

Stations of the Cross

National Board of Catholic Women

2024

Stations of the Cross by Sieger Koder, used with permission.

Jesus is condemned to death

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of heaven is theirs.



Reflection: women of Russia

At the presentation in the temple a sword pierced Mary's heart. She carries this sorrow throughout the happy times of Jesus' childhood and growth to maturity.

From the beginning of his public life she must have felt the hostility of the Scribes and Pharisees and knew her Son's life was in danger.

At the pronouncement of his execution, the moment when he was condemned to death, her worst fears are confirmed.

Recently, on our TV screens, we have seen another mother, the mother of the Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny begging for the body of her dead son.

She knew, he too, had been condemned to death by a brutal regime which brooks no opposition. She represents the many other mothers in Russia who fear for the lives of their sons and daughters.

We pray for all the mothers who live in fear in countries where conflict, harsh dictatorships or anarchy dominate their lives.

We pray for the establishment of a just and peaceful world where fear is banished and families can flourish.

Let us pray together:

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus takes up the Cross

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel;

Who even at night directs my heart.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight;

The Lord is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.



Reflection: the women of Ukraine

Jesus, you took the cross willingly to bear it for the sake of all women, to redeem our sins.

We pray that we too may share the burdens of our sisters.

We stand with Mary and see our sisters in Ukraine alongside us, about to abandon hope, but in the presence of your acceptance of this unwarranted burden, may that flicker of faith grow and burn into a fierce flame of love for you.

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

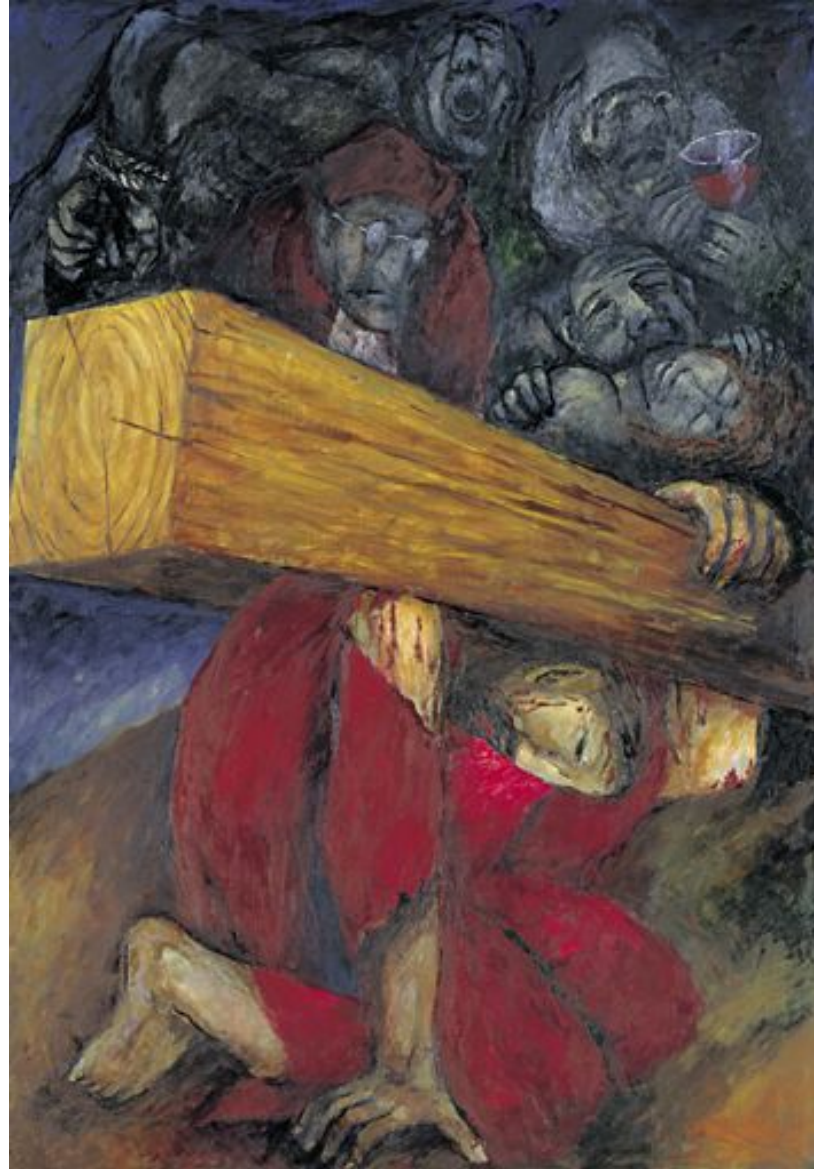
Jesus stumbles and falls

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus said:

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.



