



A C N

The Way of the Cross



The Shrine of Our Lady of Yagma (Sanctuary of Notre Dame de Yagma) in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.

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Stations of the Cross for the Suffering Church

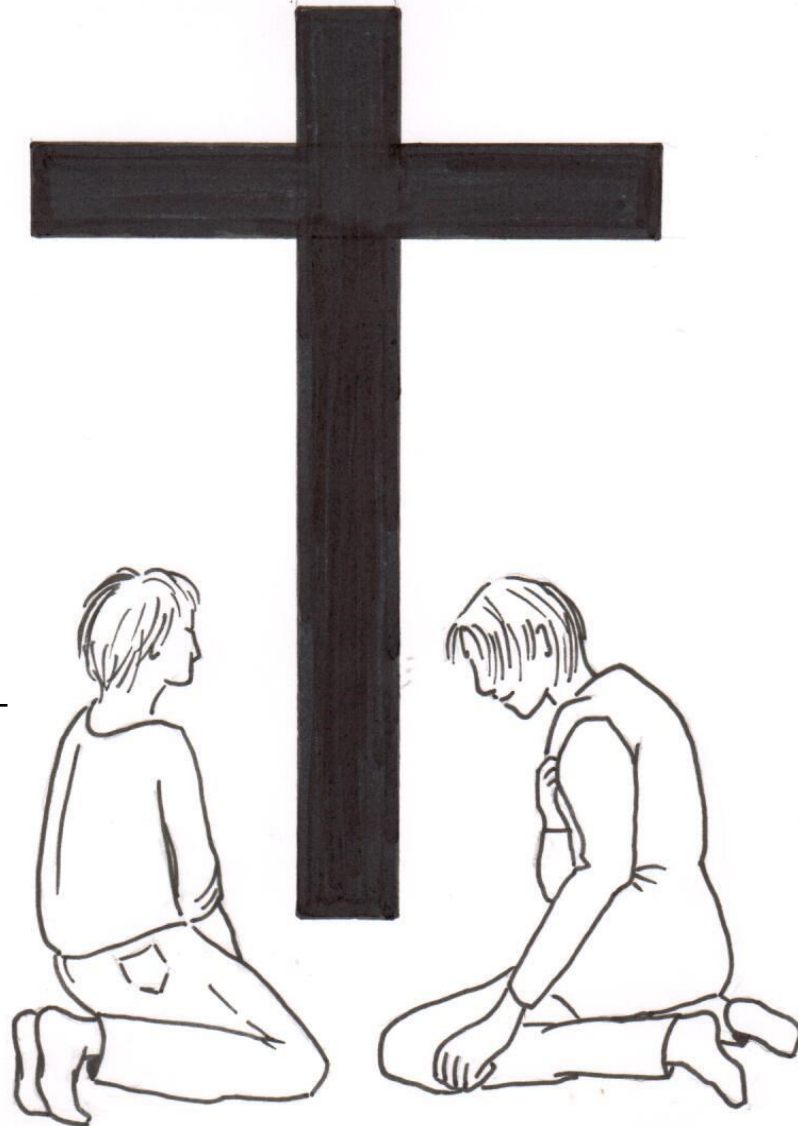
Introduction:

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Every day millions of Christians around the world suffer for their Faith. Many are persecuted for their beliefs; their ordeals can include discrimination at home or in the workplace, fines, imprisonment, torture and even execution. Still others are living out their Christian Faith in extremely isolated communities or in the face of abject poverty.

Every story about suffering and persecuted Christians involves real people with names and hopes and dreams. It is often far too easy for us to think in terms of facts, figures and statistics rather than those who are suffering. St Paul the Apostle reminds us that, “just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body... If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.” (1 Cor 12: 12-13, 26 RSV-CE)

St Paul underlines our responsibility towards our brothers and sisters. So let us work together to end their suffering and persecution by offering our prayers, sharing their stories with others and, finally, through our actions.



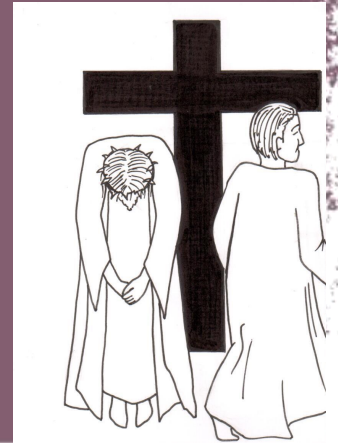
Just as we walk with Jesus whenever we pray before the Stations of the Cross, so we walk with all those who suffer for their faith. Let us pray for them, that their faith may continue to grow and that their suffering will ease through the mercy and compassion of Our Lord.

