

Way of the Cross for Migration 2016



I. Jesus is condemned to death

Jesus, as you were condemned unjustly, the migrants in our midst are condemned by unjust systems and unkind conversation. More than ever in this election year, we hear politicians and citizens make immigrants out to be criminals, at fault for many of our country's ills. We know that immigrants are the victims of an unfair world order, forced into migration for survival. As a society, we are condemning innocent sisters and brothers of ours.

*Jesus, you who were condemned unjustly,
Be with immigrants who are unjustly condemned.*

II. Jesus carries his Cross

Jesus, you accepted your cross with great courage. Migrants carry the heavy burdens of many crosses with persistence and faith. Along with the crosses of poverty and marginalization, immigrants in the United States especially carry the cross of fear. In light of recent ICE raids in various parts of our nation, immigrants wonder if they will be deported when they least expect it. Families are afraid they will be torn apart. Children must learn what to do in case "Mama y Papa" aren't there when they get home from school. Fear is a heavy cross to bear.

*Jesus, you who carried your cross with courage and strength,
Help immigrants to carry the cross of fear.*

III. Jesus falls for the first time

Jesus, you fell under the weight of the cross. Many people in Latin America are falling further and further into economic poverty. International trade agreements have destroyed the market for small farmers in these countries. Where there are jobs, people work long hours for little pay. Especially on the U.S.-Mexico border,

U.S. companies outsource labor so they don't have to pay living wages. Poverty is one of the most powerful push factors for migration.

*Jesus, you who fell under the weight of the cross,
Lift up our sisters and brothers knocked down by poverty.*

IV. Jesus meets his Mother

Jesus, you loved your Mother deeply. As your eyes met hers on the way to Calvary, you both must have felt such pain. Many immigrant families live daily with the pain of separation from their beloved family members. A migrant may not remember the last time they met their mother's gaze; a migrant may not know the next time he will see his child. Those families together now in the U.S. are never sure how long it will last. This year, the Supreme Court will review DAPA, legislation that would grant a reprieve to undocumented parents of documented children. We pray that DAPA will become reality.

*Jesus, you who loved your Mother deeply,
Inspire our nation to keep immigrant families together.*

V. Simon, the Cyrene, helps Jesus carry the cross

Simon, it is said that you experienced a conversion as you carried the cross for Jesus. We know that encounter changes people's hearts. Relationship breaks down walls. We pray that we all continue to grow in relationship with those people on the margins of our society. We pray that those whose hearts have not yet opened to immigrants may be touched by encounters with the human face of migration.

*Jesus, you who witnessed the conversion of Simon,
Lead us all to conversion that brings about justice.*

VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Veronica, you reached out in compassion and care to wipe Jesus's face as he walked. We know that there are many good people who seek to reach out in compassion to migrants on their journey. We remember those who run shelters throughout Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexico border. We remember those responding to legal, physical, and emotional needs of immigrants. We remember those helping immigrants acclimate to life in the U.S. and all those who advocate for immigration reform. We ask that we may know how you call us to embody your love to our immigrants.

*Jesus, you who felt the balm of Veronica's compassion,
Call us to reach out and be your love in our world.*

VII. Jesus falls the second time

Jesus, the cross was too heavy to bear, and you fell a second time. The journey for a migrant from their home country to the U.S. is one wrought with many pitfalls. There is danger every step of the way, especially for women and children. Rape, theft, and deception run rampant. Riding atop trains or trudging through

unfamiliar terrain, physical harm and death are all too common. And yet, migrants carry the burden of this long, treacherous journey, because it may lead to a better life than what they had.

*Jesus, you who fell a second time on your journey to Calvary,
Keep migrants safe on their journeys.*

VIII. Jesus speaks to the weeping women of Jerusalem

Jesus, you saw tears in the eyes of women as you carried the cross. Now, you see the tears of thousands of mothers and grandmothers in Mexico and Central America. Their children do not have enough to eat. Their children have few options to move forward in life. Their children are missing. Their children are caught up in gangs. Their children are killed by drug violence. When will this end?

*Jesus, you who comforted the weeping women of Jerusalem,
Console the weeping women of Latin America.*

IX. Jesus falls the third time

Jesus, as if the first and second falls were not painful enough, you fell a third time. What exhaustion you must have felt. So, too, for migrants making the journey to the U.S. Many women and children who finally reach the U.S.-Mexico border are consequently apprehended and held in for-profit detention centers. Although a federal judge ordered an emptying of these centers in fall 2015, women and children continue to be detained in our country.

*Jesus, you who fell a third time out of exhaustion,
Give courage to migrants who are detained after an exhausting journey.*

X. Jesus is stripped of his garments

Jesus, you who felt your dignity stripped away with your garments, forgive us for the ways our world fails to honor the dignity of human beings, created in your image. We remember especially those sisters and brothers of ours caught in one of the darkest aspects of world mobility, human trafficking. Tricked into migration with false promises or forced to move as a pawn on a game board, people who are trafficked are stripped of everything. We must end this evil and restore their dignity.

*Jesus, you who were stripped of your dignity,
Help us to put an end to the horror of human trafficking.*

XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus, the soldiers nailed you to cross. Hanging there, you slowly awaited your death. Immigrants in our country know what waiting feels like. Many of them are involved in drawn-out court cases, monitored by ankle bracelets and required check-ins, waiting and hoping that the ordeal will not end in deportation. While they wait, they often cannot legally work or drive. We call this the "land of the free," and yet our immigrants are nailed down because of their status.

*Jesus, you who were nailed to the cross,
Help us change the system that keeps immigrants nailed down and unfree.*

XII. Jesus dies on the Cross

Jesus, you breathed your last moments hanging on the Cross out of love for humanity. Many immigrants, too, have lost their lives on a journey they make out of love. Each year, hundreds of migrants die in the desert attempting to cross to the U.S. (*Moment of silence.*) May we honor their memory by working for justice so that there are no more deaths.

*Jesus, you who died on the cross,
Bathe all deceased migrants in the light of your Presence.*

XIII. Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus, you were removed from the cross and placed in the arms of those who loved you so much, your mother and your dearest friends. After experiencing such trauma, they held and carried you gently. We remember the refugees in our world, those forced to migrate because of unspeakable terror in their lands. Even so, some in our country would deny refugees safe-haven. Change our hearts. May we be the gentle arms that embrace refugees, sisters and brothers of ours whose lives are wrought with trauma.

*Jesus, you who were taken down from the cross by loving hands,
Call us to welcome refugees with the same tender care.*

XIV. Jesus is buried in the tomb

Jesus, they laid you in the tomb, expecting that there you would remain. There are many on our continent who would like to bury the stories of migrants, painting immigration as a political issue and not a human one. We are grateful for those who bring the human stories to light: for migrants courageously sharing their stories, DREAMers speaking out for justice, journalists risking their lives in Mexico and Central America so that the truth is known, and ordinary people urging governments to act justly.

*Jesus, you who could not be contained by the darkness of the tomb,
May our voices lifted continue to shed light on the human faces of migration.*

XV. Resurrection

Jesus, you rose from the dead, proving that love wins. They killed your body but not your Spirit. What hope lies in this knowledge! Infuse us with your Life, oh God. Give us strength in the struggle for justice. Help migrants to continue to rise up in courage as they journey. Lead all to freedom and peace.

*We adore you, oh Christ, and we bless you
Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world. Amen.*