



# The Way of the Cross



Children and young people in Poland joining the ACN prayer campaign  
'1 Million Children praying the Rosary' in 2021

## Children's Stations of the Cross for the Suffering Church

# Introduction: THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Every day millions of Christians around the world suffer for their faith. Some of them suffer because they are very poor or because they live in very isolated communities. Sometimes they also suffer because, as Christians, they are treated **unfairly** (discrimination) or, worse, they are treated **badly** because of their faith (persecution).

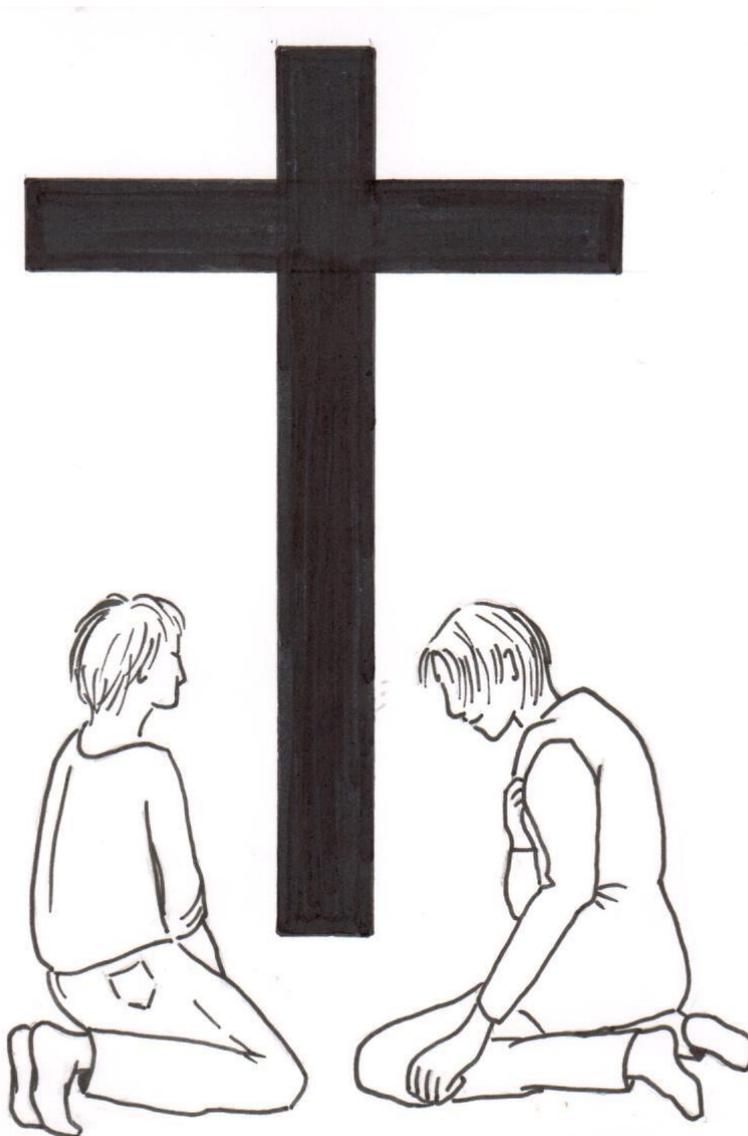
Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is a charity that works in many countries around the world to help Christians who are struggling. In *God Speaks to His Children*, ACN's Child's Bible, there is a passage from St Matthew's Gospel which reads "When I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was without house and home, you made me welcome. When I was naked, you clothed me. When I was sick, you visited me. When I was in prison, you came to see me. Then all those standing on his right will ask: Lord, when did we do all these things? And he will reply: I tell you solemnly, whatever you did to the least of my brethren, you did to me." (*God Speaks to His Children, ACN's Child's Bible, pp 103-104*)

Many of the people who are helped by ACN are in great need of those things mentioned by St Matthew: clothes, housing, food, water, love and care. Your prayers can give great comfort to those who are suffering.

These Stations of the Cross will help you learn more about the lives of young Christians in some of the countries where ACN helps people. In the past few years the world we live in has changed for many people. In addition to the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, war, persecution and poverty are continuing to make things even more difficult for children just like you who are growing up in very tough places.

Just as we walk with Jesus whenever we pray the Stations of the Cross, so we walk with all those who suffer for their faith. Let us pray for them, that their faith may continue to grow and that their suffering will ease through the mercy and compassion of Jesus.