1st Station:

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



The aftermath of the Christmas attacks in the Middle Belt region in Nigeria.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

But he was silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” And the high priest tore his mantle, and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. **Mark 14:61-64 (RSV-CE)**

Nigeria

The plight of Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria worsened after extremists murdered more than 300 people, burnt down entire villages and destroyed food supplies in coordinated attacks in Nigeria’s Plateau State over Christmas. The killings began on 23rd December 2023 and went on for four days, they centred on Bokokos but also involved 30 villages in both Barkin Ladi and Mangu.

Father Dewan, the director of communications for Pankshin Diocese, where the attacks took place, said: “The unprovoked attacks were well-coordinated and deliberate, targeting communities that were Christians specifically. The fact that it took place at Christmas, and the deliberate targeting of Christians in a mixed community where Muslims [were] not attacked, clearly bears all the hallmarks of a religious conflict. Now there are up to 16 IDP camps in Bokokos town, mostly within Church premises. In situations like this, people often rush to churches, because they don’t have confidence in government institutions.”

Condemning the “senseless killing”, Regina Lynch, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International Executive President, said: **“Our Christian brothers and sisters killed in Nigeria, and in other countries of the world, are the ‘Holy Innocents’ of the 21st century”**. [ACN News December 28 2023](#). See also [ACN News January 18 2024](#).

Let us pray:

Have mercy on us, Lord. We pray that you will strengthen the weary, console those in distress and protect all who are suffering, and lead them out of despair and darkness and into your wondrous light.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

Divine Mercy, greatest attribute of God, I trust in You.



ACN

2nd Station:

JESUS TAKES UP THE CROSS



The Church of the Assumption Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Mandalay, Burma (Myanmar), was destroyed by the Burmese army.

© Radio Veritas Mandalay



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Ephesians 6: 14-18 (RSV-CE)

Burma (Myanmar)

In late October, after almost three years since the outbreak of the civil war in Burma (Myanmar), armed insurgent groups launched a fresh offensive against the ruling military government. The attacks were in Shan and Kayah States and in the west, and in Chin State in the east causing widespread displacement. Chin State is the only region in the country with a Christian majority.

The Diocese of Loikaw is in Kayah State. In a statement Bishop Celso Ba Shawe of Loikaw said that 80% of the state's 300,000 inhabitants were internally displaced, and that 1,300 of them had sought refuge in the compound of Christ the King Cathedral in Loikaw. On 26th November, the army shelled the Cathedral compound and took it over to use as a shield in the fighting causing the Bishop and priests to flee the Cathedral.

Pope Francis, addressing the faithful during his Sunday Angelus, appealed for the facilitation of humanitarian aid and invited all parties involved "to take steps of dialogue". [ACN News November 16 2023](#), [Vatican News November 18 2023](#), and [Vatican News January 28 2024](#). See also [Myanmar Catholic Church](#).

Let us pray

Dear Lord, we pray for all, who have been falsely accused or imprisoned, abducted, mistreated or denied justice. We pray that the Holy Spirit will bring lasting healing.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

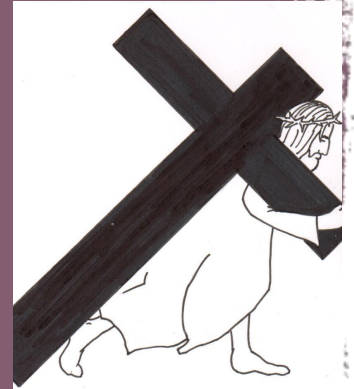
Divine Mercy, encompassing the whole universe, I trust in You.

3rd Station:

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME



Extremists attacked, torched and destroyed up to 24 church buildings and hundreds of Christian homes in Jaranwala near Faisalabad, east Pakistan, after a Christian cleaner was accused of desecrating the Qur'an and insulting the Prophet of Islam.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. [Isaiah 53: 4 \(RSV-CE\)](#)

Pakistan

Following one of the country's worst outbreaks of persecution in a generation up to 24 churches, hundreds of Christian homes and a Christian cemetery were vandalised and torched by extremists, sparked by reports of a blasphemy allegation of desecrating the Qur'an against a Christian cleaner.

