



The Way of the Cross



The cross of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (commonly known as the White Fathers because of their white habits) in Muyaga, Burundi. This is one of the oldest crosses in the country.

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Stations of the Cross for the Suffering Church

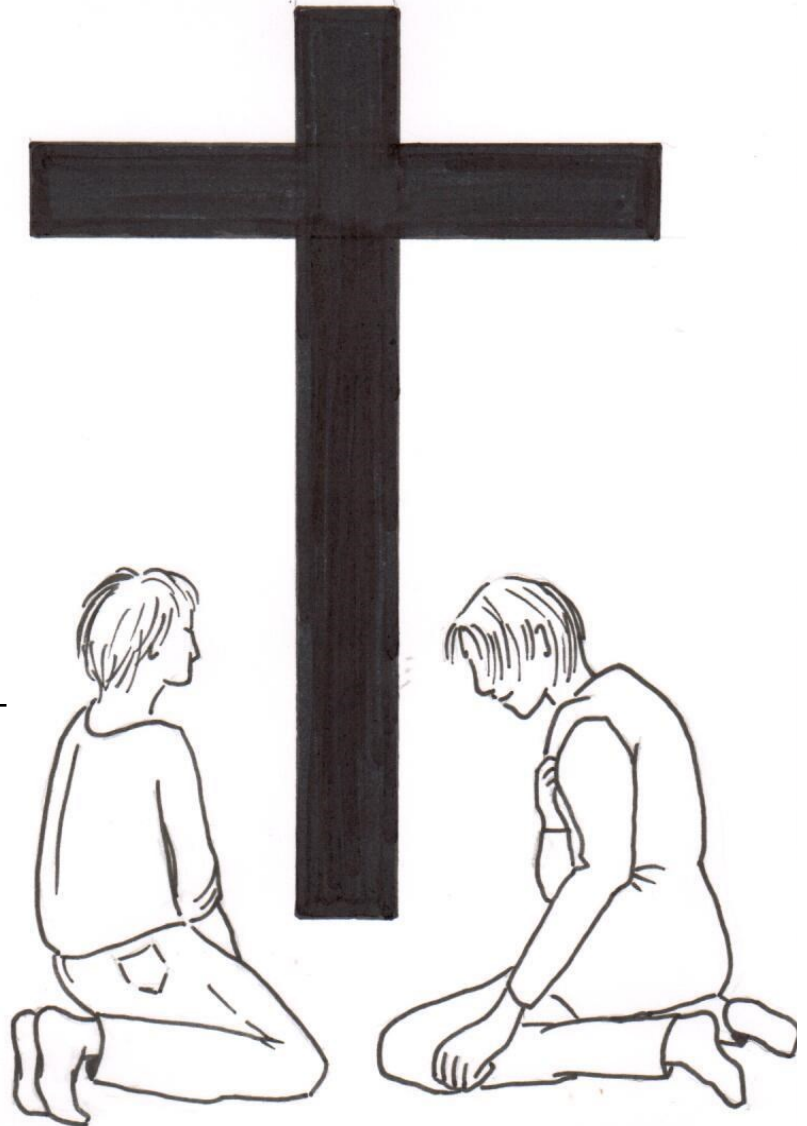
Introduction:

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.

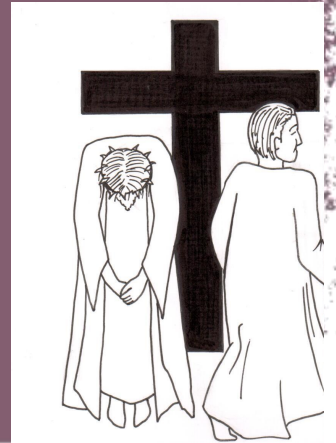
1st Station:

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



© Catholic Archdiocese of Mandalay

Father Donald Martin Ye Naing Win, a 44-year-old priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mandalay, whose body was found on the morning of Friday 14th February 2025 in the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Church, Kangyi Taw, Burma (Myanmar).



**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)**

Myanmar (Burma)

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) offices in 23 countries led hour-long prayer vigils on Saturday, 1st February, and asked the charity’s friends and benefactors around the world to pray with them.

The Burmese military has not been able to consolidate power since overthrowing the democratically elected members of the government on 1st February 2021, leading to ongoing violence and crackdowns against civilians opposing the new regime.

Millions of people fled their homes as a result of the crisis. There are more than 2.8 million IDPs (internally displaced persons) in Myanmar (Burma), according to UN reports.

