

# Vincentian Family Stations of the Cross



Resource developed by the Vincentian Family Office  
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## Introduction

The Stations of the Cross invite us to enter into Jesus's pain on his journey to Calvary. As members of the Vincentian Family, we see Jesus every day in the faces of our neighbors: those who have no place to call home, those struggling to put food on the table or keep the lights on, those living in fear of deportation, and so many others. This *Vincentian Family Stations of the Cross* invites participants to journey alongside these neighbors who are "Jesus in our midst" and reflect on the ways that unjust policies continue to condemn so many of them to suffering and even death.

All the stories included in this *Vincentian Family Stations of the Cross* have been submitted by members of the Vincentian Family, either reflecting on their own stories or on the stories of the people they serve. We ask you to hold the people within these stories in your heart as you pray the stations.

## Opening Prayer

Almighty God,  
You so loved the world that You came to live among us  
Not only walking alongside us  
But uniting with us in our suffering  
Through Jesus's violent death on the cross.

As we gather to follow in Jesus's footsteps  
Along the way to Calvary,  
Open our eyes that we might see clearly  
Our many sisters and brothers who are on this path to Calvary today,  
Condemned to suffering and even death by unjust policies  
That privilege power, wealth, and domination  
Over compassion, equity, and peace.

May Your Spirit guide us along this journey  
And inspire us to embody Your love  
By caring and advocating for our sisters and brothers in need.  
Amen.

## The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Crucify him!” So, Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. (Mark 15:14-15)

**Reader:** *Leaders wield policy as a weapon against an innocent man, as Jesus receives the sentence that sets his suffering in motion. He stands before a crowd of people unwilling – or unable – to assist.*

Jeannie, a 68-year-old refugee from the Congo immigrated to the United States three years ago. As my patient, she has shared with me about her crippling back pain from fleeing the military during the escape from her Congolese home, her recurrent nightmares of the horrors of war, and her persistent severe abdominal pain.

For two years, we have been working to get her seen by specialists, but now the appointments have been cancelled because her Medicaid has been discontinued. As her doctor, my heart breaks because I am limited by the system, and I do not have the tools to aid Jeannie in her pain. Now Jeannie is also at risk of deportation because the Green Card program is not accepting new interviews. My patient is the victim of a government that has closed its door to the stranger.

**ALL: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, far from my prayer, from the words of my cry? O my God, I cry out by day and you answer me not, by night and there is no relief for me. Be not far from me because I am in distress. Be near for I have no one to help me.”** (Psalm 22)

## The Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** And carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19:17)

**Reader:** *As a Jewish man living under Roman occupation, Jesus had long known the ache of conditional belonging in his own homeland. That fragile belonging finally gives way as he is detained, pushed aside, and condemned, as Jesus takes up his cross.*

I have lived in the United States for eight years, nearly a quarter of my life, and long enough to build friendships and places to feel like home. In that time, I have taken a step toward permanent residency moving from a student visa to a work visa. In the past year, all the time and effort I have put into these eight years feel like they have gone down the drain. I live with the quiet, daily fear of removal and the sudden end to a story I hoped would continue.

News stories that speak of enforcement, detention and separated families intensify that fear. Safety feels conditional, something that can shift overnight. Some people suggest that I turn away from the news and act as if it is not happening to protect my peace and my mental health. However, I cannot choose that kind of comfort, and I refuse to be indifferent. I would rather my heart break every day into a million pieces. My existence and my inner peace are interwoven with the fate of others living with this same uncertainty, and I cannot turn a blind eye to the pain of Jesus.

