

Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation



On February 19, 2022, the Joti Educational and Cultural Center of Hyderabad diocese organized the annual Lenten Preparation Programme, at which 49 participants from various parishes and schools of the diocese attended. The resource people for the day were from the Diocesan Ecology Commission.

The aim of the day's work was to create a Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation, combining the traditional devotion which commemorates Jesus' last day on earth and the suffering he endured, with the reality of the environmental crisis today. It would then be offered to parishes, schools and institutions of the diocese to be used during the Season of Lent

The participants were fully involved in creating the new stations, which include aspects of the traditional Way of the Cross, teaching from Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* and a theme connecting an aspect of the environmental crisis with each station.

We are happy to offer this new Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation. We hope that it will be of help to you in your Lenten preparations for Easter, and also help to make the connection between the sufferings of Jesus and the sufferings of Mother Earth, our Common Home, because of pollution, climate change and environmental destruction. In doing so, we will be responding to the call of Pope Francis, that our faith must inspire us to care for our Common Home.

Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

1st Station – Jesus is Condemned to Death

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Isaiah 24: 4-6) “The earth is mourning, withering, the world is pining, withering, the heavens are pining away with the earth. The earth is defiled under its inhabitants feet, for they have transgressed the law, violated the precept, broken the everlasting covenant. So, a curse consumes the earth and its inhabitants suffer the penalty”.



Theme: *The Innocent Suffer for the sins of Others*

LS: “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest”. (LS 48)



Reflection: When money and profit are valued more than human lives, many innocent and poor people suffer because of greed and injustice. In our greed, we are destroying the Earth and its life-giving gifts of water, air, soil, oceans, and climate. It is the poor who suffer most as a result of the environmental crisis.

Prayer: Loving God, your son did not enter the fullness of life without enduring pain and suffering. Grant that all people who suffer oppression and injustice find peace and comfort. Forgive us our sins of abuse and neglect. Increase our awareness of the value of your gifts, lest we destroy all that gives us life. Amen.

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
Have mercy on us, Lord

R. Have mercy on us, Lord

Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

2nd Station – Jesus Carries His Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Luke 4: 17-19) “they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: *The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for she has anointed me. She has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.*”



Theme: *The Earth is weighed down by environmental destruction*

LS: “Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years”. (LS 53)



Reflection: Just as Jesus, taking up the cross, accepted his burden; we accept responsibility for the damaged Earth. In the light of the environmental message of Pope Francis, let us care for our Common Home, so that all our created brothers and sisters may experience abundance of life.

Prayer: Almighty God, your son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption. Father, give us courage to accept the responsibility of taking up our cross and following Christ in compassion and commitment to care for all of creation, Amen.

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
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3rd Station – Jesus Falls the First Time

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Jeremiah 2: 7) “I brought you to a fertile country to enjoy its produce and good things; but no sooner had you entered than you defiled my land, and made my heritage detestable”.



Theme: *Destruction of the environment is forcing people to Migrate*

LS: ‘There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation’. (LS 25)



Reflection: Pope Francis challenges the world to pay attention to climate migration. He says the climate crisis forces millions of people to ‘abandon fields and shorelines, homes and villages...but they mostly end up in dangerously overcrowded city slums or makeshift settlements. In Pakistan also, millions of people are moving to urban areas searching for employment.

Prayer: O Merciful God, we for the safety of all families, especially for those who must leave their homes because the land can no longer able to sustain them because of the environmental crisis. Be with them in their hardships as they move in search of a better life. O God, open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality to our sisters and brothers in search of refuge. We ask this in your name. Amen.

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
Have mercy on us, Lord

R. Have mercy on us, Lord

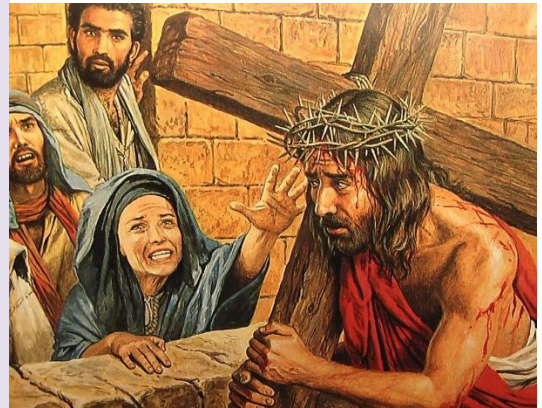
Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