**As we pray the Stations of the Cross, let us think about the things that hurt or bother us. We can also reflect on what may be happening to children elsewhere in the world.**

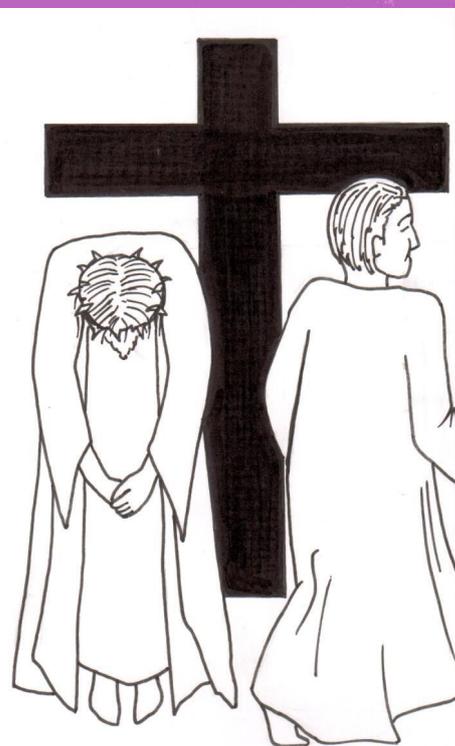


## 1<sup>st</sup> Station:

# JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross with medical equipment to help with Covid-19



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

“Pilate led Jesus out to his accusers and said: Behold, the man! But they shouted: He should hang on a cross. Pilate said: Then take him and crucify him! I find no reason to condemn him. But they countered: We have a law which says he must die. For he has declared that he is the Son of God. They kept pressing Pilate until fear overcame him and he condemned Jesus to death on a cross.”

*(God Speaks to His Children, ACN’s Child’s Bible, pp 124-125)*

### India: Helping Christian communities tackle the coronavirus crisis

In 2021 ACN was able to help priests, religious Sisters and lay workers in more than 140 Indian dioceses by providing vital medicine and equipment. Unfortunately India has had one of the worst coronavirus outbreaks in the world. One archbishop in India said, “We don’t know how the next day will unfold. It is only our faith that keeps us going.”

In many places in India, priests, Sisters and other Church workers have become infected while they were taking care of people who were suffering. Many of them chose to take care of sick people, despite the risk to themselves. Their care and actions have made them heroes!

### Let us pray

Lord God, we pray for the people of India, especially those who have suffered greatly due to the pandemic. We pray for all those around the world who have been taking care of people who have caught Covid-19.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

**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.**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Station: JESUS TAKES UP THE CROSS



Volunteers with staff who are rebuilding and restoring the parish of the Assumption in Santiago, the capital city of Chile

**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

“So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called ‘the place of a skull’, which is called in Hebrew Gol’gotha.” (*John 19.17 RSV-CE*)

### Chile: Young people rebuilding the Church

In 2020 the Church of the Assumption in the city of Santiago was very badly damaged during a violent protest. It’s going to take many years to restore the church, but a group of young university students decided they wanted to do what they could to help.

They launched a project called ‘Sursum Corde’ which means ‘lift up your hearts’. They managed to rescue many items from inside the church, including paintings, books and statues, and they’re hoping to repair them. Their mission means a lot to them because they want to show the world that love can still triumph over violence.

### Let us pray

Jesus, we pray for all those who don’t know you or might be angry with you. Please come into the hearts of those who are closed off to you, and please give us the courage to follow you each day. Let us remember always to be thankful that we are free to believe in you without fear of getting in trouble or getting hurt.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

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## 3<sup>rd</sup> Station:

# JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME



Some of the destruction in the city of Aleppo, Syria.  
September 2021



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

“The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.” (*Psalm 33(34):18 RSV-CE*)

### Syria: Searching for help

Syria is a country in great need. There has been conflict there for over 10 years, and life is really hard for people living there. Many people have left Syria, but for the people still there, life is tough. Some people are trying to survive on less than £1 a day—that’s not very much at all!

More than 12 million people are going hungry every day, living on scraps of bread or anything they can find. Many Syrian families are worn out from just trying to survive in such a difficult place. ACN and our project partners are working hard to provide support to people in Syria who desperately need it. ACN is paying for emergency aid and medicine, as well as helping priests and Sisters who are working with those in need.

