

Stations of the Cross Lent 2023

 **SCIAF**
Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland

Written by Fr. Stephen Reilly



Catherine,
Zambia

**WEE
BOX**
Big change



Ruth,
Zambia

To those leading the stations

The Stations of the Cross have long been a feature of the Church's devotional life, especially during the season of Lent. When used in a parish setting, these Stations may be a preparation for daily Mass or may follow immediately afterwards.

Fr. Stephen Reilly, Co-ordinator of Spiritual and Pastoral Formation at the University of Glasgow, writes this year's Stations. We are incredibly grateful to Fr. Stephen for the time and continued dedication he shows to SCIAF.

There is a PowerPoint of images from SCIAF's work in Zambia, to accompany this year's Stations on our website sciaf.org.uk/resources. If you would like more of these booklets or would like a representative from SCIAF to lead the Stations in your parish, please get in touch with us at getinvolved@sciaf.org.uk

**WEE
BOX**

Big change

Opening reflection

Pope Francis reminds us of where we can meet Christ today: "In each of these 'little ones' Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us." (Misericordiae Vultus 15, Pope Francis)

Elsewhere he says, "In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by helping and loving the poor, we love and serve Christ." (Lenten message 2014, Pope Francis)

On the way to Calvary, Jesus was the poorest of the poor. The one who touched others to heal them needed a tender touch, a caring hand. However, it was his very vulnerability which drew people to show him compassion: Mary's tender look, Veronica's gesture of love, Simon's helping hand, Joseph's gift of a tomb. When we stretch out our hand in friendship we discover community, our humanity grows, and we bear witness to human dignity, including our own.

We pray also for the people of Zambia, the focus of this year's SCIAF WEE BOX appeal. May their renowned commitment to peace, democracy and stability bring blessings and prosperity to all of God's Zambian children.

Opening prayer

**God our Father,
your Son encountered love and
human kindness
in the midst of the darkness of his
passion.
Grant us the courage and
perception to extend gestures of
tenderness
to those who long for them,
and let us encounter your love and
mercy
in our hour of need.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**



Gertrude
and Gift,
Zambia

First Station Jesus is condemned to death

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

*"Pilate wrote out a notice and had it
fixed to the cross: it ran: 'Jesus the
Nazarene, King of the Jews:'"
(John 19:19)*

Even at his birth, Jesus seemed
destined for this trial: hunted by
Herod, threatened with death, forced
into exile. Now he is finally in the
hands of pitiless authority. Yet Pilate's
death sentence opens the path to
our salvation. And atop his cross will
be emblazoned the name given by
the angel at his conception: Jesus, a
name which means 'God saves'.

Lord Jesus, may no child experience
the threat of violence, hunger or war.
May their rights be upheld, and their
dignity promoted by those in authority.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all
things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Second Station Jesus accepts his cross

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

*"And when they had mocked him,
the soldiers took off the purple robe
and put his own clothes on him.
Then they led him out to crucify him."
(Mark 15:20)*

For these soldiers this was just
another day, another job, either to
be carried out with resignation, or
enjoyed with the cruelty of those
whose hearts have been hardened
with cynicism. Jesus accepts their
mockery and roughness, swallowing
up the weariness and anger in an
ocean of love.

Lord Jesus, help us to find patience
and understanding even for those who
are hardest to like. Let us remember
that everyone is some mother's son
or daughter, and all are the children of
God.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all
things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Third Station Jesus falls the first time

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

*"The Lord God shaped man from the
soil of the ground, and blew the breath
of life into his nostrils." (Genesis 2:7)*

Man was made from the dust of the
earth (Adama) and bears its name
(Adam). To this earth Jesus returns in
his first fall, embracing it reluctantly,
its dust and dirt. Yet he will not return
to the dust from which he was made,
experiencing the corruption of the
tomb. Rather he will be raised to life
and will raise us up on the last day to
share his glory.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all who work
on the land and the seas, labouring
for our daily bread. May we always be
grateful for those whose sweat and
toil allow us to enjoy the fruits of the
earth.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all
things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Fourth Station Jesus meets his mother

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

*"I was like someone who lifts an infant too close against his cheek, stooping down to him I gave him his food."
(Hosea 11:4)*

To see a mother with her baby is to see a study in attentiveness and patience. Time seems to slow down: to hurry would only bring frustration. In this meeting of mother and son – Mary and Jesus – a few intense moments snatched in the midst of chaos sum up their inseparable love, and seem to be a snapshot of eternity itself.

Lord Jesus, you made us for eternity. May we be fully present to those golden moments of love, romance or friendship, when we seem to touch eternity in our very midst.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Fifth Station Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

"They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross." (Mark 15:21)

Simon was from Cyrene, a town in North Africa. We know his sons became Christian, and so we can see in Simon the first African disciple, destined to be followed by a countless procession of others, from St Monica and St Augustine to the martyrs of Uganda, from the deserts of the Sahel to the great cities of Lagos, Kinshasa, and Lusaka. Praise God for such a gift!

Lord Jesus, we bless you for the gift of the young churches of Africa, the green shoots of joy which are now blooming at the very heart of the Church.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Sixth Station Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

"She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." (Luke 2:7)

Jesus' birth and death see him wrapped tenderly in cloth: to be laid in the manger and to be laid in the tomb. Veronica gently wraps his face here, to cover his shame for an instant and to provide some comfort in the midst of sorrow.

