



The Stations of the Cross

In the wake of our climate crisis

Created by
The Metro New York
Catholic Climate Movement



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A chapter of the global *Laudato Si'* Movement

Each of the Stations of the Cross includes a quote from the environmental encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* (2015), indicated with an (LS), or a quote from the Apostolic Exhortation, *Laudate Deum* (2023), identified with an (LD). These texts can be found online at the website of The Holy See at <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

The images for the Stations are paintings by the German artist, Gebhard Fugel (1863-1939), renowned for his religious art. The photos of the paintings are now in the public domain. <https://www.messe.forumactif.org/t8370-gebhard-fugel-1863-1939-peintre-allemand-d-art-sacre>

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FIRST STATION: Jesus is condemned to death

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Once more Pilate went out and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him." When the chief priests and the guards saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." John 19:4, 6



Through our disregard for the earth, water, and air, we condemn the poor and the next generations of innocent children to a world of suffering from environmental degradation. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis states, "The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together ... In fact, ... the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest." (LS 48)

Our society condemns the poor to polluted air from chemical factories, waste incinerators and freeways placed in their neighborhoods. We condemn them to polluted water from the toxic chemicals disposed of in their communities. As people of faith, we are called to counter this by advocating for the poor and vulnerable who suffer from environmental pollution and unjust policies.



Let us pray: Jesus, help us to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Give us the wisdom to elect and support officials who will pass legislation that protects both humanity and the environment.



SECOND STATION: Jesus bears his cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). John 19:16-17



Just as Jesus accepted his cross, we are called to accept the cross of repairing and renewing the earth through prayer and action. “Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone.” (LS 202)

Laudato Si’ calls us to be open to carrying our own crosses by making difficult changes in our lives. As individuals, let us face the urgent challenges before us by accepting responsibility to develop and promote environmental justice. When we do this, we unite our sacrifices with that of Jesus on his way to Calvary.



Let us pray: May the Holy Spirit guide us to respond to the climate crisis through prayer and action and not turn away. Grant us the courage to support policies to reduce fossil fuel pollution and promote the use of renewable energy.



THIRD STATION: Jesus falls the first time

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole; by his wounds we were healed. Isaiah 53:4



The suffering of the earth and of the vulnerable is not a punishment by God, but is a result of our thoughtless exploitation of Earth's finite resources. **We fall by failing to see the interconnectedness of the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor with our habits of consumption.** "Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat [global] warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it." (LS 23)

Christian spirituality encourages growth and fulfillment marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with less. "Purchasing is always a moral - not simply an economic - act", as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us. The United States, with just over 4% of the world's population, consumes more than 25% of the world's resources. As followers of Jesus, we must learn to weigh the difference between needs and wants, and to consider the environmental impact of what we consume.



Let us pray: Creator God, keep us from falling into the entrapment of our throwaway culture. Help us to, instead, live lives of simplicity. Give us the strength to make changes in our lifestyle that benefit the poor and your Earth.



FOURTH STATION: Jesus meets his mother

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." Luke 2:34-35



We share in the suffering and sorrow of Mary each time we witness destruction of God's creation. Our hearts break seeing the melting of glaciers, death of coral reefs, loss of species, and the breakdown of fragile ecosystems. Since the dawn of the industrial revolution, we have recklessly bulldozed pristine wilderness areas, and polluted our air, soil and water. All of this has upset the delicate balance of the Creator's design that sustains the intricate web of life, including humankind.

"Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. (LS 241)



Let us pray: Mary, Our Mother, help us to engage gently with the planet as we strive to understand the interconnectedness of all living beings. Give us the humility to see that the subtle balance of the Earth works by a magnificent design that we do not fully understand. Teach us to protect God's creation and to disturb it less.

