



LENT 2021

Way of the Cross

Notes for Teachers and Leaders

Rēneti 2021

Te Ara o te Rīpeka

He Tuhinga ngā Kaiako me ngā Kaiarataki

Today, we gather to pray the Way of the Cross.

We remember Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection: events that happened more than 2,000 years ago yet changed the course of history as we know it.

During Lent, we are reminded that still, in this present day, many of His children continue that walk to Calvary, carrying heavy, difficult crosses. While we are challenged to make a new way forward, may we continue to be Simon to those whose burdens are too heavy to be borne alone and to be Veronica to those who need the touch of love and comfort. And may we, struggling with our own crosses, always remember His promises of justice, mercy and peace.

Pope Francis reminds us that 'Holy Week challenges us to step outside ourselves so as to attend the needs of others: those who long for a sympathetic ear, those in need of comfort or help. We should not simply remain in our own secure world, that of the ninety-nine sheep who ever strayed from the fold, but we should go out, with Christ, in search of the one lost sheep. However far it may have wandered.'

Today we especially pray for hope and love, in our school, in our country, in the world, and particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable families on our planet.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit/Ke te ingoa o te Matua, o te Tamaiti, o te Wairua Tapu. Āmene.

Let us join together in saying 'Our Father who art in heaven...'



Prayer Station 1 *Jesus prays in Gethsemane*

Prayer focus: one lit candle

Scripture: Matthew 26: 36-46

Reading:

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Reflection:

Jesus was feeling upset because he knew what was about to happen to him. He asked his friends to stay with him and support him in this difficult time. Instead, they fell asleep and Jesus felt abandoned. We abandon Christ when we fail to stand in solidarity with the poor and marginalised; when we forget about those whose needs are not met on a daily basis. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is part of a global network working alongside some of the most vulnerable communities in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

Prayer Leader:

E Hēhu Karaiti o te Aroha, loving Jesus, we ask that in a world where people are forced to carry their crosses that your presence will always be felt.

All:

May we always be united in your love and be encouraged to find a new way forward in your name.



Prayer Station 2 *Judas agrees to betray Jesus*

Prayer focus: black and white face mask

Scripture: Matthew 26: 14-16

Reading:

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?"

They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Reflection:

When a person is tempted by something it can force them to make choices that they would not normally act upon. Being in a situation where people can manipulate you or convince you to go against what you value or who you believe in, is not fair or just. Do you think that you could ever be convinced by someone in power to go against your friend?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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**Prayer Station 3 *Jesus before the Council***

Prayer focus: picture of Oscar Romero

Scripture: Mark 14: 53-65

Reading:

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'"

But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?"

All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.

Reflection:

Saint Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador in the late 1970s. He spoke out against the military government's unfair treatment of its own citizens. He expressed that it was not God's will for some people to have everything and for others to have nothing. Saint Oscar Romero was killed because of his brave words and actions on behalf of the poor. Like Saint Oscar Romero, Caritas is a modern voice for Justice in our world today. When do we need to speak up for those who have nothing? Do you think that you could be strong enough to stand up against those in power like Saint Oscar Romero and Caritas?

Prayer Leader:

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Prayer Station 4 *Peters denies Jesus*

Prayer focus: a bell (ring at the start of the station, followed by silence, then twice more throughout the station)

Scripture: Luke 22: 54-63

Reading:

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him."

But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him."

A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean."

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him.

Reflection:

As Judas gave way to his temptation, Peter also let Jesus down. He was identified three times as a follower of Jesus, and three times he denied any association with him. Peter later went on to repent and turn back to the Lord for forgiveness. How are we like Peter, failing to see the face of Jesus in our global family who are suffering every day?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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Prayer Station 5 *Jesus condemned by the people*

Prayer focus: a red piece of fabric to symbolise pain and suffering

Scripture: Matthew 27: 20-23

Reading:

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?"

And they said, "Barabbas."

Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!"

Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

Reflection:

Jesus stood in front of the crowd, who were all against him, condemned. Today around the world there are people still being condemned for things such as their difference in beliefs, religion, skin colour and gender. Imagine living in a country where you were not allowed to practise your beliefs? What if people in New Zealand were put in prison for being Catholic? Caritas supports the Rohingya people who fled their home of Myanmar after facing persecution. Millions now reside in Bangladesh where they are facing daily challenges in a new home away from home.