Lord Jesus, you revealed that we will be judged on whether we have clothed the naked, and responded to others in their need. Give all Christians warm hearts, which will make us the heirs to Veronica's kindness today.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Seventh Station Jesus falls the second time

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

**Because by your holy cross you
have redeemed the world.**

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now." (Romans 8:22)

In the Book of Genesis, the second consequence of The Fall caused by sin was the pain experienced in childbirth, which St Paul compared to the groaning of a creation awaiting rebirth. As Jesus prepares to die for that fallen world, he groans under the weight of the cross, but his Resurrection will open new life to all.

Lord Jesus, grant health and strength to all expectant mothers as their time arrives to bring a child into the world. May we always welcome new life as a gift, and defend the right to life of all God's children.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for
having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself
from you again.
Grant that I may love you always,
and then do with me what you will.**

Eighth Station **Jesus meets the** **women of Jerusalem**

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.'" (Luke 23: 27-28)

"Weep for your children," Jesus tells the women – and indeed many a mother, in every age, has shed tears for their child. The tears and prayers of St Monica brought her son Augustine to faith. This should be no surprise: God sees every tear that falls to the ground, and none is wasted.

Lord Jesus, the psalmist wrote of God, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle" (Psalm 56:8). Gather up the tears of those who weep, that they may one day bathe in an eternal ocean of healing.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Ninth Station **Jesus falls the** **third time**

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)

The final consequence of The Fall caused by sin, Genesis tells us, was the loss of the garden of paradise. Jesus, crucified with the dust of the earth on his hands, will make the garden bloom once more, as he throws wide the gates of paradise to welcome redeemed humanity.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all gardeners, farmers and conservationists who protect and nourish the fruitfulness of the earth. May they prepare the way for the new heavens and new earth which God has promised.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Tenth Station **Jesus is stripped** **of his clothing**

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these." (Matthew 6:29)

Do not worry about your life, Jesus had said. God clothes the flowers of the field with beauty greater than Solomon in his royal garments, how much more beautiful is the clothing he has given you? Here Jesus, stripped in humiliation, is clothed in the shining robes of the Word made flesh.

Lord Jesus, we know that these weak mortal bodies of ours are God's gift to us, made to shine with your risen glory when we rise again. Help us to treat our bodies, and those of others, with the dignity befitting the children of God.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Eleventh Station **Jesus is crucified**

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"The Son of man must be lifted up." (John 3:14)

One of the most emotional moments of our church year is the veneration of the cross on Good Friday. The sight of young and old, even babies, coming to tenderly kiss the bare cross or the feet of the figure of Jesus, is profoundly moving. We join a procession of tenderness for the crucified Lord which began with Mary, Simon and Veronica, and which will continue to the end of the world.

Lord Jesus, you said that if we showed compassion to the littlest of your brothers and sisters we showed it to you. Give us the grace to allow the tenderness of our Good Friday devotion to flow outwards into our daily actions and attitudes.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Twelfth Station Jesus dies on the cross

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water." (John 19:34)

The Fathers of the Church have gifted us many mystical interpretations of the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus: Baptism and Eucharist, humanity and divinity, death and life. As we mourn the death of Jesus, we ponder quietly the wonder of this sign and its meaning.

Lord Jesus, we pray for the people of Zambia. May the mighty Zambezi River, from which the country takes its name, wash away hurts and sorrows, and irrigate a bright and abundant future.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Thirteenth Station Jesus is taken down from the cross

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last." (Mark 15:36)

Anyone who has emptied the house of a loved one who has died knows the pain of this sacred duty. Familiar, beloved pictures and books are taken down from walls and shelves, and placed tenderly in boxes, as memories crowd in. Here, the Lord's precious body is taken down lovingly from the cross by his family, to find its resting place in the tomb.

Lord Jesus, help us to remember that pain is often the price of true love. Comfort all who have lost a loved one and mourn their absence.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Fourteenth Station Jesus is laid in the tomb

Leader:

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you.

All: (genuflecting)

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

"Your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be tenderly carried." (Isaiah 60: 4)

Jesus is borne to his grave by those who love him most: his mother and closest disciples. We see this mirrored in the mourners who carry a coffin into a church or to the deceased's final resting place. May the angels truly lead them to paradise, and may they have eternal rest.

Lord Jesus, bless all who show tenderness to those who have died: hospital staff, undertakers, council staff and loved ones. May their respect and professionalism be a powerful witness to the dignity of the human body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

All:

**I love you Jesus, my love above all things;
I repent with my whole heart for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.**

Concluding Prayer

Almighty Father,
When Jesus was laid in the rock-cut tomb at sunset,
a seed was placed deep in the heart of the earth,
ready to sprout and burst forth as the Easter sun dawned.
Tend the quiet but insistent seeds of trust which you have placed in us.
May we be the Easter heralds of your Kingdom which will never end.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For the intentions of our Holy Father Pope Francis:

**Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be**



Ruth,
Zambia

**I love you Jesus, my love
above all things;
I repent with my whole heart
for having offended you.
Never permit me to separate
myself from you again.
Grant that I may love you
always, and then do with me
what you will.**

**WEE
BOX**

Big change



Children in Zambia

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 7 West Nile Street, Glasgow, G1 2PR Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photos by Colin Hattersley and James Cave (SCIAF).

