

LENT | STATIONS 2021 | OF THE CROSS



Trōcaire



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Please adhere to current Covid-19 recommendations for your area in the delivery of the Stations of the Cross. Trócaire staff are also available to guide your group through this resource in whatever way is safest for all taking part and in line with government guidelines. Additional Lenten resources, including homily notes, *Exploring the Sunday Gospels with Children*, parish resource and reflections are available [here](#).

It is important to note that this is only one perspective from South Sudan. Avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes as you move through this resource. Conflict and poverty are a reality for these families, but not everyone in, or from, South Sudan has had this experience. Remind people that this is only one part of the story of South Sudan. Where possible, focus on positive aspects of the country as a balance. South Sudan is only one country amongst many in the entire continent of Africa; therefore, avoid describing the families as living in Africa. If you have access to the internet in your home, parish or school, encourage people to research five facts about South Sudan before starting this activity. Emphasise the diversity in the country and focus on positive aspects of its culture. Research corresponding facts about Ireland and compare.

Cover Photo: (L–R) Ajak with her son Ngor (8 months) and Awut with her granddaughter Nyajima (2). Photo credit: Achuothe Deng

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

To be read by the leader and reader beforehand. If appropriate, you can share this information with your group.

The Stations of the Cross is a traditional way of praying during Lent.

We pray this familiar prayer to be with Jesus Christ, who walked this journey, carrying the cross, the instrument of His death, out of love and commitment to us. We pray it also because we wish to become close to Jesus, who loves each of us so deeply.

We walk this journey to get a glimpse at the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, who is alive today and experiencing the Journey of the Cross wherever our sisters and brothers are suffering throughout the world. We give thanks as we walk this journey. We walk our journey this Lent with the families of Awut and Ajak, who are on our Trócaire box this year, and all the people of South Sudan.

The Way of the Cross has brought hope and the possibility of new life into the dark places of our lives. Journeying with Jesus Christ allows us to become aware of where God is walking with us in our lives, and where we are called to be with others on their journey. Millions of people in South Sudan have walked

miles and miles, fleeing conflict to find some safety and shelter in refugee camps within and outside their own country borders. Many people seek refuge in other village communities within South Sudan just as the families of Awut and Ajak have done. The South Sudanese people are striving to overcome war and poverty so that their families can survive and thrive.

‘Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. *You* can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.’

Nelson Mandela

Uganda, a country that borders South Sudan has taken in hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese refugees as a consequence of the

war. Many Ugandan Church leaders such as Archbishop Odama are praying fervently for peace in South Sudan.

As you pray, be aware of where you have experienced the different stations in your life. Think also of your loved ones, your friends, your neighbours and your community as a whole. Include them in your prayer, as you recall those who are experiencing something of Jesus Christ's journey at this time. Look beyond your part of the world and be mindful that you share your human journey with people scattered all over the world.

Be mindful of Awut and Ajak and their families from this year's Lenten campaign who are facing conflict, hunger and fear. Jesus walked the Way of the Cross for all humanity – now we walk in solidarity with all people.

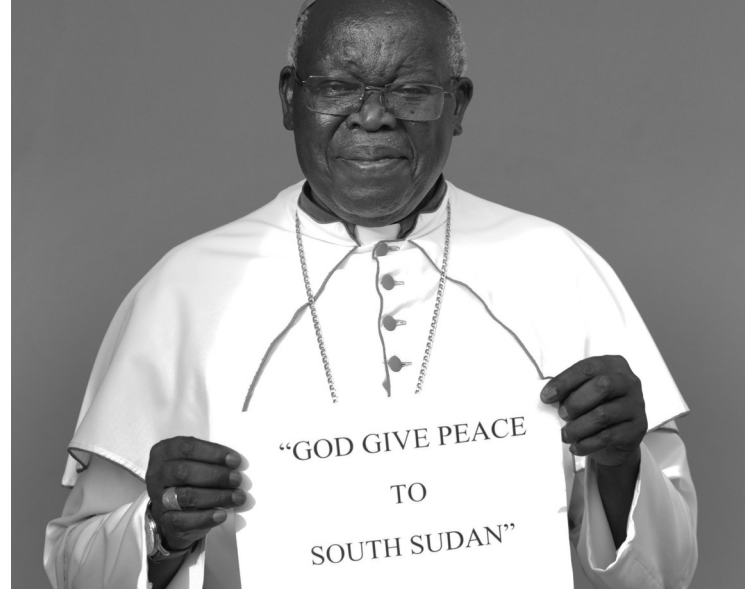
If leading the stations for a group, take a moderate pace, giving time for a pause between the reader and the prayer led by the leader.

