

REFLECTIONS ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS FROM TRÓCAIRE



trócaire

Rooted in the principles of Catholic social teaching, Trócaire works in partnership and localisation with communities and organisations to support people who are living in poverty and facing injustice every day. We also strive to address the factors that undermine progress, such as corruption, repression and persecution. In Ireland, we raise awareness about the root causes of poverty and injustice in our world and urge people to take action to address those causes. Trócaire has long-term programmes of work in seventeen countries around the world and provides funding to support humanitarian aid in a number of other countries. You will see references to some of those countries as we pray the Way of the Cross.

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

For ourselves and the work of Trócaire

Introduction for the leader and reader to read beforehand. If appropriate, you can share this information with your group.

The Stations of the Cross is a traditional way of praying throughout the year.

We pray this familiar prayer to be with Jesus Christ, who walked this journey, carrying the cross, out of love for and commitment to us. We pray it also, because we wish to become close to Jesus, who loves each of us so deeply.

We walk this journey to get a glimpse at the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, who is alive today and experiencing the Journey of the Cross wherever our sisters and brothers are suffering throughout the world. We give thanks as we walk this journey.

The Way of the Cross has brought hope and the possibility of new life into the dark places of our


lives. Journeying with Jesus Christ allows us to become aware of where God is walking with us in our lives, and where we are called to be with others on their journey.

'Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.'

(Nelson Mandela)



Niall Ennis returning his Trócaire box to Fr Paul Thornton at a Trócaire box return drive-through at St Cronan's, Brackenstown Parish, Swords. Photo credit: Mark Stedman



Thandekile and her children, Nomatter (11) and Forward (8). This family from Zimbabwe are on the 2022 Trócaire box. Photo credit: Cynthia Matonhodze, Trócaire

As you pray, be aware of where you have experienced the different stations in your life. Think also of your loved ones, your friends, your neighbours and your community as a whole. Include them in your prayer, as you recall those who are experiencing something of Jesus Christ's journey at this time. Look beyond your part of the world and be mindful that you share your human journey with people scattered all over the world and with the many thousands of people with whom Trócaire works.

Be mindful of families, parishes and communities who are facing conflict, hunger and fear. Jesus walked the Way of the Cross for all humanity – now we walk in solidarity with all people.

If leading the stations for a group, take a moderate pace, giving time for a pause between the reader and the prayer led by the leader.

Introduction

Leader: We gather as sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ as we begin our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: We gather here to walk the journey of Jesus to Calvary. We come as individuals, aware of the challenges and struggles in our own lives. We come as a community of believers and we come as members of our common humanity. We are mindful of people all over the world who walk the Way of the Cross daily. We walk in love, as we come to share the ongoing pain and suffering of people who are living with conflict and whose lives are in danger. We pray for peace all over the world. We also pray for peace in our own lives, families and communities.

Reader: We walk the journey of Jesus in solidarity with communities in Ireland and all over the world. We walk with families who are experiencing the Way of the Cross in their lives today.

Leader: Jesus our brother, awaken in us compassion for all who live the Way of the Cross daily. Fill our hearts with your love, showing us the way to embrace the world, extend your kingdom of mercy, justice and love to all.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

First Station

Reader: Pilate condemns Jesus to die.

Condemnation kills hope. Sometimes in what we say or do, we leave other people devastated. We crush their hope. We remember and pray for those in our family or parish who have been hurt by others and who are not feeling included. We pray that we will all have the courage to reach out for help when we need it, and that we will reach out a hand to others who are in need.

Trócaire is helping to build a brighter future for people in Rwanda. We help people earn better incomes and grow more food. We help women, men and young people become more resilient. We also help people overcome trauma and build a future of peace and hope.

Leader: Jesus our brother, open our hearts to those we condemn by our attitudes and our actions.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Second Station

Reader: Jesus accepts his cross.

Jesus accepts what he cannot change. People in many parts of the world have to accept poor living conditions, hunger and violence, things that they often feel they cannot change. The effects of climate change have brought severe flooding to South Sudan. Trócaire's partners carried out emergency food distribution to one thousand families there to assist in meeting immediate needs. This would not have been possible without the support and generosity of parishioners in Ireland.

