

VIRTUAL ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL WAY OF THE CROSS

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2020

Based on the Economic Way of the Cross developed by the Religious Working Group on the World Bank and IMF

SLIDE 1 Welcome to the Virtual Economic and Ecological Way of the Cross.

SLIDE 2 Thank you to our co-sponsors for helping to write the script. Many of our co-sponsors have been attending this Way of the Cross on Good Friday in Washington, D.C. for more than 20 years.

SLIDE 3

Today is Good Friday. On this day, Christian communities around the world recall the story of Jesus's Passion.

For more than 20 years we have gathered on this day in Washington, D.C. But this year is different. Because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, we come together online. I want to acknowledge the gravity of this moment. We each carry personal joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties: about the virus, about the health and wellbeing of ourselves and our loved ones, about the future of our economy and our world. Many of us are hurting like never before. We come together now to cast the story of Jesus's final days in a contemporary context – to apply the message of the Sacred Story to our own lives, times, and places.

Here in Washington, D.C., we are surrounded by powerful political and economic forces that mirror Jesus's journey to the Cross, forces that deal in death and destruction by war and benefit a privileged few, while millions of people live and die in poverty and environmental injustice. We also see signs of hope: dedicated staff at each of the institutions we will name during our Way of the Cross today, as well as grassroots and community leaders – all who share a love for neighbor and care for the earth but are stuck in structures that perpetuate violence and injustice.

Because we are a global church, we are compelled to be in solidarity and to respond.

Before we begin, I want to let you know our plan. We'll have two speakers for each of the 15 stations. Each station has a topic and focus on a particular institution in Washington, D.C. At the end of each station there will be two lines for us all to say together. The text will be on the slides, so just look at your screen and we can all say it together. OK, let's begin.

SLIDE 4

Let's take a moment to center ourselves by recalling the story of Jonah in the Hebrew Scriptures:

Jonah set out for Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was a large city; a three days' walk to cross through it. Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown," the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth (Jonah 3: 3-5).

Together, let us pray.

All: We put on the sackcloth of repentance. We acknowledge our complicity and we mourn suffering. We call for justice in the global economy and an end to environmental destruction. We claim hope and turn our hearts and minds to repairing communities, praying for peace and the fullness of life for all of creation. Amen.

FIRST STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Focus: Political Privilege and Corruption
Washington Institution: National Archives

SLIDE 5

Leader A: *Beware of the scribes who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a severe condemnation (Mark 12:38).*

By condemning Jesus to death, the powers of his day believed they could sustain extraordinary privilege for themselves and for a few others by imposing exclusionary laws that burdened ordinary people and strengthened their own power. We stand before the National Archives which contains the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. But in this election year, we lament that lawmakers are more beholden to powerful corporations and other special interests that fund their campaigns than the pledges in our founding documents.

SLIDE 6

Leader B: Our democracy has become an oligarchy, where a great majority of people no longer participate in the decisions that daily affect their lives. Pushed by special interests, politicians have ignored both people's and the planet's needs by enacting unjust laws and promoting regulations that further pollute land, air, and water while laying heavy burdens on the backs of a vast majority of the population. (*c.f. Mt 23:4*)

In our local communities and throughout the world, those who are impoverished and vulnerable carry a cross of exclusion and marginalization and the earth itself carries the deep scars of neglect and abuse. They are both oppressed by the undemocratic influence of wealth and power.

We watch special interests sway local and national elections and place politicians in office who will do their bidding. We have seen the impact of tax and spending cuts that undermine the common good.

Too many in our country are still insecure and anxious about the future.

We are worried about the many who are already poor and about those who are one illness or one unexpected major expense away from poverty.