### Let us pray

Lord Jesus, help us always to follow your example of love and kindness, and never to give up. We know that you will always be with us and guiding us, even when things are difficult. Teach us to be brave when life is hard and when we face obstacles. Thank you that we never have to face difficult times alone.

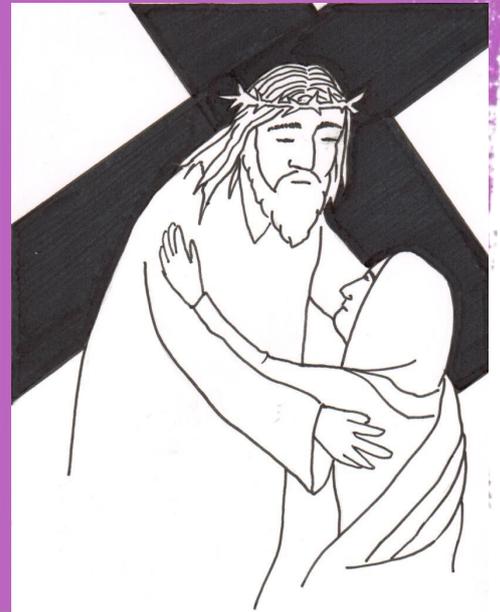
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## 4<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



Children and their mothers at the refuge for Mothers in Need



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

"The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God".” (Luke 1:30 RSV-CE)

### Russia: A place of safety for Mothers and Children

In Russia there are a few different types of Christian Churches. For many years ACN has been helping the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church to form a better friendship. One of the ways they decided to work together was by helping women and children, especially those who have experienced frightening situations in life.

In the city of Nizhny Novgorod ACN has provided money to set up a home for young women and children who need help. This means they don't need to be afraid any more. The centre gives the families everything they need to feel safe and happy.

### Let us pray

We pray for our families —for our mums, dads and all those who take care of us. Help us to recognize the love that we receive from them. Thank you for those who look after us, and for the strength and courage that you give them each day. Thank you, Lord, for always watching over us.

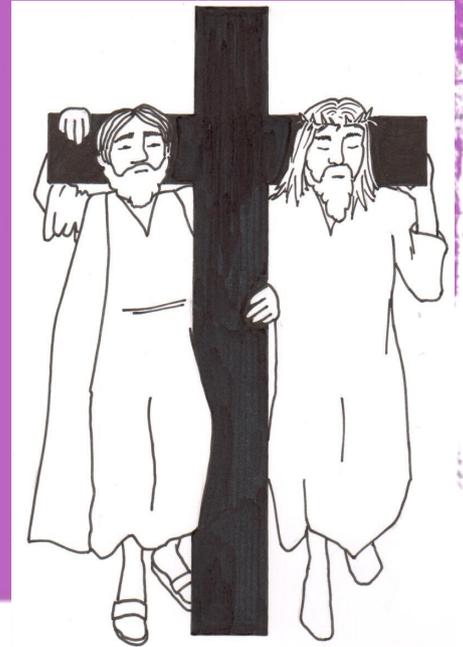
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## 5<sup>th</sup> Station: SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS



People waiting for food at the Albertine Brothers' Monastery



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### **Scripture**

“As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.” *(Luke 23:26 RSV-CE)*

### **Ukraine: The Albertine Brothers showing people a different way**

Micha is a young man in Ukraine who has been helped by the Albertine Brothers, a religious community. Before getting to know the Brothers, Micha lived on the streets. He said “They showed me a different way. Everything fell into place through prayer. Now I help the friars and bake bread for those who are poor or homeless, like I used to be.”

The Brothers don’t just help people out with food– they often provide a place to live for those who need a roof over their heads for a while. They welcome those in great need into their monastery, especially in the cold winter in Ukraine. Brother Wieslaw said “...we try to change the world.”

### **Let us pray**

Jesus, give us the courage to help others, whether they be friends, family or maybe even someone we don’t know. Help us to be kind, even when it might be difficult, and always guide us to do the right thing.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

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# 6<sup>th</sup> Station: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



A staff member and patient at the Hospital of the Cross in Beirut



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## **Scripture**

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (*Colossians 3:17 RSV-CE*)

## **Lebanon: Help needed to support patients in a hospital in Beirut**

For many years the doctors and nurses at the Hospital of the Cross have been taking care of sick and vulnerable people in the city of Beirut. Many of the patients don't have family or friends to look after them. Medicine, wages and fuel have become much more expensive recently, and the Hospital of the Cross, has to rely on help from charities like ACN to stay open.