Reflection: Human rights defenders - Mexico

The weight of the cross bore down on his bruised and beaten body

and he fell.

A martyr's rise, he determined to continue,

a mission to fulfil and a world to redeem.

And she remembered his journey,

as her words filled the page

of the missing children and criminal cartels

who extract false confessions under torture.

The similarities are marked.

Human rights abuse in a country marked by fear.

How long could she last in informing the world

Of such undercover practices?

As a journalist and a human rights defender

She knew her fate!

But despite facing attacks and harassment,

Like Christ she continued.

A brave woman, a brave saviour!

And Our Lady sent a message of comfort at Medjugorje

“I know your pain and suffering because I lived through them.

I laugh with you in your joy and cry with you in your pain .

I will never leave you.“

Let us pray:

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus meets his Mother

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

I will say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me?

Why do I go mourning, oppressed by my enemies?



Reflection: the mothers of Gaza

We walk with Jesus to the place where he encounters his mother.

The mother who had been warned that her son would suffer and die. The mother who received the gift of myrrh from the Magi and heard the words of Simeon in the Temple, 'a sword will pierce your own heart'. Nothing prepares a mother to lose a child.

Today we stop with Jesus and look into the eyes of the many mothers in Gaza who have lost their children, who fear for their children who struggle to protect and care for them. We pray for an end to war and that these mothers would once again know peace for their children.

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus remember them when you come into your kingdom

