

## Clogher Diocese Online Way of the Cross. Lent 2021



### Introduction

**Bishop Larry. (At the entrance of the Cloister of Saint Macartan's Cathedral)**

Good Evening and Welcome!

Two days after we celebrate the feast of Saint Macartan and a day after we prayerfully marked Mary's "Yes" in the Feast of the Annunciation, we come together online to begin a journey of prayer. We do so very mindful that we live out the request of Jesus in Gethsemane; *Stay here while I pray* (Mark 14: 32)

Part of this prayer is saying sorry for anytime that members of our diocesan family suffered hurt, isolation or rejection. We humbly say sorry to God and implore His forgiveness and healing.

We enter into the Way of the Cross, journeying throughout the lives of the people of our diocese in it's various places and landscape's: from the Atlantic seaboard at Bundoran, the lakes and fields of Fermanagh, the Clogher Valley of Tyrone where Saint Macartan's mission began; to the Drumlin hills of Monaghan through to the fertile lowlands of mid-Louth just miles from the Irish Sea.

This is a journey of the heart. As Saint Ignatius of Loyola says “God speaks primarily to the human heart”

Therefore, let us pray...

Music: Stay here and keep watch with me.....

**Narrator 1:** Names the Station as the image appears

## **First Station: Jesus is condemned to death**

Church: Star of the Sea, Bundoran

Parish: Magh Ene

Pastoral Area: Donegal- North Fermanagh

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified.* (Mark 15:15)

**Reader 2:** There are many blessings associated with social media, yet in this station, we reflect on the fact that so many people are scourged and humiliated on the various different platforms at our disposal. Lord, please forgive us for the times we have failed to recognise you, when we have crucified others with cruel and hurtful words.

We pray that we may use social media for sharing the Good News and refrain from causing bad news.

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I love you Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may always love you and then do with me what you will.

Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Second Station: Jesus takes up his Cross

Church: Sacred Heart, Irvinestown

Parish: Devenish

Pastoral Area: Donegal-North Fermanagh

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out of the city to the place of the skull or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17)*

**Reader 2:** Lord you bore the heavy wooden cross for all of us, and you carried our sins to Calvary Hill. When suffering comes our way in life, may we have the ability to recall the beautiful words of Saint Francis de Sales; *“Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow. The same Eternal Father who takes care of you today will take care of you tomorrow, and every day of your life. Either He will shield us from suffering or He will give unfailing strength to bear it”*. (Saint Francis de Sales, Prayer, Complete Trust in God.)

We pray for all who carry various and different types of crosses during this time. We ask the Lord to give them his unfailing strength.

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**Narrator 1:** Names the Station as the image appears

### **Third Station: Jesus falls for the first time**

Church: St Gabriel's Retreat Centre, The Graan

Community: Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (Passionists)

Pastoral Area: Enniskillen-West Fermanagh

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Yet he was pierced through our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed.* (Isaiah 53:5)

**Reader 2:** The Cross was a brutal instrument of execution used by the Roman Empire. We live in a world where we edit or photoshop out the imperfections in our lives, and yet the pain and its effects remain in so many hearts. It is only by making our own journey to the Cross and from the depths of our hearts and with humble hearts enter into the deepest prayer with, the Lord:

*“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord hear my voice!  
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.  
If you, O Lord should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you”.* (Psalm 129)

We pray for all who have fallen under the pressures of living with the modern world and with the fatigue that living with Covid-19 has brought us.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Fourth Station: Jesus meets his Mother

Church: Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tempo

Parish: Pobal

Pastoral Area: Enniskillen-West Fermanagh

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected-and a sword will pierce your own soul too-so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare'. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. (Luke 2: 34-35, 51b)*

**Reader 2:** Mary had always been there, with her quiet and prayerful presence, in the hidden years of the life of Jesus, and during his public ministry. Years after those prophetic words of Simeon, Mary was going to feel the painful sword piercing her reality, but Mary continued to be present. The young woman who held her beautiful son in the manger in Bethlehem, was on the way of suffering, still living out her great YES to the Lord.

We pray for all mothers, especially those who quietly and maternally accompany their own children, during the darker moments of their lives.

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**Narrator 1:** Names the Station as the image appears

## **Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross**

Church: St Davog's, Dromore

Parish: Dromore

Pastoral Area: Tyrone

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross.* (Matthew 27:32)

**Reader 2:** So many people in the last year became Simon. Maybe they didn't expect to encounter the suffering Christ, but that is exactly who they encountered as they carried food parcels to the needy; collected medication for those in isolation and carried the smiles and prayers of the community to the windows of people's lives.