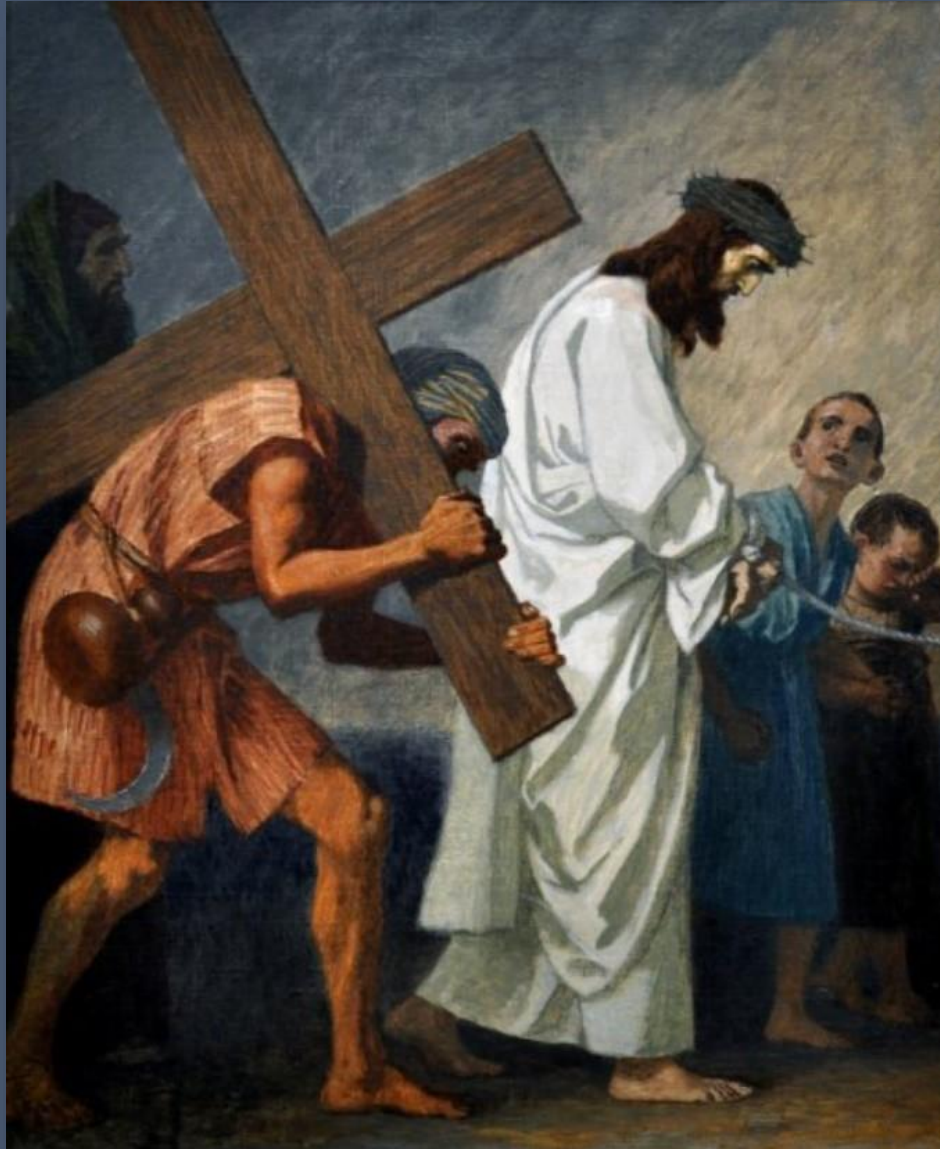


FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

As they led him away, they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. Luke 23:26



As disciples of Jesus, we too follow behind Him helping to carry the crosses of others. The climate crisis impacts us all. Those who do not have the resources to adapt to or defend against the impacts of climate change bear the heaviest crosses. Heat waves, droughts, storms and the resulting economic hardship fall most heavily on them. Often these events force them to migrate from their homelands to other countries.

As with Simon, the duty to help sometimes feels placed upon us - something we did not volunteer for. But as followers of Christ, we have a responsibility to address the injustices of climate change and to help those who are struggling to survive its impacts. "As Saint John Paul II taught, 'by enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for redemption of humanity.'" (LS 98)



Let us pray: Jesus, Son of God, grant us the strength to agree to follow You by carrying the crosses of our brothers and sisters who suffer from poverty and environmental degradation. In helping to carry the crosses of others, may we help to bring about the renewal of your creation.



