Way of the Cross

CARITAS AUSTRALIA

PROJECT COMPASSION

Unite Against Poverty this Lent

2027









Caritas AUSTRALIA

How to use this resource

This resource offers brief reflections on the 14 stations of the Traditional Way of the Cross. It also shares stories from Caritas Australia's work to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity for the sake of the world's most vulnerable people and communities.

Two versions of the resource are available: this **PowerPoint Presentation version** and a **PDF version** that you may wish to print as a booklet or direct individuals to.

Given the number of stations and related reflections and stories, you may wish to focus on a few stations at a time, 'walking' the Way of the Cross over a number of days or weeks leading up to Holy Week.

To aid group discussion, personal reflection and prayer, each **Station** and **Story** in this resource is accompanied by prompts to **Reflect** and **Respond**.

For use in School Classes or Parish Groups:

Choose a ***Leader*** to lead these parts: **The Way of the Cross – Introduction, Reflect** and **Respond**.

Choose at least one ***Reader*** to read these parts for each station: **Station** and **Story**.

Find the script for each part in the **'Notes'** section accompanying each slide.

Note: For younger audiences, we recommend reviewing the stories prior to use to ensure the content is appropriate for the age and needs of your audience.

For use in Personal Devotion:

Consider using all parts of the resource as you engage with the Traditional Stations of the Cross in your church or local area.