And in this election year, many elected officials have supported or failed to speak out against proposed policies which would worsen inequality, exclude and deport immigrants, and deny the realities of climate change.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: God, we confess that we are often disengaged. We fail to support legislators who strive to do justice or hold accountable those who are corrupt and self-serving. We pray that Congress will be a place of honest debate and discernment, a servant to the impoverished, and a beacon of hope in the world.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

SECOND STATION: JESUS BEARS THE CROSS

Focus: Structural Racism & Police Violence
Washington Institution: Department of Justice

SLIDE 7

Leader A: *Thus says the Lord, "Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place"* (Jeremiah 22:3).

Jesus fell under the weight of the cross because he had been given a burden too heavy to bear. We recognize that people of color in the United States also have had too heavy a burden to bear.

Throughout U.S. history, African-American communities have borne a disproportionately greater weight of poverty, unemployment, poorly funded schools, police violence and oppression, and incarceration. Children who experience these traumas often have a difficult time concentrating at school, which results in poor academic performance and ultimately a high drop-out rate. Rather than punishing our youth with expulsion or even jail time, we need to find ways for youth to heal from trauma.

SLIDE 8

Leader B: Black lives have been undervalued by the American public and by political and legal institutions. When black communities suffer from violence and racism, these events often receive little attention.

Black students face harsher discipline and are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than white students. These interruptions in education and the school-to-prison pipeline have devastated many black communities, leaving them further entrenched in poverty.

Incidences of police violence, particularly against people of color, have rightly enraged and frustrated communities around the country. When the responsible officers have subsequently been cleared of wrong-doing, this has added to the injustice and indignity people of color suffer.

When we arm our police with military-grade weapons and train them to profile people of color as criminals, we create a scenario for violence and racist oppression. We yearn for a society that truly values black and brown lives.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we confess that we, too, have participated in racist institutions. We have been blind to the ways that racism leads to and worsens poverty. Remind us that we are called to love and support one another, especially those who are oppressed and marginalized. Help us to live in true solidarity, listening humbly to one another and working for a society free from state-sponsored violence.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

THIRD STATION: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Focus: Worker Rights & Conflicts of Interest

Washington Institution: Trump International Hotel

SLIDE 9

Leader A: *They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat....My chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands* (Isaiah 65:21-23).

Jesus was given the heavy burden of carrying his own cross, the means of his death, as an act of humiliation and a reminder of the power of the forces of empire. Too often, today's workers fall under the weight of callous employers who withhold wages or deny them a voice in the workplace. Business interests entangled with the function of government make it even more difficult for the most vulnerable in the economy to stand up again with dignity and claim their rights to the fruits of their labor.

SLIDE 10

Leader B: The Trump International Hotel owes electricians, wood workers, and a plumbing and heating business more than \$5 million for unpaid labor, according to liens filed against the property with the District of Columbia. This is only one instance of Trump properties being sued for not paying contractors.

While the hotel has allowed workers to vote to join a union, President Trump has appointed top members of the National Labor Relations Board, which rules on disputes between unions and employers. How will workers be assured a just resolution in any disputes when their employer has control over the arbitration process?

The watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington filed a lawsuit alleging that President Trump's business holdings violate the clause of the Constitution that makes it illegal for U.S. officials to accept benefits of any kind from representatives from other governments.

Foreign governments could seek to influence the president of the United States, against the interests of U.S. workers and their families, by doing business with properties still within his family.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we pray that elected officials and the court system stand by workers in their demands for justice and untangle the web of conflicts of interest that threaten the common good. We look for ways of standing in solidarity with these workers ourselves through our advocacy and the power of our own spending habits.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

FOURTH STATION: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

Focus: The Corporate-led (transactional) Model of Development
Washington Institution: United States Agency for International Development

SLIDE 11

Leader A: *All you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering, which has been dealt me... (Lamentations 1:12).*

On the way of the cross Mary's heart is pierced by the suffering of her beloved Son. Today, around the world, millions of parents see the lives of their children diminished by the lack of access to reliable, clean electricity.

Often efforts to promote integral, human development collide with the dominant paradigm of corporate-led development based on mega-projects and corporate greed. We see this in some USAID initiatives, including "Power Africa," which aims to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa.