Regina Lynch, ACN (International) Executive President, said: “We at [ACN] are deeply moved by the situation in Myanmar.

“This day [was] an opportunity for everyone, regardless of their place of origin, to unite in a collective plea for peace and reconciliation.” [ACN News January 30 2025](#)

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



Emergency assistance for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Cape Delgado, Mozambique in 2024.



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)

Mozambique

In Mozambique, since October 2017 about 5,000 people have been killed and one million displaced, as a result of the violent clashes between insurgents seeking to establish an Islamic state and the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces according to reports received by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). The fighting has been concentrated around Muslim-majority Cabo Delgado Province in northern Mozambique

Bishop António Juliasso of Pemba, located in the port-city of Pemba the capital of the province of Cabo Delgado, told ACN that people in his diocese have faced “seven years of displacement; seven years of death; seven years during which people have lived with great suffering; of hunger, because they cannot farm their land due to insecurity; of disease, because there is no access to medication, or because the closest clinic has been destroyed. Seven years during which children have not been able to study as they should.

Extremist groups have tended to target civilian and state-owned institutions, but attacks focused on Christian communities have also been reported. The bishop said: “The Church continues to do what is in its nature, to be with the people, to help those we can help, and to offer what aid we receive. ACN [...] always come to our assistance at the most critical times. [ACN News October 21 2024](#)

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.

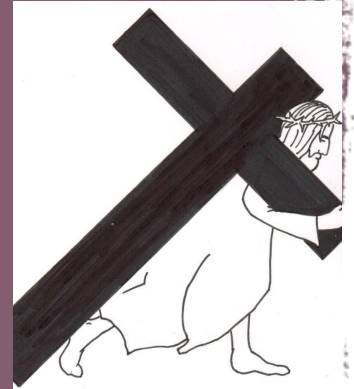
3rd Station:

JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME



Schools start in Aleppo after the transition to the new regime. Alinayah School.

© Jacob/ACN



**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 \(RSV-CE\)](#)

Syria

Despite Syria's Christian schools reopening concerns remain about the future of Christianity in the country. An ACN contact said: "My message to the world is the importance of international support for Christians to establish a civil constitution, rather than an Islamic Shari'a-based constitution. The source added that the Christian population in Syria is so small that they do not have enough power to make them "capable of securing their rights in terms of the constitution, institutional life and civil governance.

The source added that authorities have assured the public that Christian schools would be able to operate as normal. During 13 years of conflict, in which Syria suffered a crippling financial crisis. trust in the authorities has been deeply shaken.

ACN is committed to providing continued support, including emergency aid, medical assistance and food supplies for Christian families, as well as helping with pastoral activities, the rebuilding of homes and the installation of solar panels on Church buildings and schools to reduce energy costs. [ACN News December 16 2024](#)

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 Syria.

R: Lord, hear us.

A: Lord, graciously hear us.

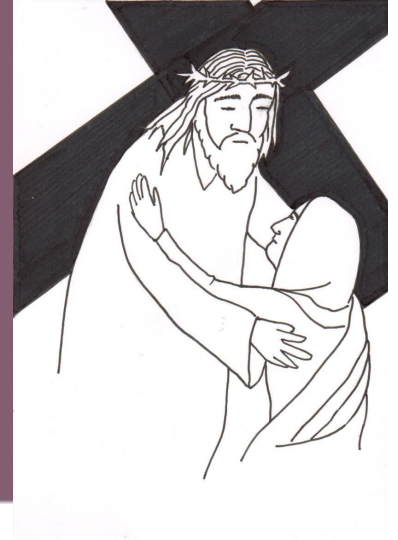
All: I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

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

4th Station: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



Sisters from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Mother of Christ in a group discussion in the Diocese of Onitsha, Nigeria.



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)**

Nigeria

Sister Vincentia María Nwankwo and Sister Grace Mariette Okoli, were abducted on 7th January 2025 in Anambra State, south-east Nigeria. Both religious Sisters belong to Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Christ.

According to the congregation's secretary-general Sister Maria Sobenna Ikeotuonye, Sister Vincentia María, the principal of Archbishop Charles Heerey Memorial Model Secondary School, Ufuma, and Sister Grace Mariette, a teacher at Immaculata Girls Model Secondary School, Nnewi, were seized on the Ufuma road after attending a meeting in Ogboji, a town in the Aguata Local Government Area. Although not officially confirmed, it is believed that the abductors are local armed criminals, commonly known as kidnapping gangs.

