

# Economic and Ecological Way of the Cross

## Good Friday, March 29, 2013

*Based on the Economic Way of the Cross developed by the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and IMF.*

Each year preceding Easter, Christian communities around the world gather in public places to recreate the story of Jesus' passion. In dramatic public liturgies, we remember who we are as people of faith and why we believe that even the greatest of evils will not have the last word.



Often in the retelling, this central story is cast in a contemporary context and serves as a powerful critique of social sins in our own times – sins that mirror the powers and principalities responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus in the first century. That is what we, who would be disciples, are called to do – to apply the message of the sacred story in our own lives, times and places. It is what we attempt in this Economic and Ecological Way of the Cross.

We know that powerful political and economic forces, in a macabre mirroring of Jesus' journey to the Cross, are dealing death in our world by war and by working to benefit a privileged few while millions of people live and die in debt and in dire poverty. We touch, we feel, we live the pain of these many excluded ones. Because we are a global church, we are compelled to be in solidarity and respond.

We are also eyewitnesses to the destruction of our earth. We have stood by in the exploitation and waste of natural resources. Because our planet and all creation are gifts from God, we must care for them and recognize God's presence revealed in them.

We know that the institutional roots of this suffering and devastation are painfully close to home – in government, in transnational corporations, in international financial institutions, in the set of transnational agreements that give shape to economic activity around the world and even in our own religious institutions.

To some of these institutions – often staffed by dedicated and well-intentioned individuals – we come in prayer to name our common guilt, to ask publicly for pardon, to call for repentance and transformation.

However, also present in our community are signs of hope – those organizations and institutions that nurture solidarity and action for justice. To some of these we come as well – to pray for courage and strength on the journey toward a better world.

**Leader:** *So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And*

*he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. (Jonah 3: 3-5)*

**All: By this action, we are donning the sackcloth of repentance, acknowledging our own complicity, calling for justice in the global economy and an end to environmental desecration. We are seeking justice, mourning suffering, repairing community. We are claiming hope; recreating the world, praying for peace and the fullness of life for all of creation. Amen.**

### **FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH**

Focus: Political privilege and corruption

Washington Institution: U.S. Congress

**Leader:** *Beware of the scribes who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a severe condemnation. (Mark 12:38)*

By condemning Jesus to death, the powers of his day believed they could sustain extraordinary privilege for themselves and for a few others by imposing exclusionary laws that burdened ordinary people and strengthened their own power. In our times, lawmakers are beholden to powerful corporations and other special interests that fund election campaigns. This funding ensures these entities that they will increase their power, while paying little in taxes.

**Left:** Our democracy has become an oligarchy – where a great majority of people no longer participate in the decisions that daily affect their lives. Pushed by special interests, politicians have ignored both people’s and the planet’s needs by enacting unjust laws that further pollute land, air, and water while laying heavy burdens on the backs of a vast majority of the population. *(c.f. Mt 23:4)*

**Right:** In our local communities and throughout the world, those who are impoverished and vulnerable carry a cross of exclusion and marginalization and the earth itself carries the deep scars of neglect and abuse. They are both oppressed by the undemocratic influence of wealth and power.

**Left:** We have watched corporations influence congressional elections and place politicians in office who will do their bidding. We have seen the impact of tax and spending cuts that undermine the common good.

**Right:** We hear a concern among legislators for those who have lost jobs and homes, but high rates of unemployment continue.

**Left:** And we are worried about the already poor who are falling into ever-deeper poverty.

**Right:** While the Pentagon's budget grew over 50 percent in the last 10 years and there is still talk of attacking yet another country.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** God, we confess that we are too often disengaged. We fail to support legislators who strive to do justice or hold accountable those who are corrupt and self-serving. We pray that the U.S. Congress will become a place of honest debate and discernment, a servant to the impoverished and a beacon of hope in the world.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

### **SECOND STATION: JESUS BEARS THE CROSS**

Focus: Human trafficking and vulnerability of workers

Washington Institution: Department of Labor

**Leader:** *Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.* (James 5:4)

Jesus bore the cross in order to bring an end to exploitative relationships. He lived as a servant, taught, died and was raised in order to unite people in love and justice.

Estimates hold that up to 27 million people are enslaved globally. Forms of exploitation and slavery can be found all around the world, including the United States. Sweatshops can be found in many U.S. cities. The individuals that pick our crops are sometimes enslaved. Women forced into prostitution are victims of modern-day slavery. And millions of others are overwhelmed by job loss and economic insecurity.

