



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Way of the Cross highlights suffering and injustice in world today - hundreds join outdoor prayer walk in downtown Saskatoon

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A Good Friday tradition of praying the Way of the Cross through the streets of the city of Saskatoon continued again this year, with hundreds joining the ecumenical outdoor prayer walk April 22, 2011.

Representatives of churches, organizations and advocacy groups carried a wooden cross from station to station, as the large crowd followed, singing hymns. At each of the 14 traditional



Youth from the Anglican Church carried the cross to the second station where they prayed for children and young people.

stations, the suffering and death of Jesus

was recalled and connected in prayer to an issue of injustice or suffering in our world today.

Stops were located at local landmarks such as a courthouse, a medical arts building, a liquor store, a television station, an employment centre, a bank, a shopping mall, churches, a youth centre, and a supported living centre.

The event began with a smudging ceremony and prayers in Cree as the crowd turned to face each of the four directions.

At the first station “ Jesus is condemned to death” church leaders led the reflection on the courthouse steps, including Rev. Paul Sartison of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Bishop David Irving of the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon, Bishop Don Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, and Rev. Harry Strauss of the Saskatoon Evangelical Ministers Fellowship.



Church leaders reflected on the first station on the steps of the courthouse.

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Praying about our relationship to the earth.

“Today, Good Friday, we gather together, from different churches throughout the city, to remember how Jesus, having preached good news and brought God’s healing presence into our midst, was rejected, put on trial, and condemned to death. Death could not bind him, and it is in the power of the resurrection that we gather in his name, to remember the redeeming love of God revealed in Jesus’ passion and death,” said Bolen.

“Our common baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ makes us sisters and brothers in him, and by carrying the name of Christian, we are committed to carry forth his mission in the world.”

Connecting the suffering of Jesus in his passion to those who are marginalized, persecuted or hurting in our day reveals that “to be faithful to Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord, we must love him and serve him in his wounded and broken body in our midst,” Bolen added.

Prayers continued with Anglican youth carrying the cross to the second station to reflect on the needs of youth and children, before passing the cross to members of the Sisters of the Mission Service religious order and Earthcare Connections, who prayed about the environmental crisis.

“Our earth too is withering, suffering, being despised and we held no account of it,” reflected Sr. Judy Schachtel. “Today is also Earth Day celebrated around the world,” she noted, calling for a new understanding of the Earth as a living organism, part of an interconnected and interdependent web of relationships in “a community of life.”

At the fourth station in front of the HMS Unicorn building, members of NASHI recalled all those children, women and men affected by the scourge of human trafficking.



Prayers about human traffickking led by NASHI

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The cross was then carried to a liquor store parking lot by members of the Filipino community, who reflected on how Simon of Cyrene's helping hand to Jesus is a model for all about the duty to lessen the burdens of others.

The reflection at the sixth station began with prayers in Aramaic, the ancient language of Jesus. Christians from Iraq prayed for all those suffering religious persecution in the world.

Integrity Saskatoon and Affirm United led the reflection at the seventh station, praying for an end to discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay and transgendered persons.

At the eighth station – Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem – the Women in Ministry group addressed the role of women in the Church, and described the pain and grief experienced when women are not able to place their gifts at the service of the body of Christ because of their gender.

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Recalling how Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross: the fifth station.



Christians from Iraq reflected on religious persecution around the world.



Representatives of Integrity Saskatoon and Affirm United carried the cross to the seventh station.



Members of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish stood outside Midtown Plaza

shopping mall holding the cross, as shoppers went in and out of the building. The parishioners reflected on materialism in a society “driven by greed, temptation and apathy,” and recalled those who are hurt or marginalized by the consumer culture.

At the tenth station – Jesus is stripped of his garments – evangelical Christians reflected on the humiliation, indignity and suffering of the cross. “Through this prayer walk we raise the cross again at the centre of the marketplace of Saskatoon. Jesus died on the cross... and he did it for us.”

Those involved in restorative justice ministry in Saskatoon reflected outside the Lighthouse, which provides a home to marginalized persons. The group prayed for an end to indifference, “that we may all come to a place of compassion... to live in a world of understanding without blame or judgment.”

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Our Lady of Guadalupe parish led prayers outside of a downtown shopping mall.



Representatives of Evangelical Churches carried the cross to the 10th station.



At the twelfth station, marking Jesus' death on the cross, the Conquest Catholic Boys Club prayed that all might learn to forgive and to love as Jesus did.

Representatives of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism prayed outside the provincial Cabinet Office, calling for governments to be the good servants of the people in addressing the growing social inequalities in our communities, including poverty and homelessness.



Conquest Catholic Boys Club reflected on the death of Jesus.

L'Arche Saskatoon led prayers at the final station of the cross at St. Paul's Cathedral. "God gives grace to all people, regardless of their abilities or disabilities," said Wyndham Thiessen, praying that the world would see the life-giving potential of each and every person.



L'Arche Saskatoon representatives prayed at the final station