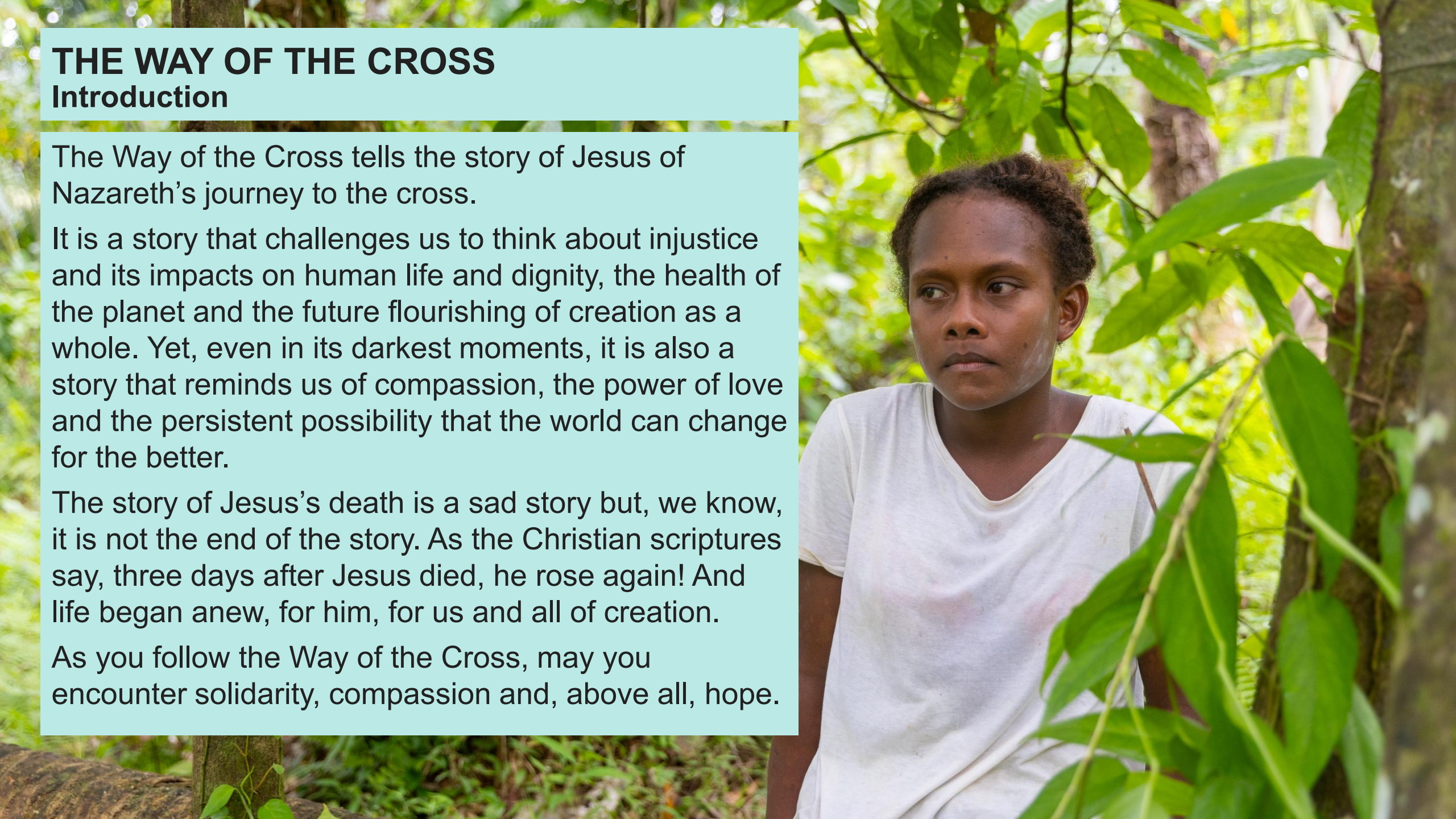
THE WAY OF THE CROSS
Introduction

The Way of the Cross tells the story of Jesus of Nazareth's journey to the cross.

It is a story that challenges us to think about injustice and its impacts on human life and dignity, the health of the planet and the future flourishing of creation as a whole. Yet, even in its darkest moments, it is also a story that reminds us of compassion, the power of love and the persistent possibility that the world can change for the better.

The story of Jesus's death is a sad story but, we know, it is not the end of the story. As the Christian scriptures say, three days after Jesus died, he rose again! And life began anew, for him, for us and all of creation.

As you follow the Way of the Cross, may you encounter solidarity, compassion and, above all, hope.



Station 1

Jesus is condemned to death

Pilate, the Roman governor of the day, can find no reason to charge Jesus, but the chief priests, elders and others cry, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Pilate can see that a riot is going to break out if he doesn’t give the crowd what it wants so he hands Jesus over to the people to be put to death, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. It is your concern.”

Standing in front of the angry crowd, Pilate literally washed his hands of responsibility for Jesus’s fate. He took the easy way out of the situation and lacked the courage to stand up for Jesus and do what was right. Pilate’s choice is in total contrast to Jesus’s deep commitment to justice and dignity for all.

Adelia’s Story



Adelia at her motorbike workshop. Photo: Caritas Diocesan of Baucau

Reflect

Adelia faced a difficult situation, but she took steps to create a better future for her family and support other women.

- What can give us courage to stand up for what is right?
- What is one way you can act for justice and respect the dignity of others?

Respond

Jesus, you stand for justice and respect the dignity of all people.

May we follow the way of justice.

'Let us all do what we can. We can all do something, at least have a sense of understanding'

Saint Oscar Romero, 24 March 1980

Station 2

Jesus takes up the cross

Jesus is made to carry his own cross all the way out of the city to a place called Golgotha or ‘the place of the skull’.

Jesus carried the weight of that heavy burden and understood the path ahead would be a difficult one. While he was in the garden, just before his arrest, he had even prayed that God would keep him from it: “*Abba*, Father, for you all things are possible. Take this cup from me. Yet not my will but yours be done.”

Iryna’s Story



Iryna was displaced from her home when Russian forces invaded her village. Photo: Svitlana Savka/Caritas Australia

Reflect

Iryna and her community face many challenges, but they continue to support one another as they rebuild their lives.

- What does it mean to stand alongside someone when they are facing difficult times?
- How can you show solidarity with people in your community and around the world?

Respond

Jesus, you feel the weight of heavy burdens and walk with all who suffer.

May we follow the way of solidarity.

'The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together… for we know that things can change.'

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n13

Station 3

Jesus falls for the first time

Under the weight of a heavy cross, Jesus stumbles and falls.

Jesus understands how uncertain we can feel when life becomes challenging. Sometimes, the combination of such things as living with a disability, not having enough money to buy what you need, or living far from hospitals or schools make life especially challenging.

Reaksmey’s Story



Reaksmey now works at Epic Arts Café. Photo: Caritas Australia

Reflect

Reaksmey's story reminds us that everyone has dignity and deserves to be valued, respected and included.

- How can we help others feel valued, respected and included?
- Where do you see opportunities to stand up for the dignity of others?

Respond

Jesus, you lift up all who stumble or feel left out.

May we follow the way of dignity.

'All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family…'

Pope Francis, *Laudato Deum* n67

Station 4

Jesus meets his mother

On the way, Jesus meets his mother. Out of depths of love and utter sadness at watching her son suffer, Mary comforts him.