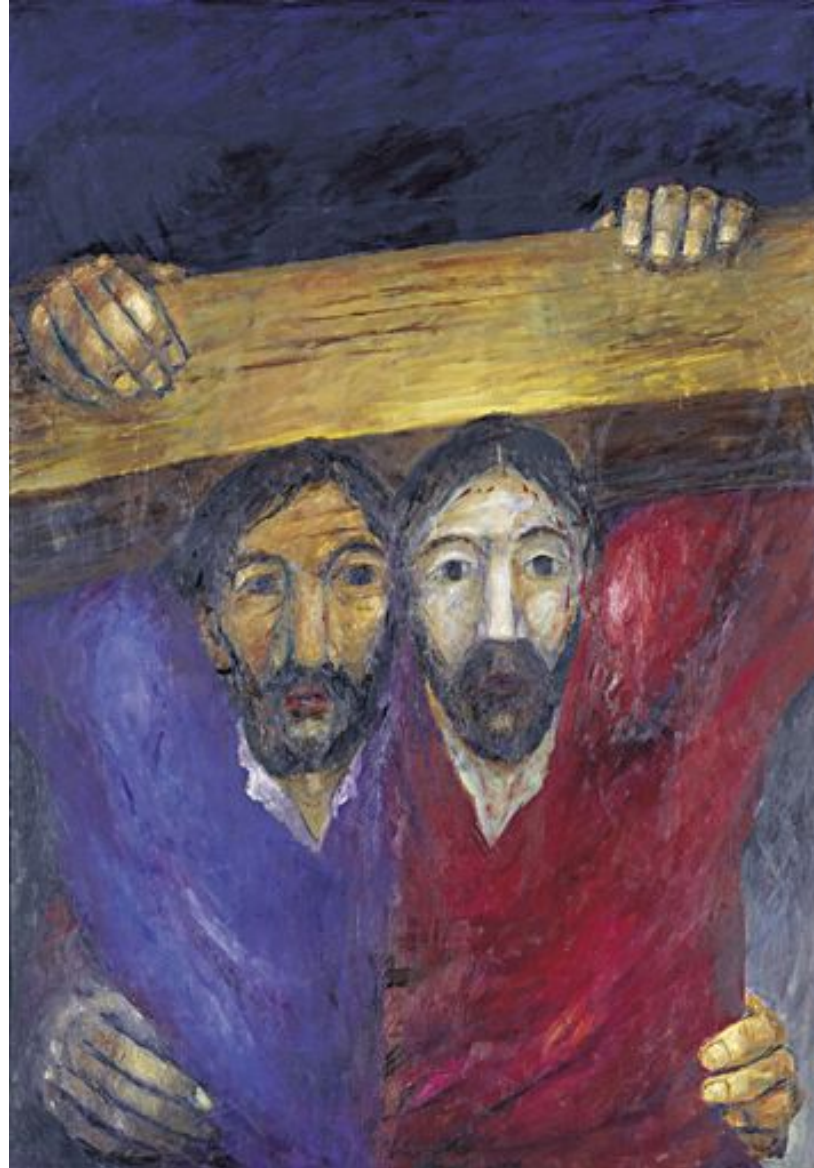
Simon takes up the cross with Jesus

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

Jesus said:

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.



Reflection: Indigenous women

Simon of Cyrene finds himself at the central scene of salvation. The cross is thrust upon him and I wonder how he felt. Surely he could see this man needed his help, surely he feared reprisal no matter what his response. As he carries this cross he connects with Christ.

As we remember Simon, we bring to mind indigenous women everywhere who find themselves as innocent bystanders, unexpectedly carrying heavy burdens. We remember they carry the weight of historical trauma, cultural preservation, and advocating for their communities against the weight of discrimination.

Just as Simon walked alongside Jesus, indigenous women walk alongside their communities embodying resilience, strength, and love, in the face of trauma. Let us honour the strength and resilience of indigenous women, recognizing their vital role in carrying the burdens of their people and cultures.

Jesus, remember them when you come into your kingdom
Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Veronica wipes Jesus' face

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

*The Lord loves those who hate evil
The Lord guards the souls of his saints
And sets them free from the wicked.*



Reflection: women of Palestine

As Jesus carried a wooden cross to save you and me, Veronica wiped His face. Though she couldn't save Jesus from pain, her act of love mattered.

Let us in love and prayer, remember the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters in Palestine burying their sons, husbands, brothers and fathers. May they be filled with strength and courage like Veronica and Jesus' mother, Mary.

*Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom
Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom.*

Jesus stumbles again and falls

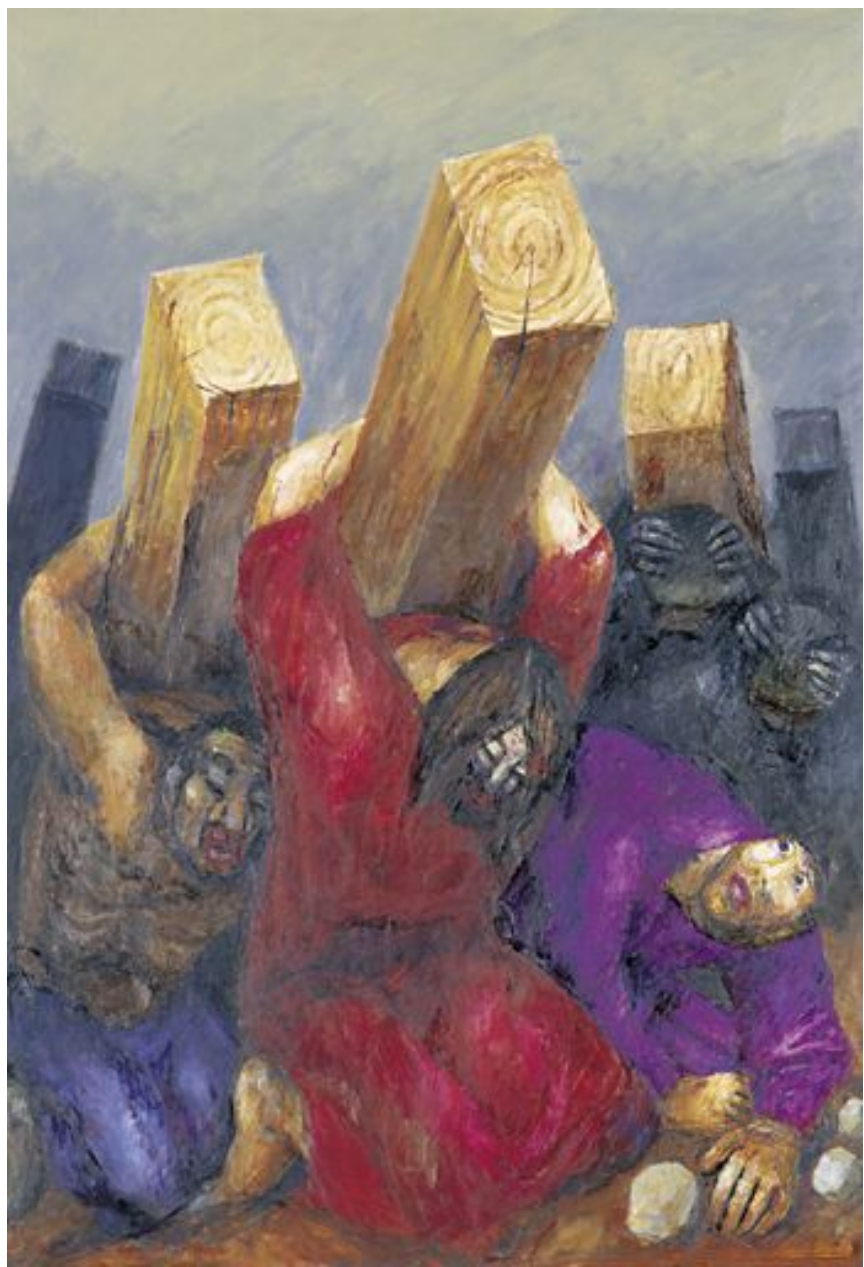
We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