SIXTH STATION: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will stand up for me against evildoers? Psalm 94:16



It has been said that we are the last generation who can address climate change before it's too late. **The compassion and courage of Veronica inspire us to bold actions to protect God's creation.** In response to Veronica's tender act of wiping His face, Jesus, in a miraculous gesture, left a perfect imprint of His image on her veil - another revelation into who He really was.

As we now rise to this challenge before us, we will grow closer to knowing our Creator. "At the end we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe..." (LS 243)



Interfaith prayer service in St. James Parish, LA, to stop a polluting plastic plant in Cancer Alley

Let us pray: Jesus, as the world grows more uncertain, give us the compassion and courage of Veronica to lead from our hearts. Grant us the wisdom to know that by walking in your light, we will find a way to confront this crisis.



SEVENTH STATION: Jesus falls a second time

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

For the just man falls seven times and then rises again, but the wicked stumble to ruin.
Proverbs 24:16



Just as Jesus fell from the weight of the cross and his own exhaustion, we fall into apathy and discouragement and fail in our commitments.

Calvary was a difficult path to climb for Jesus. He stumbled. He fell. We, too, sometimes feel we can go no further, that our efforts are in vain. Some people do not want to hear about the urgency of the climate crisis. Others place profits ahead of compassion. National and international efforts are weak. Fossil fuel use increases. Forests and whole towns burn. Storms rage.

But “God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way... [T]he Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us ...for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (LS 245)



Let us pray: Holy Spirit, grant us the wisdom to see the urgency of the crisis facing the earth and all who inhabit it. Let us not be disheartened by setbacks in our efforts, but rather carry on in faith and in solidarity with one another.



EIGHTH STATION: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.'" Luke 23:27-29



Today, we mourn the destruction caused by the climate crisis and are deeply concerned about the future of the earth which our children and their children will inherit. If we don't drastically reduce our greenhouse gases within the lifetimes of our own children, coastal cities will be flooded, temperatures over 100 degrees will be common, powerful hurricanes will be more frequent, and conflicts caused by food and water scarcity will occur in many parts of the world.

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? ...It is no longer enough...simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations...Leaving a habitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us.” (LS 160)



Let us pray: O God, show us how to live in kinship with the earth so that we need not worry nor weep over our fate and that of the generations to come. Help us to do more to pass on a livable planet to the next generation.



NINTH STATION: Jesus falls a third time

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

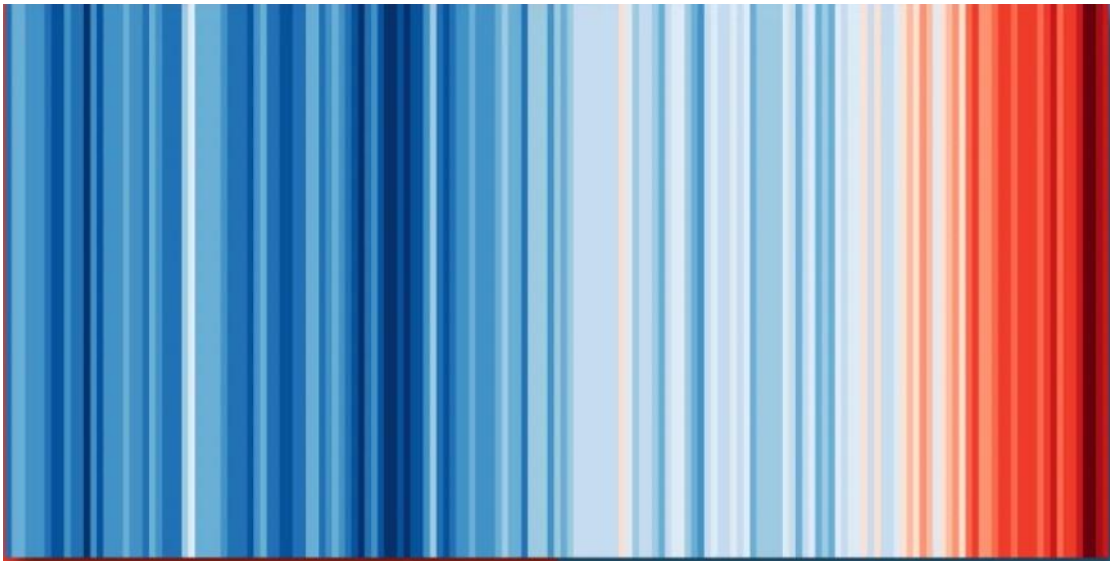
Then they will hand you over to persecution, and they will kill you.... Many false prophets will arise and deceive many; and because of the increase of evildoing, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved. Matt. 24:9-13