4th Station – Jesus Meets His Mother

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

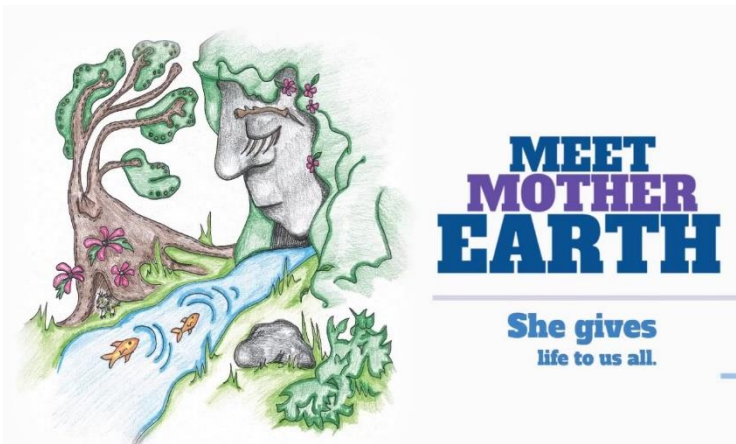
R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Isaiah 66: 13) “Like a child comforted by its mother will I comfort you”.



Theme: *In spite of environmental damage Mother Earth continues to give Life*

LS: “Mother Earth now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.” (LS 2)



Reflection: Just as the loving mother of our Lord Jesus comforts her son with her tears, Mother Earth comforts us with abundance of life. Let us care us for our loving Mother who continually gives life-giving blessings.

Prayer: Loving God, grant us that as our Holy Mother comforted her Son, we may not be the cause of any destruction of Mother Earth. But, valuing all the blessings you have given, may we take care of all you have created.

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Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

5th Station – Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus carry His Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Matthew 25: 40) “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me”.



Theme: *Those who love Mother Earth come to the aid of those affected by the climate crisis.*

LS: A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.” (LS 91)



Reflection: Environmental degradation demands of us that we play the role of Simon of Cyrene for all of creation, which is being so badly affected. Let us try to relieve the pain, solve some of the problems and be a source of sustenance for the damaged Earth and all its creatures.

Prayer: O merciful and compassionate God, help us to be like Simon of Cyrene who helped Jesus carry his cross, so that we may help carry the burden of the victims of the environmental crisis. Amen.

V. **Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father**
Have mercy on us, Lord

R. **Have mercy on us, Lord**

Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

6st Station – Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Revelation 22: 4) “They will see him face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads”.



Theme: *The face of Jesus is stained by environmental pollution*

LS: “The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.” (LS 21)



Reflection: Jesus is saddened when we waste the Father’s bountiful gifts of Earth and without thinking burden it with the waste of our unsustainable lifestyle. May we have the wisdom to change our wasteful habits and, like Veronica did, wipe away the stains of our sins against nature from the face of Jesus.

Prayer: O loving God, just as Veronica wiped the face of Jesus, help us to see the face of your Son in all men and women, and in all of creation. May we care for our Common Home, so that together we may all give glory to your name. Amen.

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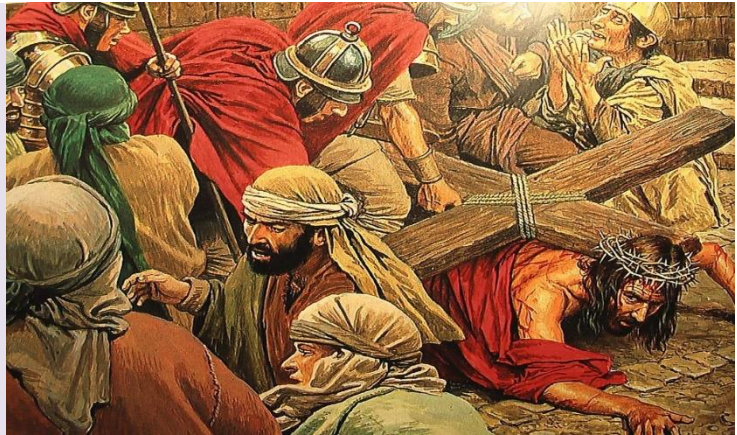
7th Station – Jesus Falls the Second Time

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Matthew 11: 28-30)

“Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light”.



Theme: *Reduced quality of life of the poor and the Earth*

LS: “We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both *the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*”. (LS 49)



Listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most.

Pope Francis

WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM

Reflection: Our unjust economic and political systems exploit the poor to the benefit of a few wealthy people. These same unjust systems are destroying the Earth. We need to be able to connect the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth. Only by hearing this cry, can we become people bringing hope and ecological conversion.

Prayer: Compassionate God, grant that we may hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. Help and guide us toward a change of heart, mind and behaviour. May we work with the Earth and not against it, so that every person can have, at least, enough for their basic needs. Amen.

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8th Station – Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Luke 23: 27-28) “Large numbers of people followed him, and of 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’”.