**Right:** We have seen executive salaries and bonuses reach scandalous levels;

**Left:** and profit remains the driving force of a profoundly exclusionary economy.

**Right:** Workers overseas are paid mere pennies a day.

**Left:** And as consumers looking for inexpensive products we too have benefitted from this exploitation of our sisters and brothers.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** God of justice, revealed in a carpenter's son, we pray today for all who labor, particularly those who are enslaved and victims of trafficking. We uplift all who are charged with protecting the dignity of workers. God, forgive us for our ignorance in not seeing how our consumption patterns fuel conditions that produce slavery and exploitation. We seek a renewed commitment -- in our government and among ourselves and our neighbors -- to the rights of workers, the implementation of international labor standards. We pray for the movement to abolish slavery in all its forms.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

### THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Focus: Destruction of moral values

Washington Institution: Department of Justice

**Leader:** *Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! They lift it upon their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. (Isaiah 46:6-7)*

**Left:** Jesus Christ died on the cross in order that “the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” (Romans 8:4). He gave his life to restore right relationships. His death gave to birth a human community in which people care for each other and where moral commitment and social justice flourish.

**Right:** Yet, the economic meltdown that began in major financial institutions and Wall Street has exposed our gullibility to purveyors of phantom profits and the lure of an unregulated, unaccountable right to accumulate wealth.

**Leader:** Too often, elite white collar criminals walk from courts of law with impunity while people with inferior legal representation are given long sentences; immigrants without documents are imprisoned without appeal and deported; and prisoners of conscience are jailed for their prophetic witness.

**Right:** The independence and impartiality of our judicial system has been threatened by intensely partisan politics and ideologies of greed. We mourn the threats to democracy.

**Left:** We see glimmers of accountability on the horizon as high-level criminals feel the public rage. But easy-to-find scapegoats cannot relieve us of our own accountability for participating in a system destructive of all of created life.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we confess that we, too, fail to seek your reign and justice above all things. Remind us that we are called first to relationships of mutual care and responsibility. Help us place authentic moral values above the demands for profit and work to subject the economy to the principles of justice for all.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

#### **FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER**

Focus: Corporate-led development, including through genetically modified organisms

Washington Institution: United States Agency for International Development

**Leader:** *Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. (Matthew 15:13).*

Mary's heart was grieved as she watched her son suffer so much. Today, millions of mothers and fathers' hearts are broken who can no longer make a living through farming their land to feed their children. The land itself cries out.

The Agency for International Development is our government's primary organization for carrying out development policies that benefit those who are economically poor. We lift up their successes and pray for increases in our collective generosity and service.

**Right:** Yet too often, these policies ignore the people whom they are designed to assist. Too often the demands of corporations and the economy, not the priorities of local communities, are heeded.

**Left:** Public-private partnerships involve corporate investments which pursue their goals for growth rather than true development. This includes pressuring farmers to use genetically modified seeds.

**Right:** The use of GMOs runs contrary to the sustainable practices farmers have used for millennia. GMOs are genetically manipulated to contain a dose of pesticide so they can withstand heavy applications of these chemical inputs. Our earth bears the burden of these unsustainable agricultural practices.

**Left:** GMO corporations have also patented their plants such that farmers cannot save, trade or reuse seeds after harvest. This stands in contrast to our belief that all life is the creation of God. Genetically modified organisms must be banned in order to protect farmers and the sanctity of life.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** We pray that our development policies always consider those who are poor, vulnerable and oppressed. May we listen to their wisdom and create programs that truly reflect their needs. O God, we confess our own misguided attempts to change your creation. We pray for the regulation and prohibition of genetically modified organisms, which wrongly manipulate your creation in the search for profit.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## FIFTH STATION: SIMON CARRIES THE CROSS

Focus: Indigenous peoples and the environment

Washington Institution: Inter-American Development Bank

**Leader:** *Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled and are gone. (Jeremiah 9:10)*

Simon helped Jesus bear the burden of the cross. Like Simon, we must hear the cries of those who suffer, including suffering creation, and come to their assistance.

The Inter-American Development Bank is a public, regionally owned bank but continues to negotiate and implement operations without the informed participation of affected people.

**Left:** The Camisea project in Peru, funded by the IDB, highlights the institution's key problems. Camisea is one of the most controversial energy projects in the world, located in a region of notable biodiversity and indigenous communities in voluntary isolation.

