



Teleza with her daughter Martha,
Malawi

Holy Week Reflections



Faith in Action

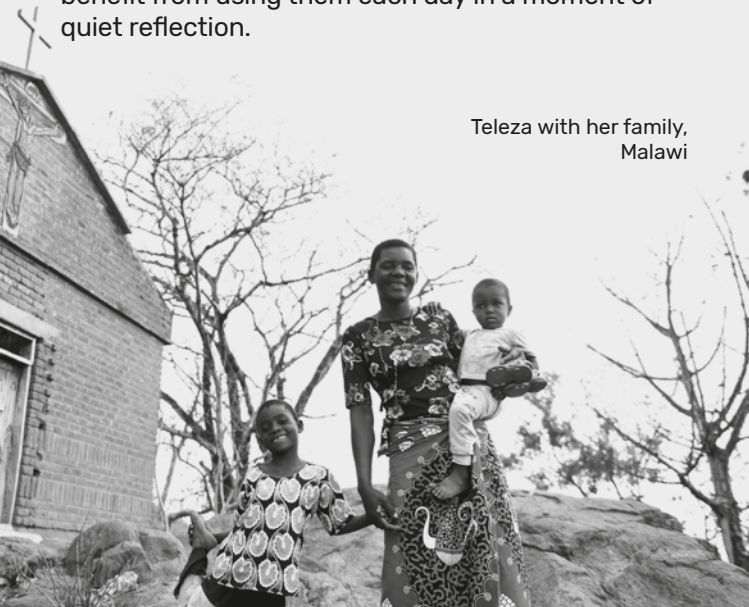
SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland. We are compelled by Christ's love to help people in the world's poorest places to lift themselves out of poverty. Scripture inspires us, and prayer and reflection are integral to our work.

SCIAF's WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE appeal this Lent is focused on our sisters and brothers in Malawi who are hungry and feeling the devastating effects of climate change.

This year, alongside putting money in your WEE BOX, we asked you to get involved in our Acts of Hope challenge as part of your Lenten practice, to stand in solidarity with those living on the front line of the Climate Emergency. Your Acts of Hope might have included changing what you eat, how you travel, or how much you waste during Lent.

The following daily reflections are from the liturgical readings for Holy Week 2022. Our hope is that you benefit from using them each day in a moment of quiet reflection.

Teleza with her family,
Malawi



Monday of Holy Week

Gospel Reading: John 12:1-11

During a dinner given in Jesus' honour, Mary takes the place of a servant and pours expensive perfume on Jesus' feet.

Judas, who later betrays Jesus, protests that the money from selling this expensive perfume could have been given to the poor. A nice thought if it were genuine – but as the keeper of the money bag, Judas wanted that money for himself.

Jesus replied and told Judas to leave Mary alone and that she had done a beautiful thing. Jesus said, "you will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Of course, this does not mean we should ignore the poor and not care for others. Rather, it was a unique time for Mary to honour Jesus before He was crucified for our sins.

Jesus' life was full of encounters with the poor and those looked down on by others. Jesus said in Luke 4:18 that He came to "proclaim Good News to the poor".

Together, as the Catholic Church in Scotland, SCIAF exists to serve and empower people living in poverty. Thank you for your generosity. Your Acts of Hope are building God's Kingdom here on Earth.

**Loving God, help us to proclaim
Good News to the poor, both in words
and by our actions. Amen.**

Tuesday of Holy Week

Gospel Reading: John 13:21–33, 36–38

Have you ever been let down or betrayed by someone close to you? If you have, then Jesus knows how you feel. This reading includes the account of Jesus predicting His betrayal by Judas, and also Peter who denies knowing Jesus.

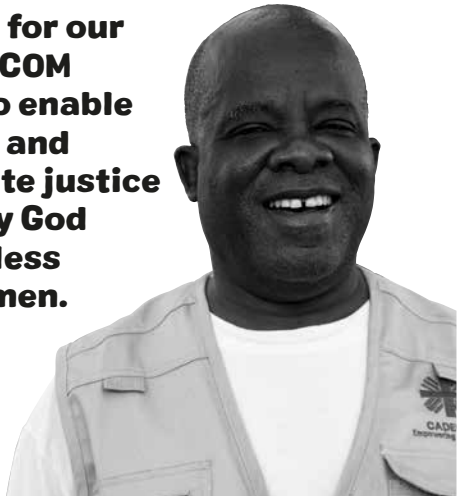
In the disappointment of betrayal, Jesus still speaks of glorification. In His sacrificial death on the Cross, God will be glorified. Through death comes life, and people will be saved because of Jesus' sacrifice.

Many millions of people across the world feel betrayed and let down over broken promises, a misuse of the earth's resources, and other unjust practices. But there is hope. Peter is forgiven and reinstated by Jesus and we can read this in John 21. We, too, can be forgiven and live in such a way that helps people living in poverty: those who have been betrayed.

"No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead." Pope Francis, from *Fratelli Tutti*.

We thank God for our partner CADECOM Mangochi who enable us to respond and provide climate justice in Malawi. May God continue to bless their work. Amen.

