



**Stations of the Cross**  
and prayers for Lent 2010

**SCI AF**  
Scotland's aid agency

**“Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer”.**

*Caritas in Veritate, Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 para 79*

The Stations of the Cross in this booklet were written by three priests from Scotland – Fr John Eagers, Fr William McFadden, and Fr Joseph Sullivan. They travelled to Ethiopia in September 2007 to visit projects supported by SCIAF, and to celebrate the millennium with the church in Ethiopia, which was observed in 2007 according to the ancient Coptic calendar.

The Stations of the Cross are designed to help us reflect on the Passion of Jesus Christ in our lives. They may also help us reflect more deeply on how poverty and suffering in developing countries challenge us to respond to our faith in the Cross.

They can be used in different ways. We can use them as we walk round the stations in church, allowing the people of Ethiopia to help us reflect on the Way of the Cross. We could use them with images from developing countries, to help us reflect on their situation in the light of the Cross, and how this challenges us to respond.

Powerpoint images to accompany the Stations, as well as an mp3 file of the Stations of the Cross with music from The St Mungo Singers, can be downloaded from SCIAF’s website at [www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)

Please feel free to copy these prayers or contact SCIAF for more copies of this booklet on 0141 354 5555. All resources, including a children’s liturgy for the fourth Sunday of Lent, can be downloaded from SCIAF’s website.

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Photos: Thomas Omondi

# Stations of the Cross

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# Stations of the Cross

## Introduction and opening prayer

In 2007 the people of Ethiopia celebrated their millennium, a time of promise and hope. Today they face hunger and drought. They are a people, who, from the earliest centuries, have celebrated the birth of Jesus, God made man; and in their history and their lives they have also experienced his passion and death.

As we walk with you, Lord, through your passion to your death, help us to walk compassionately with the people in our world, who, because of poverty, oppression and disease, constantly experience their own passion.

## 1st Station

### Jesus is condemned.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

The Ethiopian drum is often used for musical accompaniment by Catholics and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians at Mass. The drum is very large at one end, and small at the other. The difference represents the fact that Jesus was both God and man. The large end points to the God who is all-powerful, all-knowing and eternal; the small end reveals the one who took on the smallness of being human. As we recall that Jesus was condemned to death, we are reminded that the judge of the world allows himself to be judged, and judged unjustly.

### *Let us pray*

Lord Jesus, we are privileged to accompany you on your journey. It begins with a judgement, a word that mocks your authority. Help us to have the same mind as you when we seek to help others. Let us humiliate no one.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 2nd Station

### Jesus receives his cross.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

Serena is a widow living in the outskirts of Addis Ababa. She has five children; the youngest is five years old. She herself is thirty-five, but looks fifty-five. Each morning, along with many other women, she walks for miles to gather firewood. When her load is full, she walks many miles back to Addis Ababa, with her back straining under the weight of the wood. Then she sells the firewood for the pittance that will feed her family for the day. For her, there seems to be no hope, no escape from her daily toil.

### *Let us pray*

Loving Jesus, you accepted your cross upon your back. For you there was no escape, but for us your cross has become our sign of hope. Give us the courage to accept the cross that you ask us to carry, and the faith to believe that you will walk beside us.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

### 3rd Station

#### Jesus falls the first time.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

#### Reader:

In Gighessa, in southern Ethiopia, 600 young people came together to take part in a youth choir festival. Through their singing, prayer, and companionship, they recognised not only the presence of Jesus who walked with them, but also the presence of Jesus who was crucified for them. In acknowledging that Jesus suffered for their sins, they asked with one voice to be reconciled to Jesus through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so that just as they had fallen at different moments in their lives, they might rise and walk with him.