SLIDE 12

Leader B: Often this agency's "transaction" model of development and "all of the above" approach to energy development serve to favor the interests of the fossil fuel industry over those alternative sources of energy.

From natural gas investments to large-scale wind farms, we worry that the rights of communities will be exploited by "Power Africa" without significant investments in small, locally-controlled, clean energy solutions.

Too often the design of development policies follows the logic of financial investment, and the demands of corporate profit overshadow the values of free, prior, and informed consent of those affected by transactional development.

Although the Power Africa roadmap calls for development partners from diverse sectors, the list of partners from the private sector and African government institutions overshadow those of civil society organizations.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: We pray that our development policies always consider those who are poor, vulnerable, and oppressed. May we listen to their wisdom and create programs that truly reflect their needs.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

FIFTH STATION: SIMON CARRIES THE CROSS

Focus: Indigenous Peoples and the Environment

Washington Institution: Inter-American Development Bank

SLIDE 13

Leader A: *The fate of humans and the fate of the animals are the same: as one dies so does the other; both have the same breath* (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

Simon helped Jesus bear the burden of the cross. Like Simon, we must hear the cries of those who suffer - including the Earth - and come to their assistance.

The Inter-American Development Bank is a public, regionally-owned bank, but it continues to negotiate and implement operations without the informed participation of affected people. “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation” projects, commonly called “Red Plus” projects, are, at face value, meant to encourage governments and corporations to prevent carbon emissions from deforestation or degradation. But these projects do not always consult with or consider the rights of indigenous, Afro-descendent communities, and other forest-dependent peoples.

SLIDE 14

Leader B: Red Plus projects fail to recognize land rights of communities long inhabiting the land and can lead to forced displacement. These projects can fail to guarantee free, prior, and informed consent or an active role in the project. We mourn the suffering of communities.

Red Plus projects are a false solution to climate change. New forest tracks cannot replace the diversity of creation found in ancient forest ecosystems.

Carbon credits cannot accurately account for the carbon stored in the strong trunks of trees. We mourn the loss of creation.

Megaprojects for renewable energy such as dams, biofuels, wind farms, and solar farms are as much a threat to creation and vulnerable communities as fossil fuel projects when they lead to displacement, loss of livelihood, and the interconnected relationship between communities and creation.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we pray for a new vision of economic life that emphasizes and provides for the real needs of people and God’s Earth. We mourn the heavy cross of oppression that burdens indigenous people throughout the world, who have much wisdom to share about humanity’s interconnectedness with the earth. We pray that the world’s finances serve the flourishing of all creation, rather than undermine it.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

SIXTH STATION: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Focus: Solidarity and Service

Washington Institution: New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

SLIDE 15

Leader A: *Blessed are you who are poor, yours is the reign of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, you shall be satisfied.* (Luke 6:20-21)

As we ponder the woman who wiped the sweat from Jesus's brow as he labored under a heavy burden, we call to mind the many communities of faith which model for us both compassion and solidarity. They respond generously to the needs of those who are poor, providing food, shelter, health care, education, and love to those in need. They join those who are impoverished who are claiming the life of dignity that is rightfully theirs.

SLIDE 16

Leader B: But too often we fail to acknowledge the systemic and structural injustices that perpetuate poverty. Solidarity requires that we see with new eyes the reality of our world and give witness with those who are impoverished to the need for transformation.

We are called to move from pity to love, charity to justice, from one poor person to the many organized together to respond to injustice. We identify and challenge the unjust social, economic, and political structures that perpetuate poverty.

We are all guilty of turning our face from the crucified ones and ignoring their human dignity and basic needs.

Now, seniors have lost their pensions, middle-class people have lost their savings, and millions have lost jobs and homes.

They join the already-poor in the struggle for survival on a daily basis.