**Right:** When the project began nearly 30 years ago, 60 percent of the Nahua people died from epidemics after their first contact with outsiders. This year, a planned 70 million dollar expansion of the project would further enter land reserved for "uncontacted" Amazon tribes who are vulnerable to disease and development projects on their land.

**Left:** The plans avoid the fundamental issue that these peoples, not the Peruvian government or an oil company, should be free to determine their own future.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we pray for a new vision of economic life that emphasizes and provides for the real needs of people and our mother earth. We mourn the heavy cross of oppression that burdens indigenous people throughout the world, who have much wisdom to share about humanity's interconnectedness with the earth. We pray that the world's money serve the flourishing of all creation, rather than undermine it.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Focus: Solidarity and service

Washington Institution: New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

**Leader:** *Blessed are you who are poor, yours is the reign of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, you shall be satisfied. (Luke 6:20-21)*

As we ponder the woman who wiped the sweat from Jesus' brow as he labored under a heavy burden, we call to mind the many communities of faith which model for us both compassion and solidarity. They respond generously to the needs of the poor, providing food, shelter, health care, education and love to those in need. They join those who are impoverished who are claiming the life of dignity that is rightfully theirs.

**Right:** But too often we fail to acknowledge the systemic and structural injustices that perpetuate poverty. Solidarity requires that we see with new eyes the reality of our world and give witness with those who are impoverished to the need for transformation.

**Left:** We are called to move from pity to love, charity to justice, from one poor person to the many organized together to respond to injustice. We identify and challenge the unjust social, economic and political structures that perpetuate poverty.

**Right:** We are all guilty of turning our face from the crucified ones and ignoring their human dignity and basic needs.

**Left:** Now, seniors have lost their pensions, middle class people have lost their savings, and millions have lost jobs and homes.

**Right:** They join the already-poor in the struggle for survival on a daily basis.

**Left:** While the Gospels call us to service, solidarity and economic justice requires a generous response.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** God, help us move step by step from our positions of privilege into greater solidarity with impoverished people and with Christ who accompanies them on the Way of the Cross. From our churches and soup kitchens and shelters, may we learn to become advocates for justice, asking why so many in our world live in misery while a few have so much more than they need.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible**

## SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Focus: Ravaging the earth and its people in the name of economic development

Washington Institution: U.S. Department of the Treasury

**Leader:** *But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you... In God's hands are the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being. (Job 12:7-8, 10)*

Jesus falls again. It seems like he is failing. Our world too is in crisis; the neoliberal consensus, and with it, the idea that global economic integration will lead to steadily rising prosperity everywhere, has fallen apart. This crisis is defined by the intersection of a deeply flawed global economic model and an imminent ecological collapse as we overwhelm the carrying and caring capacity of Mother Earth.

**Right:** Wasteful consumption and financial innovation have taken the place of a real economy. Growth, used universally as the measure of a "healthy" economy, has had little to do with real "development" or an improving quality of human life and the health of our ecological home.

**Left:** With accelerating climate change, the imminent end of cheap energy supplies, the depletion of most resources basic to the industrial system, the spread of societies dependent on over-consumption of commodities, and the destruction of societies that offer traditional alternative models, "progress" based on industrial development may well be destroying the ground of our existence.

**Right:** The dominant model of development has been determined by a worldview in which human beings are the subjects and nature is there only for humans to exploit.

**Left:** Our dedication to a certain kind of progress is consuming the earth upon which the survival of all life depends

**Right:** And systematically precluding the possibility that the majority of people in the world will ever reliably meet their needs or experience a life of dignity.

**Left:** But as we move forward, the same institutions that brought us the economic collapse continue to propose ways forward that fail to acknowledge ecological limits and the natural world's need to rest and regenerate.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we pray today for new global relationships that honor the fact that in your hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of every human. You call us to serve you, not money. Guide us to in pursuing not economic growth but rather sustainable communities where the highest priority is life in abundance for all.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**



## EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Focus: Gun violence

Washington Institution: White House

**Leader:** *Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:28)*

Today so many mothers weep for the children they have lost to gun violence. Alongside many faith leaders around the world, we call for reforms to address the epidemic of gun violence in our nation.

**Left:** The guns in our society---within our homes, in our movies, in our video games, at our sporting events, in our churches, endorsed by chaplains, in our language, in our ongoing wars, in our massive Pentagon spending, in our nuclear arsenal, and in our drones function to shape our imagination about how to engage conflict.

