

Lent 2021

FINAL BLESSING

Everyone is invited to come and bow before the Cross at the altar,
make the sign of the Cross slowly and leave in silence.



Information concerning the Stations of the Cross:

***Please complete the Stations of the Cross by including songs
and prayers that are familiar to you!***

The texts of reflexion are drawn from the
Encyclical letter FRATELLI TUTTI, published in October 2020.
The Bible Translation is from New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.

The artistic representations of the Stations of the Cross are in the
Parish of Kasamba in Zambia and were made by
Father Pierre du Suau de la Croix, M.Afr († 2019).

The photographs were taken by Hans Schering, M.Afr, Munich.

*The Way of the Cross prayer was prepared by the
JPIC-ED Coordination of the Missionaries of Africa.
Rome, 29 January 2021*

Stations of the Cross

Dark clouds over a closed world



*The eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed our false securities
by showing a certain "inability to work together" (FT 7) in failing to rea-
lise that we are "all in the same boat, where one person's problems are
the problems of all" (FT 32).*

*The stations of this Way of the Cross take up the reflections of the en-
cyclical **FRATELLI TUTTI**. The first chapter, in particular, "Dark clouds
over a closed world" invites us to consider "certain trends in our world
that hinder the development of universal fraternity" (FT 9).*

*Let us pray and meditate together. Let us allow ourselves to be chal-
lenged and guided by Jesus, the Nazarene, friend and brother, suffering
servant, crucified, the Christ.*



1st Station:

JESUS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

“It was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ They cried out, ‘Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but the emperor.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus.” Jn 19:14-16

Comment

Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, became a victim of political and religious conflicts of interest, a victim of manipulation and religious fanaticism. And the crowd allowed itself to be dragged along, indoctrinated and manipulated.

Reflexion

We should also recognize that destructive forms of fanaticism are at times found among religious believers, including Christians; they too “can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication. Even in the Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned”. How can this contribute to the fraternity that our common Father asks of us? (FT 46)

Prayer

O Jesus, awaken our awareness and vigilance against all hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate and seek to separate human beings.

14th Station:

JESUS’ BODY IS BURIED



“Joseph of Arimathea 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 to the door of the tomb and went away.”

Mt 27: 59-60

Comment

Jesus announced the Good News: "If the grain of wheat that falls onto the ground does not die, it remains alone; if on the contrary, it dies, it bears fruit in abundance. "Jesus himself became the grain of wheat sown in the earth. Patience, and in a little more time, we will witness the harvest!

Reflexion

Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”. Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope. (FT 55)

Prayer

Recitation of “Our Father”



13th Station:

THE BODY OF JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN

“All his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. There was a good and righteous man named Joseph, ... He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took him down from the cross”.

Lk 23 : 49-53

Comment

Everyone had left. But Mary, John and a few others remained there. They lived compassion, charity and solidarity to the end!

Reflexion

The recent pandemic enabled us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious... They understood that no one is saved alone. (FT 54)

Prayer

O Mary, you accepted at the foot of the Cross to be a mother to all. You are filled with solicitude, not only for Jesus but also for the "rest of your children" (Rev 12:17). Help us to give birth to a new world where we will all be brothers and sisters, where there will be room for each one of the excluded in our societies, where justice and peace will shine forth. (FT 278)

Recitation of the “Hail Mary”

2nd Station:

JESUS IS LOADED WITH HIS CROSS



“Jesus carrying the cross by himself, went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.” Jn 19 : 17

Comment

Jesus, all bent and hunched over, carries his Cross. He also bears with him the burden and suffering of all those who are marginalised and excluded.

Reflexion

Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately, “persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, ‘not yet useful’ – like the unborn, or ‘no longer needed’ – like the elderly. We have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food, which is deplorable in the extreme”. (FT 18)

... “what is thrown away are not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves”. (FT 19).

Prayer

O Jesus, many today are crushed by the heavy burdens of daily life. They are suffering from exploitation, exclusion and marginalisation. Raise our awareness and support us in our efforts to include all people without exception.



3rd Station:

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

“Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases.” Is 53 : 4

Comment

The Cross is heavy. And it hurts Jesus who falls under its weight. This is the unbearable weight of suffering that the slaves of the 21st century and all the victims of human trafficking suffer.

Reflexion

Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person that allows him or her to be treated as an object... Whether by coercion, or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end... A perversion that exceeds all limits when it subjugates women and then forces them to abort. An abomination that goes to the length of kidnapping persons for the sake of selling their organs. Trafficking in persons and other contemporary forms of enslavement are a worldwide problem that needs to be taken seriously by humanity as a whole: “since criminal organizations employ global networks to achieve their goals, efforts to eliminate this phenomenon also demand a common and, indeed, a global effort on the part of various sectors of society”. (FT 24).

Prayer

O Jesus, be the strength and support of all trafficked persons. Show us how to live in solidarity with the victims.

12th Station:

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



“It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last.” Lk 23 : 44-46

Invitation to bow for a moment of self-reflection.

Moment of silence for personal prayer.



11th Station:

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.’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing.” Lk 23 : 33-34

Commentaire

Jesus suffered from violence. People shouted and mocked him. His arms and feet were pierced and nailed to the wood. Despite his suffering, he continued to preach forgiveness.

Reflexion

War, terrorist attacks, racial or religious persecution, and many other affronts to human dignity are judged differently, depending on how convenient it proves for certain, primarily economic, interests... These situations of violence, sad to say, “have become so common as to constitute a real ‘third world war’ fought piecemeal”. (FT 25)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, at the hour of your death, your arms are wide open to welcome us and offer us your forgiveness. Teach us to forgive as you forgive us. Teach us to reconcile with others and break the cycle of violence!

