

Way of the Cross

Pray with the Lord and Journey with Refugees



Pray with the Lord, journey with Refugees

Praying the Stations of the Cross or the Way of the Cross is a traditional way of praying during Lent. We pray this familiar prayer to be with Jesus Christ who walked this journey, carrying the Cross, the instrument of his death, out of love and commitment to us.

We pray it also because we wish to become close to who this Jesus is who loves me and us so deeply. We walk this journey with him to get a glimpse at the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, who is alive today and experiencing the journey to the Cross wherever our sisters and brothers are suffering throughout the world.

We have developed this Stations of the Cross resource to aid your prayer during Lent and Holy Week.

You can use this resource as a Parish Group, as family, or as an individual. Each station begins with a piece from scripture, followed by a reflection, and culminates with a prayer to say together.

We hope you find this resource fruitful.

The beautiful images depicting the Stations are banana leaf artwork made in Kenya by refugees, for the Mikono shop, supported by JRS Eastern Africa.

We are incredibly grateful to the refugees who created these pieces of art, which inspired this Way of the Cross.

Station one: Jesus is condemned to death



So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, after having Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:15

Station one:

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.**

Jesus is condemned to death by Pontius Pilate following the accusations of the chief priests, elders and scribes. He is treated with hatred and contempt, and the crowd bay for His blood. They will not listen to reason and Pilate, for fear of rioting, grants them their wish.

Many forcibly displaced people flee their homes in the face of similar death sentences and threats. They look for anywhere they can go to escape and save their lives. We think especially of the people of Syria, over fourteen million have been forced to flee since the civil war began in 2011. Peace seems a remote possibility and international efforts are failing. Do we act like Pilate, fearful and washing our hands of this situation? Or do we care for their needs and ensure that these are met?

We pray for all who flee their homes and the world they know in an effort to save their lives. We ask that they may be kept safe and that their material needs may be cared for. May they not face the same hatred that Jesus faced from the crowds.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station two: Jesus takes up his cross



So at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out to the Place of the Skull or, as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha

John 19:16-17

Station two:

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.**

Jesus takes up the cross and begins on His way to Calvary. It may not be far but it must feel like the longest journey. The weight of the cross would be difficult to bear even without the immense suffering Christ had already faced due to His arrest and scourging.

The same is true for refugees and forcibly displaced people. Their situations involve heavy crosses being placed upon them after they have already suffered fear, violence and oppression. These crosses add to the pain that exists in their hearts. They cry out. Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ was inspired to found the Jesuit Refugee Service because of his recognition of the suffering of the Vietnamese boat people fleeing their war torn country. Fr Arrupe allowed himself to be moved by them and took up the challenge, however burdensome, to help.

We pray for the crosses that our refugee brothers and sisters bear. May we always recognise the difficulties they face in their daily lives and treat them with empathy.

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

**Our Father....
Hail Mary....
Glory Be to the Father....**

Station three: Jesus falls for the first time



Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from then onwards he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Matthew 26:14-16

Station three:

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.**

The weight of the cross bears down upon Jesus and He falls under the heaviness of it. It is not just the weight of the cross that brings Our Lord down; it is the also the betrayal of Judas and the abandonment of his friends.

How many refugees have been lied to or exploited by smugglers or traffickers? How many times have they encountered betrayal? How often have we failed to help when we could have done something? What damage does this do to their faith in others?

We pray for all refugees that they may not be weighed down by burdens and may carry their crosses with a firm hope for the future. May those who face deception and betrayal be comforted by Jesus who endured the same treatment out of concern for us and for all.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station four: Jesus meets his blessed mother



Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala.

John 19:25

Station four:

Jesus meets his blessed mother

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

The Blessed Virgin Mary knew the pain of being a refugee with a new born infant. She and St Joseph fled to Egypt with the child Jesus to escape the murderous King Herod. St Joseph fled after his dream, making the journey with haste to ensure that his wife and baby son were kept safe.

Refugee mothers giving birth today face the same unimaginable uncertainty. A time which should be full of joy is instead filled with fear for the safety of the precious gift given to new parents. This is an injustice no one should have to experience.

We pray for all refugee mothers who are trying to raise their young families in the face of danger. May these families be protected under the care of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who lived this experience themselves.

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

**Our Father....
Hail Mary....
Glory Be to the Father....**

Station five: Simon of Cyrene bears the cross



As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus.

Luke 23:26

Station five:

Simon of Cyrene bears the cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

Jesus's strength is failing and the soldiers are worried He will not survive the journey to the hill of execution. They drag Simon from the crowd and order him to bear the cross for Jesus.