**Right:** This is “cultural violence.” We’ve seen how this cultural violence cultivates the habits of gun violence over and over again in our society. As Jesus said to the disciples who mistakenly thought he wanted them to arm themselves with lethal weapons, we say, “Enough of this!”

**Left:** We weep for the families affected by the Newtown tragedy and for all who have been killed with guns since, totaling well over 1,000 people since the massacre in Newtown.

**Right:** We weep for the 64 persons killed by guns here in the streets of D.C. last year.

**Left:** Yet God is ringing the bells of deep empathy that we may arise to the courage of social transformation! We sense the transforming energy of grace stirring us to stop the gun violence, to lay down our arms, and to call our society and government to change our laws.<sup>1</sup>

**Right:** Here in front of the White House, we commend President Obama’s call to address gun violence, and we prayerfully demand that Congress enact gun control legislation, standing against powerful, well-funded gun lobbies and those who seek to profit from gun sales.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we confess that we too often attempt to enforce our will through the violence of angry words and selfish acts. On a larger scale, gun violence is destroying your daughters and sons. We pray that the governing authorities will help renew our nation and the world by repenting of violence.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

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<sup>1</sup> This and the first two responses here are adapted from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men’s statement on the killings in Newtown, CT.

## NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Focus: Moving forward on climate change

Washington Institution: Lafayette Park

**Leader:** *This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. (Deut. 30:19)*

While we fall again and again in our commitment to care for one another and for the earth, each new day we have an opportunity to choose life. We recognize that the people, organized, are choosing to say “yes” to a movement which calls corporations to accountability and political leaders to action for clean energy solutions.

Just weeks ago, over 40,000 people marched past this park and the White House to protest the proposed Keystone XL pipeline – they are part of the growing movement to solve the climate crisis.

**Right:** Luke 19:40 says, “I tell you, if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out.” In our own generation, the stones *are* crying out. The frozen stones we call glaciers are groaning as they melt.

**Left:** The rivers cry out by flooding one-fifth of Pakistan and the entire City of New Orleans, by washing out the sturdy bridges of Vermont and flooding the subways of Manhattan.

**Right:** The rains cry out in silence as they fail to fall, bringing unheard-of droughts to central Africa, Australia, Russia, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Iowa. These silenced voices call on us to speak. Not only to speak but to act.

**Left:** To act against the money-changers, the corrupt banks and other corporations that are not human beings created in the Image of God. The Caesars of our day, the Pharaohs of our day. The Pontius Pilates and Abu-Jahls of our day. The Empires of Oil, Tar, Coal, Unnatural Gas. The Pharaohs of Fracking.<sup>2</sup>

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** A new ecological awareness is emerging, and women and men across the globe are recognizing our call to accompany creation and protect it. Thanks be to you, O God, whose Spirit moves within all who seek justice. Mindful of all who suffer the effects of pollution and climate disaster, we pray for the sustained commitment of this movement forward on addressing climate change. We pray for increased regulation of carbon pollution from power plants through the Clean Air Act and for corporate and political leaders to have the ears to hear our cries and those of all of creation.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

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<sup>2</sup> These responses are adapted from *The Palms & Passover: An Interfaith Healing Seder for the Earth* by Rabbi Arthur Waskow.

## TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Focus: Extractive industries

Washington Institution: White House Council on Environmental Quality

**Leader:** *The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. (Gen 2:15)*

As Jesus reached Golgotha, he was stripped by the soldiers of his clothing, left naked and vulnerable. Today, many extractive industries strip the land and destroy God's creation rather than cultivate and care for it. Oil and gas mining in Peru has caused gas leaks that have led to devastating fires and river contamination. Deforestation has caused erosion and landslides.

**Left:** These industries not only damage the environment, but also the communities where they occur. Deforestation displaces indigenous communities. Extraction processes poison their food, water and air.

**Right:** Local communities are also exposed to the risk of disasters at sites of operation. Excessive logging and mining in the Philippines have caused landslides that cover entire villages, exacerbated by a typhoon last year responsible for the death of more than 1,000 people. The risks of an oil spill along the Ogallala Aquifer, source of irrigation for 30 percent of America's crops, are great, particularly if the Keystone XL pipeline is installed.

