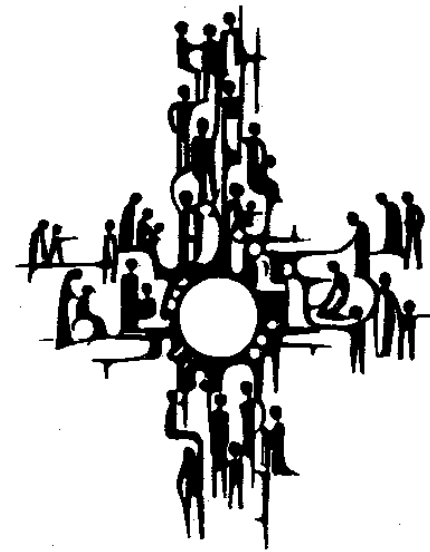


*peace & Justice Committee*  
*Sisters of the Holy Family*

## The Stations of the Cross



*As Lived by*  
*Our Brothers and Sisters*  
*Today*

## Introduction

The Congregation is engaged in *living The Earth Charter* principles and exploring the Millennium Development Goals, continually seeking a change of heart and mind in order to facilitate peace and dignity for all.

The members of the Peace and Justice Committee have engaged in conversation, study and thoughtful prayer to produce this booklet of reflections for Lent 2008. As we enter into the weeks of Lent reflecting on Christ's passion and His encounter with the Cross, we recall the thoughts of Henri Nouwen reminding us that those who are confronted with the cross have a choice of becoming Christ's followers or his executioners.

You are invited to incorporate your personal insights or reflections as you walk these stations during this journey of Lent with its unexpected discovery and encounter. May this journey bring a deeper awareness and commitment to our ministry of care and concern for all humanity, the universe, and the joyful celebration of all life, so that we may become part of THE WAY FORWARD: As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

-The Earth Charter

-Lent 2008

## **1<sup>st</sup> Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** John 19: 17-22

### **Prayer/Reflection**

JESUS CONDEMNED TO DEATH - An innocent man!

In this world, many are condemned - to a life of failure, life without future or hope. Innocent men, women and children daily abused, abandoned and unseen. What an injustice.

Lord, I get so frustrated when I see those like you unjustly treated, deprived, and judged. How unfair. Trying to alleviate their suffering seems fruitless since there are so many in need. Help me, Lord, to do my share no matter how small, to give a helping hand or to stand up for those innocently struck down by hate and false accusation.

### **Fasting**

What can I do? Where do I begin?  
Recognize that "all human beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings."  
(The Earth Charter)

Everything on this earth has value, how I treat it today will have a reaction later. Once I recognize ALL of God's creations have value - I will look and treat them differently.

### **Almsgiving**

I can:

- a) Keep informed to actions/alerts requiring my help or support. Check the website - [www.actnow.org](http://www.actnow.org)
- b) Many stores offer "buy one get one free" - give the second one to the needy

### **My response...**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Station: Jesus Carries His Cross**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Luke 14: 27

### **Prayer/Reflection**

"Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous people and minorities."

(The Earth Charter #12)

Lord, many of us are taking up our cross, or trying to, but this is a difficult call to hear and heed. The gospels tell us of the welcome received when you were hailed by the people as "King", giving you glory. But now you are called a new name, "Criminal", branding you as an outcast and one who is unwelcome by those very people, once so responsive, then given the criminal insignia of shame, the cross to carry.

Today new cross bearers are in our midst. They are called "illegal immigrants", and like you are unjustly labeled outcasts and criminals. These immigrants come with great expectations and hope. Unfortunately, they

receive rejection, discrimination and disappointment. What a tragedy! Nevertheless, we are reminded, "Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

### **Fasting**

Lay aside indifference, become energized and encouraged to work for just immigration laws that will bring the undocumented a reality of being called human, with rights and dignity, rather than "illegals" or "criminals." Let our Lenten fasting be our work to support and advocate for the rights of all people unjustly labeled and ostracized.

### **Almsgiving**

1) Keep informed of immigrant issues that political representatives introduce and share this information with others.

2) Make an effort to notice people on the street; who do you see?

HE is there; all you need do is look!

