

# The Migrants' Way of the Cross



## Introduction

The Way of the Cross is a Christian expression of faith. It helps us remember and reflect on Jesus, who carried his cross to Mount Calvary. The Way of the Cross reminds us that pain, suffering, and death are real, not only for Jesus on the road to Calvary, but also for us in the world we live.

During this Lent, let us focus on the suffering of so many people who bear a heavy cross: impoverished and excluded people who are abused by an unjust system and are trying to emigrate. Each day, in larger numbers, migrants walk with Jesus and reenact the Way of the Cross.

Our Lord invites us to dream and strive for a different future, building a kingdom of peace, love, justice, and solidarity. May this invitation turn us into better Christians, moving us to compassion toward migrants and all vulnerable people as “we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home” (2 Peter 3:13).

Note: This Way of the Cross is the result of a partnership between the Office of the Latino/Hispanic Ministries of the Episcopal Church and Forward Movement. Some of the meditations and prayers are based on the “Vía Crucis del Migrante” prepared by the Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala.

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*A hymn or other song may be sung during the entrance of the ministers.*

## Opening Devotions

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Lord, have mercy.

*Christ, have mercy.*

Lord, have mercy.

*Presider and People*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.

V. We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

R. In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The procession goes to the First Station.*

## First Station

Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Poverty Condemns People to Migrate

In many countries experiencing endemic poverty, our sisters and brothers are sometimes forced to leave, since they do not find space or opportunities to develop as persons, to raise their families, or to prosper. They experience violence as well as social, economic, and political discrimination. Jesus, living as a human being, experienced the suffering and hazards of being a refugee, living for some time far away from his homeland. As people of faith, we must find concrete ways to make a difference and promote just systems so that no one will be forced to migrate.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you experienced the bitterness of leaving your own homeland: Give us caring hearts to welcome all the migrants who wander in search of a better future, and welcome all of us, who are pilgrims on earth, into the kingdom where you live and reign for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Second Station

Jesus takes up his Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Lack of Land and Opportunities Forces Migrants to the City

Our migrant sisters and brothers take up their crosses: They are looking for work and a better future for themselves and their families. What the land yields is not distributed with fairness; thousands sink into despair. While some relocate within their countries of origin, others cross international borders. They carry the crosses of abuse, loneliness, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, exploitation, and restrictive migration policies.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, who carried the cross all the way to Mount Calvary: Inspire us to love and help all migrants carrying their crosses, looking forward to the day when we will all be with you in Paradise. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Third Station**

Jesus falls the first time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## **Migrants Are Despised and Humiliated**

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah: “He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:3-5)

There is nothing more cruel than betraying those who put their trust in you. Migrants are betrayed—often by their own compatriots and “friends”. Migrants suffer countless violations of their human rights. They are treated with cruelty; they are arbitrarily detained and jailed; their right to circulate freely and choose where to live is not respected; and they are not paid fair wages because they are undocumented.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you know what it is like to fall and to help those who fall: Stir us to help our sisters and brothers rise after each fall by showing them trust, compassion and solidarity. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Fourth Station

Jesus meets his afflicted mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Women Know Firsthand the Hardships of Migration

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke: “Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’” (Luke 2:34-35)

Poverty has a profound impact on women. In many countries, the number of women who migrate is on the rise. They look for work as maids, cooks, or nannies. They are forced to be separated from their husbands and children for extended periods of time. When their spouses or children are the ones who migrate, they have to assume the roles of mother and father. These women, too, feel a sword pierce their souls.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, as a child you witnessed examples of love and sacrifice by your mother the Blessed Virgin Mary: Help us be aware of the sacrifices made by all migrant women. May their ordeals be like a sword piercing our souls. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Fifth Station

The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## As They Cross Mexico, Some Migrants Encounter Good Samaritans

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew: “As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross”. (Matthew 27:32)

Our fellow beings experience physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. As he made his way toward Golgotha, our Lord clearly embodied physical suffering. Perhaps out of compassion, the soldiers asked Simon to help Jesus. Simon turned from a mere spectator to a participant, as he carried our Lord’s cross. Today we remember Simon with admiration and respect; the experience must have left a mark on him forever. And so it is with those who today turn from spectators to participants, providing water and helping migrants as they attempt to cross the border. They are moved by compassion, courage, and empathy. Unlike Simon, these partners choose voluntarily to help. They are aware of the suffering and challenges that individuals and families face as they struggle for safety and a better future.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord, fill our hearts with compassion and courage to respond to our society’s injustices and to the needs of those living in the margins. May we, as Simon of Cyrene, have opportunities to do good and walk with those who suffer. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Sixth Station

A woman wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Thousands of Migrants Die of Thirst in the Sonora Desert

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew: I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. (Matthew 25:35)

Crying is an expression of suffering; wiping tears and giving water are expressions of compassion. Since 2001, the bodies of 2,832 migrants have been found in southern Arizona; most of them are migrants who died of thirst. “No More Deaths” is a humanitarian group that leaves water in the desert so that migrants may survive the journey. In January 2019 four American women were convicted of entering a wildlife refuge without a permit and leaving behind gallon jugs of water and cans of beans. Like the

woman who wiped the face of Jesus, these women show compassion toward migrants crossing the Sonora desert.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded us to welcome the stranger: Teach us to be compassionate towards those who are thirsty and to help save the lives of those attempting to cross the desert. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Seventh Station

Jesus falls a second time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Refugees Face a Perilous Journey as They Attempt to Reach Europe by Sea

A reading from the Gospel according to John: “So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.” (John 19:16-17)

