



Stations of the Cross

Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

First Station: *Jesus is Condemned to Death:* Modern day slavery is the second largest – and fastest growing – criminal industry in the world.

Reader: Lord Jesus, you were tried quickly and condemned to death by a group eager to silence you and your good news. Stand now with those whose voices are lost, who are unfairly condemned, and who look to the legal system for justice but find only loss.

We pray that we become more vigilant and less tolerant of crime. Guide the work of lawmakers and law enforcers. Teach us how to share our goods so that no one is left in need. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Second Station: *Jesus Carries His Cross:* 27 million people worldwide suffer the consequences of human trafficking.

Reader: Made to carry a heavy cross, the instrument of your death, Lord Jesus you chose to pay the ultimate price for love. Many have struggled and died hoping to protect their faith and their hope in the midst of hatred and discrimination. Throughout the world, we worship in many ways, though hold precious a love that sacrifices for another.

We pray for the women, men and children who are sold into slavery and the families they leave behind. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Third Station: *Jesus Falls the First Time:* 52% of traffic recruiters are men, 48% are women; in 46% of the cases, the recruiters were known to the victim.

Reader: In your journey, Lord Jesus, you fall three times under the weight of your load, your pain, and your struggle. The burden of hunger, a reality for too many, can keep a person low and without strength for the struggle and without hope for the future. Help us to know that we can be nourishment and strength for one another and to act upon this knowledge to meet this most basic need of the world.

We pray for the women around the world who dream about working abroad and earning a lot of money in order to be able to feed their families, but they end up being sold into prostitution. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Fourth Station: *Jesus Meets his Blessed Mother: Approximately 250,000 children, under the age of 18 and as young as 10, are forced to fight in conflicts around the world.*

Reader: Lord Jesus, your blessed mother Mary endured your pain and suffering with a heavy heart. Upon meeting on the road to Calvary, you both hoped to find a way to ease the other's burden and pain. In our world today, we are all affected by violations of humanity—children are taken away from their homes and forced to kill; families are destroyed. Mary, many mothers grieve for their missing, injured, or dead children.

We pray for the many mothers who live for their child's safe return home and for a world filled with peace, love and forgiveness. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Fifth Station: *Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross: 98% of those victims of forced sexual exploitation are women and girls.*

Reader: Pulled from the crowd and forced to help you, Lord Jesus, Simon of Cyrene shared your burden despite the fear of losing his own life or livelihood. Throughout our world, many are forced into work, forced into committing violence, forced into circumstances beyond imagination—sex slavery, forced labor, child soldiers. Many have no choice in their life's work, and many lose any hope for their own ambitions and future. Enlighten us to take action and get involved so that their hopes and dreams may someday come true.

We pray for the guidance to help free the enslaved women and girls. Be our strength in breaking the chains of domination and subjection. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Sixth Station: *Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus: Street children or runaways can fall under the control of traffickers who force them into begging rings and/or prostitution.*

Reader: Lord Jesus, along the hot, dusty road of your journey, a young woman named Veronica comes to wipe your eyes and to cool your face—risking severe punishment from the Roman guards escorting you. In many countries, men and women have risked their lives in speaking up and advocating for the victims of human trafficking. This is sometimes done with fatal consequences. These advocates and martyrs seem to have endless courage and boundless faith. Help us to have the courage to speak up and do our part and to know that this courage comes from you.

We pray for the intercession of Mary, may all the women and children who have been enslaved and whose lives have now become inhuman come to know the freedom of the daughters and sons of God. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Seventh Station: *Jesus Falls the Second Time: Many times diseases such as AIDS/HIV are contracted by women as a result of being forced into prostitution.*

Reader: A second painful fall on your journey to death, Lord Jesus. In our lives, sickness and disease can be heavy burdens, pushing us to our knees. In Cambodia, a 17-year old girl was sold to a brothel by her husband. She soon became infected with HIV and contracted AIDS. The brothel threw her out when she became sick; she eventually found her way to a local shelter where she died of HIV/AIDS at the age of 23.

