



Stations of The Cross

Walking With Immigrant Stories

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Introduction

Today, our nation finds itself in the midst of a profound immigration crisis. Much of the conversation unfolds in political debates, family gatherings, and on social media, yet too often the human face of the suffering Christ is lost. Jesus continues to suffer in the lives of our immigrant brothers and sisters — women, men, and children who carry fear, hope, and deep faith as they seek safety and dignity.

Catholic social teaching calls us to respond with hearts shaped by the Gospel: to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants, honoring their God-given dignity, while also recognizing the responsibility of nations to secure their borders in ways that respect human rights.

The Church, through her many ministries, walks alongside immigrants with compassion — offering shelter, legal assistance, medical care, pastoral support, and advocacy. Still, many may ask, “What can I do?” This Lent, I invite you to begin with prayer — prayer that opens our eyes, softens our hearts, and draws us closer to Christ present in the suffering of others.

During this Lenten season, we invite you to pray with the Stations of the Cross as a guide for reflection, using them as a sacred pathway to meditate on the lived experiences of immigrants navigating the complexities and pain of the immigration system. The Stations allow us to walk with Jesus on his journey to Calvary, to enter into his suffering, to unite it with our own, and to hold fast to the promise of resurrection.

The suffering of Christ is echoed today in the lives of immigrants who undertake dangerous journeys, endure separation from loved ones, and face an overburdened and often harsh legal system as they seek lawful status and a chance to rebuild their lives. This resource focuses especially on the experiences of immigrants after their arrival in the United States, where the cross often continues to weigh heavily.

As you prayerfully accompany Jesus on the way of the cross, we invite you to also accompany immigrant families whose lives reflect the sorrow of Christ — and whose hope rests in the power of his resurrection. May this prayer deepen our compassion, strengthen our faith, and inspire us to be witnesses of mercy, justice, and hope.

Bishop Felipe Pulido

Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of San Diego | CLINIC Board Member



JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*The chief priests and scribes condemn
Jesus to death on the cross while most of
his disciples flee.*

“ My client, Sonia, is a Honduran woman who fled her country after suffering severe gender-based violence and persecution. She found safety in the United States, settling and trying to build a new life in the DC area, but in summer 2025 was caught in a raid and detained. She has been in detention for over three months, isolated and terrified, as she fears certain death if she is returned home to her abusers. She’s receiving legal help and is applying for asylum, but the outcome is uncertain. It is so difficult to watch her suffer in detention. She needs many prayers for the strength to remain in such horrific conditions and keep fighting her case to preserve her life.

- CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: *Lord, you were condemned to death by the powers of your day, though you were innocent and gentle. Help us to remember immigrants in our communities who fear certain death as they face deportation. We pray that they might know your loving presence with them always and that they might find hope and a path forward.*



II

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Jesus willingly accepts and
patiently bears his cross.*

“ John is a Cameroonian man who believes in equality and dignity for all people in his country. In October 2018, he joined a peaceful protest calling for equal rights for English-speaking Cameroonians. During the protest, government forces opened fire, and one of John’s friends was killed right in front of him. John was arrested and taken into government custody. He was held in an overcrowded detention center for days without food, water, medical care, or a place to sleep. While detained, he was repeatedly beaten and tortured by guards, including being struck with weapons and kicked. He left detention with serious injuries that required medical treatment and took weeks to recover. After his release, he went into hiding, confined to a small room for months. While in hiding, he was kidnapped by armed groups, tortured again, and held for ransom until his family paid for his release.

With no safe place left in his country, John fled and sought asylum in the United States under the previous Trump administration. Today, he continues to wait for his asylum case to be decided, carrying the physical and psychological effects of what he has endured.

- John is a pro bono client of a CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you did not fight or flee as you were forced to take up an unbearably heavy cross after torture and abandonment by many of those you loved. Today, many of our immigrant brothers and sisters must endure exhausting, long legal cases to seek safety after already experiencing horrific violence and abuse. We pray for a more merciful system, and for strength for them as they wait.