Theme: *Concern for Future Generations*

LS: What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? (LS 160)



Reflection: The poor suffer the most from the effects of the environmental crisis, though they have done the least to cause it. Pope Francis asks us, what kind of world do we want to leave for future generations? May we begin the serious work of caring for creation so that future generations will have a healthy planet to live in.

Prayer: Creator God, your beautiful creation is being rapidly damaged; like the women of Jerusalem, we weep for future generations who will face the worst consequences of the environmental crisis. May our tears help us see clearly our moral responsibility to pass on to them a safe and unpolluted planet. Amen.

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9th Station – Jesus Falls the Third Time

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

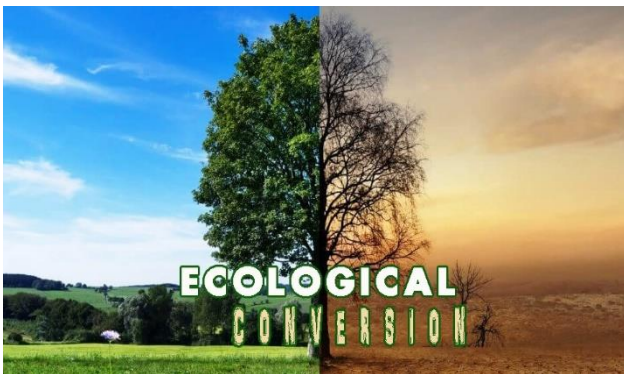
R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Joel 2: 12) “But, now, now – it is Yahweh who speaks – come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning”.



Theme: *Ecological Conversion is the Need of our Time*

LS: “Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change....A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal”. (LS 202)



Reflection: ‘Ecological conversion’ means a change in how we look at creation; and re-establishing a relationship of harmony with God, humans and all creatures. It means making changes in our daily lives, which will have a positive effect on the environment and all creatures.

Prayer: O Merciful Father, help us to repent of our selfishness and return to you. Grant us wisdom to understand our individual and collective responsibility to value and not waste or pollute water, air, food or any of your gifts; in order that future generations may be able to live life to the full.

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
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R. Have mercy on us, Lord

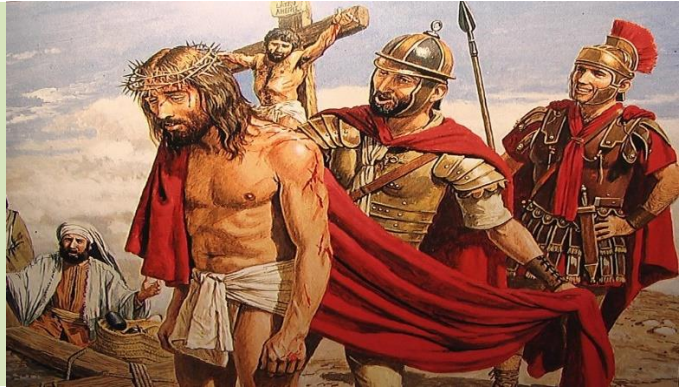
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10th Station – Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Mark 15: 24) “Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get”.



Theme: *The Earth is stripped of its trees, soil, plants, species and habitats*

LS: “Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever”. (LS 33)



Reflection: We are eradicating wildlife from the face of the Earth, burning forests, polluting the seas and rivers, making the land infertile, and causing many species to become extinct. We, humans are responsible for this, and at the same time also endangering our own health, safety and survival.

Prayer: Loving God, today you put before us a choice – life or death. Help us to choose life and to care for our Common Home. Every created thing reveals your beauty and loving plan. Teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Help us to protect all life as we journey together working for the common good. Amen.

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Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

11th Station – Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Colossians 2: 14)

“He....cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross”.



Theme: *We are crucifying Mother Earth with the nails of our greed, selfishness and carelessness.*

LS: “...concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and the natural environment”. (LS 208)

Our Responsibility Towards Nature



Reflection: Pope Francis makes it very clear that the ecological crisis is caused by human activity. We are in need of a healthy dialogue between science and religion, in order to prevent environmental destruction caused by an anthropocentric approach using technological advancement, which is unsustainable. We are primarily responsible for Christ’s pain in the exploited Earth.

Prayer: Creator of all life, we give you thanks for all our blessings. Forgive us for the careless and selfish ways we have inflicted so much destruction and loss on the natural world. Guide us on the path to a more sustainable world and to courageously accept our responsibility to love and care for this beautiful Earth.