#### *Let us pray*

Loving Jesus, just as you fell to the ground under the weight of your cross, and rose to your feet to continue your journey, give each of us the grace to rise again each time we fall under the weight of our sins, so that we may continue our own journey through life with you.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

### 4th Station

#### Jesus meets his mother Mary.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

#### Reader:

In every Ethiopian Catholic Church, immediately behind the altar, there is an icon of the virgin and child. This image of Mary holding the Christ child in her arms is used to portray the truth that Mary always points us towards her son. In each icon, she is leading us to Jesus' presence on the altar, where we encounter him in the form of bread and wine. Mary, in leading us to her son, gently points us to his real presence, and so invites us to believe in him as God's son, fully human and fully divine.

#### *Let us pray*

Father, may we allow Mary, our Mother, to lead us to her son, and so encounter him as true God and true man.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 5th Station

### Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

#### **Reader:**

Nine years ago Tisget's father died. She is the eldest of seven children. At the time of her father's death, the youngest was only a few months old. Tisget considers herself to be fortunate. The missionaries help her train as a teacher. Now she works every evening as well as every day to help her mother, and pay for the education of her brothers and sisters. It is the African way.

#### ***Let us pray***

Lord Jesus, when the weight of your cross became too heavy to bear, Simon came to your assistance. Give us the compassion to help our brothers and sisters when their burdens become too heavy to carry alone.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 6th Station

### Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

#### **Reader:**

During the days of the communist regime in Ethiopia, a Catholic priest in Tigray was arrested, stripped naked, tied up and left to endure the heat of the sun for six days. During that time, the sun's power was so strong that it burnt his eyelids, blinding him. The authorities warned anyone that if they tried to help him, they would suffer the same treatment. No-one dared, except that each night, as the soldiers slept, a prostitute came and fed the priest bread and water.

#### ***Let us pray***

Father, Veronica reached out to the suffering Jesus with love and compassion. May we too reach out bravely to all who suffer in any way, and have the courage of our commitment to show love to all our sisters and brothers in their need.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 7th Station

### Jesus falls the second time.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

Saint Jared felt called to become a monk at a famous monastery in Ethiopia. When he first entered the monastic life, he struggled to learn, and eventually gave up and went back home. On his way home he stopped to rest beside a tree, and sheltered under its branches. As he was relaxing, he noticed a worm crawling slowly up the bark of the tree. It fell down after a few inches and had to begin again. The worm kept on trying and eventually, after the seventh try, made it onto the branches. St Jared took the worm for his example and returned to the monastery. He persevered and went on to produce some of the most famous musical tones, which are sung at the Ethiopian Orthodox Mass today.

### *Let us pray*

Lord we do not know why we fail in so many ways. Teach us by your second fall to persevere in good intentions. May we not be discouraged when trials come our way. Make our whole lives be lived in faithfulness to you, and may our singing give you worthy praise.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 8th Station

### The women of Jerusalem mourn for Jesus.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

There are many links between the Old Testament and the Christian faith in Ethiopia. One of these is found in the harp or the lyre, which is used at the Ethiopian Orthodox Mass. Many trace the roots of this harp to King David playing and singing the psalms. The harp has ten strings, which tell of the Ten Commandments, given to Moses. The Ethiopians also see the teaching of Christ present in the structure of the harp. It has two arms, which hold the strings in place; these are the two greatest commandments, to love God and our neighbour. At this Station we recall great sympathy for the sufferings of Christ shown by the women of Jerusalem. Jesus in turn showed his concern for their welfare.

### *Let us pray*

Lord, may we learn what made you cry, and imitate your compassion. May we keep our love of God and love of neighbour united in all that we do.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 9th Station

**Jesus falls the third time.**

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

**Reader:**

When we celebrate the birth of Jesus over two thousand years ago, we reflect that the Son of God willingly became man. As we walk the way of the cross with him, we reflect that his birth leads to his passion and death. As Jesus walked slowly under the burden of his cross, exhausted and humiliated, he fell not once but three times. Many people living under the burden of poverty continually fall to the ground, weakened by hunger and disease. For them death is a reality they live with each day.