III

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Weakened by torture and pain, Jesus
falls beneath his cross.*

“ My client Miguel came to the United States when he was a minor fleeing severe child abuse in his home country. He was reunited with a sibling and filed an asylum application as an unaccompanied minor. After several years of waiting for an interview, he was detained this past October after being arrested. He was not charged for any crime but was sent to an ICE detention center. However, a month or so into detention, the pause on all affirmative asylum applications was put in place. We requested a bond, but the judge denied it because his arrest fell under the Laken Riley Act; therefore, he cannot be released, but no decision can be made on his case. Over the last four months, he has often complained about not sleeping because the lights are always on or there is too much noise in his cell. The food is nothing he is used to, and when one day he woke up with swollen eyes, he could not see the nurse for several days. After another inmate harmed him, he was put in solitary for more than a week and lost his “privilege” to communicate with his family during that time. Recently, he was transferred to another jail further away from his family. It is unclear how long he will have to be detained if he wants the chance to win asylum or whether he will decide to give up and be sent home.

- An attorney at a CLINIC Affiliate organization in Missouri

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, your falls under the weight of the cross further weakened your aching body and spirit. So many of our immigrant brothers and sisters make it to the United States where they think they will be safe, only to find repeated torture within our systems that oppress, detain, and abandon them. May we recognize your suffering face in their pleas for help and mercy.



IV

JESUS MEETS HIS SORROWFUL MOTHER

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Jesus meets his mother, Mary, and
both are filled with grief.*

“ Inez is a Venezuelan woman who has been separated for years from her young teenage son and only child, Daniel. Inez fled Venezuela due to threats against her life from the government because of her political views. She made it to the United States, hoping to win asylum and ultimately petition for her child. She has an asylum hearing next year, but with the travel ban in place and ongoing turmoil in Venezuela she is unsure when she will be able to reunite with Daniel. The pain of their separation weighs heavily on both of them. When Inez sees Daniel's sadness via a video call, it feels like her heart will break.

- Inez is a pro bono client of a CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: Oh Jesus, you saw your beloved mother once more on your way to the cross. Both of your hearts were pierced with sorrow in beholding the grief and suffering of the other. We ask you to fill our hearts with compassion for the parents and children who are affected by injustices and legal hurdles which have separated them. May you feel near them in their pain.



IV

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS CARRY THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Soldiers force Simon of Cyrene to
carry the cross.*

“ Brought to this country as a preschooler by his parents, my client J. lived in Texas for many years without any lawful status. He had a difficult adolescence, falling into the company of other struggling youth and eventually committing robbery. Sentenced to years in jail, the experience was life changing for him. He was released several years early from jail, given his impeccable behavior and the advocacy of many adults who recognized his promise, but he was immediately taken into immigration detention.

After being released from detention, J. has continued to develop his life alongside his loving wife and children. I met this amazing family for the first time in September of 2023. From the very beginning, J.'s criminal history forced me to question my assumptions. It was impossible to match the person described in the police report with the person seated in front of me. His story is one of the beauty of redemption, when we embrace the difficult twists and turns of life, turn toward love and hope, and reject bitterness and resentment. Every day, J. and his wife carry their cross of uncertainty and fear of his potential deportation, yet they step forward with perseverance and trust in the future. To walk alongside them has been alternately inspiring and fear-inducing, as I cannot guarantee that he will be able to stay here with his beloved family. And so I continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the heart of the judge who will decide my client's fate — that he will see with the eyes of God, judging my client for who he truly is and for all he has the potential to become.

- Courtney Greene, Department of Justice Accredited Representative, Catholic Charities of Central Texas

PRAYER: Loving God, you brought Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross of Jesus, offering a brief respite from the crushing weight and showing him solidarity and compassion in his darkest hour. We pray for all the advocates in our network like Courtney, who, in the way of Simon of Cyrene, accompany their clients through the most difficult times in their lives, showing them the love of God.



VI

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Veronica steps through the crowd to
wipe the face of Jesus.*

“ I am a family medicine doctor who works with medical students to write medical affidavits for people seeking asylum through an organization called Physicians for Human Rights. In the over 8 years I have been involved with this organization I have been let in to the world of individuals who have experienced extreme, unimaginable trauma. Perhaps the most memorable individual I have had the privilege of knowing is Simon from Cameroon. Simon experienced discrimination from an early age for being part of the English-speaking minority. In later years he joined peaceful protests only to witness mass killings, torture, and to be tortured himself. He had numerous scars from the physical violence he endured, and clearly displayed features of post-traumatic stress disorder. I was recently asked to update Simon's affidavit, five years after our initial conversation and I immediately remembered him. Just as I was during our first encounter, I was brought to tears by the authenticity of his personhood and his incredible resilience. He has a job, a home, and a life here in the United States, but is still reminded daily through family, friends and social media of the ongoing tragedy in his home country. While my ultimate goal is to help people gain asylum, I also hope our program allows those who have experienced this trauma to truly feel seen and heard, and also to convey the value of this to future physicians.