Sister Ikeotuonye said: "We solicit your fervent prayers and supplications to God that they may be released as soon as possible and come back to us safe and sound. Pray also that they may be released unconditionally."

In 2024, according to research by ACN, 11 priests were abducted in the country and another priest was killed.
[ACN News January 9 2025](#)

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.

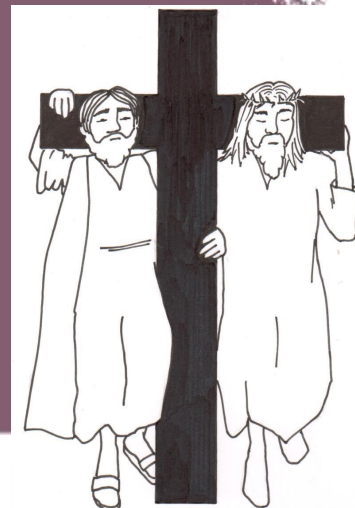
Divine Mercy, repose of hearts, peace amidst fear, I trust in You.

5th Station:

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS



Father Lucas Perozzi (centre), a Brazilian priest ministering in Ukraine, is praying at the Eucharistic celebration during the war. On his right is Fr. Mateusz Adamski of St. Anthony Parish in Kyiv.



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

After more than a thousand days of fighting in Ukraine, Father Lucas Perozzi, a Brazilian missionary priest ministering in Kyiv, told ACN that “psychologically, people are tired, very scared and without hope.” Father Perozzi said that his “mission... to spread the Gospel... isn’t easy. People need hope, they need God, the sacred”, but it seems that “nothing consoles them anymore. They have given up searching. They have become apathetic, disillusioned.”

Father Lucas, who has remained in Kyiv to minister to the faithful rather than return to his native Brazil, explained to ACN “We go to sleep to the sound of sirens, and we wake up to the sound of sirens and bombings. He continued: “You can’t live like this. For the first six months we used to run to the bunkers, but not anymore. When our time comes, it will come. Only God knows the hour. It could be a missile or a heart attack.”

He added that the Church in Ukraine has received much-needed support from ACN, including “help to hold summer camps for children, which is very important, because they are living in a state of constant alarm...

[ACN News November 28 2024](#)

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.

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

6th Station: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



Emergency support for 800 people (IDPs) displaced by the war in Lebanon, provided by the Congregation of the Sisters of Good Service (Baalbek, 2024).



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)**

Lebanon

Marielle Boutros, Lebanon project coordinator at Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) said there are 1.5 million displaced people - one in four people in Lebanon - mostly concentrated in the Mount Lebanon region, who were forced to leave their homes in southern Lebanon because of Israel's bombing of Hezbollah targets.

She added that the Church has been quick to respond to the crisis, with many of those displaced fleeing to Christian areas where they were welcomed in shelters such as schools, churches, retreat centres or private houses. ACN has provided emergency aid – including food and medicine – to support the relief efforts in Lebanon where about one third of the population is Christian.

Ms Boutros said that the Church had already worked hard to provide support to those in need before the war broke out as the country has been going through a crippling economic crisis for a number of years.

[ACN News November 19 2024](#)

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.

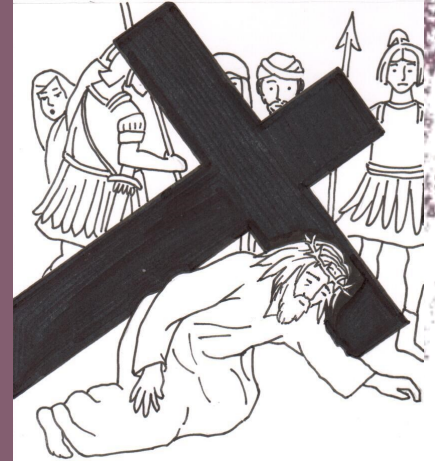
Divine Mercy, sweet relief for anguished hearts, I trust in You.

7th Station:

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



Bishop Bruno Ateba of Maroua-Mokolo, Cameroon visiting Nigerian refugees in his Diocese at the Minawao refugee settlement from 25-27 May 2021. The Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo is in the far north of Cameroon. Since 2013, Nigerians have fled Nigeria to Cameroon to escape the abuses of Boko Haram fighters.



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! **Psalm 129 (130): 1-2 (RSV-CE)**

Cameroon

In the 2024 Global Terrorism Index report by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Cameroon was ranked as the sixth country in Africa and 12th in the world worst affected by terrorism.