Europe has been setting up barriers to prevent refugees from entering. While this has not curbed the number of asylum seekers, it has pushed them to attempt a deadly journey across the Mediterranean Sea. Jesus falls under the weight of the cross. On that cross hang the tears, suffering, and lives of those lost in the sea. On his shoulders hang our hesitancy and inaction, our privilege and arrogance in deciding whose life is worth saving, and our minds and hearts hardened to injustice and suffering.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Good Jesus, in your falling help us too to fall and to realize our responsibility in this crisis. May we repent from our sins and rise with you to engage in the work of justice you have called us to do. Open our hearts to your presence in the refugees fleeing from disaster and war, and move us to raise them up in our midst. In your holy name we pray. *Amen*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Eighth Station**

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

### **“Las Patronas” Are Symbols of God’s Motherly Love**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke: “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 23:27-28)

A woman living in the Mexican state of Veracruz heard from a passing train: “*Madre, we’re hungry*”. With hardly a thought, she threw the stowaways her bread and some milk. The experience moved her to return, this time with friends, to feed more travelers. We now call these women “Las Patronas.” The words of Jesus to the women of Jerusalem call us to care for the children of the suffering mothers of our own day. The courageous example of Las Patronas gives us hope and moves us to care for Jesus as he is present in migrants, in displaced persons, and in refugees.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Loving God, like a mother you take care of us. Help us see that we are called to be mothers, too, particularly to sisters and brothers who are fleeing for safety. Move us to see in the example of Las Patronas a sign of your kingdom where all have a place at the table, and all are worthy and welcomed. Teach us to be Patronas in our everyday lives. In and through your son Jesus Christ we pray. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Ninth Station**

Jesus falls a third time

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

### **The Migrant’s Human Face**

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

Their faces reveal their harsh circumstances: They miss loved ones they had to leave behind. They lose their identity, their culture, their customs, their religious values. Like Jesus, they are despised, mistreated, and sidelined. Jesus invites us to love those who suffer. True solidarity means acknowledgment, respect, understanding, friendship, support, and striving for truth and justice.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

God of life, we ask you to protect your migrant sons and daughters as they walk dangerous roads. Help them to overcome their obstacles and find honorable work, to rise every time they fall and continue their journey.

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Tenth Station**

Jesus is stripped of his garments

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## **Migrants Are Victims of Human Trafficking**

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew: “And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

The bodies of migrants (men, women, girls, and boys) are treated as commodities. They are sold and smuggled by gangs, “polleros” or coyotes operating outside the law in the countries where migrants travel. Many suffer physical and sexual abuse: They are pimped or forced to do demeaning work; like Jesus, they are robbed of their human rights, their belongings, even their lives. Mistreating and abusing children is evil. These are victims whom we must lift up and protect.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Loving God, free us from abusive relationships and cleanse our hearts. Remove our greed and teach us to be humble and meek. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Eleventh Station**

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## **La Bestia: A Harrowing Journey by Train**

“La Bestia,” or “The Beast”, is a freight train that runs through Mexico. Until recently, tens of thousands of Central American migrants traveled each year atop the roof of La Bestia as stowaways. Sometimes the police would find them and force them off the train. But gangs also jump atop La Bestia to rob the migrants; if victims resist, they are thrown off the moving train. Falling asleep at night while traveling through rural areas is especially dangerous. Many migrants have been injured or maimed by the moving train.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you watched soldiers cast lots for your clothes and drive nails through your body: Help us draw a sword to protect the weak from abuse as we await your cross’s final triumph over violence and hatred. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## **Twelfth Station**

Jesus dies on the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## **Migrants Are Jailed, Despised, and Ignored**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke: “It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was

torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last." (Luke 23:44-46)

Jesus dies, a victim of indifference and contempt. At this station, we remember the scores of migrants who die daily at the border, without even leaving a name behind; the migrants who die in prisons; the migrants who die in the streets, sick and jobless. Like Jesus, these migrants have been pierced in their hands and in their feet, and their rights have been crushed.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you experienced the bitterness of migration: Give us compassionate hearts to welcome every family who crosses our path. Let us not violate the dignity of any person through indifference or selfishness. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Thirteenth Station

The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:  
*Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.*

## Women's Role in the Migration Drama

Over the course of his ministry, Jesus upheld the dignity of every person; and in a society that saw women as property, he affirmed the dignity of every woman. This tender, heartbreaking encounter with Jesus invites us to reflect on the roles played by women in the migration drama we witness today. Mothers receive their deported children; sometimes, in coffins holding the remains of those who died in the desert. The strength and endurance many women show around the immigration experience has inspired many. These women remind us that even in the midst of our sorrow, God gives us the strength to comfort others.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord, bless and protect all women who find themselves in precarious situations because of acts of injustice at the border. Give us courage to fight and advocate for their rights. *Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

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

### Upon Graduation from High School, DREAMers Face Uncertainty

“DREAMers” are young people who emigrated to the U.S. as children--some of them, as babies. When Jesus was laid in the tomb, his disciples were confused and afraid. When DREAMers finish high school, they realize that they may not be able to obtain a driver’s license, go to college, or earn a good living. They spent years in high school preparing for a future that remains elusive. If deported, they will end up living in a country they never knew, far away from family and friends.

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Lord Jesus Christ, you promised your disciples that even though the world would hate them, you would abide in them. Please abide in us when we feel that our dreams have been shattered and entombed, and give us hope in your eternal and glorious kingdom, where you live and reign forever and ever.  
*Amen.*

*Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.*

## Concluding Prayers before the Altar

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:

*Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.*

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

God of amnesty and forgiveness: We thank you that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and has called us to be heralds of good news, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*