We pray for the gift to recognise the presence of Jesus in the suffering of our brothers and sisters, and for the strength of Simon who help them carry their cross.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Church: St Macartan's, Clogher

Parish: Clogher

Pastoral Area: Tyrone

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Of you my heart has spoken: "Seek his face". It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face. Dismiss not your servant in anger; you have been my help. Do not abandon or forsake me, O God my help! (Psalm 26: 8-9)*

**Reader 2:** During the last year, in our hospitals, nursing homes and other places of care, Veronica wore the PPE of blue and green and other colours. Veronica may not have been initially recognisable, behind the masks and visors, but Veronica met the face of Jesus once again as they held the hand of those very sick patients, whispered prayers by bedsides and held phone's in place so family members could say goodbye to their loved ones.

We pray for all our frontline workers. We pray that they may have the physical strength to meet the demands of these times. We pray for their emotional health and for their spiritual welfare, so that they may always see the face of Jesus in the person who is sick and suffering.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Seventh Station: Jesus falls for the second time

Church: Church of the Holy Cross, Lisnaskea

Parish: Aghalurcher

Pastoral Area: Fermanagh-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!'*

(Matthew 27: 39-40)

**Reader 2:** Despite the appearance of Simon and Veronica, Jesus was losing his strength and under the weight of the cross he fell again. When we seek help, when the burden's of life come our way, it is important to recall that falls are part of the journey. The Lord is always with; us as the psalmist tells us:

*"When I think: 'I have lost my foothold';  
your mercy, Lord, holds me up.  
When cares increase in my heart  
your consolation calms my soul."* (Psalm 93: 18-19)

We pray for everyone who has taken the decision to seek help with their emotional and spiritual health. May they have the courage to continue with their journey of healing.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## **Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

Church: St Mary's, Latnamard (Aghabog)

Parish: Killeevan-Currin-Aghabog

Pastoral Area: Fermanagh-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Large numbers of people followed him, and women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children'. (Luke 23: 27-28)*

**Reader 2:** In this station, we journey to the past as a way to invoke the healing presence of Christ. So many people, especially the most vulnerable who needed compassion, received the very opposite under the watch of Church and State. Nearly 100 years ago, a judge in County Monaghan, captured the contradiction that occurred during that time. *'They went out every day and saw the spires of churches pointing to heaven, and they knew they were living in a Christian land.'*<sup>1</sup>

We pray for all the vulnerable and the weak who were treated so brutally in our past. We pray for forgiveness, and we pray for the healing of so many hurting souls.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Terence Dooley, *Monaghan: The Irish Revolution, 1912-23* (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2017), p. 88.

Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## **Ninth Station: Jesus falls for the third time**

Church: Saint Joseph's, Knockatallon

Parish: Tydavnet

Pastoral Area: North-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and stop me from getting too proud! About this thing, I have pleaded with the Lord three times for it to leave me, but he has said, 'My grace is enough for you: my power is at best in weakness'. ( 2 Corinthians 12:7-9)*

**Reader 2:** We are reminded here of the beautiful words of Pope Francis. *'The true pilgrim is capable of going at the pace of the slowest person. And Jesus is capable of doing this. Jesus is our pilgrim companion. He respects our situation, and does not accelerate the pace. Jesus is the Lord of Patience'*.

We pray for everyone on the pilgrimage of life, who may be weary of their failures. May they continue, going forward knowing that Jesus walks with them every single day.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

Church: Saint Mary's, Glennan

Parish: Donagh

Pastoral Area: North-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!'. (Matthew 27:28-29)*

**Reader 2:** Lord, we pause to think on all those poor people, who flee their own war thorn nations, with the promise of a happier life here in Europe, only to become prisoners of the new forms of slaveries.

We pray for all refugees, all those who are stripped of their human dignity, and for all who live in direct provision. May we as a society care for them in the way followers of Jesus should.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Church: St Mary's, Clontibret

Parish: Clontibret

Pastoral Area: Mid-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing'. Then they cast lots to share out his clothing.*

(Luke 23:33-34)

**Reader 2:** During the last 12 months or more, so many of our elderly at home, and in nursing homes, have been confined to their places of care, yet they have remained part of our Church at prayer, interceding for all who care for them and all the younger generations.

We pray in the words of Saint Augustine: *'Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Jesus Christ, rest your weary ones, bless your dying ones, soothe your suffering ones, shield your joyous ones, and all for your love's sake.'*

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross

Church: St Patrick's, Ballybay

Parish: Tullycorbet

Pastoral Area: Mid-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture he said: 'I am thirsty'. A jar-full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, 'It is accomplished'; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit. (John 19:28-30)*

*Please pause for quiet prayer*

**Reader 2:** During the last year it has not been possible to hear the beautiful words, for the vigil of prayer for our faithful departed:

*My brothers and sisters. We believe that all the ties of friendship and affection which knit us as one throughout our lives do not unravel with death.*

Our funeral liturgies and traditions have witnessed so much change, except for the very core belief at the heart of our prayer.