### **My response...**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Station: Jesus Falls the First Time**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Matthew 27:31

#### **Prayer/Reflection**

Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to pursue their aspirations. (The Earth Charter, 9-c)

DEBT RELIEF: The debt burden of many poor countries remains high often absorbing vast government resources that could go to health, education, and rural development. Forgiving debt would free many developing countries from this staggering burden that has stymied their economic growth and slowed progress toward achieving the MDGs.

-2015 Millennium Campaign

Christ is living the experience of everyday ordinary people of all ages. The cross, which he falls under, is the cross that many people fall under at the beginning of adult life. This burden and struggle that people shoulder; we thank you Lord Jesus for you accepted the difficulties that overwhelm us. You gave us your weakness to be our strength.

#### **Fasting**

What thoughts and feelings surfaced for you during the reading?

Do you believe that we all can make a difference?

#### **Almsgiving**

Take time to make the connection between your everyday living and actions with the larger needs of the world community.

#### **My response...**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus Meets His Mother**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

#### **Reading**

Mary sees what no one else in the whole crowd sees, a tiny child taking his first unsteady steps and falling. She is there beside him as she was before and is now again. Jesus goes on and because they both love neither can spare the other. The unvoiced cry in the soul of Mary (why?) is the cry of every mother who sees her child suffer or die.

#### **Prayer/Reflection**

Secure the human rights of women, girls and end all violence against them.

(Earth Charter, 11a)

During World War II a German widow hid Jewish refugees in her home. As her friends discovered the situation, they became extremely alarmed.

"You are risking your own well-being," they told her.

"I know that," she said.

"Then why," they demanded, "do you persist in this foolishness?"

Her answer was stark and to the point. "I am doing it," she said, "because the time is now and I am here."

-Source Unknown

#### **Fasting**

What are the ways I am contributing to the community of peace in my relationships and in my words?

#### **Almsgiving**

Look for opportunities to extend a hand, a word, or an expression of peace.

#### **My response...**

## **5<sup>th</sup> Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry His Cross**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Matthew 27: 27-32

### **Prayer/Reflection**

This station puts us where suffering is. Inviting us to assist others who daily experience the weight of the cross. Calling us to walk with those who have been condemned because of poverty, or other life situations where they must rely on the response of others. Sometimes we readily choose it, other times it meets us unexpectedly on our journey, and at times, we stand at a distance as observers.

The Earth Charter calls us to “Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.”

-The Earth Charter, Social and Economic Justice, c.

### **Fasting**

Step away as an observer. What action is your Lenten fast moving you toward? What are you being called to do for someone in need today?

### **Almsgiving**

Get involved in the “Millennium Promise.”

Tell someone else about the Millennium Development Goals, make a donation to a project, or write a letter. We all can do something.

Visit [www.millenniumpromise.org/site](http://www.millenniumpromise.org/site)

**My response . . .**

## **6<sup>th</sup> Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Matthew 27: 28-31

### **Prayer/Reflection**

Veronica walks out of the crowd of spectators, no questions asked, no judgments rendered, she reaches out and performs a ministry of mercy and compassion.

When we encounter the face of God, there are choices to be made, risks to embrace. Christ, the very blessing of God in human flesh, causes all who find themselves in his presence to step out, define who they are by reaching out to those in need.

### **Fasting**

Take a look at the ONE website at [www.ONE.org](http://www.ONE.org)

ONE is an effort by Americans to rally Americans-ONE by ONE- to fight the emergency of global aids and extreme poverty. Together as ONE, we can save lives in Africa, and the world's poorest countries.

### **Almsgiving**

Daily envision a world of nonviolence, new possibilities and a new social reality especially for the poor. What role would you like to play in this world?

Daily log onto [www.hungersite.com](http://www.hungersite.com) – click to each of six global needs to provide free food, mammograms, and books for children etc.

**My response. . . .**

## 7<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus Falls a Second Time

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading: II Corinthians 5:1-5**

### Prayer/Reflection

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution....The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

-The Earth Charter, Preamble

Our earth home is suffering with the effects of global warming and pollution. We have a choice whether to be proactive in changing the course of events for Mother Earth and generations to come, or we can choose irreversible destruction by continuing on the current path.