Leader: Jesus our brother, give us courage to speak out against the injustice suffered by others, and act to change what can be changed.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Third Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the first time.

The weight of the cross causes Jesus to fall. Many people around us in our communities are falling down under the heavy weight of bills they cannot pay or homes they cannot keep. People around the world are carrying the weight of uncertainty over their homes, their livelihoods, their land and their future. Thousands of people in our own country and many more around the world have felt the weight of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leader: Jesus our brother, nudge us daily to share our time, our voice and our generosity with those in need.

Joy-Faith in Kenya, who featured on the Trócaire box in 2020. She is washing her hands to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. The tap is made out of recycled household items. Photo credit: Denis Kioko, Trócaire



All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fourth Station

Reader: Jesus meets his mother, Mary.

How did Mary feel when she met Jesus? He is weighed down and surrounded by guards. She cannot lift the burden from him. However, she is there; her presence alone must have given him strength.

Very often women and girls have limited access to resources and little decision-making power in communities and households. Trócaire and their partners provide training about the rights of women and girls for men, women, boys, girls and local leaders. This challenges the marginalisation of women and girls, which increases their vulnerability to gender-based violence and abuse.

Leader: Jesus our friend, we remember mothers all over the world, those who are living and those who have died. We thank God for the gift of motherhood.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fifth Station

Reader: Simon of Cyrene helps carry the cross.

By working alongside struggling parish communities, Trócaire's partners help people to carry their cross, and to maintain their dignity and their hope. We ourselves in our parishes often need help in the difficulties of life each day. Grant us the courage to reach out for help and to offer help also.

Leader: Jesus our brother, recruit us as assistant workers by our prayers and generosity.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Sixth Station

Reader: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Compassion and kindness are at the heart of Veronica's action. Compassion for others and helping others are at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Trócaire means 'mercy' and our partners show that mercy through providing practical and psychosocial support to communities who are dealing with displacement and trauma because of conflict.

Leader: Jesus, have mercy on and compassion for each one of us along our journeys in life.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Seventh Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the second time.

To get up after falling is hard. Getting up a second time is harder still. Many people are beaten down when they try to rise.

Leader: Jesus our brother, give us hope when we fall down. Help us to notice others who have been knocked back and give us courage to stretch out a hand of friendship and solidarity. Trócaire and their partner organisations, such as Caritas Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, give courage, hope and strength to people around the world who are facing poverty and injustice.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Eighth Station

Reader: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

Women around the world show great resilience and strength in the face of injustice. Jesus recognises their plight and feels for them.

The ill treatment of women is a serious problem in Honduras. This includes high levels of violence against women and girls. Honduras is also very vulnerable to climate-related disasters, such as hurricanes and floods.

Thanks to your support, Trócaire's partners are supporting communities in Honduras to protect their land in the face of corporate greed. Our work helps women to live in safety and to take on roles as leaders in society. We are also helping communities to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

May their courage and strength inspire all of us on our daily journeys through life. Our prayer joins us in solidarity with all women.

Leader: Jesus, help women all over the world to overcome injustices in their daily lives.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*



Maria Felicita Lopez (31), Honduras. Photo credit: Simon Burch

Ninth Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the third time.

Many people get knocked down time and again through no fault of their own. Unjust governments, natural disasters, conflict, hunger and climate change can all prevent people from getting back up again. Jesus teaches us in this moment to get up and keep going.

Internal conflict has raged in Somalia for almost thirty years. Large parts of south-central Somalia, where Trócaire works, are governed by armed groups, leaving an estimated 2.6 million people internally displaced. Trócaire has been providing humanitarian support to people in Somalia since 1992.

Leader: Jesus our brother, open our hearts to feel the pain and despair of being knocked down again and again and again. Help us to stretch out a hand and support them to get back up.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Tenth Station

Reader: Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

Many families and communities with whom Trócaire works have been stripped of their homes or their lands as a result of conflict. Conflict and climate change can leave people destitute. Even though these families live far away from us, they share the common experience of families fighting to protect the future for their children and grandchildren.