Jesus said:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice:

they shall be satisfied.



Reflection: Trafficked women - Albania

Traffickers use false promises such as marriage or employment offers to exploit Albanian women victims into sex trafficking, both within the country and across European borders. Women are sold onwards from one gang of traffickers to another with little chance of escape.

A common characteristic of so many victims of human trafficking is their strength, resourcefulness and dynamism, often coupled with a strong ambition that propels them to better their lot.

We entrust to God's provident care the victims who are trying so desperately to escape their captivity. How disheartened they must feel when their own attempts at securing their freedom have repeatedly failed or when their possibility of escape is hampered by fears for their families or children.

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

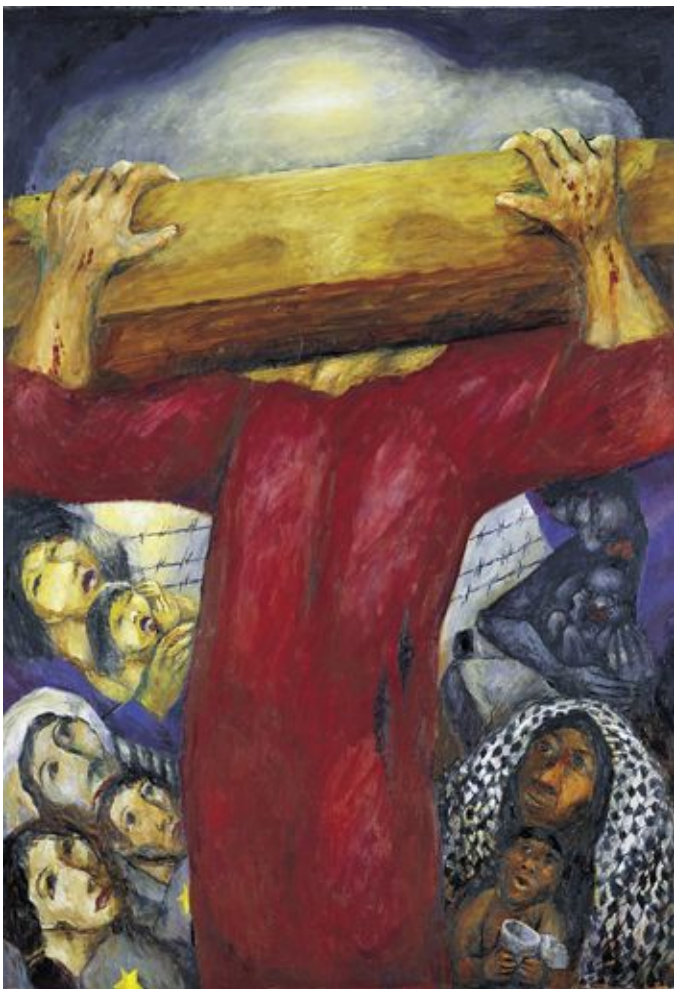
Jesus meets the Women of Jerusalem

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

In God alone be at rest, my soul; for my hope comes from God.