On 16th August 2023, 1,000 panic-stricken Christians from the Punjab town of Jaranwala, near Faisalabad, east Pakistan, fled their homes and spent the night in sugar cane fields, as the violence flared.

Both Archbishop Benny Trivas of Karachi and Archbishop Joseph Arshad of Islamabad-Rawalpindi, the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, condemned the violence and called on the authorities to act swiftly. The Punjab government ordered an inquiry to investigate the incident, with terms set by caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaarul Haq, who visited Jaranwala on 21st August.

Working through the local church, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has provided basic goods such as clothes, kitchen appliances, bedding, and mattresses. It has also provided food packages, health care items, and basic household essentials. [ACN News August 17 2023](#). See also [ACN News September 26 2023](#)

Let us pray:

O Prince of Peace, you guaranteed we would find you if we persisted in prayer and searched for you in your Word and glorified your name by doing your will. In your Holy Name we ask for your perfect peace to reign over Pakistan.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

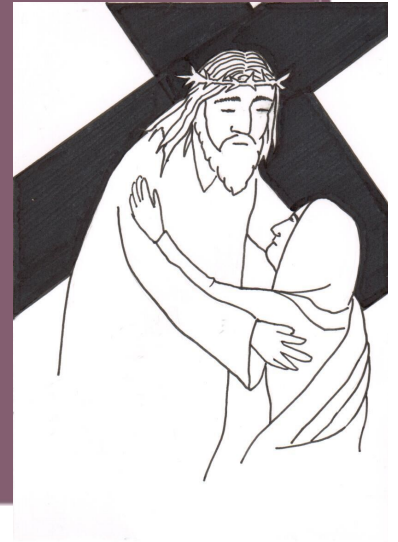
Divine Mercy, unfathomed by any intellect, human or angelic, I trust in You.

4th Station:

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



With image of Sister Stan Therese Mumuni, founder of the Marian Sisters for Eucharistic Love in Sang, Yendi, Northern Region, in north-east Ghana.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **John 19:25 (RSV-CE)**

Ghana

Sister Stan Therese Mumuni of the Marian Sisters of Eucharistic Love founded a home in Yendi Diocese, northern Ghana for children with mental and physical disabilities who were abandoned or in danger of being killed.

Sister Mumuni said: "The traditional beliefs affect the children. If a child is born blind, they are considered evil, if they cannot speak, they are considered evil. If a mother dies in labour, the family rejects the child because they are considered evil. If you have a child who cannot see in the community, the woman cannot go to fetch water with the other women, or to farm, because they tell her she has an evil child. And if there is any misfortune in the village they blame it on the child, and they kill it."

Sister Mumuni cares for the 120 children currently living in the Nazareth Home for God's Children with 15 other religious sisters and 35 staff members. Sometimes staff from the local hospital call Sister Mumuni after a mother has left a child there, whilst some families take their disabled children to the home themselves.

ACN has supported the construction of a new convent for the Marian Sisters of Eucharistic Love in Ghana. [ACN News August 15 2023](#)

Let us pray:

O Word made flesh! Guide us in your truth so that through prayer, fasting and almsgiving we may become missionary disciples learning to grow, think, see, act and pray as you do.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

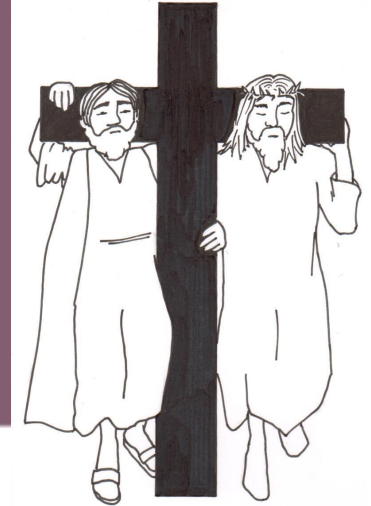
Divine Mercy, repose of hearts, peace amidst fear, I trust in You.

5th Station:

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS



Providing emergency aid to internally displaced people in the Diocese of Mukachevo in Ukraine.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **Ephesians 5:1-2 (RSV-CE)**

Ukraine

The 24th February 2024 will mark two years since the invasion of Ukraine. The Zakarpattia region, located in western Ukraine close to the borders with Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, with a population of one million, has taken in a total of 400,000 internally displaced persons from other parts of the country.