**ALL: “When I call, answer me, O my just God. Relieve me in my distress. Have pity on me and hear my prayer. Men of rank, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love what is vain? Many say, ‘Oh, that we might see better times!’ Oh Lord, let the light of your countenance shine upon us.”** (Psalm 4)

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

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, knowing pain, like one from whom you turn your face, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. (Isaiah 53: 3-5)

**Reader:** *Jesus falls under the crushing weight of the cross, and the internal suffering he carries becomes painfully visible to those around him. His body bears the burden of fear, exhaustion, and oppression, shaping every step of his journey.*

Actions against immigrants are causing great fear among a wide segment of the population who fit a certain “profile.” Women, in particular—mothers, wives, grandmothers—whose daily responsibility is to maintain their families and households, suffer greatly. In the hostile environment, which is encroaching on their home lives, they bear a great burden.

Josefina lives in fear of ICE, and the consequent restrictions, isolation, and stress have been taking a large toll on her body, mind and spirit. She lives in fear of leaving the farm where her husband, brother and nephews work. She looks for ways to get groceries while avoiding being seen in stores. Her two daughters beg her to participate in their school activities or to drive them to events. She decides not to take walks in their rural area after seeing the police double back when her nephews are outdoors. She feels so alone, especially when her husband and the other men in the household minimize what she is feeling.

**ALL: “Save me, O God. I am sunk in the abysmal swamp where there is no foothold. Those outnumber the hairs of my head who hate me without cause. Too many for my strength are they who are wrongfully my enemies. But I pray to you, O Lord for the time of your favor, O God. In your great kindness, answer me with your constant help.”**  
(Psalm 69)

## The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, “. . . (you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” And his mother kept all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:34-35, 51)

**Reader:** *Jesus meets his mother, and the agony of separation pierces as deep as the physical wounds he carries. Their love endures in the midst of their forced separation, as the bonds between parent and child remain unbroken even while power and violence try to tear them apart.*

My name is Gilberto. My state-enforced disappearance has torn my family apart. I miss my four-year-old son who does not understand why I am not home. I miss my teenage daughter. My wife does not understand and has cut off all communication with me. She has not spoken to me since ICE picked me up. She has not allowed me to talk to my son since then, and it’s been months. I am giving her space and time to process.

Colorado has been my home since I was sixteen, and I love it so much. Back home, I had a dignified job in construction. I was providing a home for my family. You are probably asking yourself, “how do you do it?” The consoling words and my daily conversations with my

mother in Colorado give me strength. Though we are apart, I don't think we've ever been this close. God has not abandoned me.

**ALL: "Rescue me from my enemies, O my God; from my adversaries defend me. For behold, they lie in wait for my life; mighty men come together against me and not for any offense or sin of mine. For no guilt of mine, they take up arms. Come to my aid; show me the fall of my foes. O God, you are my stronghold." (Psalm 59)**

## The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross. (Matthew 27:32)

**Reader:** *Simon of Cyrene shares in Christ's suffering, revealing shared humanity in a moment meant to strip it away. By walking with Jesus, Simon turns reluctant duty into hopeful action, serving even within a system that wounds and disillusion.*

My supervisor told me, "If I don't wear this uniform, then I can't guarantee that the right person will replace me." As National Park employees, our agency was one of the many federal civil service agencies targeted by the Department of Government Efficiency. Federal employees were told that they could leave or retire early, probationary employees were fired, and federally protected lands were opened to be drilled, mined, or logged.

Oftentimes we think of the vast government bureaucracy as nameless and faceless. However, the people who work for this vast organization often wanted these jobs for one simple reason: they wanted to serve. People choose to do this work because they believe in their country and want to help its citizens. If I don't wear the National Park Service uniform, someone who might not be willing to stand up for what is right might wear it instead.

**ALL: "My soul longs for you, O my God. Athirst is my soul for the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God. My tears are my food day and night. I pour out my soul within me. Why must I go about in mourning with the enemy oppressing me? Hope in God! For I shall again be thanking him." (Psalm 42)**

## The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** “Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?” And answering the king will say to them, “Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.” (Matthew 25:37-40)

**Reader:** *Veronica steps out of the crowd to wipe the face of Jesus, acknowledging his suffering in the midst of noise and indifference. Her small act of compassion interrupts the procession of pain, revealing that discipleship requires seeing clearly and tending to the wounds the world would rather ignore.*

I met Jane during Monday hospitality at St. Thomas in Chicago. In the middle of ordinary conversation, she said to me, “I’m not sure what you can do to help, but with this extreme cold and us being out in tents, a lot of people are having issues with their feet. Some of them have gone black, and we don’t know where to go.” Jane wasn’t angry when she spoke. She was simply tired, naming what she and others were living: pain, fear, uncertainty about where to turn when the cold does not let up.