4th Station:

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



“Simeon said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and 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.’” Lk 2 : 34-35

Comment

Women had a special place in the public life of Jesus: they were healed of their illness; they listened to the word of Jesus; they followed him as disciples; challenged him; suffered with him; they bore witness to the Good News.

Reflexion

Similarly, 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 words, but our decisions and reality tell another story. Indeed, “doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights”. (FT 23)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, your mother accompanied you on the Way of the Cross. Her heart was pierced with sorrow. So many women live with this same sorrow today, suffering from situations of exclusion, abuse and violence. Please show us the paths to follow for the transformation and integral development of all.



5th Station:

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

“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.” Lk 23 : 26

Comment

Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus to carry the Cross. His example and testimony are a powerful call to us and a challenge to support those who suffer the causes and consequences of migration.

Reflexion

Migrants are not seen as entitled like others to participate in the life of society... No one will ever openly deny that they are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless of origin, race or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love. (FT 39) “Migrations, more than ever before, will play a pivotal role in the future of our world”. At present, however, migration is affected by the “loss of that sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters on which every civil society is based”. (FT 40) .. when doubts and fears condition our way of thinking and acting to the point of making us intolerant, closed and perhaps even – without realizing it – racist. In this way, fear deprives us of the desire and the ability to encounter the other”. (FT 41)

Prayer

Lord, please make us aware of our sensitivity and our responsibility towards migrants who suffer. May the spirit of Simon of Cyrene encourage us to put into practice means and actions to welcome, protect, promote and seek the integration of migrants.

10th Station:

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



“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; 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’.” Jn 19: 23-24

Comment

Jesus is stripped of his clothes. He is stripped, wholly stripped, like a poor man who has nothing left. Everything is done to dehumanise him, to make him lose his esteem, his respect, his dignity, his soul. This is the case for so many peoples today who are stripped of their cultural and socio-economic wealth and oppressed.

Reflexion

Certain economically prosperous countries tend to be proposed as cultural models for less developed countries; instead, each of those countries should be helped to grow in its own distinct way and to develop its capacity for innovation while respecting the values of its proper culture. (FT 51) Destroying self-esteem is an easy way to dominate others. Behind these trends that tend to level our world, there flourish powerful interests that take advantage of such low self-esteem, while attempting, through the media and networks, to create a new culture in the service of the elite. (FT 52) We forget that “there is no worse form of alienation than to feel uprooted, belonging to no one”. (FT 53).

Prayer

O Lord, humanity was created in your image and likeness. Amidst the diversity of human beings, ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the vocation seeds to form a family of brothers and sisters. Please help us to live together in harmony and peace without necessarily being all the same.



9th Station:

JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Jesus said : “Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.” Jn 12 : 25-26

Comment

Jesus broke through the barriers when he met the Syro-Phoenician woman, the Samaritan woman, and the society's outcasts. He gave witness by fighting against polarisation and separation based on cultural, ethnic, social and political differences.

Reflexion

New walls are erected for self-preservation, the outside world ceases to exist and leaves only “my” world, to the point that others, no longer considered human beings possessed of an inalienable dignity, become only “them”. Once more, we encounter “the temptation to build a culture of walls, to raise walls, walls in the heart, walls on the land, in order to prevent this encounter with other cultures, with other people. And those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others”. (FT 27)

Prayer

O Jesus, regardless of the risk of being misunderstood and mistreated by political and religious leaders, you dared to overcome the many barriers that separate human beings. Please help us to build bridges that promote fraternal relations.

6th Station:

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



“He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering[a] and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces.”

Is 53 : 3

Comment

Veronica never stayed at a distance. She approached Jesus, sought a face-to-face encounter with Jesus. With a concrete gesture and relieved his suffering. She wipes Jesus' face with a cloth: How sweet! What kindness!

Reflexion

Prisoners of a virtual reality, we lost the taste and flavour of the truly real”. The pain, uncertainty and fear, and the realization of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence. (FT 33)

Digital media lack the physical gestures, facial expressions, moments of silence, body language and even the smells, the trembling of hands, the blushes and perspiration that speak to us and are a part of human communication. Digital relationships ... do not really build community; instead, they tend to disguise and expand the very individualism that finds expression in xenophobia and in contempt for the vulnerable. Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity. (FT43)

Prayer

O Jesus, Veronica wiped your face with love and compassion. May this same love and compassion make us present to the sick, the isolated, saddened and abandoned, to bring consolation and Hope.



7th Station:

JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” Is 53 : 7

Comment

Human rights are not always respected, and human dignity is often scorned. People are brutalised, maltreated, humiliated, and left helplessly ignored, without having recourse to their fundamental rights. Yet the world remains silent.

Reflexion

It frequently becomes clear that, in practice, human rights are not equal for all. Respect for those rights “is the preliminary condition for a country’s social and economic development. When the dignity of the human person is respected, and his or her rights recognized and guaranteed, creativity and interdependence thrive, and the creativity of the human personality is released through actions that further the common good”... In today’s world, many forms of injustice persist, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by a profit-based economic model that does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings. While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or violated”. What does this tell us about the equality of rights grounded in innate human dignity? (FT 22)

Prayer

O Jesus, so many people, suffer injustices and do not know how to defend themselves. We pray for them to find the necessary legal support through local, national and international organisations.



8th Station:

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

“A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.” Lk 23 : 27-29

Comment

Suffering deadly blows, Jesus meets with women weeping, and his encounter with them is full of human affection. It does not leave anyone indifferent. They experience the suffering and feel the pain since they are made of the same human flesh.

Reflexion

In today’s world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat... Isolation and withdrawal into one’s own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes”. (FT 30)

Prayer

O Jesus, keep this flame of humanity burning within us, this flame of affection and kindness, compassion and empathy for one another.