Jesus' journey nears the end, and the weight of evil in the world bears down on Him as he grows weaker and falls a third time. **Today, many fall under the influence of false prophets who sow division among us.**

"Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident." (LD 5) Some doubt the warming of the planet by saying..." the planet has always had, and will have, periods of cooling and warming. They forget to mention ...that what we are presently experiencing is an unusual acceleration of warming, at such a speed that it will take only one generation – not centuries or millennia..." (LD 6)

As climate change intensifies, our crosses will become heavier and our commitment may wane, causing us to fall again. Apologists for fossil fuels sow doubt and division among us and offer false solutions. Yet the cries of the poor and the earth, that we hear on a daily basis, motivate us to get up from our fall and remain steadfast in our response as Christians.



Global temperature 1850 to present

Let us pray. God of all Truthfulness, instill in us the perseverance to address this crisis facing humanity and to not fall prey to false prophets or false solutions. Let us pray for those already impacted by floods and drought, and for those trying to protect the environment and our common home.



TENTH STATION: Jesus is stripped of his garments

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. The garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let us not tear it," they said to one another. "Let us decide by lot who will get it." This happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." John 19:23-24



When we strip the earth with open-pit mines, mountain-top removal, and clear-cut forests, we destroy entire ecosystems of plants and animals, and **we strip this planet of its beauty and resources.** We divide up the spoils to feed the habits of consumption of our throw-away society.

“This sister [Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will...This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’ (Rom 8:22)” (LS 2)



Let us pray: God of creation, help us to be more conscious consumers of goods made with the resources of your earth and to adopt a lifestyle that treads lightly on our planet, harming no one.