While the Gospels call us to service, solidarity and economic justice require a generous response.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: God, help us move step-by-step from our positions of privilege into greater solidarity with impoverished people and with Christ, who accompanies them on the Way of the Cross. From our churches and soup kitchens and shelters, may we learn to become advocates for justice, asking why so many in our world live in misery while a few have so much more than they need.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible

SEVENTH STATION: JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Focus: Ravaging the Earth and its People in the Name of Economic Development
Washington Institution: U.S. Department of the Treasury

SLIDE 17

Leader A: *But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you... In God's hands are the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being (Job 12:7-8, 10).*

A sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly (Laudato Si' 34).

Jesus falls again, just as millions of people around the world continue to stumble as they try to lift themselves out of poverty and absolute destitution. Again and again they fall prey to an economic system that values profits for the few over the very survival of the many. Even the Sustainable Development Goals, meant to foster new forms of economic growth where it is most needed, are being co-opted by big banks and other corporate interests that aren't taking the needs of the most poor into consideration, nor limits to the carrying capacity of Mother Earth.

SLIDE 18

Leader B: Wasteful consumption and financial innovation have taken the place of an economy that serves the well-being of all people and creation.

We need to redefine our notion of progress and ensure that financial investments benefit local communities and the Earth.

The dominant model of development has been determined by a worldview in which only some people are subjects and other people exist only to be exploited.

Our dedication to this model also consumes the Earth, upon which the survival of all life depends.

The same institutions that brought us economic collapse continue to propose ways forward that fail to acknowledge the needs of the poor and the natural world's need to rest and regenerate.

Pope Francis challenges us to consider another path forward, one that improves the quality of life of the world's most impoverished peoples while containing growth that only feeds an addiction to producing and consuming.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we pray today for new global relationships that honor the fact that in your hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human. You call us to serve you, not money. Guide us in pursuing not economic growth but rather sustainable communities where the highest priority is life in abundance for all.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

EIGHTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

Focus: Justice for Dreamers

Washington Institution: White House

SLIDE 19

Leader A: Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28).

Today, we do indeed weep. We weep for the 700,000 immigrant youth who face deportation because of Congress’s inaction and the president’s action. We weep for those in our communities who fled life-threatening violence in search of safety and now live in constant fear of deportation to countries many have never known as home. We call on the President to stop threatening our youth — to stop using Dreamers as bargaining chips to leverage money for the wall and the deportation force.

SLIDE 20

Leader B: The hateful rhetoric in our national discourse encourages us to turn our backs on our colleagues, neighbors, and friends. Repeated lies have sown fear and threaten to tear our communities apart.

Let us take to heart the words of Holy Scripture, “For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28).

We weep for families separated by the policies of this administration and we pray for the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, that in their wisdom they will put an end to the threat to Dreamers whose only home is here.

And we pray for the grace to heed God’s call to embrace deep empathy, that we may rise to practice courageous welcome! We sense the transforming energy stirring in our hearts, minds, and communities to stand in solidarity with Dreamers and to demand that Congress enact the Dream Act.

Here, in front of the White House, we call on President Trump and the administration to live out this call to welcome and ensure that immigrant youth, and all migrants and refugees, have access to the protection they deserve and the opportunity to fulfill their dreams and enrich our communities.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: God of abundance, we confess that too often we close our hearts and eyes to the needs of vulnerable communities around us. We pray that our government will heed this call to welcome your beloved children and pass a clean Dream Act to protect immigrant youth and enact humane immigration laws that will protect and honor the lives of all. Give us the strength and courage to build your beloved community here and now—in this place and this time.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

NINTH STATION: JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Focus: Moving Forward on Climate Change

Washington Institution: Lafayette Park, next to the White House

SLIDE 21

Leader A: Before we begin the ninth station let us take a minute to remember Concepcion (Connie) Piciotto, who maintained a peace vigil in Lafayette Park for more than 30 years. In her own words she wanted to “stop the world from being destroyed.”

