Let us see Your face in all people who revive your passion in their own suffering. Fill us with compassion so we can comfort them with real, concrete, specific deeds. Fill us with faith to trust that evil and suffering are not the final words; rather Your resurrected semblance will come to meet us.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Sister Alice Paulino Legge**

## Seventh Station

### JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

#### Mali

Jesus has fallen for the second time. Jesus does not let himself become overwhelmed with exhaustion, he courageously gets up again and wants to continue right to the end out of love for us. With him and following him let us carry the cross of the people in Mali including Hunger, religious illiteracy and the loss of values linked to poor education of children.



#### PRAYER:

Lord Jesus you carried with your cross our sufferings out of love for us. That our selfishness does not stop us from seeing the needs of our neighbor but through love and patience we can console those who are suffering.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Sister Esther Thera**

## Eight Station

### JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

#### Niger

How many women of Niger are waiting for consolation, support, a word of hope so that they believe once more in their dignity. Mothers watch their twelve year old daughters forced into marriage and they are powerless to intervene. Mothers of forsaken families must make terrible sacrifices in order to ensure continued survival by any means possible.



**PRAYER:** Jesus despite the weight of your cross, please once again stop and let yourself be touched by the sufferings of the women of Niger and tell them “Happy the mourning because they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Sister Marie Catherine KINGBO**

## **Ninth Station**

### **JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME**

#### **Republic of Sudan**

The Christian community in the two Sudans is largely made up of refugees and displaced people, as a from the armed conflicts in South Sudan, in the Nuba Mountains and in Blue Nile State. Many have settled on the edges of the major cities, such as Khartoum, Omdurman and Port Sudan. This uprooting from their homes has destroyed family structures and left deep wounds in the lives of these people, who find themselves forced to live in a land which they do not see as their own.



#### **Prayer:**

Father of Mercy, guide and strengthen the hearts of those who have been displaced by violence and who risk falling into despair under the weight of their poverty and marginalisation. Raise them up and help them to discover that you are walking with them and supporting them, in the constancy of your love for Christ, Our Lord.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

#### **Padre Jorge Naranjo**

## 10th Station

### JESUS CLOTHES ARE TAKEN AWAY

#### Libya

Jesus is stripped and denied of the clothes he is wearing. He is laid bare by those who wanted to take all his dignity even as a person.

Consider the thousands of irregular immigrants trying to cross from Libya to Europe with the hope of finding a better future for them and their children. Taking the risk of not only losing their few possessions but even their life boarding unworthy boats. Consider those that are in detention centres and those that after making the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean sea to find themselves depending completely on the help and generosity of others many times even just hoping to find it.

Can you imagine yourself and your family in their situation? How would you feel being stripped of your own self?



**Credit:** © Ricardo Garcia Vilanova ACN-20160617-42346.jpg

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, we present to you all those who are suffering. All those persons that have been stripped not from their clothes but from their dignity because of the actions or inactions of others. We pray especially for those women and children who have and are still suffering and risking their lives to find a better future. We pray for those who are being kept in detention camps for unjust reasons waiting to be liberated.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

+ **Mgr. George Bugeja ofm**

## 11th Station

### JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS.

#### Nigeria

Consider how the gruesome nailing of Jesus to the cross is still happening at various Golgothas around the world. In northern Nigeria, the Golgotha hill is fast expanding:

From the Chibok village of the abducted young and innocent schoolgirls who are still in captivity, to Kafanchan and its Jema'a area, the bodies of Christians, stripped and charred like burnt offerings, litter the ground. It is a vast Calvary hill where the hammers are repeatedly pounding on the sharpened nails, tacking the Mystical Body of Christ to the wood of the Cross and the sword of jihad piercing their sides. Then, consider the volume of the heartbroken lamentation of Mother Mary, now swelled by the sobbing of innumerable 'Marys' who are also mourning the fruit of their wombs.

It is a never-ending Day of crucifixion. And, God weeps.



**PRAYER:** You foretold of the time when believers in your name will be persecuted in the name of a god. We testify to the truth of your warning. But we also bear testimony that your word is eternal life. Grant to your Church on earth, the grace to keep in mind the mystery of the 'Empty Tomb.' That as Christians partake of the cup of your Passion and Death, they may also be sharers in your resurrection to eternal bliss. By your grace, Lord Jesus, may the blood of our modern day martyrs renew and strengthen the faith of the pilgrim Church on earth. And may those who persecute the Church come to the knowledge that you, Lord Jesus, are the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Padre Isu Saliu**

## Twelfth Station

### JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

#### Central Africa Republic

Death on a cross... A terrible way to die but a seemingly logical conclusion when a crowd cried out “crucify him” Luke 23:21

These sufferings and this shameful death, Jesus still experiences this today, he who said: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40. Anyone who we inflict suffering on or anyone we kill, it is Jesus we are inflicting the suffering on and it is Jesus we are killing. Unfortunately more often than not we hear of abductions, murders and decapitations for reasons only known to the executioners.

Even today Jesus dies on the cross every time shots are fired and many innocent people, children included are displaced leaving behind their belongings to seek refuge in refugee camps or to strange places away from the wars, armed militias and tribal and ethnic conflicts. Even today Jesus dies on the cross when children and adults are accused of witchcraft and are rejected by their family and by society.



**PRAYER:** Jesus you know how to forgive, give us your loving heart so that we can love our neighbor. Teach us to forgive and to offer forgiveness. Mary you who have been given to us as our mother, pray for us and protect us. That we may become sowers of peace and of reconciliation wherever we go.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

**Padre Edouard TSIMBA**

## XIII Station

### THE BODY OF JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.

#### Somalia

The small Christian community has suffered a lot during these last 28 years: the murder of its bishop, the martyrdom of a number of its committed sons and daughters and the destructions of its institutions and churches. It has been crucified with Jesus on the cross of religious intolerance and of civil war.