The Diocese of Mukachevo, situated in the Zakarpattia region, has responded to the need of those fleeing the war by turning their diocesan buildings into accommodation. **With the support of ACN**, the diocese has been supporting local organisations providing trauma counselling for people, including soldiers and their families, affected by the war. ACN not only provided funding for the diocese to set-up and run both mental health and trauma counselling services but also for summer camps for displaced children and their families.

Since the beginning of the war, ACN has supported Ukraine's Catholic Churches with 353 projects totalling more than £8.5 million. [ACN News July 21 2023](#)

Let us pray:

God of inexhaustible compassion, through your Son you reconciled us to yourself. We trust in you. Fill us with your light, your wisdom, your peace, your grace and your joy, and make us ambassadors of your love and mercy.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

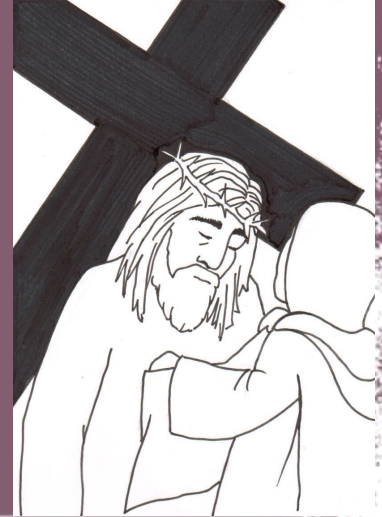
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Divine Mercy, lifting us out of every misery, I trust in You.

6th Station: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



Christmas gifts (warm winter clothing) for children in Syria and Lebanon.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **1 Corinthians 13: 2 (RSV-CE)**

Syria and Lebanon

The Sisters of St Joseph of Lyons and the Congregation of Jesus and Mary provided warm winter clothing for the 35,000 children in Syria and 10,000 in Lebanon of families struggling to survive at a time of severe economic hardship.

Sister Annie Demerjian of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in Syria said: “Many families here can only dream of new clothes. To buy a pair of trousers, a shirt and shoes these days in Syria you need two months of minimum wage.”

ACN has been supporting this project in Syria since 2015 and in Lebanon since 2021 to help relieve the suffering caused by war and a collapsing economy.

Sister Raymonda Saada of the Sisters of St Joseph of Lyons in Lebanon said: “With simple means, we can give joy and hope, witness to the incarnation of Emmanuel, the presence of God among us, and fashion a new world.” [ACN News December 13 2023](#)

Let us pray:

Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, enlighten our mind and our heart so that in fulfilling your will we will discover and understand our mission and your plan for our lives.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

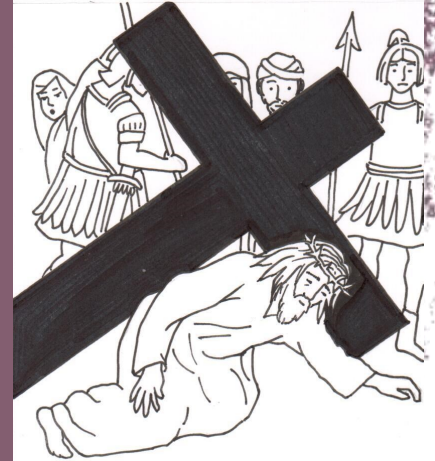
Divine Mercy, sweet relief for anguished hearts, I trust in You.

7th Station: JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



Arson attack on the Catholic-majority village Khopibung, Kangpokpi District, Manipur on 12th June – 44 houses were torched and the church was destroyed.

Arson attack on St. Paul's Parish and Pastoral Training Centre in Sangaprou, Archdiocese of Imphal, Manipur on 3rd-4th June 2023.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice! Let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! **Psalms 129 (130): 1-2 (RSV-CE)**

India

A violent conflict, in which 185 people were killed, hundreds of villages and churches looted, ransacked, and burned down, and tens of thousands of people displaced, erupted in north-east India in May between the Hindu-majority Meitei and the mostly Christian Kuki ethnic groups.

A bishop, who asked not to be named for safety reasons said: “Although it [was] widely reported that the violence [was] caused by an ethnic dispute over land ownership, religion plays a significant role. There are Christians among the Meiteis, and many of their churches [had] also been destroyed, which is clear proof that it is not just about land.”