Sister Jeanette is one of the religious Sisters who helps to run the hospital. She told ACN that if the hospital had to close, she would do her best to make sure the patients were still looked after somehow. Foutine, another staff member, said that the hospital staff are like a family to their patients; they hate the idea that one day the hospital might have to close.

## **Let us pray**

Lord, help us to share what we have— just as Veronica did when she wiped the face of Jesus as he was suffering or the way Sister Jeanette and the team at the hospital do. Help us to see the needs of others, and always to be helpful and loving. We pray for all who are in hospital, that they are able to get better.

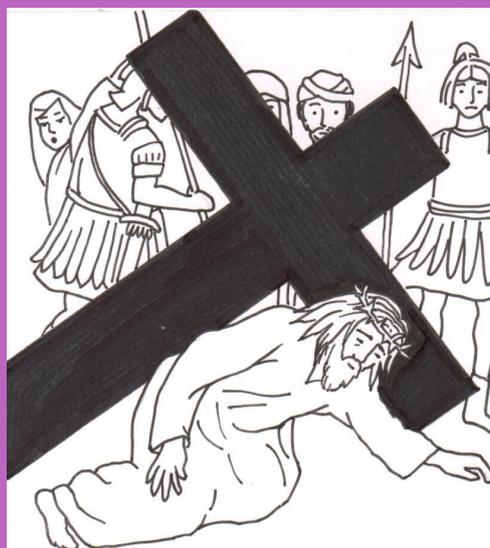
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## 7<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



A Capuchin Friar in the city of Manaus, Brazil, delivering a food parcel to a needy family



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” (*Hebrews 4:15 RSV-CE*)

### Brazil: Delivering life lines

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, more than 500,000 people have come down with the virus in the state of Amazonas in Brazil. Many people went to the city of Manaus in the hope of finding food, but there was very little food to eat and so they remained hungry. A group of priests called the Capuchin Friars started to distribute food parcels to those most in need. ACN helped to pay for these parcels, and this allowed the Friars to deliver food to those who needed it most.

Fatima received one of the food parcels. She said, “This donation has arrived just when we were going through the most difficult time. You are helping us so that we can eat each day”.

### Let us pray

Jesus, we pray that you will always pick us up and help us to carry on, even when things are hard. Help us to remember that you always have a plan for us, even when things might seem very bad.

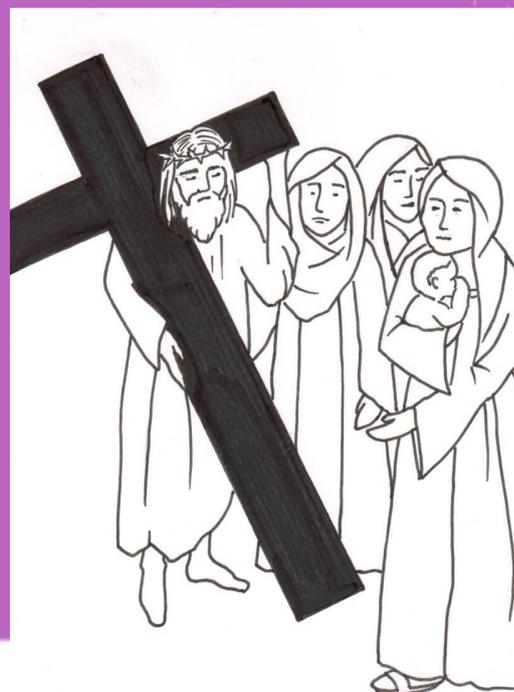
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## 8<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



A Sister from the Handmaids of Mary in Cuba, with one of her patients



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

### Scripture

“A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children’.” (Luke 23:27-8 RSV-CE)

### Cuba: The Handmaids of Mary caring for the sick

The Handmaids of Mary are a group of Sisters on the Caribbean island of Cuba—there have been Handmaids of Mary on the island since 1875! Their special mission is to take care of sick people, either in hospital or in their own homes. Many people come to the Sisters when they need help, support and love.