- Dr. Cristin Adams, Medical University of South Carolina, Asylum Clinic

Dr. Adams works with various legal organizations in the North Carolina region, including CLINIC Affiliates, to provide medical affidavits for asylum seekers' cases.

PRAYER: *Father, we remember all those medical workers, social workers, and other professionals who, like Veronica, metaphorically wipe the faces of others through their attention to physical and psychological need. We pray for them as they accompany our immigrant brothers and sisters. Give us courage to always give the loving attention needed to the stranger, foreigner, and outcast.*



VII

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Jesus falls a second time under the
weight of the cross.*

“ My client, Manuel, was an asylum seeker living in the D.C. area. He had a partner and young son and was slowly building a new life in the United States after fleeing danger in South America. He was complying with all court requirements and appointments – but one day he was randomly picked up by ICE and has been detained ever since, separated from his family. He has no criminal history. We filed a bond case for him, and right as I was finalizing the bond case to get him home to his family, a decision from the Board of Immigration Appeals was released that made most noncitizens ineligible for bond. It broke my heart to break that news to him and his partner. He has another attorney now working for to get him out of detention, but he needs many prayers for his release.

- CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you fell beneath the weight of your cross a second time, bruised and humiliated by your torturers. We hold in our hearts the many immigrants such as Manuel who jump through the hoops of our immigration legal system to lawfully seek safety but still suffer grave injustice. Give them awareness of your love and presence and the strength to move forward.



VIII

JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Jesus tells the women to weep not for him
but for themselves and for their children.*

“ Carlos came to the United States at age 14 to escape extreme poverty in Honduras. Although he was initially homeless and exploited for dangerous work, nevertheless he persevered and worked hard to build a life for himself, graduating from high school at 22, attending some college, and then working diligently. During this time, he had two children for whom he became the primary caregiver. Unfortunately, increased enforcement has led to his detention since September 2025.

As Carlos' attorney, I have gotten to see the letters of support that poured in...Each letter discussed in detail Carlos' compassion, diligence, and integrity. Teachers easily remembered the positive impact he had on others... The letters described how Carlos has stepped up to be an extraordinary single parent, putting his children above all else.

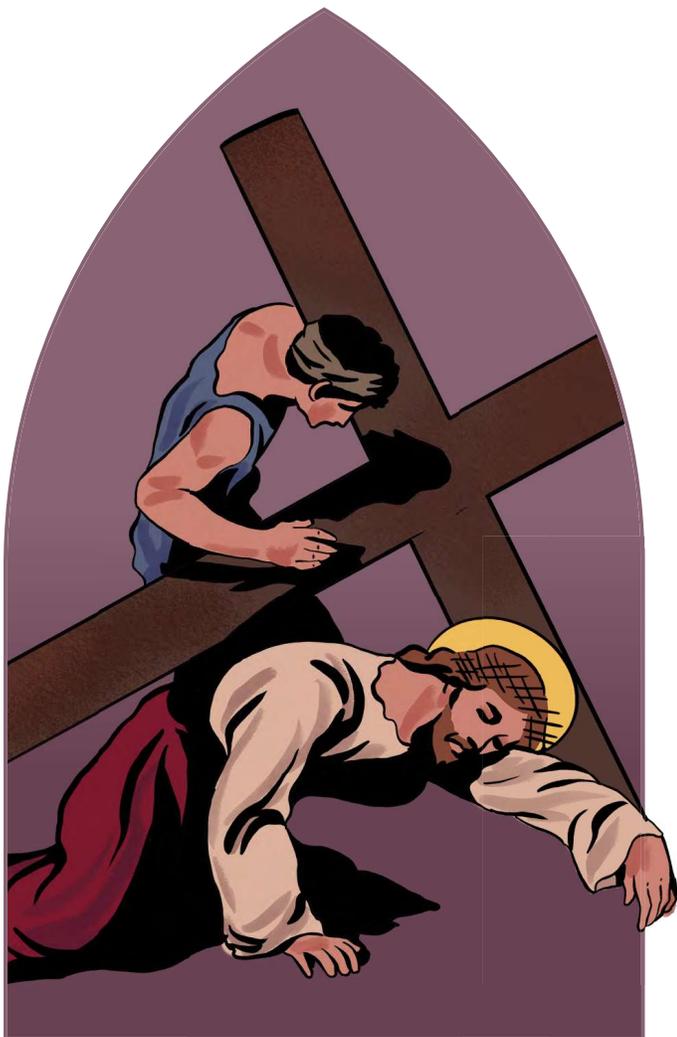
Carlos is currently appealing the decision of an immigration judge to deny his application for cancellation of removal. He is also trying to plan for his likely eventual removal to Honduras — a country where he has few-to-no contacts and to where his children would have significantly reduced opportunities.