We pray for the strength of the victims who are lured, trapped and exploited. We pray for their comfort, for their pain and for their healing. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Eight Station: *Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem: Trafficked persons continue to suffer because of our indifference.*

Reader: You met the woman of Jerusalem, weeping for you, as you carry your cross to Calvary, Lord Jesus. You demand that they weep not for you, but turn their sorrows to the suffering of the world. Open our eyes to the state of our modern world. How often do I choose to see the suffering apparent in the world, in my community, in those close to me? How often do I act upon what I see? How often do I say “I’m just one person, there is nothing I can do?” How often do I say “that’s not my problem!”?

We pray for the impulse to act on our convictions with fervor so contagious we are all lifted. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Nine Station: *Jesus Falls a Third Time: Women are trafficked due to poverty as well as a culture that sees them as inferior.*

Reader: Exhausted, bleeding, in agony, Lord Jesus you fall a third time. In our world, many are faced with the lack of resources to lift themselves and their families from the depths of struggle. There is great wealth given to only a few and great poverty left for so many.

We pray for women and girls enslaved by fear, torture, dependency, entrapment and bonded labor. We ask that you intervene with righteousness and grace. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Tenth Station: *Jesus is Stripped of his Clothing: Domestic violence is the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored form of violence against women and girls.*

Reader: At the end of your road, Lord Jesus, the Roman guards strip you of your clothing and human dignity. They make you an object for insult and your clothing becomes the prize in a game. So many people in our world are stripped of their dignity and humanity in the process of being made an object for abuse of power, for sexual gratification, for release of anger.

Between 20 and 50 percent of women [world wide] have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member. -- *World Health Organization*

We pray for the transformation of hearts and minds of the oppressors. We ask you to stir them with your voice of justice and conscience of goodness. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Eleventh Station: *Jesus is Nailed to the Cross: Human rights organizations report that over 120 countries in the world today routinely use torture to control their citizens.*

Reader: Nails pierce your wrists. Nails pierce your feet. Lord Jesus, your execution is a torturous process, meant to humble you, to lower you, to make you less than human. Too many cases of torture are apparent in our modern world. Help us to learn from your experience that no person is deserving of torture, of undignified, humiliating, or painful treatment.

We pray for the understanding of the concept of human rights. Help us to reflect deeply on them and on the teachings of the Church related to them. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Twelfth: *Jesus Dies on the Cross: In 2008, at least 2,390 people were known to have been executed in 25 countries, and at least 8,864 people were sentenced to death in 52 countries around the world.*

Reader: After many hours, you pronounce the end and commend your spirit to your father in heaven. Death on a cross—a life extinguished. Lives are extinguished in many forms in our world. Life is a gift, from you, Lord Jesus. Let us remember that being alive and living a life, are not mutually exclusive, that protection of human rights affords all a life well-lived.

We pray for the diligence to recognize that choosing life ALWAYS begins with us but does not end with us. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Thirteen Station: *The Body of Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross: Genocides and other mass murders killed more people in the twentieth century than all the wars combined.*

Reader: Lord Jesus, your body removed from the cross and placed in the care of your loved ones, is prepared and laid in a donated tomb. The bodies of those killed in events of genocide or ethnic cleansing are often placed in mass graves, without reverence or preparation. They are the bodies of men and women, boys and girls who are killed simply for being who they are.

We pray for healing as we grieve the loss of lives due to ignorance, hatred, greed and fear. Let our voices join in declaring all humanity is sacred, all human rights must be respected. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Fourteen Station: *Jesus is Laid in the Tomb: No one would ever accept the reality of living as a slave or trafficked victim and leaving his or her family behind helpless in grief and despair.*

Reader: Your tomb is sealed, Lord Jesus, your loved ones leave to prepare for the Sabbath. They grieve the loss of their most precious friend and beloved Son and brother. Despair and grief are ever-present today. Loss of life, love, home, family, identity, community and hope can break us. We need to share in the grieving, divide the despair, and conquer fear together.

We pray for strength to be present to one another especially to all the victims who have been exploited, denied their dignity and human rights. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.

Fifteen Station: *The Resurrection: We pray for hope and transformation.*

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! He is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia! Your rising, Lord Jesus, give hope to the world. Help us to see in you and in one another the hope for a brighter future, for a future with dignity, respect, safety, and comfort for all. Amen!

We pray for people who speak your truth and justice to the world around us. Help us to use our time, our resources and our energy to overcome, by your power, the evil that is human trafficking and slavery. Let your truth transform us, so that our hearts will be on fire for justice and peace. For this we pray:

All: God among us, hear our prayer.