Sister Maria Isabel said that most of the people they help struggle to get by in life—many of them find it difficult to pay for simple things like food. ACN supports the Handmaids of Mary so they can carry on caring for the people in their community.

### Let us pray

Thank you, Jesus, for looking after us and loving us. Please give us the courage to offer help to the people around us who need extra love and care. Thank you for giving us people in our lives who care about us.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

**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.**

# 9<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME



© ACN

Children attending the Holy Family Nursery, run by the Ephrem Sisters in Qaraqosh, Iraq



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## Scripture

“Our steps are made firm by the Lord, when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand.” (*Psalms 36(37): 23-4 RSV-CE*)

## Iraq: Bringing hope and happiness back to the children of Iraq

The Holy Family nursery now looks like lots of nurseries here in the UK, but it has faced many challenges over the past few years. Much of the nursery was destroyed by people who wanted to force Christians to leave Iraq. ACN helped to rebuild the nursery so that the local children would have a safe place to learn and to play.

Now there is space for more than 50 children to attend the nursery! Sister Mariam helps to run the nursery, and she said that the children who attend will “...grow up and later be a generation that is aware and ready to support one another.”

## Let us pray

Jesus, help us not to give up when things are difficult. We thank you for people like the Sisters who run the Holy Family Nursery, and for all those who help to pick people up when life is difficult for them. We pray for the children who attend this nursery, and for their families. We hope and pray that life continues to become easier for them over the next few years.

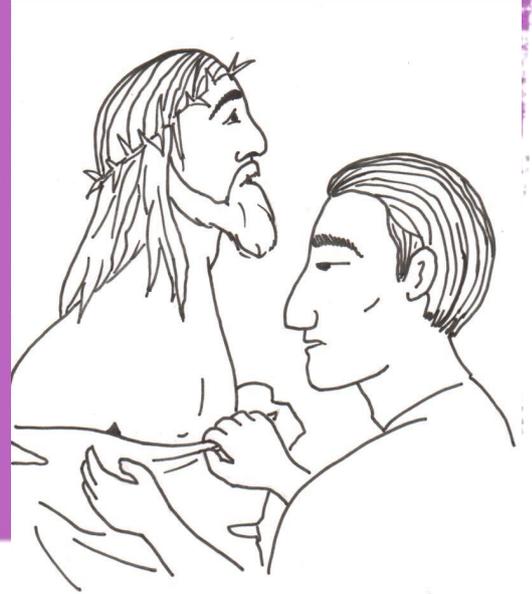
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# 10<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



Sister Annie Demerjian with children receiving their Christmas gifts in December 2021



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## Scripture

“They took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.’ This was to fulfil what the scripture says, ‘They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.’” *(John 19: 23-4 RSV-CE)*

## Syria: Coats for children

In Syria, life has become more and more difficult in recent years. People have faced war, fighting and poverty, and many Christians in Syria have been treated badly because of their faith. Summers in Syria are very hot, but winters can be very cold. Last Christmas, with the help of ACN, Sister Annie Demerjian provided 30,000 gifts of warm clothing to Syrian children. Sister Annie said, “*Thank you for your precious gift you gave to our children this Christmas. You can’t imagine the smile and joy on the faces of our children.*”

## Let us pray

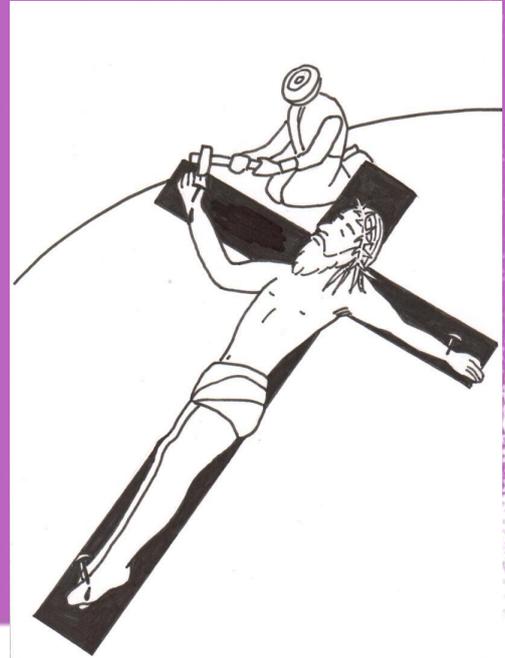
Jesus, help us to remember that everything we have comes from you. We pray for all those in Syria who have lost everything, and pray in thanks for all those people doing something to make the situation better.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