Introduction

Leader: We gather as sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ as we begin our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: We gather in these Lenten days to walk the journey of Jesus to Calvary. We come as individuals, aware of the challenges and struggles in our own lives. We come as a community of



Archbishop John Baptist Odama of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Gulu in Uganda. Photo credit: Mark Stedman

believers and we come as members of our common humanity. We are mindful of people all over the world, who walk the Way of the Cross daily. We walk in love, as we come to share the ongoing pain and suffering of people who are living with conflict and whose lives are in danger. We pray for peace in South Sudan. We also pray for peace in our own lives, families and communities.

Reader: This year we walk the journey of Jesus in solidarity with communities in South Sudan. The people of South Sudan are crying out for peace. We walk with Awut and Ajak and their families who have been displaced because of conflict and with all people who are experiencing the Way of the Cross in their lives today.

Leader: Jesus our brother, awaken in us compassion for all who live the Way of the Cross daily. Fill our hearts with your love, showing us the way to embrace the world, extend your kingdom of mercy, justice, and love to all.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

First Station

Reader: Pilate condemns Jesus to die.

Condemnation kills hope. Sometimes in what we say or do, we leave other people devastated. We crush their hope. We remember and pray for those in our family or parish who have been hurt by others and who are not feeling included. We pray that we will all have the courage to reach out for help when we need it, and that we will reach out a hand to others who are in need. We are inspired by Awut and Ajak who have reached out to each other in their times of need.

Leader: Jesus our brother, open our hearts to those we condemn by our attitudes and our actions.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Second Station

Reader: Jesus accepts His cross

Jesus accepts what He cannot change. People in many parts of the world have to accept poor living conditions, hunger and violence, things that they often feel they cannot change. We have seen domestic violence rates rise in Ireland over the last year. In South Sudan, Trócaire works in partnership with its sister agency CAFOD and

their partnership is called CAFOD and Trócaire in Partnership (CTP). Flooding in South Sudan is made much worse by the effects of climate change. Trócaire's partners carried out an emergency food distribution to one thousand families to assist in meeting needs, through the generosity of parishioners like yourselves in Ireland and in collaboration with other partners. Trócaire and their partners continue to advocate and campaign for climate justice, here in Ireland and overseas.

Leader: Jesus our brother, give us courage to speak out against the injustice suffered by others, and act to change what can be changed.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Third Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the first time.

The weight of the cross causes Jesus to fall. Many people around us in our communities are falling down under the weight of bills they cannot pay or

(L-R) Ajak and Awut in their community in Malek, South Sudan. Photo credit: Achuo Deng





Ajak with her children Yomjima (11), Pawany (7), Majak (4), Chiech (6), Malong (14) and Ngor (8 months). Photo credit: Achuoth Deng

homes they cannot keep. People in South Sudan are carrying the weight of uncertainty about the future and fear of further conflict. Thousands of people in our own country and many more around the world have felt the weight of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last year.

Leader: Jesus our brother, nudge us daily to share our time, our voice and our generosity with those in need.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fourth Station

Reader: Jesus meets his mother, Mary.

How did Mary feel when she met Jesus? He is weighed down and surrounded by guards. She cannot lift the burden from Him. However, she is there; her presence alone must have given Him strength.