God alone is my rock, my stronghold; my fortress. I stand firm.



Reflection: women against violence: Palestine

Let us remember the women of Jerusalem and of Palestine who are in the midst of conflict, war and devastation; suffering pain, hunger and heartache.

We pray with them for an end to violence.

May the forces of evil that divide and destroy be overcome.

The cry of women is sending a message to the world:

‘I beg you...bear with one another in love’.

May justice prevail and their pain be eased.

God of Peace, we pray for a peaceful end to the seemingly endless war in the Holy Land. We pray for the city of Jerusalem, sacred to the three religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Let there be equality, freedom of religion, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. Teach us as Christians to follow the way of Jesus, sharing love with those we meet.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

For a third time, Jesus stumbles and falls

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

Jesus said:

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.



Reflection: Democratic Republic of Congo: women displaced by war.

As we contemplate the image of our suffering Jesus falling for a third time, we think of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who struggle daily against violence and oppression in a country where decades-long political violence by armed groups has led to the deep suffering and trauma.

Let us remember the women and girls in displaced communities who are frequently abducted by armed groups and used as sex slaves, forced to give birth in the forest. Let us also remember the children forced to witness violence. Sexual violence against women and girls has become an instrument of war and oppression, and young women in displacement camps are forced to trade sex for food for their children.

Just as the fallen Jesus was a victim of cruelty and torture, so too are these women the victims of war, violence and food deprivation, unable to defend themselves, and crushed by the cross of fear, starvation and injustice.

Lord Jesus, because of your love for us, you struggled under the weight of the cross on the way to Calvary. We raise up to you the women and girls displaced by war. Let your great love and mercy sustain them. Grant them the courage and will to survive.

Touch the hearts of aggressors and perpetrators of violence, melt their hearts of stone and fill them with mercy to end the violence and establish peace. We pray too for the DRC government and the authorities that they will have the courage and integrity to fulfil their obligations towards their people, to keep them in safety and restore peace.

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus is stripped

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

But my people did not heed my voice, and Israel would not obey;
so I left them in their stubbornness of heart
to follow their own designs.



Reflection: Sex Tourism - Myanmar

To be naked is to be vulnerable. To be naked is to be exposed as defenceless to the eyes of others. To be stripped naked in public is to be humiliated, dehumanised, reduced to a body, meat.

Google Myanmar and you will be presented with a stream of websites with images of women. Young women, posed to suggest sexual availability, designed to entice foreign tourists – men, that is – to visit Myanmar and spend their tourist dollars, or pounds, or euros, buying Burmese women for sex.

Scroll further. Burmese women you will learn were once held in high esteem and often had significant political and economic power.

But since the succession of military governments in recent years, governments that have destroyed Aung San Suu Kyi and her democratic supporters, women have seen themselves pushed to the margins of society, forced by conscription to labour for the army, forced by poverty to service foreign tourists in the sex trade.

As Jesus was stripped and humiliated, we remember the women of Myanmar who also have been stripped and humiliated.