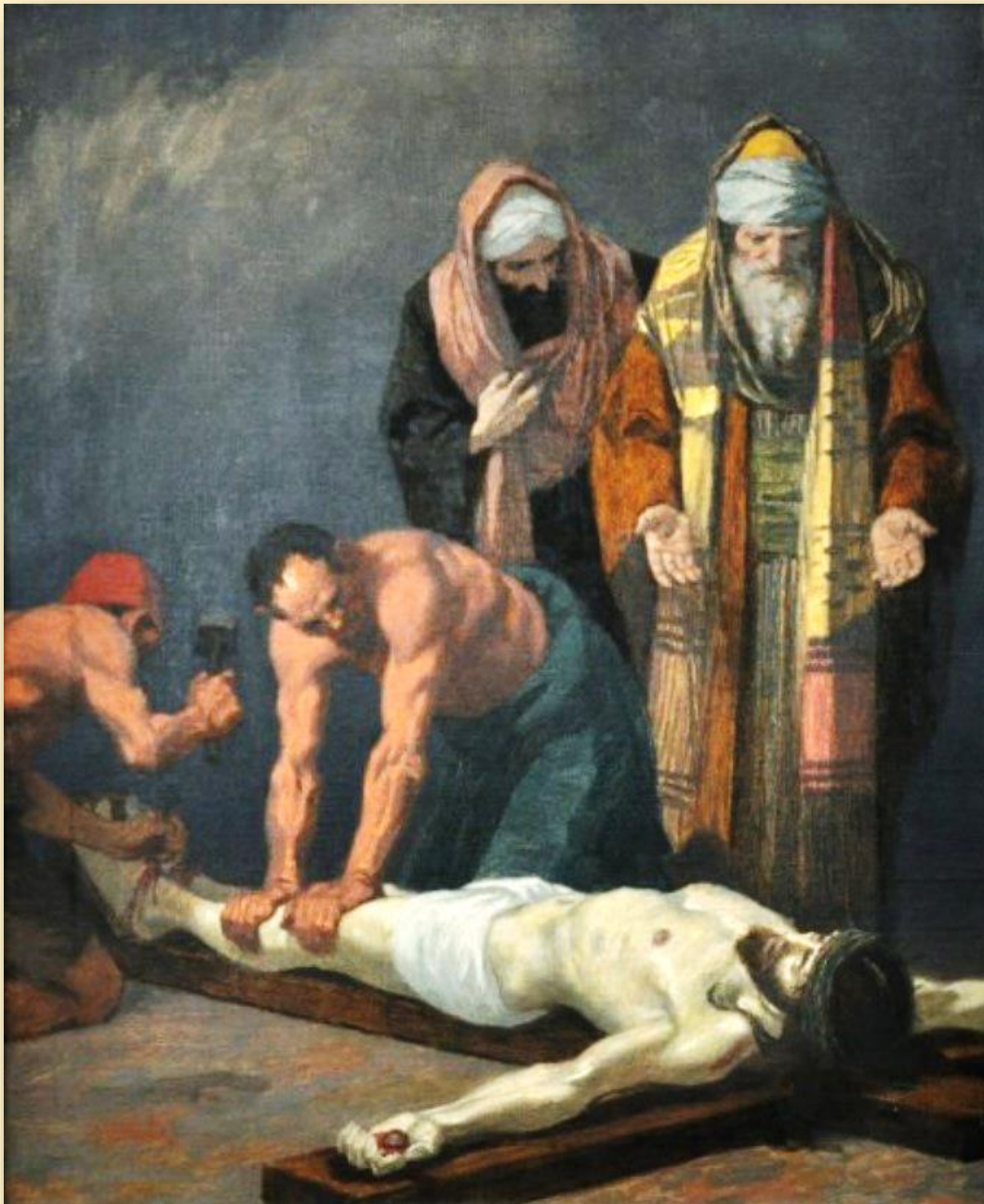


ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is nailed to the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. Psalm 22:14-18



Each nail that is pounded into the hands and feet of Jesus desecrates His body. Humanity **pounds nails into the Earth: nails of corporate greed and nails of environmental destruction.** We defile God's creation every time we drill into the earth for oil, gas or minerals. We create arid desert lands when we cut forests and deplete the underground aquifers.

“The external deserts in the world are growing because the internal deserts [in us] have become so vast. For this reason, the ecological crisis is...a summons to profound interior conversion...Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (LS 217)



Let us pray: All powerful Spirit: Help us to pay attention to the warning signs of the current crisis that call us to radically alter our lives. Deep down we know that there will be no new relationship with nature without a radical conversion of our hearts and the hearts of our society. Guide us in our efforts to replace the nails of destruction with healing actions.