There are many who work to help refugees in their different situations. The Jesuit Refugee Service places accompaniment at the heart of its mission. It tries to ease the burden of its refugee friends and journeys alongside them through difficult moments. We recognise that often we cannot remove our friends' crosses but we can help to carry them. May we all be willing to take action and not need to be dragged, like Simon, from the crowd.

We pray for the work of JRS and all those who accompany and serve refugees and asylum seekers. May they be a sign of God's presence even in the darkest moments of these people's lives.

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

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station six: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



*For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty
and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you
made me welcome.*

Matthew 25:35

Station six:

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.**

Tradition has it that St. Veronica reached out to wipe Jesus's face with a cloth, offering some compassion and respite from the agony of His journey to Calvary and his crucifixion. In response to this act of loving kindness in the midst of the anger of the crowd, Jesus leaves His image upon Veronica's cloth.

What do I see when I look at the face of a vulnerable refugee or asylum seeker? Do I see a threat, an inconvenience? Or do I see the face of Christ my saviour? Veronica's small but courageous act is an example for us in how we can serve Christ in others. The power of even the smallest acts of kindness and welcome cannot be underestimated. They are often what reminds the most vulnerable that they are loved.

We pray for the grace to see your face Lord in the faces of all those we encounter. May we live lives of loving service for others, taking courage to act like Veronica did in the face of injustice.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station seven: Jesus falls a second time



Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

Psalm 34:14

Station seven:

Jesus falls a second time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

Throughout salvation history as told in the scriptures, the issues of sin and the fall of humanity are a constant theme. The various root causes of refugee movements are usually the result of human sinfulness.

Persecution, violence and war are so often what forces people to flee their homes in search for safety elsewhere. Many are forced to leave because of the effects of climate change, which makes once fruitful lands barren and causes an increase in natural disasters.

It can be easy to feel hopeless in the face of such seemingly endless evil. The pursuit of peace is a long and difficult road. For those forced to flee it may seem impossible that they will ever return home. However, we believe in the power of forgiveness to ease pain and suffering, bringing solutions to conflict. We believe in the power of good to overcome evil.

We pray for those who are the instigators of wastefulness, war, violence and persecution; that their hearts are turned from their evil to good. We pray for the pursuit of peace and the grace of forgiveness and mercy for all.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station eight: Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem



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

Station eight:

Jesus comforts 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.**

Jesus is met by the women of Jerusalem who are distressed at seeing His pain. Despite His own agony, Jesus shows compassion upon the women and recognises their vulnerability in the society of their time.

Women are still in vulnerable positions in many places where refugees are forced to flee, with fewer rights than their male counterparts. Women still face disproportionately more poverty, lack equal access to education and are at greater risk of human trafficking. Many are left to raise their children alone with fathers being separated or killed.

We pray for the women who face these ingrained injustices each day. We weep for their oppression and ask for change which respects the strength and the dignity of the women you created.

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

**Our Father....
Hail Mary....
Glory Be to the Father....**

Station nine: Jesus falls for a third time



*Blessed is anyone who perseveres when trials come.
Such a person is of proven worth and will win the
prize of life, the crown that the promised to those who
love him.*

James 1:12

Station nine:

Jesus falls for a third time

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

As Jesus continued his arduous journey to Calvary He falls again under the weight of His cross. Despite the pain and suffering, He rises and begins taking His steps forward once again. Jesus shows His determination and courage to continue amidst ultimate adversity.

Refugees and forcibly displaced people show the most remarkable levels of perseverance and bravery that is possible. In the face of danger, rejection and uncertainty they continue moving forward with hope for the future. Many are firmly rooted by their faith in Christ and take great consolation in uniting themselves with the suffering He endured in His passion.

We pray for all refugees and forcibly displaced people who continue to persevere in the face of adversity. We ask that they may be strengthened in their faith.

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

**Our Father....
Hail Mary....
Glory Be to the Father....**

Station ten: Jesus is stripped of his garments



When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, 'Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.' In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: 'They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothes.' That is what the soldiers did.

John 19:23-24

Station ten:

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.**

The soldiers now prepare Jesus for His crucifixion. They strip Him of His clothes, and in doing so strip Him of His dignity. They then cast lots to decide who should get what, turning His embarrassment and suffering into a game for their enjoyment.

How often are refugees stripped of their dignity? Respect is often the last thing with which they are treated. They are seen as a problem to be dealt with or an opportunity to be exploited. The emotional and physical toil this has on our refugee brothers and sisters is unquestionable. Have we played our part in ensuring that our society does not treat the stranger with suspicion, hostility and abuse? Do we dignify all people as beloved children of God?

We pray for all refugees and forcibly displaced people who are treated with no respect or dignity. We ask that our eyes may be opened, that we see all people as you see them. Help us to break the silence that allows neglect and abuse to continue in our world.

