



On this death all the living find their stronghold

In this beautiful sculpture by Michelangelo, Jesus, deposed from the Cross, is supported by Mary. Mary supports the Son and at the same time leans on Him.

*Lord, we cling to you
in order to support you on your path towards the
passion.*

*We lean on you
to have the strength to carry our cross.*

*We cling to you
with the crosses of our brothers and sisters,
as well as of the whole world that suffers from the
consequences of this pandemic.*

*We lean on your death
to live, to find strength,
to invoke together,
from all over the earth,
your salvation and new life.*

Pietà Rondanini - Michelangelo Buonarroti
Museo del Castello Sforzesco di Milano



JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH



From the Gospel according to Matthew (27: 20-26)

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed... When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves". ... So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.



Associated to His cross

Dr. Mark takes care of his elderly mother who has been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for some years. He has reduced his working hours for some time, and gave up many of his activities. In this difficult moment of the pandemic he found himself faced with a difficult choice: to continue taking care of his mother or to devote himself to his mission and profession. He feels that his mother is entering the final phase of life and would like to stay by her side. However, as a doctor, he made the painful choice to part with her; he accompanied her to her sister's house and left her in order to help the sick.

Sr. Regina (Sao Paolo - Brazil)

Let us pray

Father, sustain those who at this moment face with faith and courage the responsibilities of their vocation and profession; protect those, in the face of the risk that demands the gift of themselves, do not wash their hands and do their own duty for the good of all. Amen.



JESUS RECEIVES THE CROSS



From the Gospel according to John (19:17)

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.



Associated to His cross

In Hong Kong, because of the pandemic, many workers are journeying with Jesus on the path of the cross, especially in the sector of tourism and restaurants who have lost their jobs; poor families who spend the little they have not for food but to buy materials cleaning and protection against the virus. The elderly isolated in buildings and the mentally ill; the organizers of the protests that were taking place in favor of democracy and these continue to be arrested.

Sr. Marinei (Hong Kong)

Let us pray

Jesus, good Shepherd, you who take the lost sheep on your shoulders, in this rough and heavy cross associate those who carry the weight of life with difficulty, tried by so many privations and fears. Amen.



JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME



From the book of prophet Isaiah (53: 4)

Surely, he has born our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.



Associated to His cross

One of the great sufferings in this time pandemic concerns the onset of the economic crisis. There are many who may lose their jobs; many families now already in difficulty, as they do not have enough for shopping and to support their children. Many employers are overwhelmed with concern over fears of having to lay off their employees. We walk in the dark, waiting for better days.

Sr. Susila (Italy)

Let us pray

Your strength help us Lord in this moment of trial: rekindle our faith and revive our hope. Do not abandon us to our disappointments and our frailties. Amen.



JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER



From the Gospel according to Luke (2: 34)

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed and a sword will pierce your own soul too".



Associated to His cross

With the threat of the coronavirus and the order for the total closure of public activities, our Center that deals with the reception of the disabled also stopped, leaving everyone at home. For some categories among the people who attend the Center this can be a period of rest, but for women who found some relief by leaving handicapped children, at least for a few mornings, it was a bad surprise.

We think of these mothers who with so much love, hiding their suffering behind a smile, carry the weight of a handicapped child. Above all, we think of those, who perhaps have more than one, and for this reason, they are considered guilty of the handicap. The husband asks for a divorce, the family leaves them and so they remain alone with their heavy responsibility. Let us put these brave mothers with the women who stand at the foot of the cross.

Sr. Serena, Sr. Jothy and Sr. Lucy (Algeria – Mascara)

Let us pray

Father of infinite love, let our days pass under the maternal gaze of Mary. Make us like her courageous and docile in accepting to live fully what life presents us. Amen.



JESUS IS HELP BY SIMON OF CYRENE



From the Gospel according to Mark (15: 21)

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.



Associated to His cross

We associate the cross of the Lord with many women who live in our area, in the outskirts of Dakha who find themselves having to manage children, work, home, expense, future ... all alone because they are abandoned by their husbands; they are many, lonely and fatigued women. Like the mother of Sadihia's, a little girl with some growth problems, who attends our kindergarten; she is always there, she works for 8-10 hours and in the evening, she comes to pick up her daughter. We give her little help. In front of these women, we feel like Simon of Cyrene, called to share a cross that we cannot erase but that perhaps we can sustain with our presence and our support.