This community is symbol of what happened to the Somali people during these same years: civil war, fighting, internal displacement, forced migration to neighboring countries, drought and famine; hundreds of thousands have died. A whole people have been put on the cross.

People and organizations of good will are trying to remove from cross the poor, the sick, the neglected, the few Christians: there are signs of hope. Caring hands are still needed from Somalia and indeed from the whole world. We must keep burning the flame of hope and resurrection despite the darkness surrounding us.



**PRAYER:** O Lord, your love is stronger than death: on the third day you rose from the tomb where men have put you. You have saved us through your death and resurrection. Help us to believe, hope and love beyond our human limitations and weaknesses. By your grace, Lord Jesus, may the sufferings of people in Somalia, joined with Your sacrifice, obtain new life by providing a spirit of reconciliation, forgiveness, respect for everybody, sharing and peace for this country. We ask this, o Lord Jesus, Savior of all, who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen. Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

+ **Msgr. Giorgio Bertin**

## XIV STATION

### JESUS IS LAD IN THE TOMB

#### Ghana

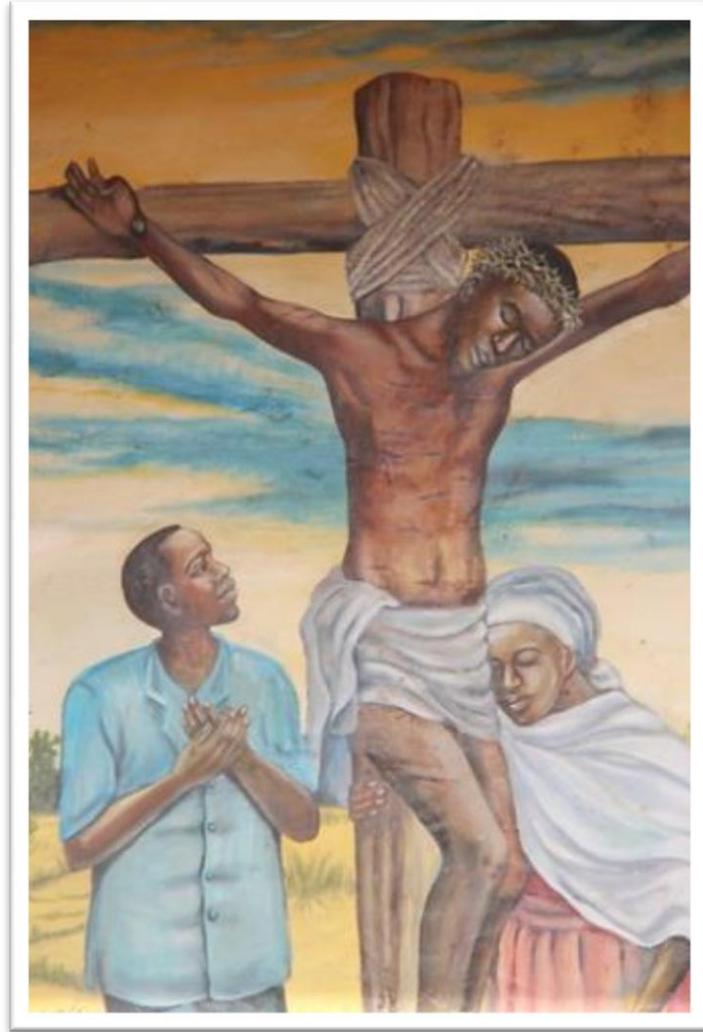
Consider the Son of God accepting to come and pay for the sins of mankind, how he kept quiet from the wicked treatment men gave him till his death on the cross. He concentrated on our welfare. He did not look for his own; that is why after his death, his body was released from the wood of the cross and placed in a tomb, a tomb not meant for him but for someone else. His treatment was better than that of the two robbers had and who had also been crucified with him by the Roman soldiers and left exposed. Their situation clearly proved that they had family and friends but never cared because of the shame they had brought to the family and to themselves. In the case of Jesus, he was fortunate enough to receive unusual attention and care from Joseph of Arimathea. In our world today appropriate burial of bodies is a sacred tradition whether they played a good role or did not. It is important that we ensure the resting place for those who have died in our homes and communities. The real cause of Jesus death was for us to be saved from shame and bondage of sin which has engulfed humanity today.



**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, I remember the fact that your death wasn't some charade, rather you really died. Thus you experienced the ultimate penalty for my sins and the sins of the world. Help me to die to my selfishness, greed, inordinate desire, anger, pride, stubbornness, envy and assist me in giving befitting burial to our departed brothers and sisters in order to rise with you in glory.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be....

**Rosemary MINIMADEY, Catequista**



### **PRAYER:**

*“Holy Mary, Mother of God, Protectress of Africa, you have given the world its true light, Jesus Christ. By your obedience to the Father and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, you have given us the source of our reconciliation and our joy.*

*Mother of tenderness and wisdom, show us Jesus, your Son and the Son of God, sustain our journey of conversion, so that Jesus may enlighten us with his Glory in all the settings of our personal, family and social life.*

*Mother full of Mercy and Justice, by your docility to the Spirit, the Comforter, obtain for us the grace to be witnesses of the Risen Lord, so that we may become ever more fully the salt of the earth and the light of the world.*

*Mother of Perpetual Succour, to your maternal intercession we entrust our brothers and sisters in Africa. Queen of Peace, pray for us! Our Lady of Africa, pray for us!”*

**Way of the Cross for Africa - Edited and compiled by Maria Lozano / ACN International**

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