***Let us pray***

Lord, as we fall, so may we rise; as we close a day, so may we rise in hope; and as we close a year may we be grateful for God's many blessings, even as we look forward to the joy which lies in the future.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 10th Station

**Jesus is stripped of his garments.**

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

**Reader:**

Tsehaye is eight years old. She is an orphan living in the Rift Valley of Ethiopia. AIDS has stripped her of both her parents. In her suffering and emotional nakedness she has found hope in the orphanage in which she now lives, and among the religious sisters who care for her. In Ethiopia, as in so many African countries, AIDS is a merciless killer. It takes away the lives of millions of people; the parents of children and the children of so many parents.

***Let us pray***

Lord Jesus, as you were stripped of your garments, there was no compassion shown to you, but only greed among those who shared out your clothes. Give us the grace to be moved to compassion for those who, through AIDS, have lost parents and children, and to recognise your presence in their suffering.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 11th Station

### Jesus is nailed to the cross.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

Abba Tesfaye has been a priest for many years. During these years he has cared for the sick, anointed the dying and presided at many funerals. Yet in a country where AIDS affects every region, every stratum of society, and almost every family, few openly acknowledge the disease which affects their lives, and brings death to those they love. AIDS is a disease that brings with it shame, and with the shame, denial.

### *Let us pray*

Lord, you were nailed to the cross to die the most ignominious of deaths, reserved only for the criminal. Be with those today who are dying of AIDS, and comfort their families.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 12th Station

### Jesus dies on the cross.

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

### Reader:

Jesus dies his own death. In the history of humanity, it is one death among many. Each day people die, many as a consequence of war, famine, poverty, disease and cruelty. The death of Jesus is unique, for his death brings hope and promise that life will not end in death. It is because of his death that, whatever the circumstances in which people face death, they will be able to imitate, with trust and hope, his prayer: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

### *Let us pray*

Saving Christ, through your death you have given us the hope that our lives will not end in death, but that we may come to share in a life of peace, light and life in your presence. When the moment comes for us to experience death, give us the faith to utter your prayer, "Father into your hands I commend my spirit."

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 13th Station

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

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

**Reader:**

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church honours its dead by holding funeral processions through the streets prior to burial. Each procession is led by the priests, who follow on immediately behind the coffin. After the priests come the men; and then, bringing up the rear, the women and children. It is a solemn silent group, who invite those they pass to stop what they are doing and join them in a period of silent respect. The sight of often hundreds of people, pausing in silent prayer for the dead, and for those afflicted in mourning, is a powerful sign of solidarity and faith.

***Let us pray***

Father, may we always show respect and reverence for the dead. As Jesus was lovingly taken from the cross, may we always treat both the living and the dead as signs of your presence and as vessels of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave us  
life; you are the Saviour of  
the world.

## 14th Station

**Jesus is laid in the tomb.**

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

**Reader:**

Among the architectural wonders of Ethiopia are the magnificent rock churches, hewn out of the mountains and created to give glory and praise to God. Over many centuries, these rock churches have allowed people to enter more deeply into God's creation, and to be places of peace, tranquillity and worship. They are filled with images and icons of faith, and they remain for Christians today symbols of religious conviction, assurance and hope.

***Let us pray***

Father, may we continue to give you praise and glory. As Jesus was laid in the tomb, may we see in the wonder of your creation the signs and reality of your presence.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the Saviour  
of the world.

## 15th Station

**Jesus is raised from the dead.**

**Leader:** We praise you, O Christ,  
and we bless you.

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

**Reader:**

The Ethiopian border town of Zelanbesa suffered terrible destruction during the war with Eritrea in the late 1990s. The Catholic church in the town was attacked and demolished, with all its contents completely destroyed. Yet, only six years later, a new church was opened and the people once again had a focus for their prayer and worship. The modern building is a sign of new life and hope for a community still struggling to rebuild itself from an experience of utter devastation.

*Let us pray*

Father, out of death comes life; out of destruction, new hope; and out of chaos, transformation. May the truth of Jesus rising from the dead empower us to believe that death has definitively been destroyed, and that eternal life awaits all those who hope.