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

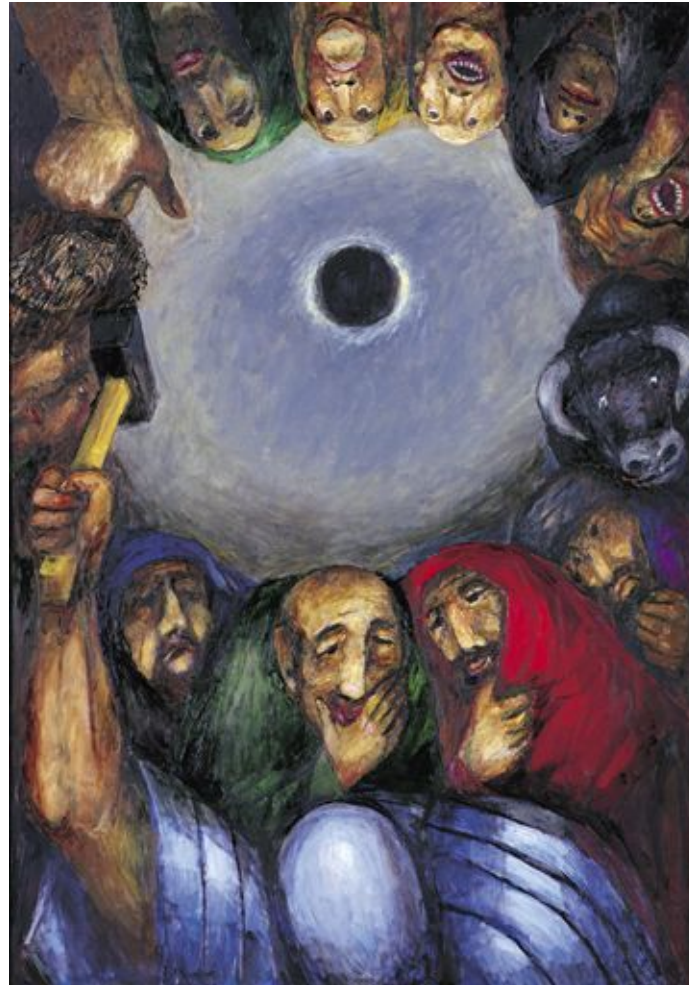
Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus is nailed to the cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus said:

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.



Reflection: women at the cross: Afghanistan

They gazed on, as Jesus was laid onto the wood.

The hands that had blessed and healed, rendered now immovable.

The Feet that had brought Him to encounter each one of them held fast.

But the eyes, not one of the soldiers could stop His gaze on the women gathered at his feet.

They stared at their Saviour, their faces more tormented than his as they watched every hope being nailed to a cross.

In silence the pain of abandonment met His.

Were they now to face the enemy alone?

Would there be a price on their heads for this trust?

And Heaven cried out as the blood on the sand bore witness to His humanity.

They gazed on, as the gates of Kabul airport closed.

The hands that had offered freedom and hope, were holding clipboards, not answers.

The feet that had once marched through the cities promising change, were walking away.

And the eyes that had seen them, and told the world about them, watched them gather the wrong side of the gates.

They stared after their supposed saviours, their faces tormented as they watched hope fading down a runway.

Together in silence they shared the pain of their abandonment.

Now left to face the enemy alone, a price on their heads for this trust.

And Heaven cried out as the blood on the sand bore witness to our inhumanity.

Jesus, remember them when you come into your Kingdom

Jesus remember them when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*The Lord shall save the poor when they cry,
and the needy who are helpless; the Lord will have pity on the
weak,
and save the lives of the poor.*



Reflection: Trafficked women: Nigeria

When Jesus cried out my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He did so in all his humanness accepting the sins of the world but knowing in his divinity that God was going to raise him up. Jesus did not fail to accept that in his dying on the cross He would be glorified.

In Nigeria, every day, women and girls are victims of trafficking. Thousands will end up being trafficked abroad for forced labour, sex work or harvested for their organs. At the same time many are lured from poverty by promises of legitimate jobs, many to remain in Nigeria to be exploited by gangs and corrupt organisations, who intimidate and use violence and threats against them; in a country where women generally are deemed inferior to men.

We pray for all Catholic Religious Sisters who are working in Nigeria to eradicate Human Trafficking, especially the Religious Sisters of Charity.

May their efforts bring truly life changing opportunities to the women they encounter.

Through their Networking, advocacy and collaboration we pray that the Sisters will help the victims they encounter to know they have not been forsaken, and that women throughout the world pray for them.

We pray that every woman and girl victim will feel the hope and promise of God's mercy and know they are loved, each one, for who they are.

Jesus is taken down from the cross

We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Jesus said:

*Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called God's sons and
God's daughters.*



Reflection: gang warfare: Haiti

His lifeless eyes hold her
As she cradles the child that she loves
Heart pierced, the mother remembers
As she embraces the battered form.
No one to jeer now, his work is done,
but the horror remains;
evermore a hope rekindled, igniting a flame,
that his death would not be in vain.