Good and gracious God,  
May we respond to this plight with the loving kindness of the Holy Family, mindful that we

are called to care for the gifts that have been given us. May we have the strength and courage to mid-wife Mother Earth back to health. May we reach out with care, compassion, and loving attentiveness.

### Fasting

May I seek concrete ways to avoid waste in my life. May I seek ways to raise my consciousness as a daughter of Lizzie Armer:

“Lend yourself to all that is asked of you. God will not permit you to be imposed upon if you find yourself through a spirit of charity”.

### Almsgiving

Suggestions:

- + Avoid running unnecessary water down the sink
- + Plant a tree
- + Become engaged in The Hippo Water Roller project ([hipporoller.org](http://hipporoller.org))
- + Other...

### My response:

## 8<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading: Luke 23:27-29**

### Prayer/Reflection

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3:

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

We have been made in God's image and likeness. Both men and women have been made in this image and likeness of our good and gracious God.

This is not a recognized reality in some places and structures far and near. Some girls do not have access to education simply because they are girls. Many women are illiterate simply because they are female. Many are trafficked for the pleasure of others.

Good and gracious God,  
You made us in your image and likeness.  
May we live out of that gift and seek ways to help girls and women who are oppressed and neglected in any way.

### Fasting

May I seek to be attentive to my sense of self as a woman and live out of that gift with its accompanying dignity.

May I seek ways to raise my consciousness as a daughter of Lizzie Armer:  
Pure and transparent as crystal should be your hearts, active as fire, unselfish as the ministering spirits, sweet and tender as grace, strong, generous and enduring as the hearts over which Jesus has obtained the perfect mastery. With hearts like these exhibiting in their union the spectacle of many and diverse natures and temperaments subdued under one Spirit, and raised up on high in the Spirit, our Lord can do any great work with you that He will, more fruitfully than we can see or understand.

### Almsgiving

Suggestions:

- + Become more attentive of using inclusive language.
- + Support efforts aimed at educating girls.
- + Learn about local efforts to teach others to read.
- + Other...

**My response:**

### **9<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus falls the third time**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Isaiah 50:5-9

#### **Prayer/Reflection**

Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.

-The Earth Charter III.10

Why can't these addicts get their act together? Why can't those welfare moms take care of themselves?; Why can't those felons stop offending and going back to prison?; Why can't he/she/they stop being, doing, acting like that?

Jesus, we see you fall again and again under the cross - your human weakness repeatedly crushed under its weight. Teach us to bear with our own human weaknesses, and to rely on your strength to persevere in times of trial. Show us how to help and respect others whose failings may seem more obvious than our own.

#### **Fasting**

Can I refrain from judging harshly those who bear crosses unknown to me?

### **Almsgiving**

What can I do to help lift those bowed by poverty, injustice, and human weakness, here in my world, and throughout the world.

**My response...**

## **10<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Matthew 27:28-29

### **Prayer/Reflection**

Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

-The Earth Charter III-12

We behold Jesus stripped even of his clothing- the final blow of humiliation.

Jesus, you remain before us, the symbol of all those who have been stripped of every sign of their dignity: the imprisoned, who live at the mercy of their captors; the children sold into slavery for the lust and greed of others; the millions of women throughout the world who remain unrecognized as truly human, and who struggle in servitude and poverty. Teach us to recognize your holy presence in all who are shamed.

### **Fasting**

Am I so covered by my own possession, pride and complacency that I remain unmoved and unaware of the destitution of those shamed by our world?

### **Almsgiving**

How can I become sensitized to the issues surrounding the deprivation of so many who live abased, abused, and forgotten? How can I pray and work for their release?

### **My response...**

## **11<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Luke 23:33-38

### **Prayer/Reflection**

"Combat HIV, AIDS, Malaria, and other Diseases" Millennium Development Goals, 6

Lord, what a long journey, to this place. Dynamics and emotions abound. The soldiers have their orders, crucify this Jew! Get rid of him! The nails find their marks in hands and feet. The sign "KING OF THE JEWS" is in place and draws comments from the crowd and from your companions who share your fate to die today. Your companions? Outcasts! But then aren't we all?

