

Stations of the Cross/Care of Creation
Sacred Heart- Oakland CA, USA, March 2021
(some text adapted for parish use)

We gather in the mystery and depth of the cross, the intersection of life and love, of pain and perseverance, of injustice and determination, of tenderness and solidarity, of Ongoing Care and Co-Creation. (+)

1. Station: Jesus is unjustly condemned by Pilate and those with Power.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: Again, the high priest began to ask him, and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" And Jesus said to him, "I AM". And you shall see the Son of Man Sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of Heaven." But the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we to witnesses "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" And they all condemned him as liable to death. (Mk 14:61-64

Prayer: Jesus does not turn a blind eye or close his heart to the plight of poor, rather he reaches out even though many will not understand, and it will bring upon him condemnation by those in Power, the oppressive government and the distant religious elite. His first sermon text guided him to this moment: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19) (OMI, CM, message)

2. Jesus picks up his cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: And Pilate said to the crowd, “Behold your king!” But they cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priest answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away, bearing the cross for himself. (Jn 19:14-17)

Prayer: “We live in a world today that is characterized by rapid changes, both positive and negative. While there are exciting possibilities in our reality today, there are also many destructive elements.” (OMI, CM, intro.) Do we turn from them and say, “not my problem” or do we accept the reality that we are ONE body in Christ? Pope Francis says “We cannot be indifferent to suffering; we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast. Instead, we should feel indignant, challenged to emerge from our comfortable isolation and to be changed by our contact with human suffering. That is the meaning of dignity. (FT # 68)

3. Jesus falls for the first time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: If the institutions of world hate you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were part of the institutions of the world, they would love what is its own. Because you are not of the institution, but I have chosen you out of that chaos, therefore to they hate you. Remember the word that I have spoken to you: No servant is greater than their master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also. (Jn 15:18-20)

Prayer: It doesn't take long for Jesus to fall under the weight of the cross for the first time. We hear and we see that “The cry of the poor and the destruction of the environment go hand-in-hand. The present pandemic is but a small sign of the chaos we have wreaked on nature. Future global disasters will multiply if we do not choose to act

effectively and immediately in favor of the gift of God's creation." All Around the World Oblates Are Going Green – OMIUSA Yes we have stumbled and have fallen down, yet "The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it if only we're brave enough to be it. (Amanda Gorman, "The Hill we Climb)

4. Jesus meets his mother

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (Jn 19: 25-27)

Prayer: Mary does not run from this moment, painful as it is. Her maternal spirit is rooted in Love which is of God. "Mary, our Mother and Model, has accompanied us during our whole history. "In the joys and sorrows of our (missionary) life, we feel close to her who is the Mother of Mercy" (C 10). Her simplicity inspires us today to live more simply and to "bear witness to God's holiness and justice" (C 9). She has sustained our Faith, Love and Hope in her Son Jesus. (1Cor. 2:2 & C 4). (OMI, CM, p.31)

5. Simon of Cyrene helps carry his Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: And when they had mocked Jesus, they took the purple cloak off and put his own cloths on him, and they led him out to be crucified. Then they forced a certain passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, to take up his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, a name meaning 'the place of the skull'. (Mk 15:20-22)

Prayer: The weight of the Cross is too heavy for Jesus and so Simon a stranger/a Jew from North Africa is called out of the crowd to carry the cross. How many times have we helped others in their time of need? Today, there looms around us “the threat to the healthy working of the global environment caused by human activity. Climate change, extinction of species, resource depletion, the destruction of natural habitats, and pollution of all kinds, threaten not just the quality of life for all today but also the future of generations to come.” (OMI, CM, p.15) When we become aware of the existing evils in our world, the question comes up: can we remain indifferent? What can be done to change all this? And who should work for change? (OMI, CM, p.18) “Here I am Lord I come to do your will. (Psalm 39)

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: “Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?” and answering the king will say to them, “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for the these, the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it for me. (Mt 25:37-40)

Prayer: This act of tender care reminds us that the small things that we do makes a difference. Mother Theresa of Kolkata says, "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies." And, "Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love."

For “Wherever a more humane world is built up, there God’s Reign is growing; wherever a human being is disfigured, wounded, or crushed, it is God who is disfigured, wounded or crushed. Jesus makes this very clear as he identifies himself with the poor, the suffering and those condemned to death and sitting on death row. And because every

person is an image of God and a sister/brother of Christ, Christian love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely the recognition of the dignity and the rights of one's neighbor. (OMI, CM, p. 27)

7. Jesus falls a second time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: It was our weaknesses that he carried, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the punishment that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following our own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. (Is 53:4-6)

Prayer: Jesus cannot look back, nor can he look forward. He can only see the cobbled stone street below him as his head is bowed down. He is exhausted and falls to the ground/one with the Earth.

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one the environmental and one other the social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded and at the same time protecting nature.” (LSi # 138) If we try to do this alone, we too will fall, yet “As members of (church name), we will opt for teamwork rather than for individual commitments.