When the conflict began, **ACN sent emergency aid to help the local Church** to provide support for the victims of the violence. The Catholic Church has been providing aid to thousands of people, including about 2,400 displaced families. **ACN continues to be in contact with Church authorities looking to find ways to provide emergency aid to help alleviate the suffering.** [ACN News August 24 2023](#)

Let us pray:

O Lord, our rock and our refuge! Restore and renew us in your mercy. Stay with us, Lord, and help us to abide in you so that filled with your courage we may strive to do your will.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

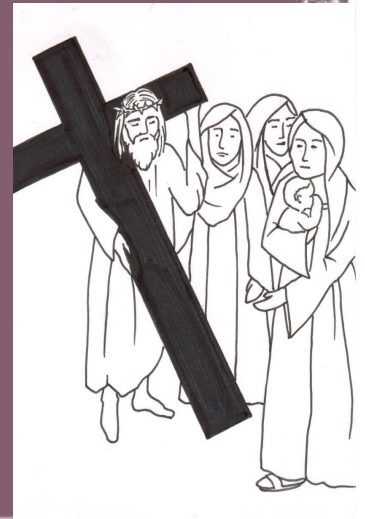
All: I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

Divine Mercy, accompanying us through our whole life, I trust in You.

8th Station: JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



On Friday 3rd November Mission in Khartoum a bomb caused major damage to the first floor of Salesian Sisters' mission centre, Dar Mariam, in Khartoum, Sudan. The mission housed five religious Sisters, all above 65 years old, a priest, a teacher, and about 45 children, 20 women and men—some of them elderly and sick.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture

Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you. **1 Peter 5: 7 (RSV-CE)**

Sudan

In April civil war broke out in Sudan between the RSF (Rapid Support Forces), loyal to the vice president of Sudan, and the Sudanese army, loyal to the president. Sudan's capital Khartoum and other cities were turned into war zones overnight. Many homes were occupied, and churches were attacked and looted by RSF soldiers. According to the UN special envoy for Sudan, Volker Perthes, at least 5,000 people have been killed, and over 12,000 wounded since the start of the conflict. All citizens are equally affected by the war.

Christians have fled to safer regions. Most of Sudan's Catholic population, are South Sudanese; they fled to South Sudan whilst some of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees moved to cities closer to the borders of their respective countries. Those who chose to remain in conflict zones have faced food and water shortages, a lack of electricity, and temperatures of over 40°C during the day. Most Catholic missionaries have opted to stay and support their faithful. **Over the last decade ACN has assisted the Church in Sudan with religious formation and humanitarian support in refugee camps.** [ACN News July 26 2023](#). See also [ACN News November 6, 2023](#).

Let us pray:

Lord of everlasting tenderness and mercy, our hope is in you. We pray for an end to the hostility, violence, greed and corruption. We ask that you shelter and protect women and girls against all forms of exploitation, mistreatment, aggression, and hateful and controlling behaviour.

R: Lord, hear us.

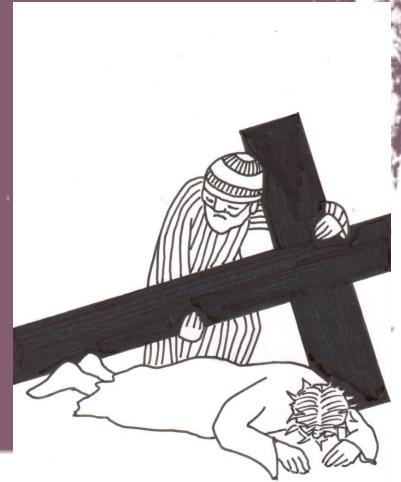
A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

Divine Mercy, inspiring hope against hope, I trust in You.

9th Station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

With image of Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, a missionary from the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, during the homily at a Mass.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. **Ephesians 2: 10 (RSV-CE)**

Philippines

Extremists in the Philippines killed four parishioners and injured 50 others after detonating a bomb in a gymnasium at the University of Mindanao where hundreds of people had gathered to participate in the Mass on the first Sunday of Advent.

Father Sebastiano D'Ambra, a missionary at the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, said the perpetrators' identity and motives were not yet known, but "there is no doubt that Christians were the target". He explained that the university draws Christians from other parts of the island to Marawi, and "there [was] a danger that the attack will provoke an exodus of the Catholic minority.

