

12



Jesus **dies on the cross**

Today in more than 100 countries voices are crying out in pain from acts of torture. Unspeakable forms of violence continue to be used as a means to attain information or confessions of guilt.

Lord, remind the victims of torture that you are there with them, sharing their pain. For people who suffer and die with you, may they find relief in your everlasting mercy. May our compassion for victims of calculated violence help us to denounce these crimes against humanity.

13 Jesus is **taken down from the cross**

Many of our sisters and brothers have grieved with others during the burial of close friends who were killed as martyrs for speaking the truth in the face of injustice.

Lord, so many people are standing by graves today, feeling hopeless and fearful, wondering how to rebuild a life in your love. Let us show them your saving grace and renew their convictions that their loved ones are free from pain and fear.



14



Resurrection

Franciscan communities run schools, hospitals, counselling centers, shelters, and specialise in many other services that aid the poor. Their dedication in the spirit of Francis and Clare renews our belief and hope-filled participation in Jesus' resurrection!

Lord, we pray for all of the Christian communities that celebrate your passion, death, and resurrection. Help us to become an active sign of the new life you are bringing into our world. Jesus, thank you for leading us from the darkness and into the light.

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The Way of the CROSS

a reflection on Christ's
DEATH &
RESURRECTION



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Franciscans around the world live and work in poverty among those whose human rights are often violated. In the spirit of saints Francis and Clare, we work to change social structures that perpetuate injustice. In this struggle, we experience the Way of the Cross today.

1



Jesus is **condemned to death**

Currently, 69 countries continue to retain the death penalty. As Christians, we are taught to believe that all life is sacred. Who are we to bestow judgments upon another human life?

Lord, as we recall our Savior's own execution, we pray for your forgiveness. Let our communities serve the Gospel of life which consistently promotes and celebrates human dignity.

2

Jesus **takes up the cross**

There are billions of people throughout the world who suffer from extreme poverty; a cycle that perpetuates itself from one generation to the next. Daily, they experience hunger, dependency, ridicule, lack of housing, poor sanitation, and exploitation.

Lord, we pray for the victims burdened with the cross of extreme poverty. Show us effective ways in which we can share our resources with our sisters and brothers.



3



Jesus **falls for the first time**

We live in a world where honor-killings, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, stoning, forced sterilisation, dowry-deaths, and trafficking of women are everyday occurrences. Violence against women is casually accepted in many societies. This 'custom' must end.

Lord, our societies often 'fall' into a cycle of accepted discrimination. Help us to move people from silence in the face of such violence.

4



Jesus meets his mother

Devastating and crushing events continue to assault family life. Each year, hundreds of thousands of families are torn apart by illegal trafficking. Often, these trafficked persons are sexually, physically, mentally, and economically exploited. They are the slaves of the 21st century.

Lord, you looked into the eyes of your mother and knew the anguish in her heart. May her love for you reach out through us to all families with broken hearts, who are fearful for the safety of their children.

5

Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

Like Simon, many Franciscans work selflessly for those in need, be it with the poor, the sick, the elderly or directly battling the structures that cause suffering.

Lord, bless all of our Franciscan sisters and brothers who live and work with those less fortunate.



6



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

According to UNAIDS, 40 million people are HIV positive worldwide. Every day 8,000 people die from AIDS-related illnesses, leaving millions of children orphaned.

Lord, thank you for our compassionate sisters and brothers who work tirelessly to create supportive communities for HIV and AIDS patients. Let us all work to increase discussion within church communities on the issues of stigma and discrimination.

7

Jesus falls for a second time

The 20th Century has witnessed the great atrocities of the Nazi Holocaust, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. Tens of millions of people have perished at the hands of those who were determined to destroy a national, ethnic or religious group.

Lord, open the eyes and change the hearts of those who are bent on cleansing society through force, violence and blind hatred. May we find peaceful ways to address our differences while growing as communities that have acceptance and respect for each other.



8



Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem

For the past four decades, the people of Togo in West Africa have been living in a state of profound crisis. Peace is often lost within a chronic state of material and psychological poverty. There is an ongoing unrest due to the desperate political situation. The plight of the Togolese, among many others, is often unheard by the majority of the world.

Lord, you told the women not to weep for you, but for the people of the world. Let us console our sisters and brothers by taking every opportunity to speak out against unjust governments. Let our voices be heard.

9

Jesus falls for the third time

In a globalizing world, many international and transnational corporations continue to expand within developing countries, often adversely affecting their economies and the environment. With the destruction of forests, tainting of water supplies and air pollution, corporations directly endanger the lives of people living in these areas.

Lord, we pray for those whose decisions affect the global economy and environment. Help them to make choices that encourage sustainable development.



10



Jesus is stripped of his clothing

Extreme poverty and war forces people to migrate. Often this vulnerable population of migrants and refugees is received with discrimination and stripped of their basic human rights and dignity.

Lord, let us open our minds and hearts to those who are different from us. Give us the courage and wisdom to stand up for migrants, displaced persons and the homeless until we all live in freedom with equal rights.

11

Jesus is nailed to the cross

Today in various countries Franciscan sisters and brothers are caught in the middle of intense religious and ethnic struggles. Surrounded by armed groups, they work to create dialogue in the face of terror.

Lord, we can only begin to imagine the pains of your people who are nailed to the cross by terrorism. Help us as your followers to work towards a peaceful co-existence between sworn enemies by developing an active non-violent culture of understanding and acceptance.

