

# Stations of the Cross



Syria has experienced suffering and pain from eight years of brutal war. Christians have been especially persecuted. The following Stations of the Cross have been shared with us by Archbishop Samir Nassar through our partnership with the Archeparchy of Damascus. They reflect the anguish of the Christian community and their desire for hope and peace.

Please consider using them this Lent in solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters in the Middle East.

## 1st Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

“Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified” (Matthew 27:26).

An innocent man condemned to death. Lord, our families feel they are close to you in their sufferings; they are innocent, like you were. They have been forced by violence and persecution to flee their homes, schools, parishes, friends, neighbors, cemeteries and villages; forced to live in refugee camps in misery and indifference. Pilate continues to be the source of injustice.

*Lord, enlighten the spirit of these ‘judges’ and make us the messengers of justice. Amen*

## 2nd Station: Jesus is Given His Cross to Carry

“...then they led him away to be crucified” (Mark 15:20).

Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, he without whom “nothing came to be” (Jn 1:3). He who bows his head and continues on, humiliated, carrying his own cross.

*Lord Jesus, the force of evil continues to crush and destroy us; you have taken on the same burden as the weakest. Look kindly on our families so broken, humiliated and torn apart by violence. They are victims of injustice as you were. Give them the strength to carry their crosses and keep their faith and hope in you. Amen*

### 3rd Station: Jesus Falls for the First Time

“He was pierced because of our crimes, and crushed because of our sins” (Isaiah 53:5).

He who carried peace to the world has been wounded by our sins and falls beneath the weight of our faults.

*We are crushed, Lord, beneath the weight of our crosses and the tragic circumstances we are living through. Our selfishness and weaknesses pull us down. Help us up Lord when we fall and bring us to your truth. Amen*

### 4th Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

“And your own soul will be pierced with a lance” (Luke 2:35).

Wounded and carrying the cross of all humanity, Jesus meets his mother and all humanity is shown in her face. From this mutual suffering between son and mother, a new humanity grows.”

*O Mary, Mother of God, you were able to see your own son suffering; help all mothers who are not able to see their own sons who are suffering and dying alone far away from them. In our daily life, children and parents sometimes cause each other to suffer. Help us Lord to transform our families and our countries into places of love and serenity like the Holy Family. Amen*

### 5th Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

“...they made him carry Jesus’ cross behind Him” (Luke 23:26).

This silent meeting between Jesus and Simon of Cyrene is a lesson: two sets of eyes meet and it is a life-changing encounter. Suffering welcomed in faith traces the way of salvation.

*Lord, our families are left alone in their suffering and distress. They wait for a helping hand, a loving heart, a “Simon of Cyrene” who you will place on their desert road of suffering. Amen*

## 6th Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

6

“...it is your face that I seek O Lord; hide not your face from me” (Psalm 27:8-9).

Veronica does a very symbolic action which carries a strong message. She wipes away the pain of suffering Jesus; a gesture of faith which shows her love for him. Who will wipe the injured faces of our brothers, of our mothers who weep for their children and for their own distress?

*Help us, Lord, to see your face in the poor who are persecuted and the innocent victims of violence, injustice and intolerance. Amen*

## 7th Station: Jesus Falls for the 2nd Time

7

“Do not stay far away; suffering is near, I have nobody to help me” (Psalm 22:12).

The second fall under the weight of the cross is the sign of solitude in time of suffering. Injustice and violence push the less favored people further into the mud. This solitude can be identified with the isolation of the poorest who are victims of egoism and worldwide materialism.

*Come Holy Spirit and console, strengthen and plant hope in the hearts of the persecuted in order that, united to Christ, they may be the witnesses of his love for all. Amen*

## 8th Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

8

“Women of Jerusalem do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28).

These women see nothing in the cross but a sign of malediction. The Lord, however, sees it rather as a sign of redemption which wipes away sin and is a consolation for the oppressed. He opens the eyes of the women to the truth of the Pascal mystery.

*Lord, our mothers who are hurt and left to struggle in search for a meaning to their families' sufferings need your consolation and comfort. O Christ, suffering, be their peace and balm for their wounds. Amen*

9

## 9th Station: Jesus Falls for the 3rd Time

“For Christ died for all in order that all the living would no longer keep their lives entered on themselves, but on him who died and rose from the dead for them” (2 Cor 5:15).

Jesus falls again under the weight of the cross, and in spite of his exhaustion, tries to get up, but without success. Lord, your people here are exhausted and weakened by their efforts to get up again, too much for some. And our divisions are deep, those of the Church also. The unity of Christians is far from the idea of divine sonship.

*Lord, help us to get up once more and continue on the road of pardon and unity which comes from your saving wounds. Amen*

10

## 10th Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

“They shared my garments between themselves and drew lots for my tunic” (Psalm 22:19).

You carried our humanity, Lord. Numerous victims of blind violence are completely without resources and share in your suffering which you undertook in your saving love.

*Help, Lord, our poor refugees who find no sense in life, to overcome their fear and remain attached to this holy land which is quickly losing its Christians. Teach us, Lord, how to detach ourselves from material goods and to be better able to live in evangelical poverty. Amen*

11

## 11th Station: Jesus is Nailed on the Cross

“Pilate wrote an inscription which he placed on the cross and which said ‘Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews’” (John 19:19).

Lord Jesus was crucified for our sins. Each blow of the hammer resounds in our hearts. Our children have been martyred, sacrificed savagely without reason; these young are very close to Calvary.

*Lord, may your liberating suffering free these young people and their families from their slavery so that they may discover your divine face. Amen*

## 12th Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

The cry of abandon breaks the wall of silence and opens the way to liberty. All the meaning of the cross takes its value from this saving path of suffering. Our innocent victims did not die in vain. Death will not defeat us.

*Lord, by your death, you have opened the door of the kingdom of eternal life. Death allows us to understand the way to the resurrection. Open, Lord, the hearts of those who put the lives of others in danger. Let them discover the preciousness of human life which is a reflection of your divinity. Amen*

## 13th Station: Jesus' Body is Given to His Mother

“Then he said to his disciple, ‘Behold your mother’” (John 19:27).

He who loved Jesus, remained at his side. Mary is the model of this love, model of our faith. We put into the hands of Mary, our Mother, our martyrs, our refugees, those who have been tortured by injustice, hatred and exclusion. We confide to Mary, our dear Mother, our children who have no schools, our sick you have no aide and our refugees who are homeless.

*Lord, let the blood of these innocent victims be the sowing of seeds of a new society steeped in fraternity, peaceful gestures and a better justice. Amen*

## 14th Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

“They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a linen cloth” (John 19:40).

Happy is he, who like Nicodemus, receives the body of Jesus, cares for it and puts in in the tomb. Jesus allows himself to be crucified with the same complete self-abandonment by the hands of man whilst being perfectly united with them. In reality, by our baptisms in his death, we have let ourselves be put in the tomb with him and new life will emerge from the tomb.

*Lord, from the depths of our tombs, let the light of the Resurrection shine out. Give us the grace to choose your liberating way of the Cross and keep firm our faith and hope. Make us, Lord, children of light who no longer fear the darkness. Help us, Lord, to allow our way of the Cross become one of pardon, reconciliation and peace in the light of the Resurrection. Amen*