Bishop Bruno Ateba of Maroua-Mokolo told ACN the two parishes of his diocese which border Nigeria are the most impacted by the violence. Bishop Ateba said the “sporadic attacks” by Jihadist terrorist group Boko Haram in northern Cameroon were mainly to “steal food, livestock, money and even clothes”, but they no longer have “heavy weapons”. He told ACN that weapons will not “solve the problem of Boko Haram”. “If young people have prospects, it will be difficult for Boko Haram to recruit new members and brainwash them.” “Most of the time, the army is there to protect the population, but the partisans of Boko Haram in Cameroon tell Boko Haram in Nigeria when the soldiers are not there.” He explained: “The people are afraid.”

Bishop Ateba concluded: “It’s not easy here, especially because of climatic conditions, poverty and terrorism, but ACN helps us enormously.” [ACN News January 10 2025](#)

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.

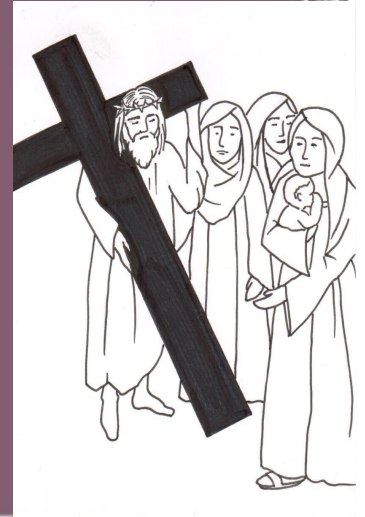


ACN

8th Station: JESUS CONSOLES THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM



The house of a Christian family aided by ACN in Jerusalem's Old City. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



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)**

Holy Land

In April Cardinal Pizzaballa told ACN that, after the war, it will be possible to “rebuild the infrastructure – but how can we rebuild relationships?” The patriarch said “What concerns me is the level of hatred. The hate speech, the language of contempt, the denial of the other is very problematic.” He added that the Christian community “because we are so small [1.5 percent of the population] and politically irrelevant, we have the freedom to connect with everyone.

Almost all the Christians in the West Bank who worked in Israel have had their permits revoked since the beginning of the conflict, and those who worked in the tourism sector have lost their livelihoods due to the cancellation of pilgrimages. Since October 2023, ACN’s help in the Holy Land has included: emergency and subsistence aid, job creation programmes, transportation, support for church construction and pastoral projects and help with the formation of priests and religious.

Cardinal Pizzaballa said it is essential for Christians to remain in the region to “keep the memory of Jesus alive in the land of Jesus”. [ACN News December 11 2024](#)

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.



ACN

9th Station: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME



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Sri Lanka soldier attached to the United Nations forces in Haiti watches as a mob-like crowd surges to the check point where Haitians presented food vouchers to receive rations at a distribution point in Carrefour, Haiti..



**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)**

Haiti

Haiti – which is the poorest country in the western hemisphere – has been going through a deep political, social and economic crisis for years, with armed gangs having taken control of the capital. Since March 2024, Haiti has been paralysed by violence however since early November Archbishop Max Leroy's Mésidor of Port-au-Prince, President of the Haitian Bishops' Conference, told ACN the ongoing fighting “has taken a serious turn”.

Criminals have cut off the main transport routes between Port-au-Prince and the rest of the country, destroying livelihoods and depriving the population of basic services. Within a period of four days in November, more than 20,000 people in the Port-au-Prince region fled their homes according to reports from the United Nations. UNICEF estimates that more than 700,000 people – about half of them children – have been displaced within the country. In 2024, ACN supported the Church in Haiti with up to 70 projects, such as training and subsistence aid for priests, religious and catechists, as well as funding for diocesan radio stations and solar panels for Church buildings. [ACN News November 27 2024](#)

Let us pray:

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

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.

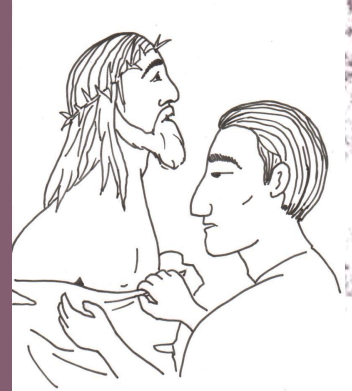


ACN

10th Station: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS



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The situation in the Diocese of Mopti after an attack to the village of Sobanda, Mali a 100% Catholic village where 35 people at least died. Christians who escaped the massacre.