Sr. Prity, Sr. Silvia, Sr. Cecilia (Zirani – Bangladesh)

Let us pray

Father, make us sincere friends of our companions of journey. Arouse an active compassion in our spirit for those who are in trial. Grant us to serve everyone, according to the gospel charity. Amen.



VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS



From the book of prophet Isaiah (53: 2)

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like root out of the dry ground.
He had no form of majesty that we could look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we could desire him.*



Associated to His cross

We observe the rules, in respecting the people around us, but in my limited surrounding, the greatest suffering is seeing the pain of the many people who are sick, alone, of families who have lost their loved ones and have not been able to greet them. I inquired if I could do something but I was told, for the time being the municipality is taking care of everything. I am living very much in my family, rediscovering together the values, closed in a drawer due to excessive running daily.

I would like to be a nurse so I could approach a suffering person and at least hold his hand. I feel useless, I stay here and I assist from afar, I would like to do many things but I cannot. I entrust to you Jesus, my feeling of uselessness, so that it may be transformed through your Cross-, in Love for all these brothers of mine.

Lorenza (Community of MdI Lay Associates – Italy)

Let us pray

O Lord, give us the grace to be able to recognize you in the suffering faces of those you put near us. Amen.



JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME



From the letter to the Hebrews (4: 15)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.



Associated to His cross

There are many young people in Guinea and they are everywhere: on the streets, in popular markets trying to sell something to earn a living. They are at school to prepare for their future, but the long strikes take away their desire to continue believing in quality education. Others spend hours and hours chatting without doing anything, without a plan for the future. Yes, they are young people full of life, energy, they want to work, dream big, but all of this only falls in the air, because nobody really cares about them. Of course, even for the Church it is not easy to take charge of which so many times, thinking of getting up, they fall even lower in drugs, in corruption; some run away from the country even without knowing where to sleep and even what to eat. Who will help them out of this despair? Only you Jesus who experienced the failure and the feeling of abandonment of many. Your mother, Mary, has always remained close to you, in the deepest pain. May the Church in Guinea be like Mary, the faithful mother who always remains close to her children, especially those most in need, who today more than ever are young people without a future and a hope.

Sr. Suzanne (Guinea Bissau)

Let us pray

Jesus falls to the ground like the grain of wheat: from his death, life is born. Father, sustain the Church in the faithful testimony of this mystery by the side of those who feel themselves in danger, unsuccessful and without hope. Amen.



JESUS MEETS THE PIOUS WOMEN



From the Gospel according to Luke (23: 27-28)

And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."



Associated to His cross

Together with Jesus who walks the path of the cross, there are 50,000 people who are accused of witchcraft every year in Papua New Guinea. The majority are women: single mothers, widows and mentally disabled; they are the ones who pay the highest price: they are driven out of their villages, tortured and often killed.

Sr. Vimala (Papua Nuova Guinea)

Let us pray

O Jesus, the beloved city pushes you out of its doors. Make us reflect silently on this terrible mystery. Save us from the misfortune of not recognizing you in the face of those who are cut off and left behind in our societies. Amen.



JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME



From the first letter of Peter (2: 20-21)

But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.



Associated to His cross

This new and difficult experience is teaching us to make the best use of our time. Love for our neighbor pushes us to act, providing the necessary food for those without it and school supplies for the children of our kindergarten in order to allow them to face this moment.

We try to comfort people through a phone call to safeguard their mental health and well-being because in this environment the loss of the family, financial difficulties or worries about work lead the individual to have suicidal tendencies and suffer from depression.

Sr. Julli, Sr. Teena, Sr. Sucitha, Sr. Ilenia (London)

Let us pray

Father, grant us to learn from Jesus perseverance in the good and a heart ready to help those who in this difficult moment are in need of us, our kindness, our creativity, our care. Amen.



JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HI GARMENTS



From the Gospel according to John (19: 23-24)

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. The also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it".



Associated to His cross

We are accompanying a worrying situation that in this pandemic period, which assumes a dramatic character. About three thousand people, the vast majority men, but also families of migrants, who are homeless, are practically abandoned to themselves. There is a moderate effort by the government and a commitment from the diocesan caritas. We missionary sisters of the Immaculate gave rented accommodation and stable work to two men. It is a drop of water in the ocean of the needs of our people! We entrust this and other social challenges to Providence and to the great mercy of the Lord.