The first Sunday of Advent also marked the beginning of the Week of Peace in Marawi Diocese, southern Philippines. Father D'Ambra has been supporting interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines since 1984. He said: "These are new challenges, and they make our work, which is coming up to 40 years, as important now as it was in the beginning." **ACN has been supporting the Church's interfaith work in the Philippines.** [ACN News December 4 2023](#)

Let us pray:

Christ Jesus the Good Shepherd, we pray for peace, justice, and unity in the Philippines.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

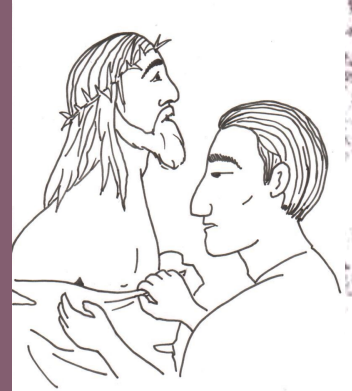
All: I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

Divine Mercy, accompanying us every moment of our life, I trust in You.

10th Station: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



Bombing around the Holy Family Church compound in Gaza.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots. **Psalm 21(22): 16-18 (RSV-CE)**

Holy Land

Since the beginning of the war, many Christian families have lost their homes and all their possessions. There are 1,000 Christians living in Gaza. In October 2023 an airstrike killed 17 Christians who had been sheltering in the Orthodox Church of Saint Porphyrius; five others died later from a lack of medical care.

In December, the Holy Family Church – the only Catholic church in Gaza – and its associated parish buildings were damaged in an airstrike and ran out of fuel, leaving them without electricity. Four civilians — two women, a mother and her daughter, and two workmen were killed by sniper fire in the grounds of the Church; seven others were injured. The Missionaries of Charity's convent, which is part of the Church compound and home to 54 disabled residents, was also hit by a rocket rendering it uninhabitable.

ACN has helped Christians sheltering at the Holy Family Church purchase food items and medicines. The charity has also provided emergency aid for Christians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem's Vicariate for Migrants and Asylum Seekers—which has given emergency aid to more than 100,000 Christians including those who were originally from Gaza but had been displaced before the war . [ACN News December 12 2023](#). See also [ACN News December 18 2023](#); and [ACN News January 9 2024](#).

Let us pray

Merciful Lord Jesus, we know we are precious in your eyes. All things were created through you and for you. We place into your care families separated by war, conflict, violence, famine, sickness and corruption.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

Divine Mercy, only hope for despairing souls, I trust in You.

11th Station:

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



Bishop Rolando José Álvarez Lagos of Matagalpa, in the ruins of the premises of the Caritas of Sebaco, burned by supporters of the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. **Psalm 81 (82): 3-4 (RSV-CE)**

Nicaragua

Two bishops, 15 priests, and two seminarians were released from imprisonment in Nicaragua and expelled to the Vatican in January. The two released bishops were Bishop of Matagalpa, Rolando Alvarez, Who had been sentenced to 26 years imprisonment, and Bishop Isidoro de Carmen Mora Ortega of Siuna, who had been arrested for mentioning Bishop Alvarez during a homily.

Since 2022, 50 priests have been arrested in Nicaragua. Four out of nine dioceses in the country are now led by exiled bishops. In October 2023, 12 priests were released from prison and sent to the Vatican, whilst another group had already been exiled to the USA in February 2023. The Government has also deported foreign missionaries including members of the Sisters of Charity, the order founded by Saint Mother Theresa.

Despite the release of the group of bishops, priests, and seminarians, there remains concern over religious freedom in Nicaragua. [ACN News January 15 2024.](#)

Let us pray:

Lord our God, you are gentle and humble of heart. We ask that you watch over and strengthen the people of Nicaragua and fill them with your wonder, so that peace may flourish.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

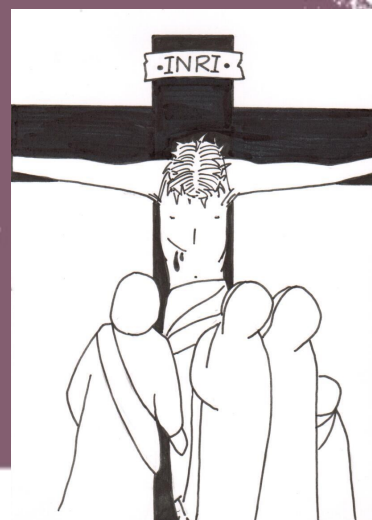
All: I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. ever permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

Divine Mercy, source of our happiness and joy, I trust in You.