Jesus knew the relief that love brings in times of suffering or struggle. Mary knew it too. Even while Jesus was on the cross, he continued to show love for his mother by connecting her with his dear friend John, who made a place for her in his home.

Rose's Story



Rose sitting with her daughter outside a local health care facility. Photo Credit: Caritas Australia

Reflect

Rose's story reminds us that love means caring for others and helping them to live with dignity.

- How can you show love and care for people who need support?
- How can our actions help build a more loving and caring community?

Respond

Jesus, you show love without limits and make a place of belonging for all.

May we follow the way of love.

'This is the peace of the Risen Christ, a disarming and humble and preserving peace. It comes from God. God, who loves all of us, without any limits or conditions.'

Pope Leo XIV, 2025

Station 5

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

On their way out to Golgotha, the soldiers come across Simon, a man who had travelled from a place called Cyrene. They make him help Jesus carry the cross.

As in Jesus's own story, when we travel life's difficult roads, the help of others can make all the difference. Sometimes, we depend on the support of friends, family or others in our community. Other times, we are the ones to stand in solidarity with people experiencing need or vulnerability.

Patricia’s Story



Patricia washing her hands using a new water system that was installed just outside her family house in Malaita province, Solomon Islands. Photo: Caritas Australia

Reflect

Patricia's story shows how working together can make a difference in the lives of others.

- What can we achieve when we work together to support others?
- How can you show solidarity with people in your community and around the world?

Respond

Jesus, you are in solidarity with all in need.

May we follow the way of solidarity.

'Remember, we are all but travellers here.'

Saint Mary MacKillop, 1867

Station 6

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

As Jesus walks along the road, slowed and sweating under the weight of the heavy cross, he is met by a woman named Veronica. Seeing his suffering and with her heart full of compassion, Veronica holds out her cloth and uses it to wipe his face.

Veronica was moved to compassion and used what she had to help Jesus. Her action was a sign of care and human dignity.

Hein and Thandar's Story



Hein and his wife Thandar with their two children. Photo Credit: Jesuit Refugee Service

Reflect

Hein and Thandar's story shows the courage to keep going and care for others, even when life is difficult.

- What helps you find courage when things are difficult?
- How can you encourage or support someone who is facing a challenge?

Respond

Jesus, Veronica's courageous act met your need and upheld human dignity.

May we follow the way of courage.

'Without fear, united, hand in hand with God and among ourselves, we will go forward. We are disciples of Christ, Christ goes before us, and the world needs His light.'

Pope Leo XIV, 2025

Station 7

Jesus falls for a second time

Worn out from his slow and terrible journey to Golgotha, Jesus stumbles and falls again.

Poverty and injustice keep people from accessing what they need to live safe and healthy lives. Global events such as war and natural disasters deepen these struggles, especially for the most vulnerable.

Yeshareg's Story



Yeshareg at home with her harvested potatoes. Photo: Peter Caton/Caritas Australia

Reflect

Yeshareg's story shows how sharing what we have can help people grow stronger together.

- What are some things you can share with others besides money or possessions?
- How can sharing help build a stronger and more caring community?

Respond

Jesus, before the cross, you urged your friends to remember the meal of bread and wine you shared.

May we follow the way of sharing.

'We cannot hope for a better world, a bright and peaceful future, if we are not willing to share what we ourselves have received.'

Pope Leo XIV, FAO World Food Day Address (2025)

Station 8

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

The women in the crowd following Jesus weep and mourn for him. Jesus sees their grief and understands what it means for them and the whole of the human family.

The word ‘compassion’ comes from a Latin word *compati,* which literally means to suffer with.

Compassion is motivated by love and moves us to act in solidarity and care for others.

Emergency Nepal Story



Caritas staff responding to flash flooding. Photo: Caritas Nepal

Reflect

The Nepal response reminds us that courage can mean working together and knowing when to pause so we can help safely.

- Why can asking for help or waiting until it is safe also take courage?
- How can working with others help us face a challenge we could not manage alone?

Respond

Jesus, you were courageous as you experienced pain and suffering.

May we follow the way of courage.

'Social love is a force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today's world.'

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* n183

Station 9

Jesus falls for the third time

Exhausted and feeling the limits of his human body, Jesus falls again.

At times when we feel exhausted or down, we can rely on trusted others to help lift us up.

Maria’s Story



Maria in her farm in Indonesia. Photo: Caritas Australia

Reflect

Maria's story shows how generosity can grow when we share knowledge, skills and opportunities with others.