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

**Our Father....
Hail Mary....
Glory Be to the Father....**

Station eleven: Jesus is nailed to the cross



It was the third hour when they crucified him. The inscription giving the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews'. And they crucified two bandits with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Mark 15: 25-27

Station eleven:

Jesus is nailed to the cross

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

Jesus is nailed to His cross and crucified between two bandits. He has been tried and falsely sentenced. The lies that have been told about Him determine His fate. His accusers have closed their ears and refuse to listen to Him. He is labelled as a criminal.

What are the labels that refugees and forcibly displaced people receive? Are they treated as criminals? The systems and policies that those needing help face are usually rooted in mistrust and unbelief. People must be telling lies, exaggerating their stories, looking for advantages that they don't deserve. They are scrutinised and examined. They are deemed untrustworthy. They are detained and treated like criminals.

We pray that our brothers and sisters who face such trial are supported. We ask that You who have endured false accusations and maltreatment will be their comfort. We pray that the systems and policies of governments and organisations may be rooted in love and truth, not suspicion and hostility.

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

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station twelve: Jesus dies on the cross



It was now about the sixth hour and the sun's light failed, so that darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Sanctuary was torn right down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice saying, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' With these words he breathed his last.

Luke 23:44-46

Station twelve:

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.**

Jesus dies on the cross, abandoned by His closest friends and followers. He cries out to His Heavenly Father. This cry echoes through all creation and all time. In Jesus's death, God has fully united Himself with the human experience.

Experience of death is a central part of the lives of refugees and forcibly displaced people. Loved ones may have died as a result of whatever made them flee. Journeys are dangerous and many die trying to reach safety. Since January 2014, it is estimated over 50,000 men, women and children have died travelling dangerous migratory routes. Each of those was an individual with their own hopes and dreams. Christ unites Himself to each and every one of them in His death on the cross.

We pray for the peaceful repose of the souls of those migrants and forcibly displaced people who have died on their journeys. We especially pray for those who have no one to pray for them. We also pray for those who are missing and whose families and friends are left uncertain of their fate.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station thirteen: Jesus is taken down from the cross



Then there came Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the Council, who himself lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate, astonished that he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he had been dead for some time. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph who bought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross

Mark 15: 43-46

Station thirteen:

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.**

Jesus's body is taken down from the cross. Darkness settles around the world. The Son of God has been killed by His own people. He is placed in the arms of His mother, just as He was that first night in the stable. Mary, the mother, cradles her child.

There are so many children caught up in these desperate situations. Many are born in camps away from their home, never knowing any life other than makeshift tents. Others accompany their parents on the dangerous journeys across borders and seas; journeys they may not complete. Some journey alone, leaving them extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Many children are born and raised in the countries where their parents have sought refuge and are not afforded the same rights and opportunities as their peers, despite this being the only home they have ever known.

We pray for all children who are refugees; that they may be kept safe. May they be blessed by being able to have a happy childhood and not be forced into situations which make them grow up too soon.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

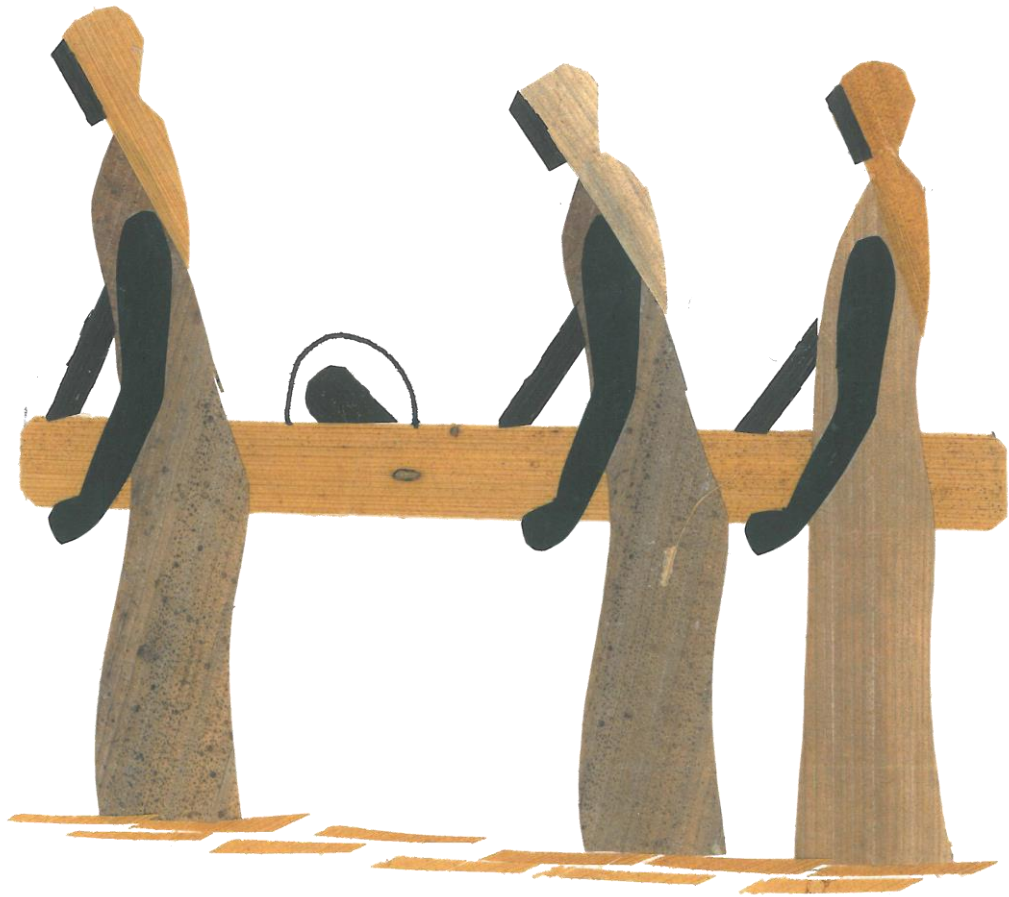
**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station fourteen: Jesus is laid in the tomb