*Jesus remember them when you come into your
Kingdom.*

Her lifeless eyes hold those of the medic
As she mopped her blooded legs with compassion.
A volunteer caught between the politics of rival gangs
In Haiti
With no government, prisoners freed,
They make no discrimination
As women are subjected,
To a horror only the world reads about

*Jesus remember them when you come into your
Kingdom*

Jesus is laid in the tomb

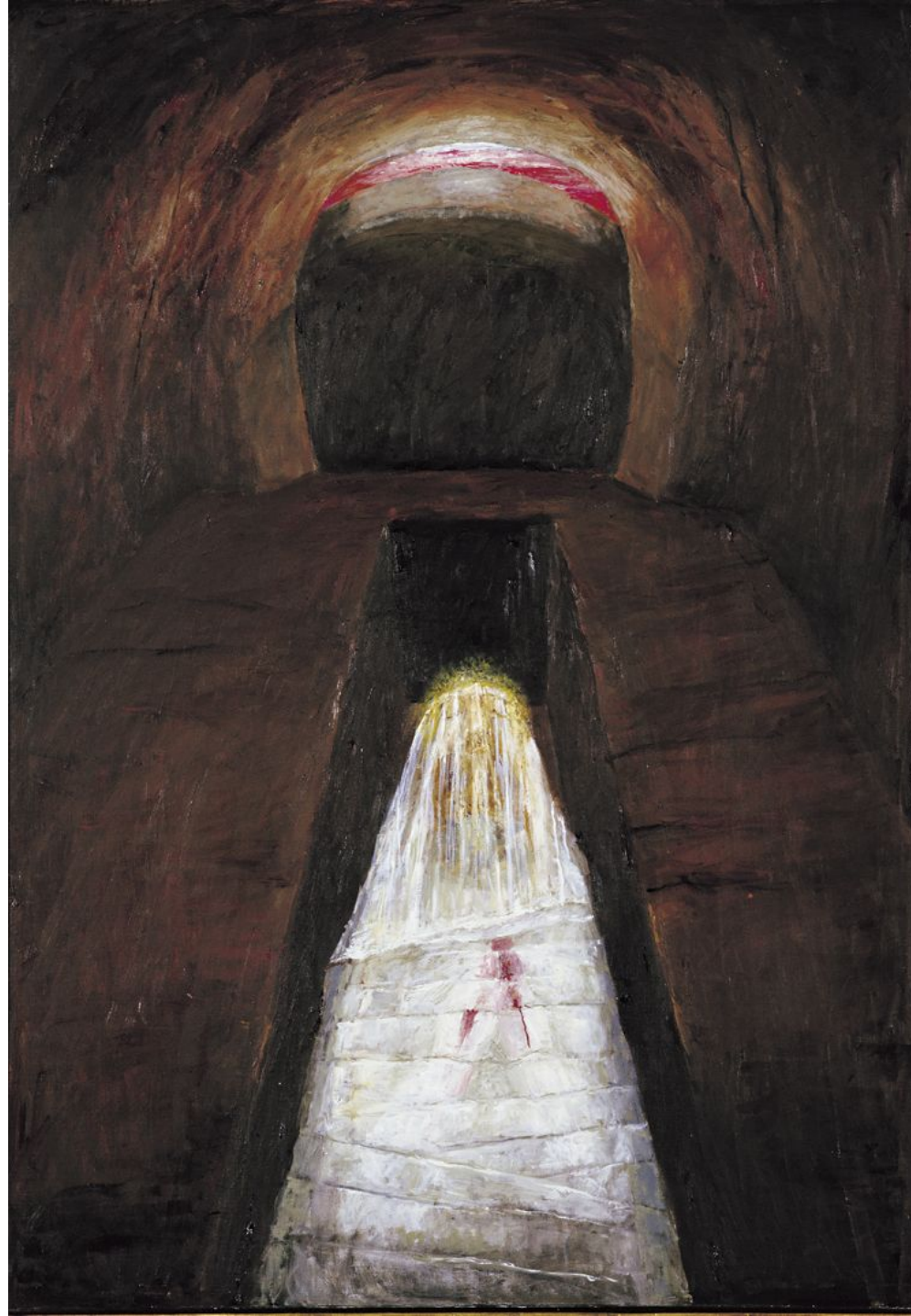
We adore you O Christ and we praise you

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Rescue me God my helper

and my tongue shall sing of your mercy;

Lord open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise.



**A new commandment
I give unto you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you.**



AMEN