Checking temperatures for fever symptoms to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Habiba Mohamed, one of Trócaire's health workers, checks the temperature of Mohamed Abdi Ali at Luuq Hospital, in the Gedo region of Somalia. Photo credit: Victoria Nthenge, Trócaire

Leader: Jesus our brother, you know what it feels like to be stripped of your dignity. Make us advocates for those who are fighting to protect their families' futures.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Eleventh Station

Reader: Jesus is nailed to the cross.

'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. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing"' (Luke 23:33-34).

With your support, Trócaire has been responding to the crisis in Syria since the conflict began in 2011. We provide humanitarian aid in Syria and to Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. We have provided food, shelter and basic household items. Trauma from the conflict is also a huge issue. We provide counselling and psychosocial support to affected families. We also support people with life skills and vocational training. This helps them to begin to rebuild their lives.

Leader: Jesus, our brother, open our eyes to all those people who are suffering injustice in our world. Bless all those who speak out for truth and justice, especially those defending human rights and promoting peace around the world.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Twelfth Station

Reader: Jesus dies on the cross.

Jesus dies because of the way he lived – his stand for justice and truth, his belief that God's greatest interest lies with those who are placed on the fringes of society. His death is reconciliation in totality.

Due to military bombardments and an ongoing blockade, 80 per cent of people in Gaza depend on aid to survive. In the West Bank, Palestinian homes are being demolished. Land is being confiscated. Illegal settlements are being built on stolen land.

With your support, Trócaire works in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to support those affected by conflict and human rights violations.

Leader: Jesus our brother, challenge the way we live. Make us more conscious of those becoming poorer and more excluded in our society.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Thirteenth Station

Reader: Jesus is taken down from the cross after his death.

Jesus' body is removed from the cross and taken by his friends. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa. It has been ravaged by conflict for decades. It is a country rich in natural resources yet is one of the ten poorest countries in the world. Trócaire

is providing life-saving support, such as food, water and shelter. We support women who have survived violence. We also work on longer-term projects to build resilient communities, so that people don't go hungry, women are free from violence and people are protected, safe and can live with dignity.

Leader: Jesus our brother, nurture respect for the gift of life that you gave us.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fourteenth Station

Reader: Jesus is placed in the tomb.

Jesus being placed in the tomb seemed like the end. His disciples may have felt as if all hope was lost. In many parts of the world, people are fighting to hold onto hope due to the challenges of conflict, hunger, climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leader: Jesus our brother, be with us when we lose hope. May we work with Trócaire and their partner organisations, who offer hope and solidarity to people in the midst of despair. May their strength and resilience lead them on the road to hope and peace.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Closing Reflection

Reader: We have walked this journey of Jesus to the cross with each other. It ends in despair with the burial of Jesus. However, our faith teaches us that this is not the end. We trust in the hope that

Jesus rose from the dead and, in this way, God has transformed our lives too. Darkness, fear and injustice will not prevail. Jesus Christ, our brother and saviour, hold us close to you in our struggles.

Remind us always of the difficulties faced by those most vulnerable and in need in our world. Give us the courage to speak out as you did and to act for justice. We make this prayer in your name, through Christ our Lord.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: Pope Francis tells us in his recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* that we are all one family in spite of distances between us, so let us go from here as people of the Resurrection, sharing our hope with all who despair. Let us share our voice and generosity with the thousands of families who are living in fear of losing their lives, homes and their possessions because of drought, floods, hunger, conflict and war. We share our support with all who walk the Way of the Cross daily.



Leader invokes God's blessing and crosses herself/himself.

Leader: May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

Yaka Lucia with her baby Rosa in Palabek refugee camp in Uganda. Yaka is a refugee who fled from South Sudan's civil war. Trócaire is supporting people in Palabek to grow crops to provide food and income. Photo credit: Sarah Fretwell, Trócaire



More resources, photos and videos are available [here](#)

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Cover photo: Villagers in Nyamagabe, Rwanda, in August 2017, celebrate the achievement of their kitchen gardens with Thioncote Twagurumuhire, Water Field Officer for Trócaire partner UNICOOPAGI. Photo credit: Alan Whelan, Trócaire

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