In that moment, Jane placed the weight of this winter into my hands. Not to solve it alone, but to refuse to walk past it unseen. Jane reminded me that discipleship often begins the same way: by being interrupted, by seeing again, and by staying with the weight instead of turning away.

**ALL: “Have pity on me, O God; have pity on me, for in you I take refuge. In the shadow or your wings, I take refuge till harm pass by. I call to God, the Most High, to God, my benefactor. May he send from heaven and save me; may he make those a reproach who trample upon me. May God send his kindness and faithfulness. My heart is steadfast, O God; my heart is steadfast.”** (Psalm 57)

## The Seventh Station: Jesus falls for the second time

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will

condemn? It is Christ [Jesus] who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. (Romans 8:31-34)

**Reader:** *Jesus falls a second time, violence and rejection pressing even deeper into his wounded body. Though already exhausted, he rises again, revealing a resilience born not of ease but of love that refuses to surrender to despair.*

Ana grew up in Central America and ended up in a domestic abuse situation. Ana escaped with her child to Mexico and was raped by a cartel member. She and her child then traveled to the US border seeking asylum and protection from danger. After coming to the US, Ana discovered she was pregnant by the cartel member who had raped her. Ana worried that this man would pursue her. She was anxious about her relationship with the baby, but she decided she had enough love through much prayer.

She later married and had a third child. Her oldest is still seeking a green card through her asylum case. The family now lives in fear because many immigrants are having their legal status revoked and then labeled as criminals just because they no longer have status. Their mixed status family fears being separated and forced to voluntarily deport.

**ALL:** **“O God by your might defend my cause; O God hear my prayer. For haughty men have risen up against me and fierce men seek my life; they set not God before their eyes. Turn back the evil upon my foes. From all distress, rescue me and may my eyes look down upon my enemies.”** (Psalm 54)

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

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL:** **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:27-28)

**Reader:** *Jesus turns to the women of Jerusalem and meets their grief with compassion. Though he carries the cross, he sees the world their children are inheriting, and tenderly acknowledges their tears and the fragile future unfolding before them.*

In the year after the wildfires, many environmental protections have been overturned, helping to ensure that those fires will not be the last my students experience.

My student Rhonda's English class assignment puts you right in the middle of that night: the distant pops and bangs as water heaters burst, the scratch of dog nails against the door, waking up the whole family - a dog who didn't make it out but gave his life to keep the whole family safe.

My student Marco spends his free time taking care of everybody. He cares for his teammates, his girlfriend, and his sisters. He cares for his teachers, urging his classmates to quiet down when he sees our tired faces. He smiles at me through the pain, and it's enough to go on.

**ALL: "Hear O Lord, attend to my cry. Your eyes behold what is right. Though you try me with fire, you shall find no malice in me. My steps have been steadfast in your paths; my feet have not faltered. I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me; hear my word. Show your wondrous kindness from the wicked who use violence against me. I shall be content in your presence." (Psalm 17)**

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

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** I lie prostrate in the dust; give me life according to your word. I declared my ways, and you answered me; teach me your commands. Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds. My soul weeps for sorrow; strengthen me with your words. (Psalm 118: 25-28)

**Reader:** *Jesus falls once more, his strength nearly gone and his body pressed to the ground by the cross. For a moment, he almost gives up, but he rises again, pushing himself forward.*

Irene fled an abusive family situation and a forced marriage and traveled from her home in Africa, finally arriving in Maryland. She is seeking asylum while working nights cleaning office buildings, and she recently moved into her own small apartment. We received word at our health center that Irene was in the emergency room in a mental health crisis. Someone reported her to immigration, and she was released with an ankle GPS device, feeling fearful, ashamed, and at the brink of suicide.