**Left:** Local communities also suffer economically because of extractive industries. The same countries that are so rich in natural resources are home to some of the poorest of the poor, victims of extractive industries rather than beneficiaries.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we confess that we do not always care for your creation the way we should. We exploit its resources, causing damage to the earth, destruction of the economy, and suffering of marginalized people. We pray that our government policies and our own actions may honor all your creation.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Focus: Fair Trade NOT Free Trade

Washington Institution: U.S. Trade Representative Office

**Leader:** *The Lord says, “The people of Israel have sinned again and again. So I will punish them. They sell into slavery those who do what is right. They trade needy people for a mere pair of sandals. They grind the heads of the poor into the dust of the ground. They refuse to be fair to those who are crushed.”*  
(Amos 2:6-7)

**Left:** Jesus Christ was unjustly tortured and killed by the powers and authorities of his day. He identified with all whose human rights are denied. In the mystery of redemption, the nails of his oppression become the linchpins of a just new order.

**Right:** Transnational corporations and U.S. trade negotiators, like the Israelites condemned by Amos, systematically place profits over human beings. They enrich themselves and their shareholders by undermining their employees’ wages and working conditions. They destroy local industries and rural livelihoods, both domestically and abroad. All of us, producers and consumers, are harmed by this injustice.

**Left:** Any trading system should serve the common good and benefit ordinary people, especially those struggling against poverty. It should preserve natural resources, be democratically accountable and respect human rights. The right of each person, as a bearer of God’s image, to participate in decisions that shape society is especially sacred.

**Right:** Fair trade systems can help redress the injustices of the global economic system. Buying fair trade products supports living wages for producers and higher social and environmental standards. By choosing fair trade products we help ensure that the wealth garnered by the products be distributed fairly, thus alleviating the cycle of economic inequality.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** We confess that we too try to dominate others and violate their human dignity. We pray today for the global trading system to become open to popular participation and democratic accountability. We pray for agreements that prioritize human rights and God’s creation – supporting food security, sustainable agriculture and the right to life-saving medications.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Focus: Destruction of God's creation

Washington Institution: World Bank

**Leader:** *Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:21).*

Jesus died on the cross, giving his life to free all of creation from bondage to the effects of sin. However, we are stripping the earth of its natural resources, destroying the environment, exploiting local labor, and displacing communities. Created by God as "very good" (Gen. 1:31), the whole community of life has borne the cross of human sin and misuse. Subject to the control of the world's most powerful governments, the World Bank has been dominant in shaping the model of economic development in the global South. Under this model, poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor have increased in many places, while environmental degradation has worsened.

**Left:** Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden, light" (Matthew 11:30), but the yoke of the World Bank – imposed on low-income countries in the name of free markets and free trade – has been an intolerable burden for too many people and for the earth.

**Right:** The World Bank has said that their policies will address the demands of a changing climate. Yet there is no indication that this has begun to occur or that it is really intended.

**Left:** It is time for the World Bank and other international institutions to acknowledge their accountability to the demands of love and justice. The welfare of the poorest person and the integrity of creation should be the standard by which their policies are judged.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we confess our indifference to massive destruction of human life and our failure to protect the integrity of creation. We have been wasteful and have benefited from economic policies that oppress others. We pray for sustainable, people-and-earth-centered development that meets the needs of the impoverished majority of humanity and allows creation to survive and flourish.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Focus: Economic policies for the common good

Washington Institution: International Monetary Fund

**Leader:** *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. (John 12:24)*

His body beaten, Jesus died quickly, yet one soldier still threw a lance in his side before Joseph of Arimathea came to take his body down.

Our planet and economy are in crisis, yet the IMF continues to promote policies which pursue quantitative economic growth dependent on the exploitation of natural resources. Careful attention must be paid to the assumptions underlying IMF policy advice. Urgent attention must be paid to achieving measurable improvements in real quality of life for marginalized and impoverished people, rather than offering one more lance in their side.

**Right:** IMF conditionality applied to new loans and debt cancellations have contributed to the deep injustices in the global economy and have been criticized for decades with little impact.

**Left:** The economic systems currently in place and upheld by institutions such as the IMF must change to support people- and planet-centered sustainability.

**Right:** Mechanisms such as international debt arbitration should be established to address the increasing debt burdens of yet-impoverished countries.

**Left:** Within U.S. politics, the myth continues to be perpetrated that reducing assistance to the most vulnerable is necessary for fiscal recovery. Campaigns proposing a Faithful Federal Budget, however, demonstrate how fiscal responsibility can be achieved while increasing support for the poor by focusing on job creation, an equitable tax system, and true human security over disproportionate military spending.