Sr. Valeria (Manaus – North Brazil)

Let us pray

O Jesus, stripped of your clothes, we pray to you for those who are most vulnerable, in body or spirit, so that they may be helped by the charity of their brothers and sisters to find their way back to self-confidence and love of God. Amen.



JESUS IS CRUCIFIED



From the Gospel according to Luke (23: 32-34)

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing".



Associated to His cross

Here in Yaoundé, very often we hear speaking about street children, teenagers and young people, who came to the capital because of poverty, lack of perspectives, family violence and other reasons. Once they arrive, they make the streets their home. In this period of epidemic these young people are among the most exposed, on the one hand in fact, they have no place to shelter and respect the basic rules for hygiene and on the other they are victims of "cleansing the city" because they are considered as scraps to be thrown. Even more submerged and fragile, there are the families of the "Mapans", families that grew and built up in the hidden shantytowns of Yaoundé. These families cannot move and change situations due to the presence of infants and children. At this moment all the makeshift work to earn the minimum for daily food is interrupted and the Edimar Center is collapsing in the possibility of help. The State does not even talk about it ... all this resounds to me like the cry of Jesus on the cross : I am thirsty, a cry from the one who is naked and humiliated, asking for at least a drop of water, a final gesture of humanity.

Sr. Daniela (Yaoundé – Cameroon)

Let us pray

O crucified Jesus, grant strength and new opportunities to those who are placed on the margins of society, to those who have no means of redeeming themselves, to those who participate in your passion through illness. Open the eyes of each one of us to see our indifference. Amen.



JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



From the Gospel according to John (19: 30)

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "it is finished." Then bowed his head and gave up his spirit.



Associated to His cross

Our great concern and pain is that of having been forced to close the hospital because of the pandemic, knowing that many of our lepers need to come to be treated; we are not allowed to open and we can only take care of the inpatients who live with us. We think of Jesus abandoned, abandoned people whom no one helps. We give medicines in hand but they need more; the police check and we cannot welcome them; we are afraid that they will get sick and that they will let go of their fate. The situation in India is serious, many poor people on the street without a roof top to cover. In the community, we are fine, but we miss our patients. In our neighborhood, we made the appeal to help 150 families. Our boys, with the permission of the police, will go to the houses bringing the necessary help.

Sr. Lucia (Mumbai – India)

Let us pray

In your open arms may those who died from this pandemic find grace and salvation. In our open arms, may the most needy and abandoned brothers find welcome and care. Instil in all the hope in the resurrection. Amen.



JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS



From the Gospel of Luke (23: 50-53a)

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down from the cross.



Associated to His cross

We participate in the cross of Christ whenever we feel alone or far away in the places where we should feel more united and welcomed, the places where we spend most of our day: the home and the workplace ... as it happened to Christ with his disciples in the darkest hour. At times, we are unable to

understand ourselves and be understood; other times we understand and welcome each other, but not in unconditional way. We share the cross of Christ in the misunderstandings, disappointments and loneliness of everyday life.

A young family of Lecco (Italy): Daniele, Marta and little Teodor

Let us pray

O Jesus, contemplating your love for us, we thank you for the gift of life and salvation. Help us to cope with the difficulties in living our fraternity and self-gift. Amen.



JESUS IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHER



From the Gospel according to Luke (23: 53)

Joseph of Arimathea “wrapped the body of Jesus in a linen cloth and laid it in the rock hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid”.



Associated to His cross

Injustice, outrages, humiliations, revenge, violence, racism towards our migrant brothers and sisters. As we walk with them, we discover the difficult situation of migrants, in particular the young women who arrive in Tunisia, often defenseless and sold by their colleagues in the hands of Tunisian leaders under contract. Their sufferings are very great; discouraged, they find no refuge in anyone. They fall back into the hands of their colleagues, trusting them, but often end up getting pregnant and are asked to have an abortion. If they refuse, they are abandoned. However, they remain faithful until the birth of their children and showing the true qualities of a mother. All these situations reveal to us the face of Jesus who still suffers with his people. Jesus God of mercy takes pity on us. We entrust you with our migrant sisters and brothers who live in Tunisia and throughout the world. Be their courage and strength.

Sr. Rekha, Sr. Rosangela, Sr. Jessy (Tunisia)

Let us pray

O Jesus, your body, wrapped in a bedsheet, enters the sepulcher.

Down here, everything is anguish, without your presence; only your cross illuminates the darkness of the world.

We pray for those who are about to die alone: may they feel your reassuring presence. For everyone there is the consolation of the promise: “If we die with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him”. Amen.