Although I am a person rarely brought to tears, the evening after this trial, I sat on my couch and cried. I cried for the effect that losing Carlos will have on his children and his community. I cried for the cruelty of a system that would deport such an extraordinary human, and because every day I witness, and participate in, a system where my moral norms are violated and betrayed by those in positions of authority.

Despite such difficulty, I hope that my continued engagement in this work helps to make changes that benefit our communities.

- CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: *Lord, you noticed the suffering of those who watched you suffer, recognizing the ripple effects of sin and violence. We pray for all legal advocates for immigrants who suffer significant secondary trauma as the result of moral injury and nearness to injustice.*



IX

JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

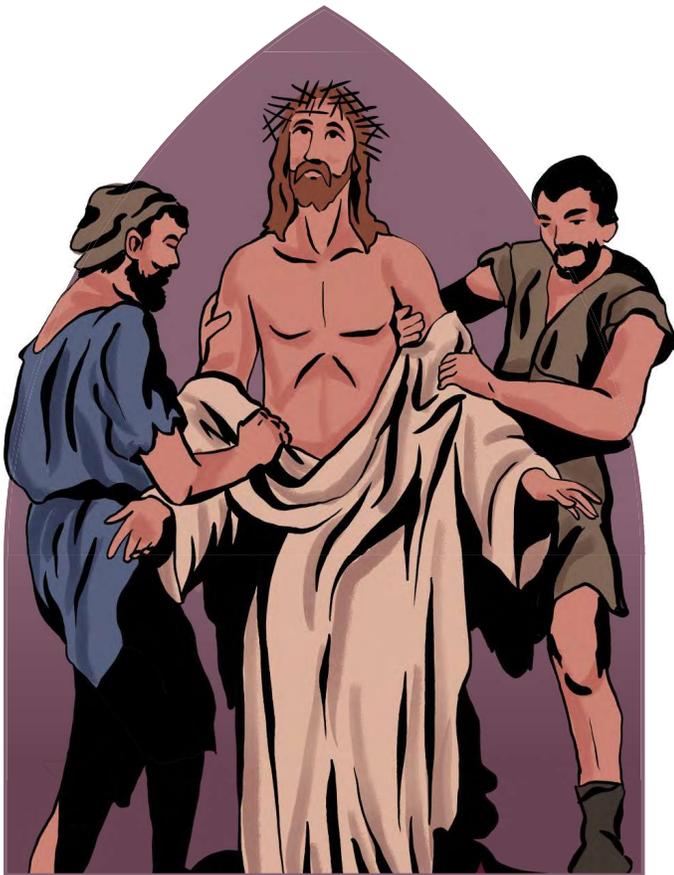
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*Weakened almost to the point of death,
Jesus falls a third time.*

“ Aurelia is a woman from Cuba who came to the United States seeking political asylum. During her immigration journey she got separated from her husband, Juan, who wound up in Bolivia. Juan was diagnosed with cancer while in Bolivia. When Aurelia won asylum several years ago, she began petitioning for Juan to join her in the United States. He went to his asylum interview at the U.S. embassy in Bolivia, and was set to be approved, but then this year the travel ban went into effect preventing Cubans from entering the United States. Juan and Aurelia remain separated, even as his suffering worsens, and it is unclear when and if they will see each other again.

- Aurelia is a pro bono client of CLINIC staff member

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, this last fall showed your utter exhaustion after hours of suffering. Many of our immigrant brothers and sisters today find themselves close to the end of their immigration journey until a sudden change in law or circumstance knocks them off their feet, setting them back years in the process and causing great hardship. May you be with them as they take up their crosses once again and attempt to persevere.



X

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*The soldiers strip Jesus of his garments,
treating him as a common criminal.*

“ Marisol was brought to the United States undocumented when she was a child. After experiencing childhood abuse, she obtained a special visa for crime victims. She later married and had several U.S. citizen children. Seeking to build a new life here, she applied for permanent legal status, following all the laws in her application. Marisol recently left the country briefly to visit family in Mexico and obtained permission from the government to do so, known as advance parole. After returning, she was suddenly sent a letter by the government stating that she had abandoned her application for permanent status due to her trip out of the country and was being placed into removal proceedings. Customs and Border Protection failed to correctly stamp her passport upon re-entry and are now refusing to believe her despite all the concrete evidence she and her legal representative have submitted.