**Right:** We must re-arrange our economic priorities to focus on the common good. We call on Congress and the Administration to craft a federal budget that helps lift the burden on the poor, rather than increasing it while shielding the wealthiest from additional sacrifice.<sup>3</sup>

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** O God, we recognize the need for deep transformation of the global economic system. No longer can we as humans exploit with abandon the global commons – the precious resources soon to be depleted. No longer can we spend billions on the military while the safety net is slashed and so many bear the burden of crushing debt. We commit ourselves to live more justly with others.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Preamble of the Faithful Budget Campaign.

## FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Focus: Justice for migrants

Washington Institution: Mexican Embassy

**Leader:** *Woe to you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey!* (Isaiah 10:1-2)

The torment Mary faced as she helplessly witnessed the execution of her beloved son demonstrates the vulnerability and suffering she endured here on earth. Mary can relate to the plight and suffering of the needy, including immigrants in a foreign land. Mary herself was a migrant as she fled to Egypt with her husband Joseph and infant Jesus. We ask Mary to pray that God brings together those called “alien” and those called “native” into one new humanity in Christ, “reconciling both of us to God in one body through his cross, which put that enmity to death” (Eph 2:16).

**Right:** Today, immigrant workers and other people of color bear the cross of a globalized economy. They are paid the lowest wages and work the longest hours. In the United States, the poverty rate increased to over 15 percent in 2010, the highest level since 1993. The poverty rate of Hispanics increased to 26.6 percent and the rate for African Americans rose to 27.4 percent.

**Left:** Immigrants and communities of color also suffer the heaviest burden in an economic system that gives tax breaks to the wealthy and disinvests in social services in poor communities, privatizing health care and education, and providing less and less affordable housing.

**Right:** There is talk of a push comprehensive immigration reform in this year, including a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants. Yet we recognize, too, that over 1.4 million people have been deported, often separated from their families, since 2008. We pray for immigration policies that are humane, holistic, and emphasize unification of families.

**All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.**

**Leader:** Our work, and the work of immigrant workers and other impoverished people of color, plays a role in lessening the suffering of the others. We pray, O God, for an end to self-serving policies that only benefit the wealthy while belittling the poor and marginalized. We pray for a new vision of community where no one is forced to live in the shadows.

**All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.**

## FIFTEENTH STATION: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Focus: Seeds of hope - Another world is possible

Washington Institution: Murrow Park

**Leader:** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among human beings. God will dwell with them and be their God; and they will be God's people." ... And the One who was seated on the throne said, "See I am making all things new." (Rev 21:1-5)*

**Left:** Mindful of our own complicity in and responsibility for the global crises of our times, but claiming the hope that is rooted in the Resurrection, we now reflect on our lives and choices. We claim our God-given power as individuals and as a community to effect meaningful change, to name the signs of Resurrection – Shalom – that we can see, even in our broken world.

**Right:** We follow a Jesus who suffers in the flesh of impoverished and excluded peoples. We have walked with Him to places of power where decisions are made daily that determine who will survive and who will not, who will flourish and who will not.

**[Pause for a moment to reflect in silence on our own lifestyle. Do you think about where the products you buy or use are made, by whom, under what condition? Is your lifestyle sustainable? Do you live at the expense of others?]**

**Leader:**

To our own greed . . .

To our habits of consumption . . .

To social systems and structures that oppress the poor . . .

To the roots of terrorism and war . . .

**Response:**

open our eyes.

open our eyes.

open our eyes.

open our eyes.

**Leader:** Let us pray: Loving God, open our eyes as well to signs of hope in our world. Help us to believe that a better world is possible, and to act on that belief – personally, communally and institutionally.

**[Pause for a moment to reflect in silence on signs of hope. After a short while, take turns naming some signs of hope aloud.]**

**All:** Loving God who provides for all people in all times, we are frightened by signs of crisis, encouraged by signs of hope, and compelled by the urgency of both. Thus, we commit ourselves to the works of repentance – to reparation, redress, and revaluing. We commit ourselves to an ongoing journey – a living faith, a sign of freedom, and a mark of discipleship.

The contours of a better world that is peaceful and just are yet to be defined, but the invitation is clear and the need is great.

In the spirit of community, mindful of truth ever-exceeding knowledge, we covenant to live in a manner explicitly informed by the Gospel we proclaim. Amen.

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

200 New York Avenue, NW + Washington DC 20001 + 202-832-1780 + [ogc@maryknoll.org](mailto:ogc@maryknoll.org) + [maryknollogc.org](http://maryknollogc.org)