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Jesus fell the third time not out of weakness of spirit, but because others had such trouble accepting his message of love that they wished to persecute him in the most humiliating manner possible. We recognize his suffering on the road to Calvary in the images of families fleeing wildfires in California and Australia, and of whole communities forced to consider relocating from low-lying islands. And like the passive bystanders who witnessed Jesus falling again and again under his heavy load, too many elected officials are making excuses for inaction or prioritizing other agendas as they see the obvious signs of distress in a warming planet.

SLIDE 22

Leader B: We join the thousands of people who have gathered in this park over the past year to urge our leaders to choose life in the face of the worsening climate crisis. And we listen for the cries of the earth.

The rivers cry out in unprecedented flooding in many parts of the world, including in the United States.

The silence of the rains that fail to fall, bringing unheard of droughts, require us to speak and to act.

Future generations cry out in fear as they ponder a future in which polar caps have melted, glaciers have receded even further, and the agricultural patterns that threaten food production have continued.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: We call on our government to choose life and put the life of planet Earth and well-being of the world’s citizens before all other political interests so that all people may live with dignity on Earth.

O God of all, at this time of our gradual awakening to the dangers we are imposing on our beautiful Earth, open the hearts and minds of all your children, that we may learn to nurture rather than destroy our planet. Amen.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible

TENTH STATION: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Focus: Extractive Industries

Washington Institution: White House Council on Environmental Quality

SLIDE 23

Leader A: *The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it (Genesis 2:15).*

The culture of consumerism, which prioritizes short-term gain and private interest, can make it easy to rubber-stamp authorizations or to conceal information (Laudato Si' 184).

As Jesus reached Golgotha, he was stripped by the soldiers of his clothing, left naked and vulnerable. Today, mining, oil, gas, and other extractive industries strip communities of their livelihoods, their health, their cultures and, too often, their very lives as protests provoke violent reactions. Church and indigenous leaders of the Amazon region of South America brought such concerns to the Vatican last October. Here in the U.S., we lament proposals to weaken regulations around environmental assessments and community input in infrastructure projects that require federal approval.

SLIDE 24

Leader B: Countries that are rich in natural resources are often home to some of the poorest of the poor.

Wealth from mining is siphoned off to corrupt officials, while impacted communities are left worse off than before.

That has prompted communities throughout the U.S. and around the world to ban fracking and other forms of extractive industries.

We celebrate with residents who have been able to block mining projects, pipelines, transportation of mining waste, and other forms of extractives infrastructure.

We grieve with indigenous and other communities whose wishes have been ignored and whose land, water, and way of life have been threatened by extractive industries.

And we lament our own complicity in purchasing electronics that require minerals from violence-wrecked countries, products containing palm oil grown where rainforests once stood, and more and more oil and gas to keep our homes comfortable and our car fuel tanks full.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we confess that we do not always care for your creation the way we should. We exploit its resources, causing damage to Earth, destruction of the economy, and suffering of marginalized people. We pray that our government policies and our own actions may honor all your creation.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Focus: Fair Trade NOT Free Trade

Washington Institution: U.S. Trade Representative Office

SLIDE 25

Leader A: *The Lord says, “The people of Israel have sinned again and again. So I will punish them. They sell into slavery those who do what is right. They trade needy people for a mere pair of sandals. They grind the heads of the poor into the dust of the ground. They refuse to be fair to those who are crushed” (Amos 2:6-7).*

Jesus Christ was unjustly tortured and killed by the powers and authorities of his day. He identified with all whose human rights are denied. In the mystery of redemption, the nails of his oppression become the linchpins of a just new order.

Transnational corporations and U.S. trade negotiators, like the Israelites condemned by Amos, systematically place profits over human beings. They enrich themselves and their shareholders by undermining their employees’ wages and working conditions. Trade agreements such as NAFTA not only destroy local industries and rural livelihoods, but also overrule nations’ own laws of environmental protection. All of us, producers and consumers, as well as our blessed Earth, are harmed by this injustice.

SLIDE 26

Leader B: Any trading system should serve the common good and benefit ordinary people, especially those struggling against poverty. It should preserve natural resources, be democratically accountable, and respect human rights. The right of each person, as a bearer of God’s image, to participate in decisions that shape society is especially sacred.