- What can you generously share with others, beyond money or possessions?
- How can generosity help others grow and create new opportunities?

Respond

Jesus, you gave all that you had out of love and generosity of spirit.

May we follow the way of generosity.

'Love enables us to create one great family, where all of us can feel at home.'

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* n62

Station 10

Jesus is stripped of this garments

The soldiers strip Jesus of his clothes. They mock him by saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They make him wear a crown of thorns and a scarlet robe.

They dress Jesus in his own clothes only to strip him of them again and crucify him. And then they divide his garments among themselves.

When all that a person needs to live a safe and healthy life is taken away, their human rights are denied, and they are unable to live a life worthy of their dignity.

Caritas Australia works alongside some of the world’s most vulnerable people. Informed by principles of Catholic Social Teaching, it works to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity.

Amrita’s Story



Amrita studying at her home in India. Photo: Caritas India

Reflect

Amrita's story reminds us that education can open new possibilities and help life flourish.

- What helps you to learn, grow and make the most of the opportunities in your life?
- How can you help others have opportunities to learn and live life to the full?

Respond

Jesus, you long for all to experience life in its fullness.

May we follow the way of life.

'Aspire not to have more, but to be more.'

Saint Oscar Romero

Station 11

Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus is crucified between two criminals. It is a dark scene.

Nevertheless, Jesus's love and compassion for humanity is so deep that even while he is being crucified, he prays for God to forgive those who mock and hurt him.

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

One of the criminals crucified alongside Jesus sees his innocence and something of the divine possibility he embodied.

In that moment of connection, Jesus replied with words of forgiveness and welcome: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Nimol’s Story



Nimol has become a leader who advocates for climate action in her village in Cambodia. Photo: Kimheang Tuon

Reflect

Nimol's story shows how small acts of care can make a difference in our communities and our world.

- What are some small ways you can care for the world around you?
- How can your actions encourage others to care for our common home?

Respond

Jesus, you lead us to connect with each other and our common home.

May we follow the way of care.

'There can be no true peace and no true love that is based on injustice...'

Saint Oscar Romero, 14 March 1977

Station 12

Jesus dies on the cross

The sky is dark and, from the cross, Jesus cries out in despair: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Soon after, he dies.

At that moment, not only does the curtain of the temple tear in two, from top to bottom, but the whole earth shakes.

Injustice can impact Earth and its people for generations.

But actions that restore justice help all of creation to thrive.

Such approaches to justice hear “both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor,” as Pope Francis says in his letter, *Laudato Si’*.*

*Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* n 49

Emergency Venezuela Story



Buildings destroyed by the Venezuela earthquake. Photo: Caritas Venezuela

Reflect

Caritas Venezuela's response shows how care can bring practical help and hope in difficult times.

- How can you show care for someone going through a difficult time?
- What can we do to help create communities where everyone feels cared for and supported?

Respond

Jesus, you hear "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."*

May we follow the way of care.

'Hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.'

*Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n49

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Station 13

Jesus is taken down from the cross

A secret follower of Jesus named Joseph of Arimathaea asks Pilate if he can remove the body of Jesus from the cross. Pilate allows it, so Joseph and another follower named Nicodemus take it away and prepare it for burial.

Joseph of Arimathaea kept his care for Jesus secret because he was afraid of what might happen if it became public. But his fear did not keep him from acting with care and human dignity.

Rumbidzai’s Story



Rumbidzai collecting safe and clean water from the newly established borehole. Photo Credit: Caritas Gweru

Reflect

Rumbidzai's story reminds us that love can grow when we care for our families and communities.

- How can you show love through the way you care for others?
- What can you do to help love grow in your family, school or community?

Respond

Jesus, your love beyond measure inspires love in return.

May we follow the way of love.

'No sign of affection [love], even the smallest, will ever be forgotten, especially if it is shown to those who are suffering, lonely or in need.'

Pope Leo XIV, *Dilexi Te n4*

Station 14

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus wrap Jesus's body in linen cloths, with myrrh and aloes, then they lay it in a new tomb in the garden, near to where Jesus was crucified.

Having endured a terrible loss, Jesus's friends were afraid and hid themselves away. But soon, with love and courage in their hearts, Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and John would return to the tomb, only to find it empty.

Nadia's Story



Nadia sits with her family inside their tent home in Sudan. Photo Credit: George Wambugu/CAFOD

Reflect

Nadia showed courage by taking action to make life better for her family and community.