### **Fasting**

Our world still houses the outcasts - people who suffer persecution, discrimination, disease, and war. They are present. Always let me see them. Let me always remember the words of Aldous Huxley, "The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human."

Let me never be indifferent to the presence of others.

### **Almsgiving**

Help me strip away all that which keeps me fixed in place. Let me be generous in giving others my appreciation and thanks for their lives and presence. Let me value the smallest and love the broken.

### **My response...**

## 12<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, Because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** John 19:30

### Prayer/Reflection

Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

-The Earth Charter

Lord, there are only two realities, two relationships, after all—one called LIFE, the other DEATH. You lived among us in our world filled with violence, greed, distrust and oppression to point out a better way to be, a better way to live, and look what you did! In addition, you say it is finished. You did not dot the “i’s” or cross the “t’s” in justice; therefore, justice is still unfinished. But that implies whatever is left undone is ours to do. In the words of Evelyn Underhill: “The note we end on, is and must be, the note of inexhaustible possibility and hope.”

This is the message you delivered every day of your life Lord, and today is no different,

“...live and walk in right relationships with self, others, and the larger whole of which we are all a part.”

-The Earth Charter

### Fasting

Life often involves tensions between important values. Let me cease from saying, “First thing tomorrow, I will do...”, and never do the good. Do our lives reflect the depth and horizon of God’s vision and embrace, a question Megan McKenna asks, or are we stuck in place?

### Almsgiving

Give thought and time to this wisdom: “None of us is in a position to change the whole world, to change the entire structure of our society, but we are able to do a certain limited amount. Our danger is that by dreaming to change the whole thing we are not available to do the limited thing which is possible for us.”

-Thomas Cullinan, OSB

### My response...

### 13<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, Because you remind us to take responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

#### Reading: Luke 23: 50-53

It was nearly evening by the time Joseph of Arimathea came to take down the dead body of Jesus. Mary, his mother is still present by the cross. As her son's body is taken off the cross she asks to hold him. There is protest – “please” she says, “do not deny the last touch of a mother's love.” She opens her arms and makes her lap wide to receive her son.

#### Prayer/Reflection

Take some time to reflect upon the spaciousness of your lap of love, and your current life situation.

How much room do you have for the suffering of others?

Think of a time when you had the suffering of someone layed into your lap of life?

#### Fasting

Ask yourself the following question: What are

the ways I/we can prevent 5.4 million young children from dying of poverty related illnesses and 400,000 women from dying in childbirth each year? How can I/we make a difference?

“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.”

--Ann Lamont

#### Almsgiving

Study further the Millennium Development Goals.

Visit: [www.unmillenniumproject.org](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org)

What action are you being inspired to do as an individual or even more important as a member of the community of believers?

#### My response...

## 14<sup>th</sup> Station: Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

We adore you, O Christ and we praise you,  
Because you remind us to take responsibility  
for the present and future well-being of the  
human family and the larger living world.

**Reading:** Mark 15:42-47

### Prayer/Reflection

Affirm gender equality and equity as  
prerequisites to sustainable development and  
ensure universal access to education, health  
care, and economic opportunity.

- a. Secure human rights of women and girls and  
end all violence against them.
- b. Promote the active participation of women in  
all aspects of economic, political, civil, social,  
and cultural life as full and equal partners,  
decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.
- c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety  
and loving nurture of all family members.

-The Earth Charter, 11.a-c

Many have become the “walking dead”- still  
breathing as they work day-in-and-day-out as  
another’s possession and for another’s use.  
For these, our sisters (and brothers), move in-  
and-out of one tomb to another.

Pray for the freedom and restored dignity of  
those who have been or are currently being  
trafficked.

### Fasting

Avoid making judgments against those making  
a living from prostitution. We do not know the  
story of how they got to where they find  
themselves now.

### Almsgiving

\*Go online to get the *Stop Trafficking  
Newsletter*

\*Get involved with [captivedaughters.org](http://captivedaughters.org) (a  
non-profit organization dedicated to the  
prevention of sex trafficking through education)

### My response...

## Easter Sunday

Sit a while to contemplate the joy of the Easter story, of Jesus who lives, and is present.

**Reading:** John 20:1-9

Write your own *Reflection, Prayer, and Response*.