Women and girls in South Sudan often have limited access to opportunities and are vulnerable to gender-based violence and abuse. Girls still struggle to gain access to school. Trócaire and our partners work to protect vulnerable women and girls and to provide training on the rights of women and girls.

Leader: Jesus our friend, we remember Awut and Ajak and mothers and grandmothers in Ireland and South Sudan and all over the world, those who

are living and those who have died. We thank God for the gift of motherhood.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fifth Station

Reader: Simon of Cyrene helps carry the Cross.

By working alongside struggling communities, Trócaire and CAFOD's partners help people to carry their cross, and to maintain their dignity and their hope. We often need help with the difficulties of everyday life. Grant us the courage to reach out for help and to offer help also.

Leader: Jesus our brother, recruit us as assistant workers and believers in justice by our prayers and generosity.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Sixth Station

Reader: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Compassion and kindness are at the heart of Veronica's action. Compassion for others and doing something to help are at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. We see this compassion in the friendship between Awut and Ajak, as well as in the support offered by Trócaire's partners. Trócaire means 'mercy' and our partners show that mercy by providing practical and counselling support to

communities who are dealing with displacement and trauma as a result of conflict.

Leader: Jesus, have mercy and compassion on each one of us, along our journeys in life.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Seventh Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the second time.

To get up after falling is hard. Getting up a second time is harder still. Many people are beaten down when they try to rise.

Leader: Jesus our brother, give us hope when we fall down. Help us to notice others who have been knocked back and give us courage to stretch out a hand of friendship and solidarity. Awut and Ajak, and many others like them in South Sudan, are showing friendship and solidarity towards each other through great challenges.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Eighth Station

Reader: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

Women in Ireland, South Sudan and around the world show great resilience and strength in the face of injustice. Jesus recognises their plight and feels for them.



Awut's grandchildren Nyajima (2) and Nyibak (5), and their farm animals. Photo credit: Achuoth Deng

Awut and Ajak are shining examples of women who are full of perseverance, solidarity and courage. In times of great adversity for Awut and Ajak and their families, they have come together to help one another, and continue to do so throughout the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. May their courage and generosity towards each other inspire all of us on our daily journeys through life. During this Lenten time of perseverance, our prayer joins us in solidarity with all women.

Leader: Jesus, help women all over the world to overcome injustices in their daily lives.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Ninth Station

Reader: Jesus falls for the third time.

Many people are being forced to flee their homes through no fault of their own. Unjust governments, natural disasters, war, hunger and climate change can all prevent someone being able to get up again. Jesus teaches us in this moment to get up and keep going.

Leader: Jesus our brother, open our hearts to feel the pain and despair of those who are forced to flee their homes. Help us to stretch out and support them to get back up.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Tenth Station

Reader: Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

In Ireland we see homeless people and migrants who are experiencing

displacement and being stripped of their dignity. Many families and communities in South Sudan have been displaced, lost everything and have to find safety in a new community and start a whole new life. Conflict and climate change can leave people destitute. The stories of Awut and Ajak and their families give us an insight into the impact of conflict on families, who often have to leave everything behind for their own safety. We see the strength and resilience shown by so many families and communities in South Sudan whose lives have been impacted by war and displacement. Even though these families live far away from us, they share a common experience of families fighting to protect the future for their children and grandchildren.

Leader: Jesus our brother, you know what it feels like to be stripped of your dignity. Make us advocates of justice for those who are fighting to protect their families' futures.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Eleventh Station

Reader: Jesus is nailed to the cross.

The sheer brutality of being nailed. Jesus is nailed because he threatens the status quo. He is nailed because others want to get rid of him. However, he is doing this for us and for our salvation.

Leader: Jesus our brother, open our eyes to see the people who are nailed in our society, because they challenge our comfort, our status and our wealth. Bless all those who speak out for truth and justice, especially those defending human rights and promoting peace around the world.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Twelfth Station

Reader: Jesus dies on the cross.

(Note for Reader: please omit the quote below in orange for any groups involving children.)