Irene connected with a lawyer who said he might help her if she brings an interpreter along with \$3,000 cash, and that additional help would cost thousands more. She told us she can afford \$1,000, but no more. She was told by immigration that she will have a home visit in

one month and then a check-in at immigration several weeks after that. Irene continues with counseling sessions, working nights and sleeping days, hoping for a future that is safe and secure and brings freedom from fear and persecution.

**ALL: “Hearken to my words, O Lord, attend to my sighing. Heed my call for help. To you, I pray, O Lord, at dawn I bring my plea before you. The arrogant may not stand in your sight. You hate all evildoers. But I, because of your abundant kindness, will enter your house. Because of my enemies, guide me in your justice; make straight your way before me. For in their mouths, there is no sincerity; let them fall by their own devices. But let all who take refuge in you be glad and exult forever.”** (Psalm 5)

## The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,” in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled [that says]: / “They divided my garments among them,/ and for my vesture they cast lots.” (John 19: 23-24)

**Reader:** *Jesus is stripped of his garments, and what little he had left is claimed by others. In this public loss, Jesus stands exposed; his dignity treated as disposable.*

Rick receives government SNAP food assistance because he is unable to work. The government shutdown interrupted his benefits, and he must now reapply. Months have gone by, and he still has not received his benefits. To get money for food and to repair his house door so he could pass a government inspection or be evicted, he sold his three precious NFL jerseys. He had saved for them for years, and they were the only precious things he had.

**ALL: “Why, O Lord, do you stand aloof? Why hide in times of distress? Proudly, the wicked harass the afflicted who are caught in the devices the wicked have contrived. For the wicked man glories in his greed. He lurks in ambush near the villages, his eyes spy on the unfortunate. He lies in wait to catch the afflicted. Rise, O Lord! Forget not the afflicted. Take them into your hands.”** (Psalm 10)

## The Eleventh Station: Jesus is crucified

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”] (Luke 23: 33-34)

**Reader:** *Under the Roman Empire, criminals were subject to brutal and undignified death by crucifixion. Through Jesus’s crucifixion, God expresses closeness to those who are despised, tortured, and insulted.*

Carlos and Maria came from Mexico in 2003 dreaming of a future in the United States. After 10 years of saving money and working additional hours at night, they were able to buy a house.

In October 2025, Carlos was on his way to work when ICE detained him and took him to jail. He was treated as a criminal. He was placed in an overcrowded cell with chains on his feet, received a number and never heard his name again. He had insufficient food, no personal hygiene and no medical attention. All this, plus the constant insults from the guards, made him become sad and depressed. He asked himself, “Was coming to the United States a terrible mistake or a sin?” Thinking about the suffering of his five children, he felt guilty. “Do my children think that I abandoned them?”

After three months Carlos was deported to Mexico.

**ALL: “Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am languishing. My soul, too, is utterly terrified. O Lord, how long...? Rescue me because of your kindness. I am wearied with sighing: every night I flood my bed with weeping. My eyes are dimmed with sorrow. The Lord has heard my plea and accepted my prayer. My enemies shall fall back in sudden shame.”** (Psalm 6)

## The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which is

translated, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (Mark 15: 33-34, 37)

*(All kneel together for a reflective pause.)*

**Reader:** *Jesus is nailed to the cross, his abused body reaching its breaking point. With each labored breath, life slowly drains away, yet love endures even when violence seems to have the final word.*

I looked at the hospital notifications that we receive for our clients and saw that Joe, a 40-year-old man with a history of substance use and mental illness, had been admitted. EMS found him in a ditch, after he had been assaulted, and resuscitated him in the field. EMS brought Joe to the hospital, and upon entry, he was in cardiac arrest which required a second resuscitation. After receiving emergency surgery, Joe went to the ICU.