*In the waters of baptism. Our faithful departed died with Christ and rose with him in new life. May they now share with him eternal glory.*

What we pray, is what we believe.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross

Church: St Joseph's, Carrickmacross

Parish: Machaire Rois

Pastoral Area: South-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son'. Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'. And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.* (John 19: 25-27)

**Reader 2:** Lord, we could not be at your side in our sacred spaces for the celebration of our liturgies. The sacred spaces we call our homes became our places of worship and our expression of love for you. We re-discovered the gift of spiritual communion and the bond of love, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that unites us all when we desire you from the depths of our hearts.

We pray for our diocesan family, that we may always be a people of prayer, and a community of believers, who find new ways, to express traditions which we hold dear when it comes to the community gathering for the celebration of liturgy.

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Narrator 1: Names the Station as the image appears

## Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

Church: St Enda's, Killanny

Parish: Killanny

Pastoral Area: South-Monaghan

**Narrator 2:** We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

**Narrator 1:** Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 1:** *When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away.* (Matthew 27: 57-60)

**Reader 2:** We all have our Good Friday moments in life. They take various and different forms, but they all cause us suffering in one form or another. In this station let us place in the tomb of our hearts the thing that has disappointed us most during the last year. We have been confined in our homes, isolated from one another. Let us isolate and leave in the tomb with Jesus, the most negative and anxious part of our lives, knowing that while we are still in Good Friday. Resurrection day is not far away.

Let us pray here for all our families and for everyone who has requested our prayers. Indeed, for every person who lives or who is connected to the diocesan family of the Church of Clogher.

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## Conclusion

### Bishop Larry

We have journeyed with Jesus and we met Mary and the faithful followers, along with those whom they met, on the way to Calvary. It is a journey that so many people in all our parishes and across our world make every day.

The past year has for many been a painful Way of the Cross. Like Christ, many of us have fallen a number of times under the heavy burdens; but throughout this journey, Simons and Veronicas have emerged in all of our local praying communities.

Our ways of praying together, as gathered communities of God's people, have undergone Good Friday moment's. Our way of being Church, our way of outreach, especially to the sick and the housebound have brought their own agony in the garden experience. Just as an angel appeared to strengthen Jesus; so many people have strengthened those who have experienced suffering.

Our priests and our deacon have had to find new ways to proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the Sacraments - ways in which our training never envisaged.

Many hundreds are united to the Lord with us on our journey each day through spiritual communion, thus making our online presence real as the 'digital Church'. Please God we will soon be able to return to a time when people can join us safely in our churches and be a sacramental community once more. Hopefully, many of those who are joining us now online and who were not usually in attendance pre-Covid will 'come and see' and participate in the sacred mysteries too.

While we journey to Calvary, we don't remain there; we move with joy to the empty tomb and new life. Something new has emerged for us, which reminds us that Christ risen and alive is our hope; it is he who brings newness and youth to our world.

That first Easter Sunday, it was the women who ran to the tomb. They didn't know what they would find, but in their hearts they knew that God was at work, and they were the instruments that brought the good news of the resurrection - that Christ is Risen and Alive!!

Similar to the Church throughout Ireland, our diocese is going through a period of change, a change which will transform the way in which we come together in prayer, in many cases without the presence of a priest.

This evening, we have travelled through our 7 pastoral areas which together encompass the 37 parishes of our diocese. This deeply moving and meaningful prayer was led by lay representatives of over 80 church communities, centred around our many beautiful sacred spaces, our churches.

When the women discovered the empty tomb, a newness and a joy was felt in their hearts. They felt empowered to share the good news. In the same way, all of us, in our own parishes and working with our neighbours in adjoining parishes - and in communion with the whole Church - must be re-awakened to the joy of the Gospel. We must all awaken within us the calling that flows from our baptism; to be disciples of Jesus; to be missionaries here at home – handing on the faith, making the crucified and risen Christ known to others and being ministers of his love and mercy in our families, communities, schools and parishes. Like the women at the tomb, we are called to do this prayerfully and with joy; not just looking back to the past but also looking ahead to future possibilities with hope, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our way of the Cross this evening is an excellent illustration of what the present and future holds.

I pray for you all and I ask you to pray for me.

### **Let us pray**

God our Father,

in obedience to your will

your Only-Begotten Son endured the cross for our salvation.

Grant that as we have come to know the mystery of the cross here on earth, we may receive its rewards in heaven.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

May almighty God bless you,

✠ the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. R./ Amen.