

This text originally appeared in a collection of parish resources 'CELEBRATING THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE: *The work of young people creates hope*'.

It prayerfully explores themes of working conditions and unemployment.

One of the contributors to this resource was CAFOD's partner organisation, CEREAL, a labour rights organisation which supports workers in the Mexican electronics and garments industries.

WAY OF THE CROSS

Preparation

Each station has a symbol which needs to be prepared or collected before you begin.

To begin

Dear sisters and brothers,

We begin this Way of the Cross
walking with Jesus
along the path of his Passion
and walking with
our brothers and sisters in Mexico
who also suffer
a sorrowful Passion
through the inhuman conditions
of their working lives.

At each Station
we will live the experiences
of many people – young and old,
our brothers and sisters,
and we will ask the Lord
to give us his strength
so we can seek ways
of love and justice.

1st Station. Jesus is condemned to death

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Mk 15:6-15

SITUATION: Workers are condemned to death.

Pancho worked in a textile factory for 50 years. There was a staff cutback and he was left without any redundancy payment or pension, abandoned to his fate.

Symbol

A man wearing overalls, representing this story.

Prayer

Lord, we pray for the many workers, our sisters and brothers, who are condemned to desperation and poverty; that they may be strengthened and encouraged by your Spirit to find new ways forward.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The man wearing overalls, leads the group to the 2nd station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

2nd Station. Jesus carries his Cross

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Jn 19:7

SITUATION: A young professional worker carries the cross of unemployment.

Symbol

Read a story from your local newspaper about job losses or unemployment.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you know better than anyone the weight of carrying the heavy Cross. We pray for all young unemployed people, that by following your example they may bear with the difficulty of their situation and carry on striving to free themselves.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The reader of the newspaper story leads the group to the 3rd station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

3rd Station. Jesus falls the first time

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Is 50:6

SITUATION: A young person is arrested by US immigration officials.

Symbol

Make and display a notice saying: "RELOCATION IS NOT A CRIME. FORCING PEOPLE TO RELOCATE IS A CRIME."

Reflection

What does this notice mean to me? Share your thoughts with those near you.

Prayer

Father, every day more of our young people are leaving for big cities, for other countries, looking for a better way of life. We pray that you walk beside them, and that they find a friendly hand to help them up.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The person carrying the migration poster leads the group to the 4th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

4th Station. Jesus meets his mother

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 2:34-35

SITUATION: A single mother struggles to maintain her children.

Symbol

Act out or represent this story: Maria gets up very early to get her children ready and make their lunch before leaving for work. She gets back home at night and finds her children are already asleep.

Prayer

We ask Mary our mother to intercede for all women who suffer difficulties as single working mothers, that they may have time to talk to and spend time with their children.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The actors of the story lead the group to the 5th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

5th Station. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 23:26

SITUATION: Human rights organisations are helping our indigenous sisters and brothers to carry their Cross.

Symbol

A notice saying: "I AM INDIGENOUS; I AM A HUMAN BEING; I AM YOUR BROTHER AND YOUR SISTER."

Reflection

Our indigenous brothers and sisters who live in the Mexican states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz and Guerrero, amongst other places, suffer terrible poverty and are ignored and despised by many. They have grouped together and now there are people in Mexico and other countries supporting them, as they seek to have their rights respected and to be treated as human beings with dignity.

Prayer

Lord, in the big cities, in the underground and elsewhere, we meet indigenous people asking for money, their dignity trampled underfoot. Help us to be aware of their reality and to look for ways to help them.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The person carrying the poster leads the group to the 6th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

6th Station. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Is 52:14

SITUATION: A modern day Veronica shows a new face of Jesus to the world.

Symbol

A notice which says:

SEEKING: Thin, 40-year-old woman, calloused hands and slightly bent spine. Twenty five years domestic service, maintains four children, used to bad treatment and disrespect from employers, will accept low wage.

IF FOUND: Give her back her dignity, as a woman made in the image and likeness of God.

Prayer

Lord, we offer you the lives of our working women, who struggle daily to provide food and love for their children. Give them the strength and courage they need to strive for their freedom.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The person carrying the poster leads the group to the 7th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

7th Station. Jesus falls the second time

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Is 53:4-5

SITUATION: A young person is victim of exclusion.

Symbol

Two people act the parts of a reporter and a street boy:

Reporter: "Good afternoon everyone, you are watching the news feature programme 'You Won't Believe This'. We now have a live interview with this young man who has a very special job: he washes cars in the street and swallows fire at traffic lights!"

Interview:

- How old are you?
- Fifteen.
- Where are your parents?
- I never knew them.
- Where do you live?
- In the gutter.
- How much do you earn?
- Between 10 and 20 pesos. (\$1-\$2 US)
- In how long?
- From 7am to 7pm.

- Are you happy?
- I don't know what that means...

Reporter: Sadly this is happening every day all around us.

Reflection

Who is responsible for this reality?

What about us, what can we do?

Moment of silence.

Prayer

Give us the strength Lord not only to care about these situations but to show we care, by joining hands and together looking for other ways to find a better kind of life.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The actors lead the group to the 8th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

8th Station. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 23:27-28

SITUATION: Jesus consoles women who are exploited.

Symbol

Make a display with cuttings from newspapers or magazines showing the exploitation of women.

Reflection

As we look at these photos, how often do we see women being exploited and either pass by, do nothing, or even become part of this exploitation? Are we really aware of the value of women?