“I sometimes can't sleep at night out of fear that ICE will decide to come to my home and try to send me to Mexico...even though my whole life is here,” said Marisol. “I could try to survive there, but what about my kids? I can't leave them to suffer without me...I want people to know that I have no criminal background and I have lived here since childhood and done everything by the law. I just want to stay so I can see my kids grow up in their own country.”

- Client story from a CLINIC Affiliate in North Carolina

PRAYER: *Jesus, you were humiliated and degraded by the powers of your day, treated as a criminal despite your gentleness. We hold in our hearts our immigrant brothers and sisters who are degraded by the injustice of our systems. Draw near to them in their pain, and help us work for justice.*



XI

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

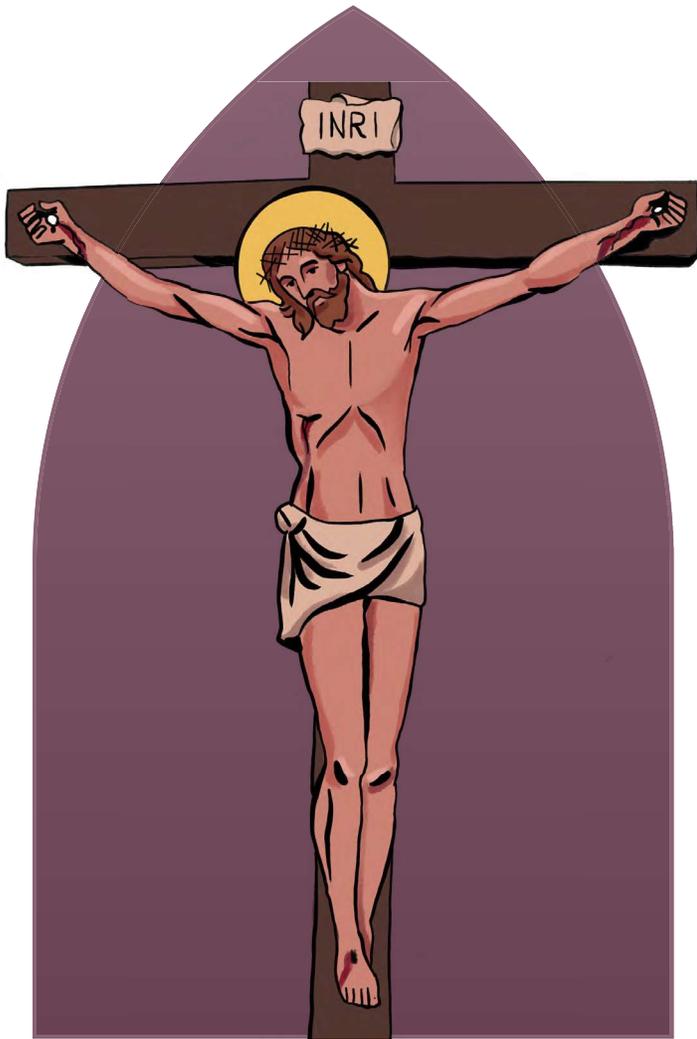
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

Jesus' hands and feet are nailed to the cross.

“ Yemi, a young man from Nigeria, was lured into a human trafficking scheme that brought him through many countries until he eventually arrived in the United States. Forced to provide backbreaking and ultimately illegal work by his captors, he wound up in the U.S. prison system and then in immigration detention. Throughout this time, he learned that several of his family members, including his brother and parents, had been murdered back in Nigeria by the trafficking gang. The pain of these deaths almost killed him. He eventually found legal help through a CLINIC Affiliate, gained a temporary visa, and is fighting his case to remain in the United States long-term and find hope and healing.

- Yemi is a client of a CLINIC attorney

PRAYER: *Oh God, we see your face in all those who face torture and abuse today, including victims of trafficking. You endured crucifixion for love of us; help us to know that and remember it in our darkest days.*



XII

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*After suffering greatly on the cross,
Jesus bows his head and dies.*

“ My client Santiago came to the United States as an unaccompanied minor and received temporary legal status and a work permit. He had no issues with the law until he was grabbed up in an ICE raid at his workplace. He has now been detained for 6 months in Ohio and has been experiencing increasing medical issues in detention due to the cold temperatures and environment. He was recently told the water at the facility is contaminated; they now are given four water bottles to drink each day. His extra blankets and clothes were recently taken by guards as a retaliatory measure for an incident in the detention center, and he complains of being extremely cold. I pray for Santiago, and for all those like him who suffer terrible detention conditions with few options for release.