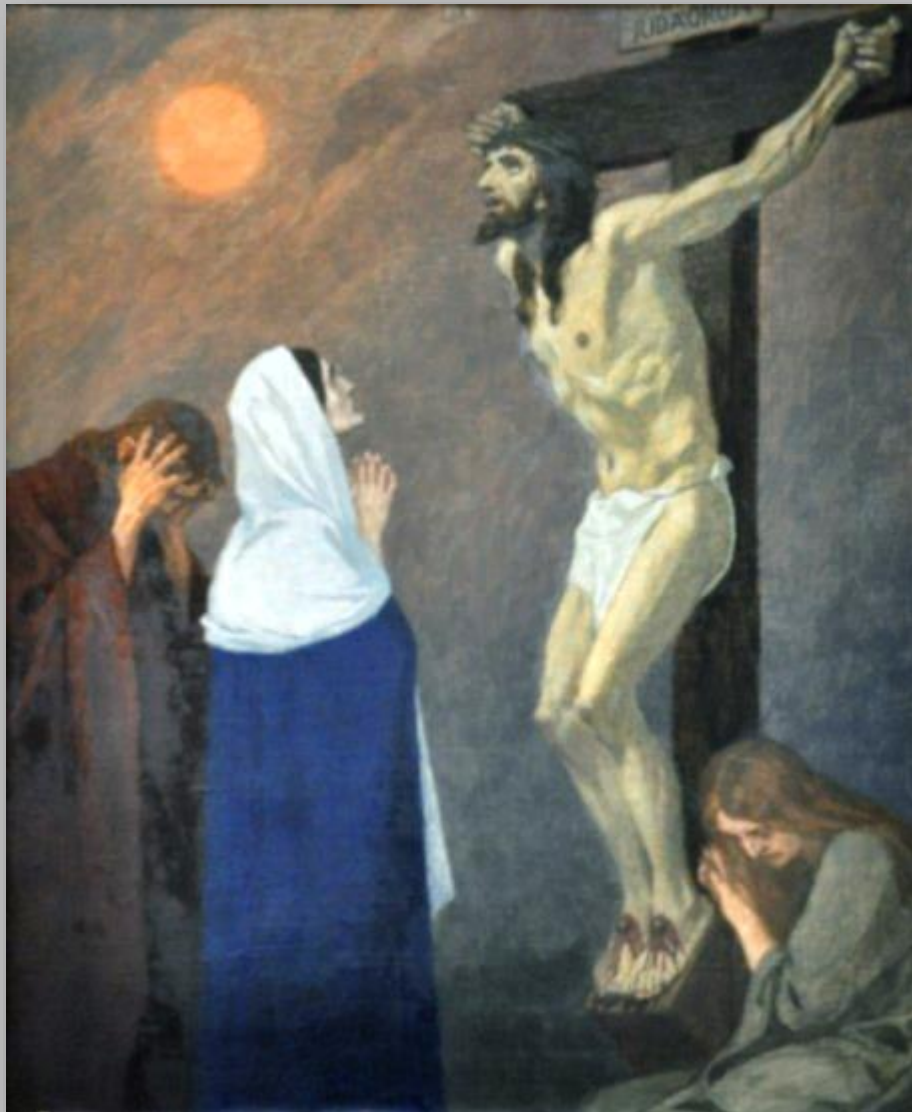


TWELFTH STATION: Jesus dies on the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an Eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this, he breathed his last.
Luke 23:44-46*



Because of our disregard for God’s creation, we witness death around us as we fail to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor as they breathe their last.

With every climate catastrophe, there comes death: death of people who drown in floods, of people who die because their crops have failed, or who succumb to heat exhaustion. Climate change itself is already causing the extinction of many plants and animals. “Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us.” (LS 33) Humanity itself may be headed down a path towards its own extinction as we approach the environmental tipping points from which there is no return. Because it is so overwhelming, we shut out the news of the ongoing dying of your Creation.

God spoke to us in Deuteronomy: “I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live...” (Deuteronomy 30:19)



Let us pray: O Merciful God, help us to have the courage to stop this spiral of death caused by our disregard for your gift of creation. Let us choose life. Accompany us as we join others to renew the face of the earth and to care for the most vulnerable among us.