12th Station: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



The hospital in Maboya, Uganda after an attack by armed militants.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Isaiah 53: 5-6 (RSV-CE)**

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)/Uganda

Extremist rebels ransacked a secondary school, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, before setting fire to dormitories. The extremist group, group ADF-NALU (Allied Democratic Forces – National Army for the Liberation of Uganda), which carried out the attack is widely reported to have pledged allegiance to global Islamist group Daesh (also known as the Islamic State). It kidnapped six students after killing 38 of them, a school security officer and three others while students were singing their evening prayers.

The Provincial Episcopal Assembly of Bukavu issued a statement at the end of May, which highlighted the suffering caused by extremist groups and the worsening security situation in the region – which has left almost a quarter of a million people in displacement camps. The affected areas are rich in natural resources such as coltan, a mineral used in the manufacturing of mobile phones, electric cars, and other electronic devices.

ACN is supporting the Diocese of Bukavu by helping to build churches and houses and providing training programmes to strengthen the Church's presence in areas apparently forgotten by the government. [ACN News June 19 2023](#). See also [ACN News June 26 2023](#)

Let us pray:

O Lamb of God, with your stripes you have taken away the sins of the world. May your kingdom come! May your will be done!

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

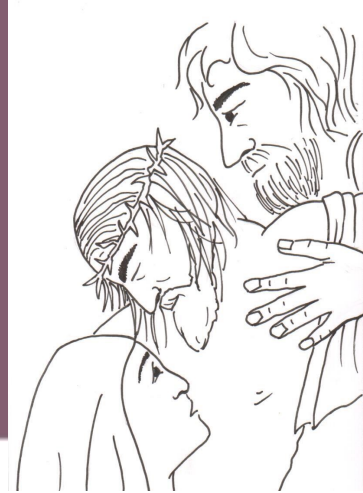
Divine Mercy, which flowed out from the open wound of the Heart of Jesus, I trust in You.



13th Station: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN



With image of a Marian sanctuary in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3: 16-18 (RSV-CE)

Haiti

Following the murder of President Jovenal Moïse, in 2021, Haiti has been facing increasing levels of chaos. Criminal gangs' control key parts of the country. Delinquency and poverty remain rampant, with an alarming increase in murders, kidnappings, and sexual violence, leaving the population vulnerable.

More than 3,000 people were kidnapped in Haiti in 2023. On 19 January 2024, six religious Sisters from the Congregation of Saint Anne were kidnapped in broad daylight when their bus was stopped by armed criminals in the capital city, Port-au-Prince. The six Sisters and the two other occupants of the vehicle, a young woman, and the driver, were then taken to an undisclosed location by the criminals. But just days later, on Wednesday 24th January, the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince confirmed that the six religious Sisters and their two companions had been released. After confirming the release, Archbishop Max Leroy Mésidor of Port-au-Prince said: "Let us give thanks to God. Thank you for your support."

ACN has been active in Haiti for many years and continues to support the Church and the communities she serves. [ACN Intl News December 22 2023](#). See also [ACN Intl News January 9 2024](#), [ACN News January 22 2024](#), [Vatican News January 23 2024](#), and [ACN News January 25 2024](#).

Let us pray:

O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me. Psalm 69 (70): 1- 2

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

Divine Mercy, source of miracles and wonders, I trust in You.

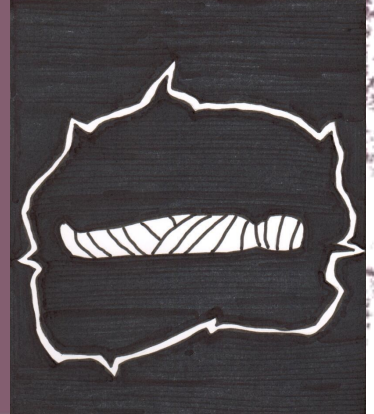
14th Station: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



(Above) Internally displaced people from Dédé in the compound of the Cathedral in Dédougou, Burkina Faso.



(Right) Bishop Prosper Bonaventure Ky of Dédougou.



**We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Scripture

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4: 6-7 (RSV-CE)**

Burkina Faso

The persecution of Christians in Burkina Faso entered a new phase at the end of 2023 after jihadist terrorists drove the Christian population out of Dédé, a village in northwest of the country.

