‘GOD CREATED MANKIND TO BE ONE FAMILY; WHEN ANY OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS SUFFER, WE ARE ALL AFFECTED.’

POPE FRANCIS
INDEX

REFLECTION: UNTIL LOVE CONQUERS FEAR 3
ABOUT SIERRA LEONE 4
TRÓCAIRE’S WORK IN SIERRA LEONE 4
OUR PROGRAMMES IN SIERRA LEONE 5
INTERVIEW WITH FR SYLVESTER MOIJUEH OF ST PAUL’S CATHOLIC COMMUNITY, FREETOWN 6
GUIDE TO PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS 8
SIERRA LEONE: STATIONS OF THE CROSS 9

Additional Lenten Resources for Parishes, including homily reflections, an examination of conscience, videos and pictures are available at www.trocaire.org/parish

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS:
David O’Hare, Trócaire
Frances Rowland, Diocese of Kerry
Hannah Evans, Trócaire

Cover photo: The Koroma Family stand in front of the site where their home once stood. A landslide claimed their house and the lives of over 600 people in their community. Credit: Mark Stedman
FEAR IS THE DEAFENING SOUND OF WAR.
LOVE IS THE HAND THAT QUIETENS IT.

FEAR IS THE VOICE THAT’S NEVER HEARD.
LOVE IS BREAKING THE SILENCE.

FEAR IS THE TRUTH THAT’S LOCKED IN THE DARK.
LOVE IS THE COURAGE THAT FREES IT.

FEAR IS THE HUNGER THAT STARVES ALL HOPE.
LOVE IS THE FOOD THAT FEEDS IT.

AS LONG AS PAIN EXISTS, AS LONG AS SUFFERING IS HERE,
TRÓCAIRE WILL STAY.
UNTIL LOVE CONQUERS FEAR.
ABOUT SIERRA LEONE

According to the UN, Sierra Leone is ranked 179 out of 188 in the Human Development Index, which tracks poverty by examining factors such as health, education and life expectancy.

Average families are living on less than €50 per month. In areas where Trócaire works it is as low as €35.

Annual school fees for an average-size family are about €55. So, feeding a family and keeping them in school is a really big challenge in rural communities in Sierra Leone.

71,000 people have benefitted from Trócaire’s programmes in Sierra Leone in the last year.

Women are particularly vulnerable, especially in the areas where Trócaire works:

- Half of women live in violent homes;
- Only 40% of women can read and write;
- 50% of families do not have a reliable source of food and income. Battling hunger and malnutrition is a struggle in these communities.

TRÓCAIRE’S WORK IN SIERRA LEONE

Trócaire has supported programmes in Sierra Leone since the 1980s, focusing mainly on women’s empowerment.

In 2003, we also began working to improve governance and people’s participation in political matters connected to their community and society. Our office in Freetown was set up in 2007 to provide more support after the country’s civil war came to an end in 2002.

We currently work in partnership with eighteen local Church and civil society organisations in the country. Our work is located in four geographical areas including Port Loko, Kambia, Bombali and the Western Rural Area.

In 2015/16, we responded to the Ebola crisis, providing aid such as food and water to people in quarantined areas. We also ran information campaigns on how to stop the spread of the virus. Ebola had a lasting impact upon people, both financially and socially, with many people still struggling to fully overcome the horrifying ordeal.
Trócaire is now working with communities to rebuild their livelihoods and is also providing counselling. More recently, the mudslides that killed over six hundred people in Freetown have required an emergency response, with dignity kits and school kits being distributed among those affected.

**OUR PROGRAMMES IN SIERRA LEONE**

Trócaire’s work in Sierra Leone covers four areas:

1. **WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**
   - This programme aims to reduce violence towards women and to protect women’s rights. Our partners do this by providing training and information about gender inequality and violence against women. We also support efforts to provide legal protection and access to justice for women whose rights have been violated. In addition, we work to reduce women’s vulnerability to abuse and poverty by helping them become more economically independent. We work alongside men and women to ensure that women can prosper and realise their potential.

2. **FOOD AND RESOURCE RIGHTS**
   - Our livelihoods work focuses on improving the food security and income of vulnerable women and girls, while also working to protect their rights to resources such as land. This resource is providing new skills, agricultural training and business support to help women earn a living wage.

3. **JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
   - This programme supports women to increase their influence in decision-making processes at community and local level by helping them to develop their leadership skills and demand their rights. We also aim to increase the capacity of our partners so that they can hold government and leaders more accountable on issues facing women.