**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.**

# 11<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Father Edegard holding the crucifix made from charred wood and broken pieces from a previous home



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## Scripture

“Jesus carried his cross out of the city to a hill called Golgotha. There they nailed him to the cross. Two criminals had been sentenced with him. Their crosses stood to the left and to the right of Jesus’ cross. Pilate had an inscription placed at the top of Jesus’ cross. It read: This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

*(God Speaks to His Children, ACN’s Child’s Bible, pp 125-126)*

## Mozambique: Rebuilding the Cross

For the past five years the Christians in northwest Mozambique have faced tragedy. Many Christians have been forced out of their homes, and their churches have been destroyed. This all happened because there are people there who think that what Christians believe is wrong.

Father Edegard had to leave his home and church in Mozambique. Many of the Christian people now live together in a new area. They took some pieces of wood from their destroyed homes, and used the wood to make a crucifix. The little figure of Jesus on the cross has also been made from broken pieces of damaged wood. The people feel that their crucifix represents what they themselves have been through. They know that Jesus experienced great hardships, just like they have. They know that they’re not alone, and that he knows their pain.

## Let us pray

We pray for all people in desperate situations and all who are suffering. Jesus, please be with those people who feel alone—let them know that you are with them in their pain.

**Reader: Lord, in your mercy... All: Hear our prayer.**

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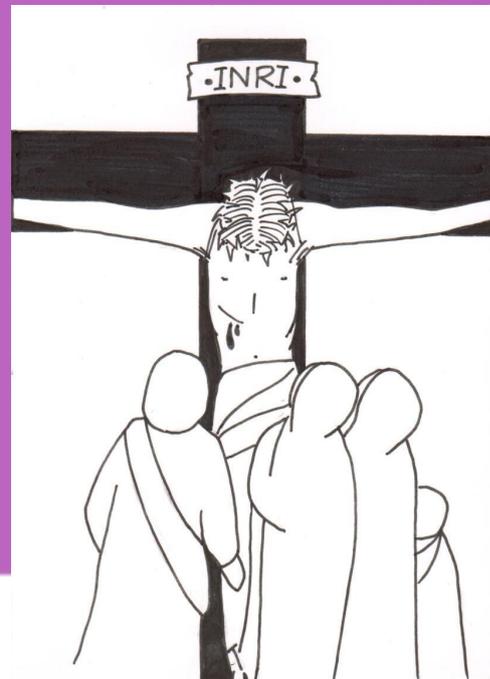


ACN

# 12<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



John Joseph Gazi praying with children in Bidi Bidi refugee settlement



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## Scripture

“Four women stood at the foot of Jesus’ cross: his mother; his mother’s sister, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. The disciple whom Jesus loved stood near his mother. When Jesus saw his mother, he said to her: From now on he is your son. And to the disciple he said: From now on she is your mother. From that time on the disciple took Mary to his own home and cared for her. Jesus now knew that he had accomplished everything. He said: It is accomplished. Then he bowed his head and died.” (*God Speaks to His Children, ACN’s Child’s Bible, pp 126-127*)

## Uganda: Bringing souls back to God

In Uganda, life for Christian people can be difficult for many reasons. It can be hard for priests to minister to their people, particularly when their parishes cover huge areas. Catechists (who teach Christians about their faith) often help out locally to make sure people can access their faith even if their priest is far away

John Joseph is a catechist from South Sudan. He came to Uganda to escape war and fighting in his own country. He has made it his mission to bring the love of God to others who, like him, have had to leave behind people and places that they love. John said “Many are filled with hate and thoughts of revenge. I talk to them about forgiveness.”

## Let us pray

Jesus, it is hard to understand why the people we love might get hurt or die. Remind us that our faith will always help us when we experience loss, and that you will be with us whatever may happen. We pray for the souls of those who have passed away, and pray that they are with God in heaven.