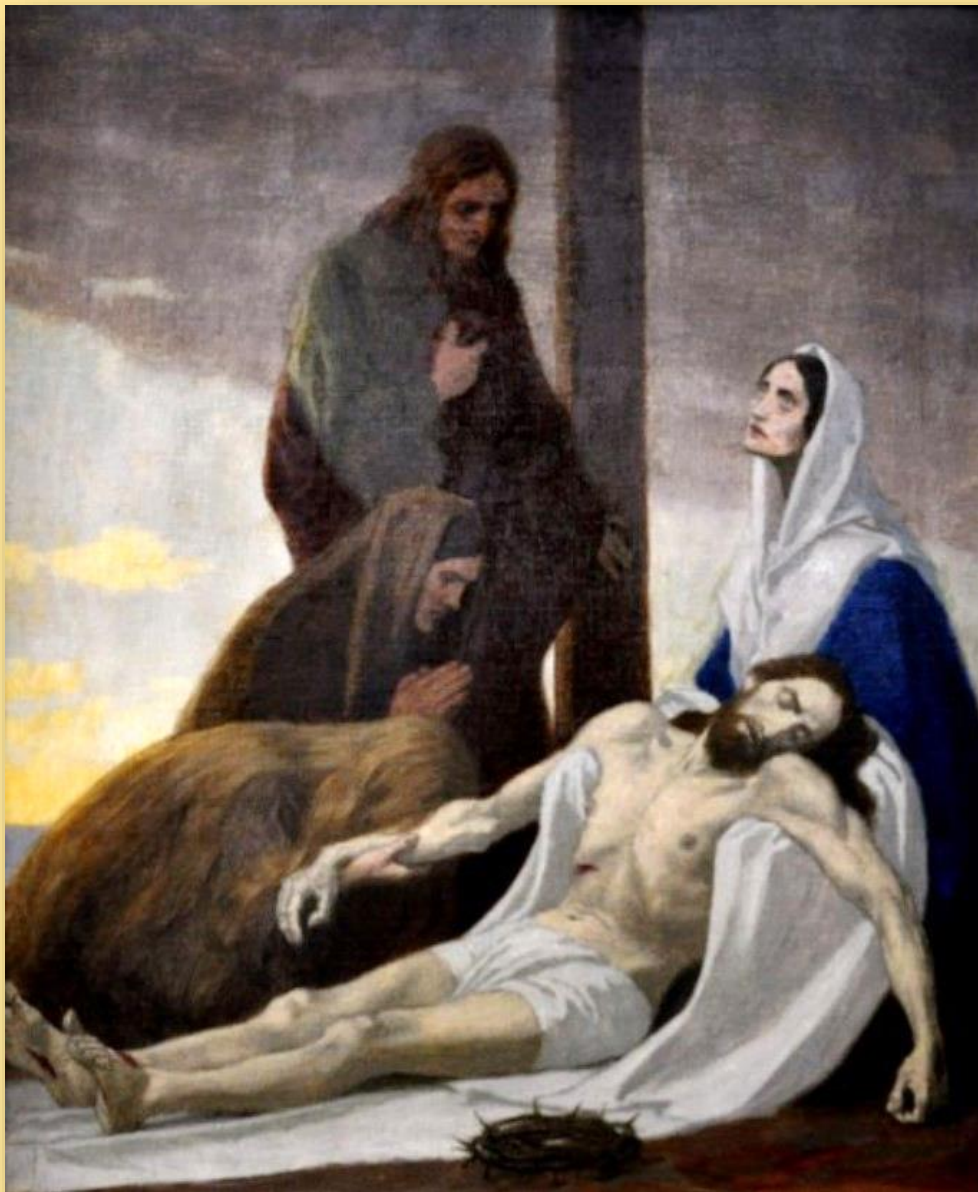


THIRTEENTH STATION: The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jewish leaders, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. John 19:38



As a follower of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea stepped forward in a very public way. This took great courage.

While we cannot stop global warming overnight, we can slow its rate by reducing fossil fuel pollution. But to do this, all of us will need to step out of our comfort zones into the public realm, as Joseph did, and use our voices and our votes to address this crisis. Pope Francis reminds us that “...along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society.(LS 231)



Let us pray. God of all, bless us with the courage of Joseph and the grace to see that your kingdom is found in simple everyday acts of kindness and service to others as well as acts of civic and political advocacy. With the urgency and weight of the environmental crisis looming large, grant us the faith to trust that, through You, all things are possible.