- When have you needed courage to take action or make a difference?
- What is one thing you could have the courage to change for the better?

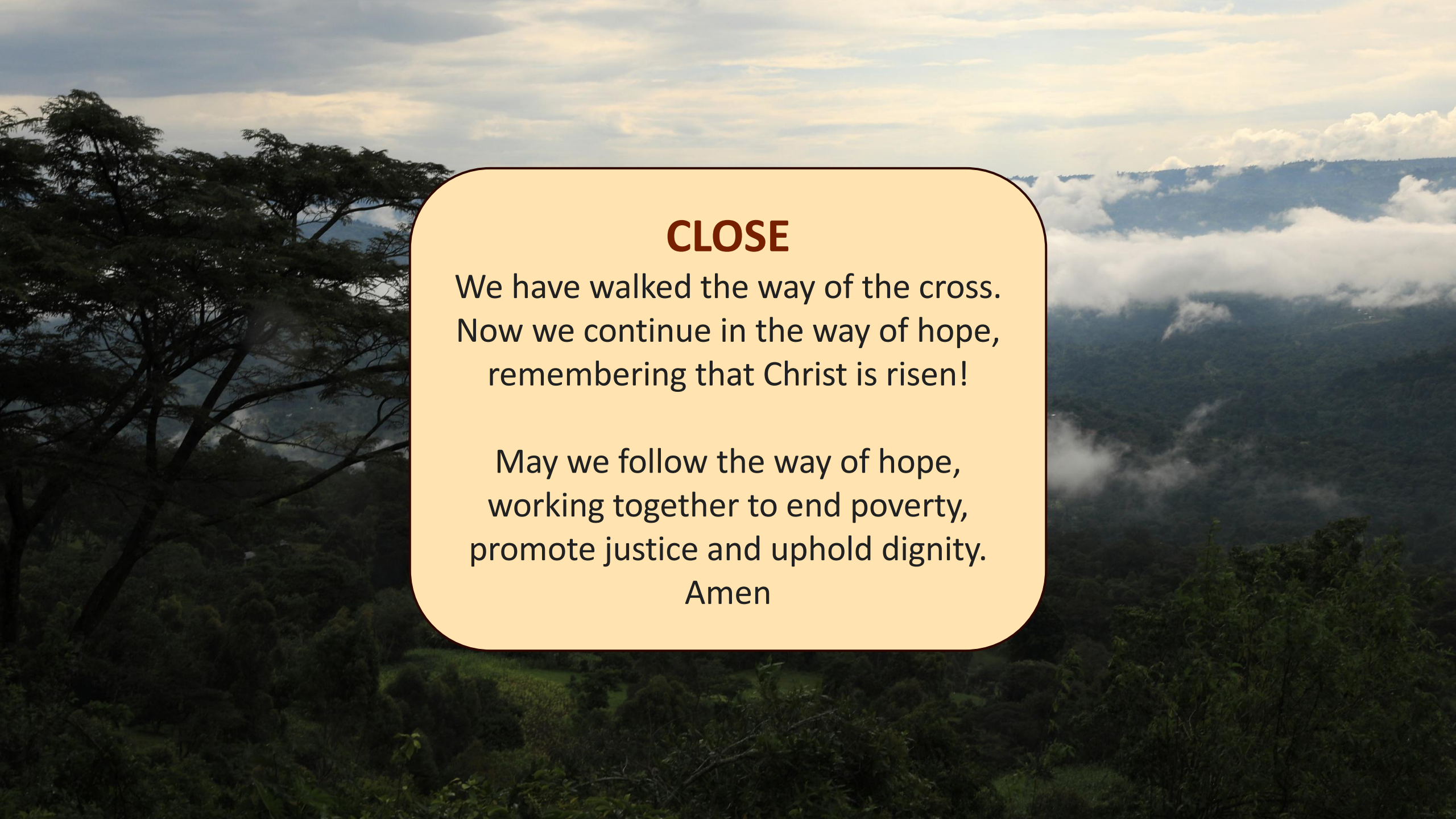
Respond

Jesus, inspire us to be courageous.

May we follow the way of courage.

'Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life…'

Earth Charter (2000) in Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* n207



CLOSE

We have walked the way of the cross.
Now we continue in the way of hope,
remembering that Christ is risen!

May we follow the way of hope,
working together to end poverty,
promote justice and uphold dignity.
Amen

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