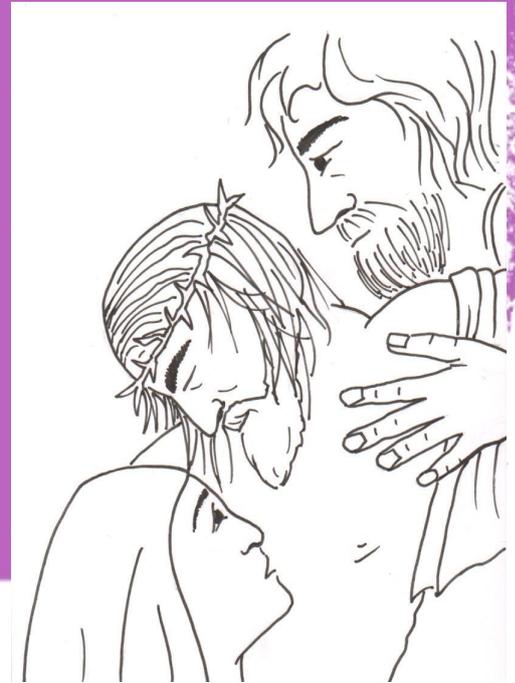
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# 13<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



Majed at a viewing point over the city of Zahle, Lebanon



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## Scripture

“Joseph of Arimethea was a man of influence. He belonged to the council of Jews, but was also waiting for the dawning of God’s Kingdom. In the evening he went to Pilate and asked: Let me take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it. Pilate gave Joseph permission to bury Jesus’ body.” (*God Speaks to His Children, ACN’s Child’s Bible, p. 127*)

## Lebanon & Syria: Joy in the Sadness

Majed is 12 and lives in Lebanon, but he and his family are originally from Syria. He was just 3 years old when his family had to leave their home in Syria, and look for a safe place in Lebanon. Many were not as lucky as Majed and his family, and didn't make it out of Syria. When they arrived in Lebanon they were living with a relative—15 people were in the house and had to take turns sleeping as there wasn't a lot of room.

Eventually they managed to get their own house, and life started to get a little better. The Church has been there to help Majed and his family. Majed’s Dad said “*Thanks be to God, without this aid we would not have known what to do.*” Majed and his family have always called out to God in their prayers, and, even though they have faced many difficulties, they are thankful for the blessings God has given them.

## Let us pray

Jesus, you were treated so cruelly in your death, but handled with great love and care when you were taken down from the Cross. May we always treat those around us with love and care—especially people who have been dealing with difficult situations.

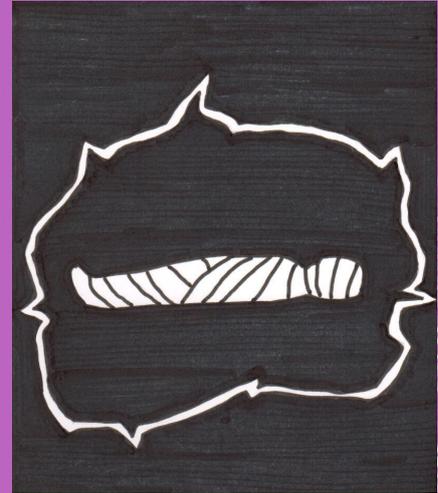
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# 14<sup>th</sup> Station: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



Fr Jose with a young person receiving a copy of 'God Speaks to His Children' in Tsetlal



**Reader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you**

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

## **Scripture**

“Joseph bought linen, took the body of Jesus down from the cross, wrapped it in the linen and placed it in a tomb that had been dug out in the rock-face. Then he rolled a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Two women, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, watched him and saw where he laid the body of Jesus to rest.” (*God Speaks to His Children, ACN’s Child’s Bible, p. 127*)

## **Mexico: Child’s Bible**

Our final scripture in our Stations of the Cross comes towards the end of the ACN Child’s Bible. This little red book is used by children all across the world. Maybe you have one in your home or classroom?

Children in the Diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas in Mexico read the Child’s Bible in Tsetlal, a language spoken mainly in the south of Mexico. Without the Child’s Bible, Tsetlal speakers would struggle to learn the stories in the Bible in their own language. Many priests, religious Sisters, schoolteachers and lay people in parishes around the world use the Child’s Bible to introduce stories about our faith to their children and young people and to give them a chance to read these stories in their own language.

## **Let us pray**

Jesus, we pray today for everyone who is mourning somebody, that you may bring them your peace. We pray also that you bring the love of God into each of our lives, and give us the courage to share the stories of Jesus with those around us.