4. **HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**
   - In response to the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone, Trócaire and our partners started community-led mobilisation initiatives to increase knowledge about Ebola prevention. We also distributed food, water and non-food items to those in quarantined areas. Furthermore, we strengthened community structures to take the lead in the fight against Ebola and ensure increased transparency and inclusion of local actors in the response. In the aftermath of the crisis we are supporting communities to rebuild their lost livelihoods and to provide psychosocial support. In response to the recent flooding and mudslides in Freetown, Trócaire distributed dignity kits, which included basic hygiene products such as soap, towels, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand sanitiser, sanitary towels and underwear, as well as household items including a plastic bucket, kettle, torch and plastic plates and cups.
Interview with Fr Sylvester Moijueh of St Paul’s Catholic Community, Freetown

Father Sylvester Moijueh (51) is based at St Paul’s Seminary in the Regent area on the outskirts of western Freetown. He is a diocesan priest.

The seminary currently has forty seminarians and is the main seminary in Sierra Leone. Father Sylvester has been here for nine years. He lectures in moral theology and is the dean of students. He is also head of the Justice and Peace Commission of Caritas Freetown.

A Catholic community is also attached to the seminary and Fr Moijueh lost six of his parishioners in the recent landslide. Dozens more were affected. The immediate response from Caritas was to feed people and then to distribute non-food items, including cooking utensils and hygiene kits. The Justice and Peace Commission, partnered with Trócaire, is currently helping people with counselling after this traumatic event.

‘The trauma we are seeing is unbelievable. Some people are so traumatised they can’t even speak. The psychosocial support is absolutely crucial. Trócaire helped with setting up information kiosks where people could come for help.’ The information kiosks proved very helpful to people in the aftermath of the landslide. It provided a safe haven for people to come and receive help and guidance. Here they could find a shoulder to cry on, a listening ear and people to lean on for support. It has become a lifeline for a struggling and grieving community.

‘The Catholic agencies – CAFOD, CRS, Cordaid, Caritas and Trócaire – were really well co-ordinated from the start. There was a rapid joint assessment and the agencies all took a lead on one particular aspect of the help.

‘The majority of the people affected by this disaster were poor. They were living in shacks in a high-risk area. Some of them had bought the land from the government and had everything tied up there. They had nowhere else to go.’

Faith, Hope and Love

‘We are trying to give hope to the people, particularly through counselling. During the Ebola crisis, people were so worried. There is a lot of fear here. When it rains we get flooding and landslides. People stay put – they think it’s safer.’

‘We are always trying to bring hope into our sermons and homilies. People want hope. The churches are packed in times of trouble. Times like this actually deepen people’s faith. I have even seen Muslims in our church.

‘In the aftermath of the landslide we immediately asked for donations in all Catholic parishes across our diocese – food, clothing, money. People gave willingly and that to me is love in action.’
Children in Matome, Freetown. Photo: Mark Stedman
GUIDE TO PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

PRAYING ALONE
If you are praying alone, you might like to take a different Station each day and let your prayer be with and for those who are experiencing that particular Station at this time. Begin with your own life and your experience of this part of Jesus Christ’s journey. Let your heart be touched by Jesus and respond to Him as you spend time with Him. Think also of your loved ones and your friends, your neighbours and your community as a whole – include them in your prayer, as you recall those who are experiencing something of Jesus Christ’s journey at this time. Remember also our world and God’s people scattered, north, south, east and west. Recall the people who are in the news at this time and how they are sharing in Jesus Christ’s journey to the Cross today.

DOING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS AS A GROUP
Each church building is different. In preparing to lead the Stations of the Cross, you will have some decisions to make:

- Will all or only a core group move from Station to Station?
- Is the use of symbols possible at the Stations? Do you want to use all of them? Or perhaps use only some of them?

- If the majority of people are seated in the pews, how will you involve them? For example, would it be possible to project images for each Station onto a screen so that all can see them?

MUSIC
Choose music to set the tone of the prayer time and accompany people from Station to Station. It is not necessary to sing between every Station – moving in silence allows people to stay in the experience of the prayer. Yet, to have only silence might not be helpful either. Ideally, let the cantor use the sense of the prayer and the mood of the praying group to determine when it is helpful to sing, and when to move in silence. Possible hymn choices are ‘The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor’ (John Foley SJ) or another version of Psalm 34, or a mantra; for example, ‘Stay here and keep watch with me’, or after the twelfth Station, the refrain, ‘Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom’ would be apt.
INTRODUCTION AND OPENING PRAYER

[Invite people to stand]

Leader: When we pray the Stations of the Cross, we recall Jesus’ suffering and journey towards the cross on Good Friday. We join Him en route, bringing to mind all the people of the world who find themselves grieving, injured, hungry, mistreated and neglected. As we journey with Jesus, we journey also with our sisters and brothers who find themselves condemned, falling time and again, being stripped, or nailed to the cross in our world today.