A woman gave birth to us, and from her we receive tenderness, consolation, forgiveness, love, life... It's time to stop the exploitation of women.

Prayer

Father we pray to you through the intercession of Mary our mother, a simple woman, a woman of the people, that the situation of women no longer be one of discrimination and violence, and that we value and respect both their person and their work as we join the fight against their exploitation.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The person carrying the poster leads the group to the 9th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

9th Station. Jesus falls for the third time

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Mt 11:28-29

SITUATION: Don Pancho is forced to sell his land

Symbol

Act out the following story -

Don Pancho is a poor farmer. Because of the economic crisis in Mexico and the lack of government help for farmers, every year he finds it more difficult to survive. Now that the agriculture clause of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has come into effect, all his hopes have gone. Pancho finds himself forced to sell his land, and he goes to the capital city to sell his last harvest to support his family. When he arrives in the capital most of his products are confiscated by the authorities, leaving him with just one third of his harvest which he has to sell at a very low price.

Reflection

We are often unaware what the farmers who provide our basic foodstuffs have to suffer in order to make ends meet. Do we prefer our own national products to things brought in from other countries? Moment of silence...

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you lived in the countryside with Mary and Joseph and you know better than anyone how so many farming people have to struggle to survive. Lord, make our hearts more sensitive and more aware, that we may support those who work on the land, see the value of their labour and help to make their cross less heavy.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The actors in the story lead the group to the 10th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

10th Station. Jesus' clothes are taken away

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Mt 27:33-36

SITUATION: Beto is stripped of his rights.

Symbol

Read out the demands made of a young man being sacked from his job –

Before Beto is sacked from the maquiladora (factory) where he is working, he is told that he has heavy debts towards the company. He is told he has to pay extra national insurance contributions and a membership for the canteen, pay for all the factory transport he has used and a loan that he requested. He will have to pay double this amount before a certain date, and work overtime to pay back the hours that he owes to the factory for some days that he took off when he was sick. As if that wasn't enough, he loses all chance of getting a job in another factory because he has been banned by this one.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you endured having your clothes stripped from your back; you know what workers live through in the maquiladoras. May your presence among them create solidarity and a decent working environment.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

Reader of Beto's story leads the group to the 11th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

11th Station. Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 23:33-49

SITUATION: Workers are nailed to the Cross of the minimum salary.

Symbol

A young man explains his situation to Jesus -

'My Cross today is called the minimum salary, which is a wage that doesn't even cover the bare essentials. I refuse this cross, because it is not a cross that gives life, many of us can no longer carry it, and it is not the cross that you wanted for us...'

Prayer

Forgive us Father for the contribution we have made towards the existence of this situation in our country, for forgetting that we are responsible for every one of our brothers and sisters.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

Reader leads the group to the 12th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

12th Station. Jesus dies on the Cross

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 23:44-48

SITUATION: Workers who organise into groups are persecuted.

Symbol

Act out the following –

A group of male and female workers are demonstrating at their factory gates, asking for a wage rise and union democracy. Suddenly, from inside the factory come a number of professional thugs, who beat up the workers' leader.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us to recognise you in the women and men who are persecuted for fighting for a fairer world for everyone.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The actors lead the group to the 13th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

13th Station. The body of Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Lk 23:50-53

SITUATION: Women are not recognised for all the childcare and housework they do every day.

Symbol

Invite group members to name some of the tasks carried out by housewives in a single day.

Reflection

Do we really value the work that women do in the home? Why do we say that housewives 'don't work'? Is it just up to women to do all the household chores and look after the children?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, give us the grace to recognise the unpaid work done in our homes by the hands of women. Convert our hearts, that we may as families all join in with the work around the house.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

Those who named a task lead the group to the 14th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

14th Station. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Jn 19:38-42

SITUATION: Workers suffer injuries and illnesses at work that can kill or disable.

Symbol

Act out or represent the following -

In order to increase his own wealth, a businessman neglects the safety equipment in his factory. Manuel is a young, exemplary worker, he is responsible and careful. He has been working in the factory for five years. One day he starts to cough and finds it difficult to breathe. The doctor tells him that the chemicals and toxic substances that he works with have got into his lungs. Manuel is condemned to a slow and painful death. The firm never takes any responsibility for his illness...

Reflection

How many people do we know who have died or become sick because of their work? What have we done for them? What have their employers done for them?

Prayer

We pray to you Lord through the intercession of Mary, that we may be aware of this kind of labour rights violation and help look for ways of legally protecting and helping our brothers and sisters.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

The actors of the story lead the group to the 15th station.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

15th Station. Jesus has risen

Introduction

Christ we adore and bless you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world and me, a sinner.

Reading: Jn 21:4-6

SITUATION: Throw out your nets.

Symbol

Prepare a big net with various paper fish showing the following phrases – union freedom and democracy; fair wage; fair working hours; responsibility in the workplace; respect for workers' rights; job opportunities for young people; decent benefits; friendly boss-worker dialogue; housework fairly shared. (Add more of your own.)

Prayer

Lord your resurrection is a great sign of hope for workers. Together we throw out new nets, representing new working conditions with real justice and mutual respect.

All

Lord hear our prayer... Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be to the Father...

Invitation

A random group of people are asked to hold the net and say out loud, 'Into your hands we throw our nets and we will have a miraculous catch'.

Chant

Jesus remember me or O Lord hear my prayer (Taize)

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