**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)**

Mali

In Mali, Christians make up 2.35 percent of Mali's 20 million population, according to ACN's Religious Freedom in the World Report 2023.

Islamist militant groups have seized large swathes of the country where they have imposed the jizya Islamic tax of 25,000 CFA francs (£32) on those over 18 years of age in the Christian village Douna-Pen in Mopti Region. Some only earn 50,000 CFA francs (£64) a month in what is one of the world's poorest countries. A source told ACN that those unable or unwilling to pay have been threatened with the closure of their churches. The source added: "We know that the country is large and that the same is happening in other places, but if we don't do something in this area soon, the consequences will be disastrous.

The ACN contact explained that this latest case of financial extortion is just one example of the persecution afflicting Christians in the region, and physical attacks are also common – adding that problems are made worse by a lack of basic infrastructure, such as roads and water supply systems, and schools closing due to growing insecurity. [ACN News October 31 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.

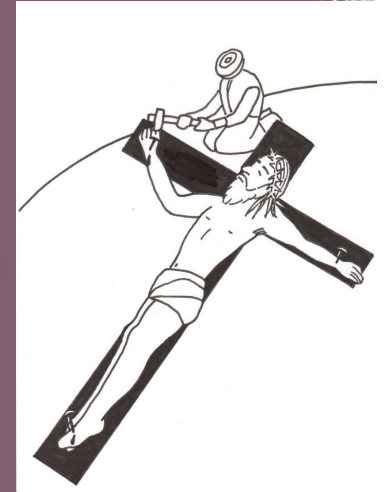
Divine Mercy, only hope for despairing souls, I trust in You.

11th Station:

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS



© Aid to the Church in Need



In early October, terrorists killed at least 150 people in Manni in the northeast of the country, many of whom were Christians. This latest massacre testifies to a cruelty and a stronger determination than ever to sow terror in Burkina Faso where more than half of the country is now controlled by terrorists.

**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)**

Burkina Faso

In a series of attacks over 3 consecutive days in October 2024, Islamist extremists massacred at least 150 people in the town of Manni – home to a large Catholic community – in eastern Burkina Faso. Local sources told ACN the extremists opened fire at residents and torched buildings before returning the following day, attacking medical staff and murdering many of the previously injured who were being treated in hospital. In the third and final attack, the extremist killed all the men they could find in the town.

For a number of years Burkina Faso has endured the highest level of extremist violence in the Sahel region. More than two million people – about 10 percent of the population – have been displaced as a result

In response to the escalating violence, ACN has stepped up its emergency aid to Burkina Faso, providing food, medicine and psychological help for traumatised people. [ACN News October 17 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 Burkina Faso 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. 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 our happiness and joy, I trust in You.

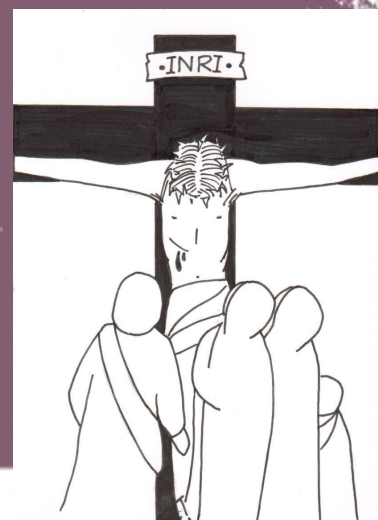


ACN

12th Station: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



Archbishop Joseph Arshad of Islamabad-Rawalpindi and Christian Senator Tahir Khalil Sindu visited the police headquarters in Sargodha after a mob of Muslim fanatics attacked a Christian on May 25, 2024.



**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)**

Pakistan

Two days after a violent mob brutally beat Mr Nazir Gill Masih, a Christian shoe factory owner from Sargodha, Punjab Province, and his son Pakistan's police have charged more than 100 men for the attempted lynching of Mr Masih and his son; they have also launched an investigation into allegations of blasphemy against Mr Masih. Extremists attacked Mr Masih and his son on Saturday 25th May, blaming them for burning the Qur'an after damaged pages of the Islamic holy book were found outside their house in Sargodha. The mob also looted and set fire to Mr Masih's home and factory. Mr Masih, who was in his 70s, died from his injuries on 3rd June.

Speaking to ACN, Archbishop Joseph Arshad of Islamabad-Rawalpindi – who visited Sargodha on the day of the attack – called on Pakistan's government to help prevent further violent incidents and to ensure the security of the country's Christian community. [ACN News May 28 2024](#)

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



The aftermath of an attack on a hospital in DRC in 2022.