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (LSi # 92) (OMI, CM, p.33)

8. Women of Jerusalem

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: There was following Jesus a great crowd of people, and among them were some women who were bewailing and lamenting him. Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Lk 23:27-28)

Prayer: The women who followed Jesus from Galilee did not run away in fear; but stayed with Jesus all along the way even to the foot of the Cross. He saw and felt their pain. He could not change the moment and was simply present to them.

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment...but the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.” (LSi # 160) “We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth.” “The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now. (LSi # 161)

9. Jesus falls for a third time

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life according to your word. I declared my ways, and you answered me; teach me your commands. Make me understand the way of your precept, and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds. My soul weeps for sorrow; strengthen me with your words. (Ps 118: 25-28)

Prayer: Can Jesus continue, or will he die on the streets and simply kicked to the side, thrown away like waste?

The seas sings out its suffering. Knowing too much of waste, screeching sounds and pernicious poisons, its depths bruised..... (Amanda Gorman, “Ode to our ocean”)

“Our sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the good with which God

has endowed her.” “The loss of forest and woodlands entail the loss of species” How much more can she take? Have we forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.” (LSi #2) As mother Earth suffers, so do we with fear, sickness and now a pandemic, let us remember that the very flowers of the fields and the birds which Jesus contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence. (LSi # 100)

10. Jesus stripped of his clothing

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embrace) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: They gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall; but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. Then after they had crucified him, they divided his cloths, casting lots, to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, “They divided my clothes among them, and upon my garments they cast lots.” (Mt 27:34-35)

Prayer: The Roman soldier strip Jesus of the tattered clothing he wore to humiliate him even more. Yet seeing his wounds only reminds us of how he is one with us in our deep reality. Rather than the human body as disgrace, it is full of grace, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139).

As we look upon the wounds of Jesus, the wounds of strip mining-stripping the forest bare and the desecration of land and sea, “We can no longer ignore, for example, the cumulative effect and consequences of emitting so-called ‘greenhouse’ gases into the atmosphere. One aspect of this phenomenon is that those countries with the least resources for adaptation will be most affected. Care of the planet is both an ecological and a justice issue. (OMI, CM, p.15)

11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: When they came to Golgotha, the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus and the robbers, one on his right and other on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk 23:33-34, Jn 19:18)

Prayer:

The nailing to the cross is denying life to be free and grow. There are many ways in which we and society deny life, love, and beauty.

"Patriarch Bartholomew has spoken in particular of the need for each of us to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, for 'inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage,' we are called to acknowledge 'our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation'. He has repeatedly stated this firmly and persuasively, challenging us to acknowledge our sins against creation: 'For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life—these are sins'. For '...to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God". (LSi # 8) (OMI, CM, p.28)

12. Jesus dies on the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the curtain of the temple was torn in the middle, Jesus cried out

with a loud voice and said, "It is finished. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Then, bowing his head, he died. (Lk 23: 44-46, Jn 19: 30b)

Prayer: At the moment of death, we can only watch. Emotions rise and fall, and we can do nothing to change the reality. Yet our presence and love does make a difference and the life of the one who died is forever one with us.

"Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reason related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no long give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right!" (LSi # 33)

13. The lifeless body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead so that they did not break his legs, but one of them opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water. Joseph of Arimathea, cause he was a disciple of Jesus besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave permission. (Jn 19:33-34, 38b)

Prayer: A flood of emotions. Grief, gratitude and disbelief. A cosmic shock reverberates though out the cosmos.

"Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the suffering of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power." (LSi # 241)

14. The Body of Jesus is placed in tomb

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus and wrapping it in a clean linen cloth he laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn out of rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and departed. (Mt 27:59-60)

Prayer: And so, we stand at the tomb, numb and in shock. Life seems at the moment, over. And then we look around at family and friends, we hear the bird chirp and the breeze upon our cheek and “We regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. For when the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of genuine culture and care for the environment. St. Theresa of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace, friendship” and the care of creation. (LSi # 229,230)

15. The Resurrection

We adore you O Christ and we praise you. Because, by your holy cross you have (redeemed/embraced) the (world/Earth).

Scripture: When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might go and anoint Jesus. Very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had just risen, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, “Who will roll the stone back from the entrance of the tomb for us?”, for it was very large. But looking up they saw that the stone had been rolled back, and upon entering the tomb they were amazed to see a young man sitting at the right side and the clothed in a white robe. He

said to them, “Do not be terrified. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.” (Mk 16: 1-6)

Prayer: But all is not lost, he continues: “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home” (LSi # 13). The trust in a God who does not forget his creation but loves it and wants to save it was what prompted St. Eugene (and countless others) to ease the suffering in today’s world and seek to save both, creation, and humanity. (OMI, CM, p30)

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Resources Used

Superior General Fr. Louis Lougen, O.M.I.

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