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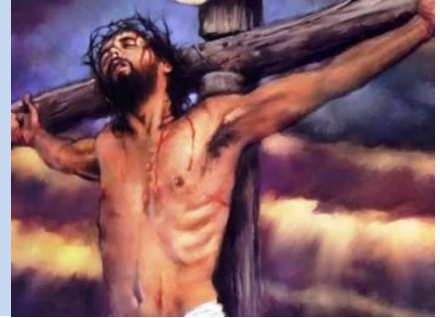
12th Station – Jesus Dies on the Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

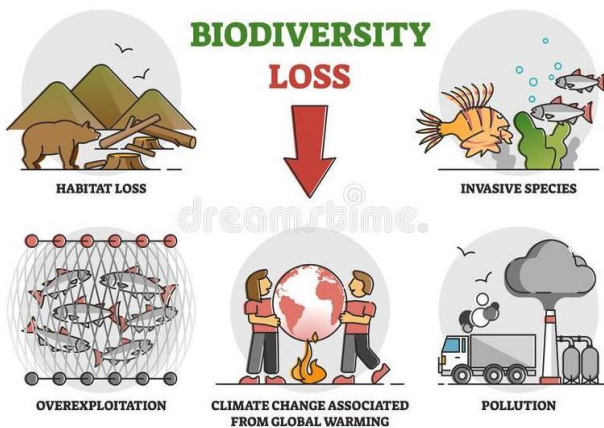
Reading: (Philippians 2: 7-8)

“...emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as people are; and being as all people are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross”.



Theme: *Loss of Biological Diversity*

LS: “Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right”. (LS 33)



Reflection: The air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat all rely on biodiversity, but right now it is in crisis – **because of us**. According to the 2019 IPBES report, 1 million species face extinction unless action is taken. On average, global populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles plunged by 68% between 1970 and

2016, according to the WWF and Zoological Society of London (ZSL)’s biennial Living Planet Report 2020. “Without biodiversity, there is no future for humanity,” says Prof David Macdonald, at Oxford University.

Prayer: O Merciful Lord, we praise you for sustaining the beauty, goodness and life of the many diverse species that we share the planet with. O Lord, send your spirit of wisdom upon us, that we may play our part in the survival of all living creatures. Amen.

V. **Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father**
Have mercy on us, Lord

R. **Have mercy on us, Lord**

Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

13th Station – The Body of Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (John 19: 38) “Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away”.



Theme: *Earth's life-giving resources are being depleted*

“When people become self-centered and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume”. (LS 204)



Reflection: Pope Francis says we are obsessed with a consumerist culture and possessing as many things as possible. This attitude is the result of the spiritual emptiness inside us, as “we attempt to fill the void which modern society creates in the heart of humanity”. As a result, we are ruthlessly wasting limited natural resources as if they were unlimited.

Prayer: O Merciful Father, fill our inner spiritual emptiness with your mercy and love. So that we may see Creation and all its creatures as you see them, care for and protect them all and value all natural resources. Amen

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
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Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

14th Station – The Body of Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Matthew 27: 59-60) “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”.



Theme: *We are buried with Jesus in the tomb of injustice and environmental destruction*

LS: “Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded”. (LS 13)



Reflection: The tomb symbolises death and the end of life. But, we have hope and expectation that the Earth and all creatures and species can be restored to the fullness of life again, through the love and efforts of all who are concerned for Mother Earth.

Prayer: O Creator God, grant that we may rise from the graves of human and environmental destruction into the light of hope; and help to bring to fruition your dream for the Earth of justice, peace and harmony with all creation.

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Stations of the Cross for the Care of Creation

15th Station – The Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ

V. We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you

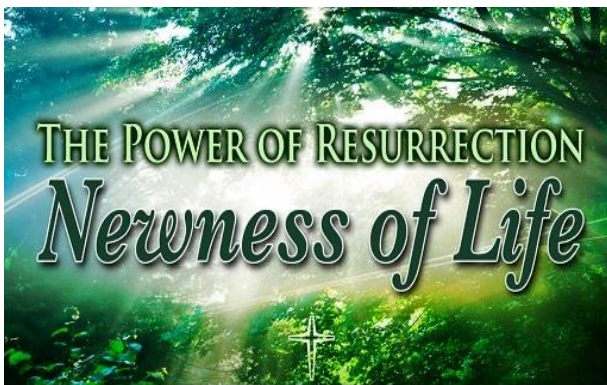
R. Because, by your Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Reading: (Luke 24: 5-6) “Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here, he is risen”.



Theme: *New Life and New Hope in the Risen Christ*

LS: “We come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us... May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope”. (LS 244)



Reflection: The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to give us new life and new hope. We are living through a critical time in human history. The Resurrection of Christ inspires us to live in a new way – to live simply and sustainably; in order that the Earth is restored and humanity and all of creation rise into his new life. Amen

Prayer: Lord God, the resurrection of your Son from the dead has given us new life and renewed hope. Grant us, individually and as a society, the ability to rise with your Son, to choose the right things and have a new awareness so that through us all of creation may live in the new Life of Christ. Amen.

V. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father
Have mercy on us, Lord

R. Have mercy on us, Lord