Prayer Leader:

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**Prayer Station 6** *Jesus is crowned with thorns and clothed in purple*

Prayer focus: purple fabric and thorns

Scripture: John 19: 1-3

Reading:

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

Reflection:

This prayer station reminds us of the physical suffering that happened to Jesus. How he was humiliated by having a crown of thorns placed on his head and how he was left to suffer on his own. Yet Jesus' response and actions showed his love not only for the Roman soldiers, but the love that he has for the whole world. How do we help our friends when they are suffering? Do we provide them with encouragement and support? Have we ever acted like the Roman soldiers by humiliating others?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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**Prayer Station 7** *Jesus carries the cross*

Prayer focus: purple fabric and thorns

Scripture: John 19: 17

Reading:

And carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

Reflection:

It took all of Jesus' strength - physical, spiritual, and emotional - to bear the weight of his cross and carry it all the way to Golgotha. When we think of those who must flee their homes, we must remember that it takes all of their strength for them to flee and then to seek a better life somewhere that is not their home. Through Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS), Caritas has worked alongside several Catholic communities and organisations to support a refugee family settle in New Zealand. How do we support and offer a welcoming place to those who move into our local community? What about in our school?

Prayer Leader:

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**Prayer Station 8 *Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus***

Prayer focus: Crucifix and template of a hand

Scripture: Mark 15: 21

Reading:

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Reflection:

Unexpected things happen to us whether it be natural disasters or global pandemics. Like Simon of Cyrene who saw a need and helped a stranger, emergency workers around the world react the same. As New Zealand and the rest of the world headed towards the first initial peak of the pandemic in April 2020, Beirut, Lebanon was also hit by a massive explosion that killed over 100 people and wounded thousands. Caritas showed great solidarity and helped those in need. Within the first week after the blast, volunteers distributed more than 50,000 meals and supported families who had lost their homes. How do you help those who have been affected by something unexpected? Who are like Simon of Cyrene in your community?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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**Prayer Station 9 *Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem***

Prayer focus: icon of Mary

Scripture: Luke 23: 27-28

Reading:

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.

Reflection:

Jesus can hear the women weeping for him, but he knows that they have more things for which to feel sorrow. There are women around the world who demonstrate how powerful women can be, but in so many places women do not have access to education, work, or the basics to help create a home for their whānau. In Timor-Leste, Caritas supports a group of women who have empowered themselves and run a successful business called HAFOTI. How are you able to empower yourself? How can you help others to transform their lives?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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**Prayer Station 10 *Crucifixion of Jesus***

Prayer focus: a map of showing the countries where Caritas Aotearoa works

Scripture: John 19: 16-19

Reading:

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. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Reflection:

Like Jesus who suffered on the cross, there are billions around the world who live daily with great pain and suffering due to lack of food, clean water and facing continual conflict. In South Sudan, many are still suffering from the combined impact of conflict, drought, food insecurity and climate change where people have had to flee their homes for safety. How do you help so everyone’s basic needs are met including food, water, shelter and health?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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**Prayer Station 11 *Jesus speaks to the thief***

Prayer focus: green fabric to represent the earth, God’s creation

Scripture: Luke 23: 39-43

Reading:

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Reflection:

Do you know your neighbour? How do our lifestyles impact our neighbours? As a global community we need to think about the environmental impact we have on one another. We need to reflect on our Pacific neighbours like those living in Kiribati who are suffering from the effects of environmental degradation, rising sea levels and the effects of global warming. Could you imagine having to leave your home and relocate because of these issues? How can we work together with our neighbours to help the environment?

Prayer Leader:

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Prayer Station 12 *Jesus speaks to his mother*

Prayer focus: icon of Mary could be carried to this prayer station

Scripture: John 19: 25-27

Reading:

... Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."

Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Reflection:

Due to the business of our day to day lives, we do not always say thank you enough to the mothers, aunties, grandmothers who care for us. Jesus asks his disciple to care for his mother, as he understands the pain that she is about to endure because of his death. There are many women around the world today who suffer this pain of losing their children through inadequate healthcare for themselves or their babies. Take time to say thank you to those women who help care for you in your life.

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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Prayer Station 13 *Jesus dies on the cross*

Prayer focus: cross made out of red cloth

Scripture: Luke 23: 44-46

Reading:

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.

Reflection:

Jesus was exhausted and thirsty as he hung on the cross. A huge proportion of our world's population are exhausted and thirsty too, due to lack of access to safe drinking water. In Papua New Guinea, Caritas is working alongside villagers to help improve their access to safe water by installing water tanks. How often do you take water for granted? Where in your day to day life do you waste water the most?

Prayer Leader:

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All:

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Prayer Station 14 *Jesus is buried*

Prayer focus: one lit candle

Scripture: Luke 23: 52-56

Reading:

This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Reflection:

In a time of shadow and grief, people will reflect on what has happened and what has been. We use this time to renew and uphold the dignity of every person. This is a time to come together, join in solidarity and do what needs to be done to find a new way forward and help make the world a better place.

Prayer Leader:

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All:

May we always be united in your love and be encouraged to find a new way forward in your name.

Conclusion:

Let us be the light and hope in the world, making a new way forward through our daily lives and all that we do.

We came together today, especially to pray for hope and love, in our school, in our country, in the world, and particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable families on our planet. May they always be at the heart of our actions and our words.

Amen.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit/Ke te ingoa o te Matua, o te Tamaiti, o te Wairua Tapu. Āmene.