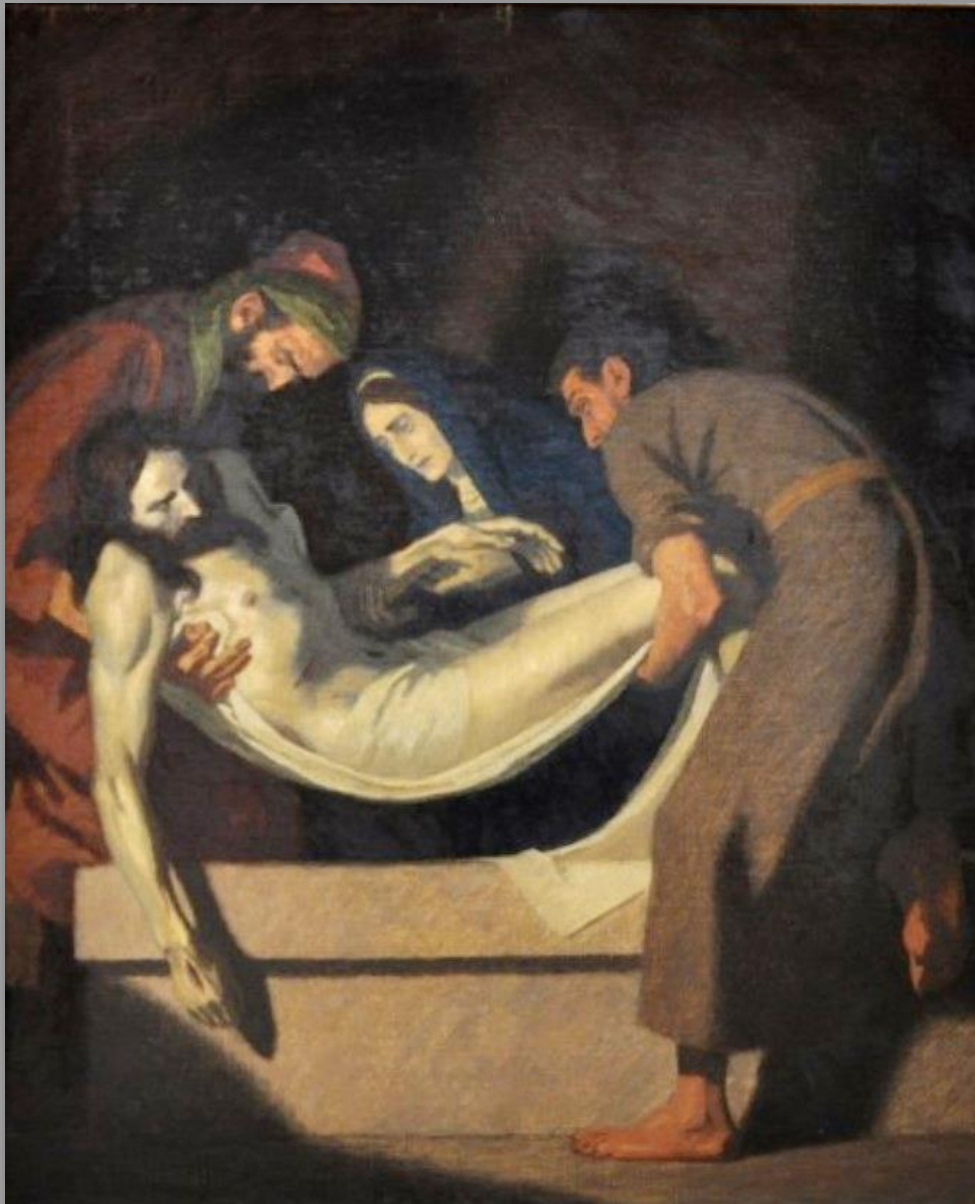
FOURTEENTH STATION:

The body of Jesus is laid in the tomb

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. Matthew 27:57-60



We bury God's creation in a tomb of injustice and environmental destruction. Since the advent of the industrial revolution, the human family has produced so many fossil fuel emissions that our entire planet is now enveloped in a layer of a warming atmosphere. The greenhouse gas effect is increasingly becoming our planet's tomb; we are trapped in it...not just some of us, but all of us. We are in a time when the whole of humanity is called to act together to turn this around. There is urgency to act now, while, with God's help, we can still turn our tomb into hopeful resurrection.

[The Creator] does not abandon us, he doesn't leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward." (LS 245)



Let us pray: Jesus, our hope, help us to realize that it is up to all of us to confront this crisis that humanity faces. Your way is the way of truth, of justice and of action. You were willing to bear the consequences with your crucifixion; help us come together as a human family to care for one another and restore your gift of creation, our common home.



FIFTEENTH STATION: Jesus rises from the dead

L: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

R: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices so that they might go and anoint him. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him." Mark 16: 1-6



In the light of the Resurrection, we work for the renewal of humanity, the earth, and all of God's creation. The resurrection of Jesus inspires us to live in a new way – to live sustainably and simply – as we work toward the renewal of the earth so that all of creation will rise into new life.

“As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.” (LS 207)



Let us pray: Jesus, through you, all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother; you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. Praise be to you! Amen. (LS 246)