Jesus dies because of the way He lived – his stand for justice and truth, his belief that God's greatest interest lies with those who are placed on the fringes of society. His death is reconciliation in totality.

Father James Oyet Latansio, General Secretary of the South Sudan Council of Churches, a local partner of Trócaire, has witnessed many people being left dead on the streets outside of his office. Father James recalls this memory from an incident outside his office:

'So, I had to drive the car at the extreme side in order to avoid the bodies. More than fifty dead bodies on the road. As I speak now, this memory is live in my head. I see it. It disturbs me.'

Leader: Jesus our brother, challenge the way we live. Make us more conscious of those becoming poorer and more excluded in our society.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Thirteenth Station

Reader: Jesus is taken down from the cross after his death.

Jesus' body is removed from the cross and taken by His friends. Since civil war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013 as many as four hundred thousand people are estimated to have been killed. When people die in atrocities and war in South Sudan, there are times when their families and friends do not get to mourn over their dead. People here in Ireland over the last year have not been able to mourn our dead as we normally would, due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Leader: Jesus our brother, nurture respect for the gift of life that you gave us.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Fourteenth Station

Reader: Jesus is placed in the tomb.

Jesus being placed in the tomb seemed like the end. His disciples may have felt as if all hope was lost. In South Sudan and other parts of the world, people are fighting to hold onto hope due to the challenges of conflict, hunger, climate change and the outbreak of Covid-19. We remember Awut and Ajak and their communities from this year's Lenten campaign, as well as others like them from around the world. Father James from the South Sudan Council of Churches says:



Fr James Oyet Latansio,
General Secretary of SSCC.
Photo credit: South Sudan
Council of Churches



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'Now with the situation of Covid-19, I try my best to give the people of South Sudan hope. I give them that hope that we need to move through. Like in the letter from St Paul to the Corinthians (13:3), things will last forever: faith, hope and love – and the greatest of these is love. So, I try to instil this message of St Paul in them. They should stay strong in the faith, they should stay strong in their hope, they should stay strong in their love and move forward. A good day is to come for South Sudan, still. I tell them that.'

Leader: Jesus our brother, be with us when we lose hope. We need that hope in our struggles with the Covid-19 pandemic and to reach out to others in need. May we work with Trócaire and their partner organisations who offer hope and solidarity to people in the midst of despair. In our parishes let us share that hope with all our families in the community. May the strength and resilience of the people living in South Sudan lead them on the road to hope and peace.

All: *Save us, saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.*

Closing Reflection

Reader: We have walked this journey of Jesus to the cross with each other. It ends in despair with the burial of Jesus. However, our faith teaches us that this is not the end. We trust in the hope that Jesus rose from the dead, and in this way, God has transformed our lives too. Darkness, fear and injustice will not prevail. Jesus Christ, our brother and saviour, hold us close to you in our struggles.

Remind us always of the difficulties faced by those most vulnerable and in need in our world. Give us the courage to speak out as you did and to act for justice. We make this prayer in your name, through Christ our Lord.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: Pope Francis tells us in his recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* that we are all one family in spite of distances between us, so let us go from here as people of the resurrection, sharing our hope with all who despair. Let us share our voice and generosity with Awut and Ajak and the thousands of families who are living in fear of losing their lives, their homes and their possessions through conflict and war, particularly in South Sudan. We share our support with all who walk the Way of the Cross daily.



Father James from the South Sudan Council of Churches says the following to the Irish people who are supporting the work of Trócaire through our prayers and generosity:

‘Thank you for everything you do to enhance peace, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation through your advocacy support. Please rest assured of my prayers and gratitude.’

Leader invokes God’s blessing and crosses herself/himself.

Leader: May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

‘Don’t leave South Sudan alone, join us in the search for peace, support us through your prayers and hold our hands.’

Fr James

More resources, including homily notes, parish resource, *Exploring the Sunday Gospels with Children*, reflections, photos and videos are available [here](#)

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