This year we walk with the people of Sierra Leone, who have suffered greatly in the recent past. They too have fallen three times: firstly, during the brutal civil war from 1991 to 2002; secondly, during the outbreak of Ebola in 2014; and thirdly, during the recent mudslide in Freetown, which claimed the lives of over six hundred people. Each time, they pick up their cross and continue on their journey. This Lent, may we play the part of Simon of Cyrene and help carry the cross of this suffering people.

FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

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

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

Scripture: And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. (Mk 15:18–20)

Reader: The Ebola virus outbreak claimed eleven thousand lives across West Africa from 2014–16. When Ebola was confirmed in a family, people were confined to their homes, cut off from sick relatives and quarantined for 21 days. This period of isolation was like a condemnation for many. Entire communities were cut off for weeks on end. Great emotional suffering took place during this time.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.
SECOND STATION: JESUS RECEIVES HIS CROSS

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

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

Scripture: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man!’ (Jn 19:5)

Reader: Trócaire has supported programmes in Sierra Leone since the 1980s, focusing mostly on helping women to have more rights, in their personal lives, in their homes and also in the communities where they live. In 2003, Trócaire began work to ensure that local people became aware of benefits that are available to them which would empower them as a community and a society.

This involved making the local people aware of the government programmes on offer and with the expert advice of Trócaire staff, local families were able to recognise the projects that would benefit them and help them improve their lifestyles. The Trócaire office in Sierra Leone’s capital, Freetown, was set up in 2007 to provide support to families trying to get back on their feet after the country’s brutal civil war had ended in 2002.

More recently, staff in Trócaire’s office in Freetown have responded to the Ebola crisis of 2014–16 and the landslides in Freetown in 2017. The Trócaire staff there remain faithfully committed to making a real difference to the lives of the people in Sierra Leone and steadfast in their dedication to helping the people there to carry any difficult crosses that they might be given.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

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

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

Scripture: Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! (Is 53:4)

Reader: Sierra Leone fell for the first time in modern history when it succumbed to a civil war in 1991. This war saw widespread human rights abuses and brutality inflicted upon ordinary people. During this conflict (which lasted over eleven years), thousands of civilians were killed and up to one quarter of the population was forced to flee and seek refuge in safer places.

There were many casualties during this time and many people to this day carry the scars of this bloody war. Hundreds of people suffered limb amputation, while thousands of young girls and women were subjected to sexual
violence. Children suffered greatly also, often being forced to fight in a war they did not understand.

**All: Suffering for us you set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.**

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

**Leader:** We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.

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

**Scripture:** Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (Jn 19:25–7)

**Reader:** Rugiatu’s mother died from Ebola when she was just seven years old. When her mother became ill, her aunt Dora welcomed Rugiatu and her two older brothers into her home. The family were then quarantined for twenty-one days.

Suddenly, Dora went from having two children to care for to having five. ‘It was a burden but it didn’t affect me. They are my children. They were a little bit older than my children so I could help them and they could also help me.’ Dora’s husband was also supportive during this time. ‘He loves the children,’ says Dora.

After Rugiatu’s mother died, it was left to her aunt Dora to try to explain things to the children. ‘I tried to explain it to them. They cried a lot. They were very sad for some time.’ She did her best to help them grieve. She explains, ‘I owned up to my own grief. Then I encouraged them to see me as their mother. I told them to stay calm ... I tried to keep off my own grief and bring the children close together so that they could get back on their feet before anything happened to them.’

**All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.**

Rugiatu, 9, and her aunt, Dora, Sierra Leone. Photo: Mark Stedman
FIFTH STATION: SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS

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

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

Scripture: You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2 Tm 2:2–3)

Reader: Trócaire adopts a partnership approach in Sierra Leone and in over twenty developing countries around the world. By working in partnership, they help others to carry the cross. Trócaire’s partners provide local experience and knowledge, which are vital when working in collaboration with and educating people to bring about a real and lasting change.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, Rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

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

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

Scripture: The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ (Mt 25:40)

Reader: Cecilia Sesay is a counsellor working for Trócaire. She has been working with people in the Makombe area that was hit by the recent landslide. She says that people are worried about what will become of them. At first, they were so panicked about where to go or how to reach loved ones that they couldn’t process what had happened. Now that people are settled and rehomed in camps, they have begun to come to terms with what happened through counselling.