Peter Nthenda,
CADECOM Mangochi,
Malawi



Wednesday of Holy Week

Gospel Reading: Matthew 26:14–25

Today's Gospel reading again highlights Jesus' betrayal by Judas, but also talks about the preparations of the Passover meal that the disciples would later share together with Jesus. This Passover meal took place the night before Jesus was crucified and is often referred to as the Last Supper.

When we gather around a table to eat with others, we are normally doing it with people we trust and who we want to be with. Indeed, eating with someone in the culture of Jesus' time was like saying, 'I have nothing against you, therefore you are my friend'. This context makes it even more shocking that Judas was eating with Jesus knowing he would later betray Him for thirty silver coins.

Sharing a meal is a time of community, celebration and thankfulness. Tamala and her family are often hungry:

"If the climate was normal, households would not face hunger; we would not struggle to find food."

Thanks to your support, and the hard work of our partners at the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), we have been able to restore some hope in the face of an uncertain future.

We pray for the people of Malawi who are, today, suffering the devastating impacts of climate change. We pray for those who are hungry, thirsty, without proper shelter, and who are in need of schooling and healthcare. Amen.

Holy Thursday

Gospel Reading: John 13:1-15

What an attitude of service Jesus has! Taking one of a servant's lowliest tasks, Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and began to wash the disciples' feet. Why? Even Peter couldn't understand why Jesus, of all people, would do such a menial task.

This was a deliberate act to teach a lesson in humility and servanthood. If Jesus, the Son of God, would do such a thing then all the disciples present – as well as all of us today – must follow Christ's example and serve others. Serving others is a sacrifice. We may give up our time to volunteer; we might give a share of our money to help others. But Jesus gave his life!

Giving your time and talents to SCIAF means that we are able to visit hundreds of schools every year, provide resources for teachers and Children's Liturgists, run fundraising activities, lead prayer and reflection events in Parishes, lobby politicians and more. Because of your support, service and encouragement, we are able to help our sisters and brothers around the world. Thank you.

"I have a message: a message of gratitude to SCIAF. We appreciate what you have done for us – we know it is love." Malita from Malawi.

Loving Father, help us to follow the example of your Son Jesus and to serve others with the gifts that you have given us. Amen.

Good Friday

Gospel Reading: John 18:1-19:42

When you read the Scripture detailed here, it is difficult to see the 'good' in 'Good Friday'. Betrayal, arrest, an unfair trial, beatings, humiliation and a painful death – of course, none of that is 'good', but we stand this side of the crucifixion and know of the power of God to raise Jesus back to life. We also know that without the sacrifice of Jesus, we are unforgiven and remain separated from God.

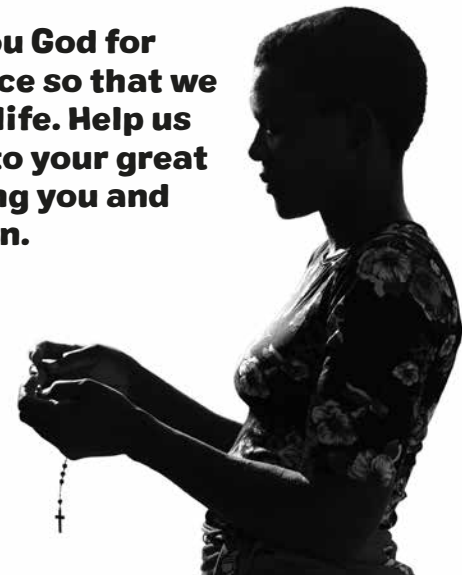
Romans 5:8 says, 'But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.'

It is 'good' because Jesus' death brings us life! We have a hope that is not found in our own strength, but in God's.

"I do believe that one day God will change my situation. That is the reason I come to pray at this church and why I continue to pray. I do believe that God can change the situation, so that the future of my children can be better than what I have faced in my life." Teleza, Malawi.

We thank you God for your sacrifice so that we might have life. Help us to respond to your great love by loving you and others. Amen.

Teleza, Malawi



Holy Saturday

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:1-12

Early in the morning, some of the women took prepared spices to the tomb. However, when they arrived at the tomb, the stone was rolled away and Jesus' body was not inside. While they considered what had happened, angels appeared and said, "why are you looking for the living among the dead?" The women are then reminded that Jesus said he would be crucified, but on the third day He would rise again.

The women then leave the tomb and share the news with the Apostles, but they do not believe them. Peter ran to the tomb to see it empty for himself and was left wondering what had happened.

Sometimes we struggle to believe things that are difficult for our brains to comprehend. Dead people don't come back to life on Earth, so we can forgive the Apostles for their disbelief even though Jesus said he would be raised back to life.

Difficult circumstances can challenge our faith. But, together, we are determined at SCIAF to nourish the hungry and build God's Kingdom here on Earth, allowing others to thrive. How will you Act in Hope this Lent?

Help us Lord to trust in you, in both good and bad times. When we are challenged in our faith, help us to remain strong, to remember that we are loved, and that you conquered death through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.