- CLINIC staff member

In 2025, deaths in detention were numbered at 33, a two-decade high. Meanwhile, the United States reached a record for number of detainees – around 70,000.

PRAYER: *Loving God, your death on the cross felt like a moment of utter darkness, when all was lost. We hold in our hearts so many immigrants in detention who wait in misery to see if they will lose everything they hold dear. Help us – and them – to recall that, because of your cross, death and misery are followed by resurrection.*



XIII

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*The lifeless body of Jesus is placed in the
arms of Mary, his mother.*

“ Jamillah was a Ugandan migrant who died in the Mexican border town of Ciudad Juarez while hoping to find safety in the United States. Her death alone in a public hospital halfway across the world from her family was unexpected, unnecessary, and unjust. Her body laid in the morgue in Ciudad Juarez for 9 months while her family and local advocates collaborated so that she could have a proper Muslim burial. Muslim communities and nonprofits who had never even met her mobilized to raise funds and advocate for release of her body. When it became impossible to repatriate her remains, communities in Juarez and El Paso came together to honor her life and family’s wishes. Under the scorching sun, people across continents gathered in person and via Zoom to say goodbye.

“It was a powerful moment, one I will carry with me forever,” writes Edith Tapia, an advocate present at the burial. “I was overwhelmed by the solidarity and kindness of everyone who was present, and everyone who made the moment possible.”

- From the testimony of an advocate in the CLINIC network

PRAYER: Lord, we are filled with sorrow thinking of Mary cradling your lifeless body. Too many mothers and fathers today suffer the deaths of children due to the forces of injustice, including the violence of forced migration. Help us to remember and honor the countless, unnamed many who die on the journey to safety, and especially the parents who mourn.



XIV

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

Jesus' disciples place his body in the tomb.

“ Mary is an 83-year-old Catholic woman from Sudan. A government official attempted to force her granddaughter to convert to Islam and marry him, and when the family refused, her son was kidnapped and tortured. Years earlier, another official tried to pressure Mary's daughter to abandon Christianity. She continued to practice her faith quietly in Mary's home, even under the threat of being reported for blasphemy, a crime punishable by death in Sudan.

Mary lost her home, her community, and nearly all her support system, leaving her far from the life she had known. She has waited since 2016 for a decision on her asylum application and has traveled long distances for two interviews, each more than eight hours from her home. At the end of her most recent interview in December 2025, she looked at the asylum officer and said, “May God bless you, and guide you, and be with you always.” Now, with a nationwide and indefinite pause on the adjudication of affirmative asylum claims, her case continues to linger without resolution.

Even in exile and uncertainty, Mary's faith endures. Her story is a quiet reminder that hope can live even in the darkest moments, much like the promise of life beyond the tomb.

- Mary is the pro bono client of a CLINIC attorney

PRAYER: *Jesus, your mother and followers watched as your body was placed in the tomb, not knowing that you would rise again. Be with our immigrant brothers and sisters as they seek hope even when their worlds crumble and they face unimaginable suffering. You are our hope in the darkness of the tomb.*



XV

JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.
Because by your Holy Cross, you have
redeemed the world.

*After three days, Jesus is resurrected from
the dead and appears to his disciples.*

“ Jaime came to the United States from Venezuela, fleeing threats against his life for his public opposition to the Maduro rule. He applied for asylum and was able to work and send money back to his parents, both of whom had serious health issues and who were in hiding due to persecution. One day, Jaime had a run-in with law enforcement which led to his detention for over four months. By that time he had a U.S.-born daughter with special needs, and he grieved being separated from her. He was able to find help from an attorney, who fought for him despite his seemingly “impossible” case. After his initial release from detention with an ankle monitor, he was very nearly deported to a third country, but they fought his case and eventually won. He is now joyfully married to a U.S. citizen and they both care for his daughter. He is so grateful to live without fear now.

- Jaime is a client of a CLINIC Affiliate organization in Colorado

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, your resurrection is the ultimate good news longed for by all. We remember all those across our network who do experience wins in immigration cases in which families can remain together and live in safety and stability. We long for your coming Kingdom in which all can taste your peace and justice and know your love.

In this guide, all names of immigrants have been changed for confidentiality. CLINIC wishes to thank all its staff and Affiliate partners who have contributed stories and made this guide possible.

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