Most children who are referred to a counsellor like Cecilia are quiet and withdrawn from other children. Many cannot sleep or they have nightmares. Flashbacks are common amongst survivors. They cry a lot.

She says, ‘We talk to the children when they are playing or we often talk to the girls when they are doing their hair. The children suffered when it became time to go back to school. They really realised what had happened and that there was no longer anyone there to look out for them. Sometimes we play games with the children, like a game called Wishes. We get them to pick up an object and wish on it. The game can help to calm them because it gives them focus and hope for a future and sometimes it helps them to relax.’

All: Suffering for us You set us free, Rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.
SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

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

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

Scripture: I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. All my longings lie open before you, Lord, my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes. My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbours stay far away. (Ps 38:6–11)

Reader: After picking itself up from the rubble of the civil war, Sierra Leone suffered a second devastating fall when Ebola hit in 2014. The Ebola virus outbreak claimed the lives of 3,956 people in Sierra Leone from 2014–16. It is estimated that twelve thousand children lost parents. During the outbreak, isolated families were visited each day (up to the quarantine line) by Trócaire’s partner AJLC (Access to Justice Law Centre). They would talk, counsel and support families to help them to remain calm while feeling trapped inside the homes. This was the only contact that families had with the outside world. People couldn’t leave for food or water or tend to their farms. They had no way to grow food. They were isolated, fearful and panicked. Children cried out to be able to play and roam freely.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

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

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

Scripture: A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.’ (Lk 23:27–8)

Reader: When the quarantine was lifted, women were brought together in a mothers’ club to provide support for Ebola orphans. Often women were trying to explain the loss to children while also dealing with their own personal grief. AJLC taught carers to talk to children about the loss of their mother (or parent) by explaining, ‘Your mother is there with God. She is preparing for you. One day you will go to your mother.’ The children would then sometimes become very excited at the thoughts of going to their mother. So, then it was explained to them, ‘You cannot go with your mother right now because your mother does not have enough money for now.’
The children understood that concept because, sadly, it was familiar to them.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

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

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

Scripture: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Heb 4:15–16)

Reader: The third fall. On 14 August 2017, a suburb of Freetown in Sierra Leone was hit by a massive landslide. Hundreds of people lost their lives and many bodies remain unaccounted for, buried beneath the mud.

Sahr Koroma, 38, whose daughter Kumba is on this year’s Trócaire Box explains the event as it unfolded: ‘As I turned around to go back to my house, I heard a massive rumble. I looked up and all I could see was the mountain rolling down like water. Mud and huge boulders came tumbling down. I was rooted to the spot – frozen in fear. I was only fifty feet away from the landslide. My house was over a rise so I couldn’t see it but I feared the worst. Everything happened so quickly. It was all over in three or four minutes. I didn’t know it at that time but there were actually two landslides very close together. At the noise of the first one, my wife woke up. She woke the children and they ran from the house. Two young men that were staying with us in the house also ran from the house.’ Sahr is a builder and these young men were apprentices from outside the city that he was teaching. He was letting them stay with their family for free.

‘My wife and children turned left when they got out the door and made for the treeline. The two young men turned right and were caught in the next bigger landslide. They were killed. My smallest daughter was caught and injured by the mud and rocks at the edge of the landslide. My eldest daughter had to tug her free. She had a detached kneecap. I didn’t know that my family had survived. My biggest fear was that they were dead. When I went up the hill and saw them I was so happy. Even though they were covered in blood and injured, they were alive.’

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.
TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

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

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

Scripture: She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger.
(Lk 2:7)

Reader: ‘Our home has been totally destroyed. We have lost everything but at least we are alive. I am a builder and I lost all my tools. My wife is a hairdresser and she lost all of her equipment too. We have no way of making a living in the near future. Once things settle down, I am going to try to borrow some tools from someone to see if I can start again,’ says Sahr. ‘My biggest fear for the future is where we are going to live. Where are we going to lay our heads? I need to get my family back together. My wife has been staying in the hospital with our youngest daughter since the landslide. My other three children are staying at the Don Bosco children’s home. I am staying with my brother, his wife and children. It is very cramped. I visit the children and my wife and youngest daughter every day. Eventually I will look at buying some land if I can get some support and I’ll start over again.’