**All:** Suffering for us, you set  
us free, rising you gave  
us life; you are the saviour  
of the world.

## Closing Prayer

Loving Jesus, as we prayed these stations, we have been reminded of your suffering and passion as you journeyed to your death. We have been reminded of the suffering and passion of the many millions of people who constantly experience poverty, disease and oppression in their lives.

Your cross has become for many the symbol of hope and compassion. Your resurrection brings the promise of a new and eternal life.

Help us in our compassion to be a sign of the hope and promise of life that you have offered to all people.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

**Amen**





# **Prayers and reflections for Lent**

## **From the Church's social teaching**

The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men and women of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties, of the followers of Christ.

*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965, opening paragraph*

The obligation to place the poor and marginalised at the centre of our lives is central to our Christian vocation from baptism. Jesus, in the Gospels, is devastatingly clear about our duty: "In so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me". [Matthew 25:45]

*From the pastoral letter of the Bishops of Scotland on the 40th anniversary of the founding of SCIAF, Lent 2005*

The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity... This is the institutional path – we might also call it the political path – of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly...

*Caritas in Veritate, Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 para 7*

Feed the hungry is an ethical imperative for the universal church, as she responds to the teaching of her Founder, the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods...

Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional. What is missing, in other words, is a network of economic institutions capable of guaranteeing regular access to sufficient food and water for nutritional needs...

The problem of food insecurity needs to be addressed within a long term perspective, eliminating the structural causes that give rise to it and promoting the agricultural development of poorer countries. This can be done by investing in rural infrastructures, irrigation systems, transport, organisation of markets, and in the development and dissemination of agricultural technology ...

It is ... necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings...

*Caritas in Veritate, Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 para 27*

On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself – God's gift to his children – and through hard work and creativity.

*Caritas in Veritate, Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 para 50*

## **Fasting**

This is the sort of fast that pleases me... to break the unjust fetters and undo the thongs of the yoke... [Isaiah 58:6]

Lent is a time of fasting. Fasting from food is undertaken to change our hearts. If we remain silent and so collude in the unjust fetters imposed on others, then “Fasting like yours...will never make your voice heard on high.”

*From: Show me your face – daily readings and reflections for Lent, Gerard W Hughes, Pax Christi and SCIAF, 2009*

## **Our daily bread**

Generous, loving God, we ask you  
to give us today our daily bread.  
Creator of the world we share,  
give us today our daily bread.  
As we store the crops  
and fill the barns;  
stack the shelves,  
pile high the tins;  
and wander the aisles  
of supermarket choice.  
Show us how to see the world  
through the eyes of the hungry.  
Teach us how to share with all  
our daily bread.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
who taught us how to pray.

*Linda Jones, CAFOD*

## **Hunger**

Living God,  
our strength and help,  
we turn to you in our distress.  
May the spirit of compassion  
comfort and protect your people.

In the parched lands and failed  
harvests  
we see you hungry.  
May the shadow of that hunger  
be broken by the light of your hope.

In our hearts we hold a vision  
of a better world.  
May we, by our actions,  
bear witness to your love.

*Linda Jones, CAFOD*

## Prayers of the faithful for the Sundays in Lent

We pray for those who are hungry today and cannot feed their children.

May we show our love for them by sharing our Lenten fasting and almsgiving through SCIAF.

*Lord, hear us*

We pray for the church.

May the church, through its teaching, continue to call us to work for a world where the hungry are fed and their right to food is secured.

*Lord, hear us*

We pray for those who have been driven from their homes by war and poverty.

May our hearts be open to them, and to the stranger in our midst.

*Lord, hear us*

We pray for the work of SCIAF in feeding the hungry, and campaigning to end the causes of hunger.

May we be generous in our giving, and in our support for SCIAF's campaigns.

*Lord, hear us*

We pray for world leaders.

May they put the rights of the poor at the heart of their policies.

*Lord, hear us*

We pray for ourselves

May our hearts be open to the needs of our sisters and brothers and may we always remember that what we do to them, we do to you.

*Lord, hear us*





[www.sciaf.org.uk](http://www.sciaf.org.uk)

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