Christians were forced to leave their village after the extremists shot dead two schoolboys for flouting their ban on children going to school. The terrorists, who control parts of all the provinces in the Burkina Faso, forced locals to follow Islamic norms and closed all schools in Dédé, forbidding schoolchildren from continuing their studies. Pupils however, continued to attend school by travelling 45km (28 miles) to Tougan, under the protection of a military convoy.

Bishop Prosper Bonaventure Ky of Dédougou, Burkina Faso said, “There has never been anything like this before. Up until now the whole village was driven out, not just the members of a particular religion. **We offer our heartfelt thanks to all the donors of ACN who support us and make it possible for us to alleviate the sufferings of the people in this difficult situation. We ask for prayer and implore the Lord to send peace to Burkina Faso, to West Africa and to the whole world.**” [ACN News November 20 2023](#)

Let us pray:

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. **Psalm 36 (37): 3-4 (RSV-CE)**

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

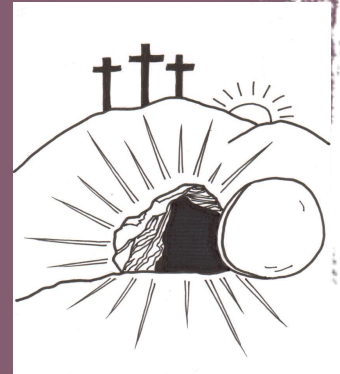
All: I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

Divine Mercy, in our justification through Jesus Christ, I trust in You.

RISEN JESUS, WE PRAISE YOU!



The Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin in Maroua, in the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo - one of the poorest in country - in the north of Cameroon, was consecrated on the 8th July.



Risen Jesus, we praise you! You have triumphed over sin and death and your victory is evident in your Church today. No evil can withstand the power of your love.

Cameroon

Bishop Bruno Ateba Edo of Maroua-Mokolo said the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin in Maroua, in the north of Cameroon would become a symbol of unity as it was built by both Muslims and Christians. It was consecrated on 8th July.

The Cathedral, which has room for 3,500 worshippers, was designed to evoke the Virgin Mary's mantle embracing and protecting the faithful. The inner columns are positioned to form the letter M, and the four pillars holding up the ceiling are shaped like a star that reaches upwards, symbolising the Assumption.

The diocese, which is in one of the poorest regions of the country and has suffered multiple attacks by extremists, is home to a large number of internally displaced Cameroonian and Nigerian refugees who fled from terrorist group Boko Haram.

The consecration of the Cathedral was the culmination of nine years of hard work and struggle against a backdrop of terrorism and extremism. Bishop Edo said: "We are proud and happy. Finally, we have a worship space where we can celebrate the Holy Mass with dignity".

ACN has also supported several aid projects for refugee children in the area, as well as a refugee camp for victims of Boko Haram. [ACN News July 6 2023](#)

Let us pray

Christ Jesus, our Redeemer, through your Resurrection we know that your "...power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think". We pray that we may follow the instruction given by your Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the servants during the Wedding at Cana to "Do whatever he tells you".

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

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.

Divine Mercy, fount gushing forth from the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, I trust in You.



A PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS



Children in the Diocese of Dedza, Malawi taking part in the ACN prayer initiative 'One Million Children Praying the Rosary'. ©ACN



A man prays in Pakistan while a police officer guards the church. ©ACN/Magdalena Wolnik

We pray together in solidarity with the millions of Christian people around the world who are persecuted because of their beliefs.

Loving Father, we pray that each of your precious children across the world may know of your love for them.

We pray that, where life has become very difficult, you may make a clear path for them.

We pray for their protection, and for them to know that “...under His wings you will find refuge”. (*Psalms 90(91):4 RSV-CE*)

May persecuted Christians know that with your grace, Lord God, they can do anything. We offer our prayers for their strength and safety.

*We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

“My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9 RSV-CE)



The ONE NIGHT Icon commissioned after One Night for Religious Freedom at the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus, Manchester. March 2015. ©ACN

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” **John 20:29** (RSV-CE)



Children from the Diocese of Dori in Burkina Faso on an annual retreat funded by ACN ©ACN

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 6,000 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

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

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Please keep in touch with your local office. Details are listed below.



Volunteers working to support Christians in Aleppo, Syria ©ACN

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