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

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

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

Scripture: When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
(Lk 23:33–5)

Reader: Sia Fanta is fifteen years old. Her family lost everything in the mudslides. Most teenagers in Ireland might lament the loss of their clothes, music, hair straighteners, pictures, gifts and personal possessions like phones and iPods. Sia Fanta only misses one thing: her official papers that allow her to sit the state exams: ‘My document for the exam for entrance to secondary school has been missing because of the mudslide. The government are so fussy that you need to bring it before you take your next exam. I have very limited choices since I lost all my documents. I have already reported that these documents are missing if they ask for them, but for sitting exams it’s a concern.’

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.
TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

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

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

Scripture: And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. (Mt 27:50)

Reader: We remember all who have died in Sierra Leone as a result of war, Ebola or the recent landslides. For all who mourn their passing, and all who work to console and help them to rebuild their lives, we pray. May their passing serve as a reminder of Jesus’ suffering and ultimate death on the cross.

Every day, many people in our world die as a result of war, hunger, disease, poverty or brutality. Their death serves to remind us of how fragile human nature can be. Jesus’ human nature made him just as weak in the face of the cruelty of humanity; however, his divine nature brings us the promise that his death was not in vain and instead brings us hope and assurance for the redemption of all humanity.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

THIRTEENTH STATION: THE BODY OF JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

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

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

Scripture: I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. (Ps 22:14–15)

Reader: Fatu Kanu lost her husband in the landslide. She had been visiting her sick mother in the countryside and her three children were staying with relatives. Her house was completely destroyed and her husband died. The first she heard of it was when she received a call from a friend. ‘My husband’s body hasn’t been recovered and I don’t think it ever will be,’ she says. ‘I think about him every day. I don’t know what the future holds. We have lost everything and I am worried for my children.’ The family are currently staying at one of the emergency camps set up by the government in the area where the disaster struck.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.
A woman and child attend Mass in St Paul’s Church, Freetown. Photo: David O’Hare
FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

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

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

Scripture: So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. (Mk 15:46–7)

Reader: Yainkin was taken to an Ebola burial site after she died. But her sister Dora doesn’t know where it is. ‘We couldn’t follow the body. We were too scared.’ Much like Ireland, the tradition in Sierra Leone is to mourn the dead by burying them, bringing flowers and visiting their grave from time to time. But Dora will never be able to do this for her older sister.

Faith leaders were encouraged to preach about acceptance and fighting stigma in the community, helping families to cope with Ebola deaths. When they were asked what support they needed, most families and communities said they wanted a way of mourning their dead. This was not possible during Ebola as contaminated bodies were removed quickly for fear of spreading infection.

The Muslim tradition is to buy a cow, cook it, gather together, eat and pray. AJLC organised these ceremonies to help families to cope with their loss.

Christians wanted to go to church. Ground rice and flour was put on the graves.

All: Suffering for us You set us free, Rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.

FIFTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

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

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

Scripture: When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last. I am the living one; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (Rev 1:17–18)

Reader: When Sierra Leone was finally declared free of Ebola, a wave of joy and relief spread throughout the country. To celebrate the occasion, Trócaire organised an event with its eighteen partners, who had been vital to the Ebola response. The event was a moment of unity among Trócaire staff and partners and an acknowledgment of shared achievements in helping to work through and overcome the Ebola crises, which had ravaged this country that had already endured its fair share of suffering.

Sister Mary Sweeney is a Trócaire partner in Sierra Leone. She runs St Joseph’s School for the Hearing...
Impaired. ‘Trócaire was so important because they did exactly what the people needed,’ she said. ‘People needed things like blankets, mattresses, and food, and Trócaire was there to respond.’ While many agencies are unclear about what their role will be in Sierra Leone in the recovery phase, Trócaire is committed to the long haul, staying to promote the long-term development and dignity in a country full of people who are ready to improve their lives.

**All: Suffering for us You set us free, rising You gave us life, You are the saviour of the world.**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving Jesus, as we prayed these stations, we have been reminded of the suffering and passion of the people of Sierra Leone who have endured the harrowing experiences of poverty, war, disease and natural disaster.

Your cross is the ultimate symbol of how love conquers fear. Your Resurrection assures us that love will prevail, even when the darkest hour is upon us.

May the people of Sierra Leone overcome the many obstacles and fears that have been put before them.

**All: Amen.**

May we embody Your example of love and compassion as we reach out to our brothers and sister in Sierra Leone and throughout the world this Lent.

**All: Amen.**

And may the love of Christ conquer the fear in the hearts of all women, men and children who suffer this very day.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**
Trócaire gratefully acknowledges support received from Irish Aid to conduct Development Education and Public Engagement activities in Ireland.

The content, approaches and activities outlined in this resource are entirely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policy of Irish Aid.