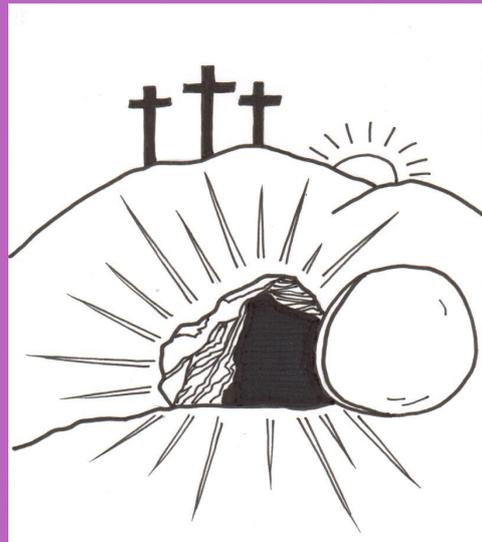
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# RISEN JESUS, WE PRAISE YOU!



Easter in Homs, Syria, 2016. ©ACN



Easter display in the Diocese of Homs, Syria (2016). ©ACN

***As Christians, we know that death was not the end for Jesus.***

***We know that after being laid in the tomb on Good Friday, Jesus rose on Easter Sunday.***

***Easter brings the promise of new life and reminds us that Jesus — and Jesus working through us — has the power to change and transform our lives and our world.***

***Jesus, help us always to trust in you and in the plan you have for each of us.***

# A PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS



A Syrian girl praying the Rosary in front of a statue of Our Lady in Aleppo, Syria (2021)



Two boys praying the Rosary in Cameroon

**We pray together for the needs of millions of men, women, children and families around the world who suffer because of their faith.**

Loving God, we pray that all of your children across the world may know how much you love them. We pray that, where life has become very difficult, you will make a clear path for them.

We pray for their protection, and for each of them to know that “...under His wings you will find refuge”.

*(Psalm 90 (91):4 RSV-CE)*

We pray that you give each of them the strength and courage to keep going, and let them know that you will never abandon them.



Young people attending Mass at the Armenian Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Martyrs of Gyumri, rebuilt with the help of ACN.  
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*“My grace is sufficient for you.” (2 Corinthians 12:9 RSV-CE)*

*“Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God” (Isaiah 41:10) RSV-CE*



Children at school in Malawi taking part in the ACN campaign '1 Million Children praying the Rosary'

ACN, its project partners and thousands of suffering Christians around the world are deeply grateful for the part you are playing to care and pray for God's people everywhere.

We pray especially for those who are faithful, even under the threat of persecution or death.

**Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)** is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church, supporting the Catholic faithful and other Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need.

Founded on Christmas Day 1947, ACN supports around 5,000 projects across the world each year.

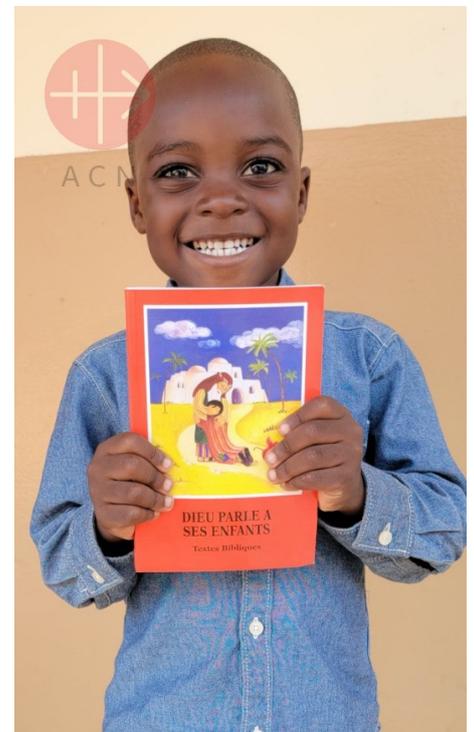
For regular updates from the suffering Church around the world or to find out more information, please visit

[www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org)

**Thank you for your prayers and support for our brothers and sisters in Christ across the world.**

All images are Aid to the Church in Need copyright, unless otherwise stated. The line drawings have been produced for us by Wendy Moore, for use with ACN materials.

*Details are listed below to get in contact with our team in England & Wales, and our team in Scotland.*



Young boy in Cameroon receives his copy of 'God Speaks to His Children' - the ACN Child's Bible

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