Fair trade systems can help redress the injustices of the global economic system. Buying fair trade products supports living wages for producers and higher social and environmental standards.

By choosing fair trade products, we help ensure that the wealth garnered by the products be distributed fairly, thus alleviating the cycle of economic inequality.

Our export-based model of trade makes us further complicit in climate change. By shifting our focus to strengthening local and regional economies, we can support families, farmers, and small businesses, and a just economy for all.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: We confess that we too try to dominate others and violate their human dignity. We pray today for the global trading system to become open to popular participation and democratic accountability. We pray for agreements that prioritize human rights and God’s creation – supporting food security, sustainable agriculture, and the right to life-saving medications.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

TWELFTH STATION: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Focus: Destruction of God’s Creation and Threats to Vulnerable Communities
Washington Institution: World Bank and International Finance Corporation

SLIDE 27

Leader A: *Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:21).*

Jesus died on the cross, giving his life to free all of creation from bondage. However, we are stripping the earth of Creation’s gifts and destroying indigenous cultures along the way. Created by God as “very good” (Gen. 1:31), the whole community of life has borne the cross of human sin and misuse. Subject to the control of the world’s most powerful governments, the World Bank, including the International Finance Corporation, has been dominant in shaping the model of economic development in the Global South.

Pope Francis says that “Many intensive forms of environmental exploitation and degradation exhaust not only natural resources, which provide local communities with their livelihoods, but also undo the social structures shaped by cultural identity and their meaning of community. The imposition of a dominant lifestyle linked to a single form of production can be just as harmful as the altering of ecosystems.”

SLIDE 28

Leader B: Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and my burden, light” (Matthew 11:30), but the yoke of the World Bank – imposed on low-income countries in the name of free markets and free trade – has been an intolerable burden for too many people and for the earth.

Tomás Garcia, Presente!

Berta Cáceres, Presente!

In 2013, Tomás Garcia was assassinated in Honduras for opposing a hydroelectric dam project. The International Financial Corporation withdrew their loan to the dam that year. In 2016, Berta Cáceres was assassinated for opposing the same project. Both were indigenous Lenca activists who put their lives on the line for their community.

This is just one example of how public-private finance for development projects can degrade the existence of indigenous cultures and creation.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we confess our indifference to massive destruction of human life and our failure to protect the integrity of creation. We pray for sustainable, people-and-earth-centered development that meets the needs of the impoverished majority of humanity and allows creation to survive and flourish.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

THIRTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Focus: Economic Policies for the Common Good
Washington Institution: International Monetary Fund

SLIDE 29

Leader A: *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit (John 12:24).*

His body beaten, Jesus died quickly, yet one soldier still threw a lance in his side before Joseph of Arimathea came to take his body down.

Our planet and economy are in crisis, yet the IMF continues to promote policies which pursue quantitative economic growth dependent on the exploitation of natural resources. Careful attention must be paid to the assumptions underlying IMF policy advice. Urgent attention must be paid to achieving measurable improvements in real quality of life for marginalized and impoverished people, rather than offering one more lance in their side.

SLIDE 30

Leader B: IMF conditions applied to new loans and debt cancellations have contributed to the deep injustices in the global economy and have been criticized for decades with little change.

The economic systems currently in place and upheld by institutions such as the IMF must change to support people- and planet-centered sustainability.

Mechanisms such as international debt arbitration should be established to address the increasing debt burdens of still-impoverished countries.

Poor countries are mired in debt and poverty. Too often, International Monetary Fund loans intended to help those countries perpetuate that poverty by imposing austerity measures that harm the poorest.

And too often the people most impacted by those policies have no say in the loan process. Secrecy leads to bad policies and a lack of accountability for governments and lenders.

We must build transparency in the international financial system so that all people have a say in their own economic future. We must support reforms at the International Monetary Fund that encourage responsibility and transparency that leads to better policies that benefit the world's poorest people.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole earth community.