It was Preparation day and the Sabbath was beginning to grow light. Meanwhile the women who had come from Galilee with Jesus were following behind. They took note of the tomb and how the body had been laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath day they rested, as the Law required.

Luke 23: 54-56

Station fourteen: 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.**

Jesus's body is laid in the tomb. There is peace and stillness as the earth waits expectantly for the Son of Man to rise again. It is a time of waiting and hope for all creation, but one of uncertainty and despair for Jesus's friends and followers.

Many forcibly displaced people seek asylum in foreign lands. Though many are in relative safety compared to their homeland or the journey they have just completed, they are still vulnerable and subject to policies and controls which make them destitute or put them into detention. This is a time of agonised waiting, not knowing if they will be recognised as 'worthy' of help. They may be allowed to stay and build a new life filled with hope, or they may be returned to their homeland and the danger that awaits them there.

We pray for all those who have sought safety away from their homes and wait for a decision upon their claims. We pray for a spirit of understanding and charity for those who are responsible for taking such decisions. May all who seek asylum be granted the opportunity to start a new life in safety, where they can use their gifts and talent to the benefit of their new lands.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

Station fifteen: The resurrection



After the Sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre...And suddenly, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings,' he said. And the women came up to him and, clasping his feet, they did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; there they will see me.'

Matthew 28:19-10

Station fifteen:

The resurrection

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You.

All: **Because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

After Jesus' death on the cross the world was dark; it seemed that death had won. However, we know that the darkness was not the end. On the Sunday morning, the women went to the tomb to attend to the body, only to find that it wasn't there. Jesus later greeted them on the road, risen to new life.

For those refugees who are fortunate to be granted official recognition and protection it must feel that the period of darkness is over and a new life has begun. Like the risen Jesus, they may well bear the wounds of their experiences but they can focus on bright and hopeful future. What emotions would this bring? Are they overwhelmed as the women in the Gospel appear to be when they encounter Jesus after His resurrection?

We pray for those who have finally been recognised as refugees in the countries they have fled to; that as they begin their lives in their new homes, they may be given all they need for a better future. We also pray for those refugees who are able to return to their homelands; that peace and prosperity may be their future, and that all wounds of division may be healed.

**I love you, Jesus, my love above all things,
And I repent with my whole heart of having offended
you.**

**Never permit me to separate myself from you again,
Grant that I may love you always, and then do with
me what you will.**

Our Father....

Hail Mary....

Glory Be to the Father....

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation, at work in over 50 countries around the world with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

JRS UK has a special ministry to those who find themselves destitute as a consequence of government policies and those detained for the administration of immigration procedures.

Our work is carried out in the spirit of mutual respect, dignity and solidarity with the refugees and forced migrants, and in collaboration with other organisations. Our work expresses the commitment of the Society of Jesus to stand with refugees around the world.

 /jesuitrefugeeserviceuk  @JRSUK

 @jrsuk_

JRS UK, 2 Chandler Street, London, E1W 2QT

020 7488 7310 | uk@jrs.net | www.jrsuk.net

Reflections produced for Lent and Easter

JRS UK is a work of the Jesuits in Britain, 230165 and 40490



UNITED
KINGDOM