

April 14, 2014



**SPIRITUALITY** - At this time in the lives of the people of South Sudan, praying the Way of the Cross has taken on an extra special significance. This traditional devotion, inspired by the love of St Francis of Assisi for Christ Crucified and spread by the early Franciscans, is one that has become familiar to most Catholics especially in the Season of Lent.

But for many in South Sudan, the world's newest nation, to pray the Way of the Cross during this year's Lent has become a special way to pray for peace and reconciliation in their homeland and to remember the many thousands who have been killed, displaced from their homes and continue to suffer as a result of conflict which began in mid-December of 2013. As one response to this ongoing tragedy, the Catholic Bishops of South Sudan have initiated a program called "Forty Days of Prayer, Fasting, and Charity for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation in South Sudan" in which all parishes are participating.

One key way of communal prayer has been the Way of the Cross which all parishes are leading each Friday afternoon during Lent. At Holy Trinity Chapel, Juba, under the care of the Franciscans, each of the three friars takes turn to lead the people in an outdoor Way of the Cross in the grounds of the community's simple mud brick church. Each week, the faithful gather and take various roles in leading the prayers, songs and reflections, doing something which their brothers and sisters in some other parts of the country are simply not able to do at this time. It has to be said that an outdoor Way of the Cross can pose some challenges however, especially in a built up area in Juba. As we move from station to station, as well as singing our own songs, we are accompanied by the loud music of a nearby club and movie house. But not to worry, equipped with our own portable loud speaker, we are more than a match!

As we continue the journey of Lent towards Easter this year, we invite all people of good will to

join with us in praying for a lasting and just peace in South Sudan so that all people of this young nation can share in the goodness that God has bestowed upon them. We invite you all to also pray this prayer which the Catholic Bishops of South Sudan have authorized at this time of need for their nation:

### **Prayer for Peace in South Sudan**

God the Father of love and mercy,  
You created our people from every clan,  
tribe and nationality.  
It is your will that all our people should live  
in harmony, peace and unity,  
because we are all brothers and sisters.  
We ask forgiveness for the times we failed  
to live together in peace.  
Heal our offenses and help us to reconcile  
with one another.  
Grant to our leaders your divine wisdom  
and help us all to promote respect, justice  
and true reconciliation, so that the people  
of South Sudan may live in unity and peace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: ofm.org, April 8, 2014