I called Joe’s mother and informed her that Joe was in the hospital in critical condition. Joe’s mother sounded tearful over the phone, and I assured her of our prayers. The next week Joe was placed on life support, and his mother continued to say that she was “hoping for a miracle.” On Friday, Joe was pronounced dead after having no brain activity.

**ALL:** "How long, O Lord? Will you utterly forget me? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I harbor sorrow in my soul and grief in my heart day after day? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look, answer me, O Lord, my God." (Psalm 13)

## The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL:** **Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So, he came and took his body. (John 19: 31-34, 38)

**Reader:** *Joseph of Arimathea cared for Jesus and offered him dignity and respect, even after death.*

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) used to fund the staff salaries at the *Rosalie Rendu* and *Lucelia Bontemps* clinics in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The clinics served as lifelines to some of the most impoverished and unstable neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince, offering quality primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, and nutritional recovery programs for malnourished children and tuberculosis patients.

When USAID was dismantled in 2025, that funding abruptly ended. About 20 staff members were terminated, services temporarily closed, and leaders were left discerning whether a scaled-down model could survive. Sisters and benefactors continue to support these clinics, despite the immense challenges, because they are essential lifelines in an area where more than 80% of the health clinics have closed, and many that remain are cost prohibitive.

**ALL: “O Lord how many are my adversaries! Many rise up against me! But you, O Lord, are my shield, my glory, you lift up my head. I fear not the myriads of people arrayed against me on every side. Save me, my God. Upon your people be your blessing.”**

(Psalm 3)

## The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**ALL: Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

**Leader:** Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb. (Matthew 27:59-61)

**Reader:** *Jesus is laid in the tomb, and it is closed. He is left in the dark, alone, seemingly forever.*

Marcos has been working at a chicken processing plant for 10 years. The other day he was laid off because the company no longer wants to employ people without documents, for fear of immigration interventions in the area. Marcos has five children and does not know what to do. He is the one who supports the family. A neighbor has helped Marcos find some work, but he doesn't pay Marcos well because Marcos doesn't have papers. Marcos no longer has the money to pay the rent for the trailer where he and his family live, or to pay for electricity or his cell phone. He is afraid of going out and being detained; he and his family practically live locked up.

**ALL: “In you, O Lord, I take refuge. In your justice, rescue me; incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me. Be my rock of refuge. You will free me from the snare they set for me; you will redeem me O Lord, my faithful God. My trust is in the Lord. You have seen my affliction and watched over me in my distress. For my life is spent with grief and my years with sighing. For all my foes, I am an object of reproach, a laughingstock to my neighbors. I am forgotten like the unremembered dead. They consult together against me. But my trust is in you, O Lord. You are my God.” (Psalm 31)**

## Closing Prayer

Loving God,  
As we conclude this pilgrimage to Calvary  
May we remain mindful that –  
For so many of our sisters and brothers –  
The road to Calvary is unending.

May our eyes remain open to our countless neighbors  
Who are bearing their own crosses  
Condemned to suffering by policies that are unjust.

Replace our hearts of stone, oh God,  
With hearts that break for our neighbors.

Send down Your Spirit  
to inspire a season of repentance in our society  
So that we might work for a world where  
The hungry are fed,  
The sick are cared for,  
The unhoused have homes,  
And the migrant is welcomed.  
A world that does not know war or violence,  
A world where every part of Your precious creation is cared for,  
And the dignity of each person is recognized and held as sacred.  
We ask this through the crucified Jesus, who accompanies us in our suffering,  
Amen.

## Thank You

We are profoundly grateful to the members of the Vincentian Family who shared their personal stories and the stories of people they've accompanied. Each story is a precious gift, reflecting a facet of God's image among us. May they continue to open our hearts to God and to one another.

Branches of the Vincentian Family that shared stories for this project include:

- Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
- Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul International Project Services
- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Young Adults from the Vincentian Small Faith Communities