Leader A: O God, we recognize the need for deep transformation of the global economic system. No longer can we as humans exploit with abandon the global commons – the precious resources soon to be depleted. No longer can we spend billions on the military while the safety net is slashed and so many bear the burden of crushing debt. We commit ourselves to live more justly with others.

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

FOURTEENTH STATION: JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Focus: Justice for Asylum Seekers

Washington Institution: Embassy of Mexico

SLIDE 31

Leader A: *"Woe to you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you many make the orphans your prey!"* (Isaiah 10:1-2)

The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb which is then sealed with a large rock. We remember immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as the U.S. government continually enacts policies intended to seal the borders of this country and to deport many immigrants back to the violence and oppression they are trying to escape. The Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), otherwise known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy, sends asylum seekers back from our southern border to Mexico to wait in dangerous and unhealthy situations for their asylum hearings. Some have already died in holding centers.

SLIDE 32

Leader B: Many migrants have valid asylum claims, but 98% of asylum seekers have no access to legal counsel. The asylum denial rate is growing. For individuals from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the denial rate is 81%.

Contrary to the Trump administration's claims of chaos and threats at the border, groups of asylum seekers and their lawyers have waited peacefully at ports of entry even as U.S. troops were deployed to U.S. border posts to "maintain order."

Since MPP was enacted in January 2019, more than 57,000 people have been forced to remain in Mexico as they await asylum hearings in the United States. The governments of Mexico and the U.S. signed an agreement to enforce the "Remain in Mexico" policy.

As of January 2020, at least 816 asylum seekers have been raped, kidnapped, assaulted, and even murdered in Mexico, including 201 children.

Together, we say:

All: We long for a moral economy that promotes and protects the whole Earth community.

Leader A: We urge Congress to end MPP and to restore asylum protections. We pray for an end to policies that bring violence to vulnerable people. We pray for a world where communities welcome the stranger and the migrant. We pray for a new vision of community where no one is forced to flee violence and poverty. "So then, putting away all falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another" (Ephesians: 4:25).

Together, we say:

All: We pray for the coming of the New Creation; we believe that another world is possible.

FIFTEENTH STATION: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Focus: Seeds of Hope - Another World is Possible

Washington Institution: Murrow Park, a public park surrounded by places of power in Washington, D.C.

SLIDE 33

Leader A: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among human beings. God will dwell with them and be their God; and they will be God's people." ... And the One who was seated on the throne said, "See I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:1-5).*

Mindful of our own complicity in and responsibility for the global crises of our times, but claiming the hope that is rooted in the Resurrection, we now reflect on our lives and choices. We claim our God-given power as individuals and as a community to effect meaningful change, to name the signs of Resurrection that we can see, even in our broken world.

We follow Jesus, who suffers in the flesh of impoverished and excluded peoples. We have walked with Him to places of power where decisions are made daily that determine who will survive and who will not, who will flourish and who will not.

SLIDE 34

Pause for a moment to reflect in silence on your own lifestyle. Do you think about where the products you buy or use are made, by whom, under what condition? Is your lifestyle sustainable? Do you live at the expense of others?

Leader B:

To our own greed . . .

To our habits of consumption . . .

To social systems and structures that oppress the poor . . .

To the roots of terrorism and war . . .

Response:

Open our eyes.

Open our eyes.

Open our eyes.

Open our eyes.

Leader A: Let us pray: Loving God, open our eyes as well to signs of hope in our world. Help us to believe that a better world is possible, and to act on that belief – personally, communally and institutionally.

Let's pause for a moment to reflect in silence on signs of hope.

Together, we pray:

All: Loving God who provides for all people in all times, we are frightened by signs of crisis, encouraged by signs of hope, and compelled by the urgency of both. We commit ourselves to the works of repentance – to relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution. We commit ourselves to an inward and outward journey – a life of prayer, study, and action – as followers of Jesus and his Gospel message. Amen.

For more information about the ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL WAY OF THE CROSS, contact:

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