**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)

Democratic Republic of Congo

Bishop Melchisedec Sikuli Paluku of Butembo-Beni in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has called on authorities to “put an end to the plight of the Congolese people” following the massacre of around 150 people – including at least 80 Christians – by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) which is affiliated with Daesh (ISIS).

The terrorist group carried out the killings in villages in North Kivu Province in the eastern part of the (DRC) between 4th and 8th June. They torched homes, medical facilities, businesses and vehicles, forcing survivors to flee the area. Eastern DRC – a region rich in natural resources – has been plagued by violent incursions by rebel groups since the 1990s.

Bishop Paluku wrote that “with the mobilisation of all Congolese, good will triumph over evil, life will conquer death and the truth will ultimately destroy lies”. The Holy Father, Pope Francis also condemned the massacres and said that among the victims were “Christians killed “in odium fidei” – in hatred of the faith – who are therefore “martyrs”, whose “sacrifice is a seed that germinates and bears fruit, teaching us to bear witness to the Gospel with courage and consistency”. [ACN News June 20 2024](#)

Let us pray:

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



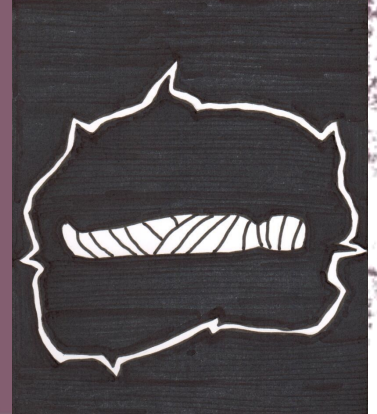
ACN

14th Station:

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB



Saint Joseph School at Luxmipur District set on fire by a fundamentalist group on August 23, 2024.



**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)**

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh a well-placed ACN source said that religious freedom – despite being guaranteed by the constitution – is not being respected, and “the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party wants Islam to be the only religion in Bangladesh”. Consequently, the future of Catholic schools is under threat, Church construction projects are delayed, and Christians struggle to find work.

Catholic schools and universities have been targeted by mobs “controlled by Jamaat-e-Islami”, an Islamist political party with ties to the government. A mob of Islamist extremists has set fire to a Catholic school and completely burnt down some of the classrooms, and others have been putting increasing pressure on Catholic institutions to replace the people in charge. In a number of schools “religious administrators have been forced to resign” – adding that “in one [Catholic] school, two Sisters have been forced to step down. ACN’s contact highlighted that the Church has set up an interfaith committee of legal experts and other leaders who have been instrumental in helping Christian communities “maintain a peaceful situation” and “appeal for justice.”

ACN’s help in Bangladesh includes church and school construction projects, training programmes for catechists and Mass stipends for priests. [ACN News November 11 2024](#)

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.

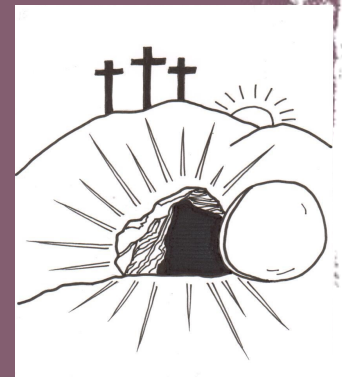
Divine Mercy, in our justification through Jesus Christ, I trust in You.



RISEN JESUS, WE PRAISE YOU!



The new centre for the Sisters in Araden, northern Iraq.



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.

Iraq

The Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a Chaldean order of religious Sisters, has been able to go back to the village of Araden in northern Iraq.

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) helped the order to return to its birthplace by supporting the building of a retreat centre and a shrine to the order's founder, Father Abdul Ahad Rayes. Mother Superior Samar Mikha said: "The revitalised space will continue the mission of Father Rayes by supporting the Christian educational needs of the region."

The village has been a hub of Aramaic-speaking Christian activity, and its three churches Mart Shmoni, Sultana Mahdokht and Mar Awda were all founded more than a millennium ago. But a succession of conflicts from the First Iraqi-Kurdish War in the 1960s down to bombing raids by Turkish air force at the end of the last decade have seen numbers decline as villagers fled the danger.

Mother Samar thanked ACN for helping the community re-establish itself in Araden. "The Abdul-Ahad shrine and retreat house now stands as a symbol of resilience and hope for our community." [ACN News September 12 2024](#)

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”. (*Psalm 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.



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

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

“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.

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.

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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