***Walking in Solidarity: Lent 2014***

***Prayer before setting out on the Road***

**All:**  In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Reader: Opening Reflection**

Our Christian tradition has a long history of walking and of pilgrimage as a spiritual practice. We take a few moments to gather as we begin.

**All:** We gather today

in the goodness of the merciful Father,

in the gentleness of our brother Jesus,

in the radiance of the Holy Spirit,

in the faith of those gone before us.

God, Three in One, we entrust to you our pilgrimage today.

Drawn from different places and families,

We ask your blessing on each of us as we journey together.

May we be enriched by our walking, praying, sharing

So that we will return home renewed and refreshed.

**Leader: Blessing of Water from the Well**

Bless again this water, source of life and nourishment,

It gives fullness to all living things, it refreshes and cleanses us.

May we thirst for you, knowing it is you alone who can satisfy our quest for freedom and wholeness.

Give us living water, today and always,

And bring us fullness of life. Amen.

who wishes, may offer a prayer or mention the name of someone they would like to remember at this station. After each prayer intention, the following is said: **All: Lord, hear our Prayer**

**Station 5** *(The fact about water is read, all pause and reflect)*

**Leader:** At this station, we pray for waters which are in need of healing. We call to mind places on this earth where the waters are polluted, troubled or in drought. We invite you to name some place you are aware of and we will respond: **All: May the waters be healed**

**To conclude, we pray together:**

Spirit of Renewal, breathe into all waters. Waters, be made clean that you may fully praise God our Creator and share your life-giving powers with all creation. Source of Life, Living Water, Restoring Spirit, Heal all waters. Amen.

**Station 6** *(The fact about water is read, all pause and reflect)*

**Leader:** We have been thinking about the preciousness of water and the impact its scarcity is having on people in some of the poorest parts of our world.

What can we do about it? There are some things; we can raise awareness, be more conscious of the gift of water. We can wash clothes at 30 degrees, spend less time in the shower, mend those dripping taps, unplug items that are not in use. How can such small acts make a difference? Through these small acts, we live in solidarity with those wo are suffering because of shortage of water. *We pause to think about what action we will personally take to respect the preciousness of water.*

**All:**

We pray for ourselves, who have access to clean water. We pray that we will be more aware of the preciousness of water. May this awareness help us to conserve water as a scarce global resource. Amen.

(The water is now sprinkled on the walkers or they sign each other on the forehead in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.)

**All:** May God bless us and keep us,

 May God’s face shine on us and be gracious to us,

 May God walk with us and bring us peace. Amen.

**Station 1**

**Leader:** This year on our Lenten Walk we are responding to Trocaire’s call to think about the gift of water and about the global water crisis. It is hard for us who live in a country with so much rain to imagine that other parts of the world are suffering from an acute shortage of clean water.

*Provide a fact about use of water and take a moment in silence to reflect.*

**Reader:** We pray for those who do not have proper access to water for drinking and sanitation. We pray for those who suffer greatly from illness as a result of no access to clean water. Lord, in your mercy

**All: Hear our Prayer**

**Reader:** We pray for those with whom we walk in solidarity today; especially those who are suffering the effects of hunger due to water shortages and crop failure. Lord, in your mercy

**All: Hear our Prayer**

**Station 2** (*A second fact about use of water is read, all are invited to take a moment in silence to reflect.)*

**Leader:** At this station, we reflect on the gift of clean water we enjoy and which perhaps we take for granted.

*(This reading from John O’Donoghue, speaks about the respect in which water is held in our tradition.)*

**Reader:** Water is one of the most beautiful elements. It has a whole depth of meaning. In the Irish tradition, there is a great respect for water and a lovely sense of how the water element can bring protection. People put bottles of holy water in the walls of their farms to keep away evil and sickness. Some carry it in their cars to prevent accidents. Others sprinkle it at night for the holy souls and for absent friends and loved ones. A huge percentage of the human body is water. Blessing with water is beautiful; it is as if the innocent water of the earth which has flown wild and free in rain and ocean comes to bless its embodied human sister.

**Leader:** As we journey on, we thank God for the gift of water which we enjoy.

**Station 3** (*The fact about use of water is presented; Women and girls are often deprived of access to education in the developing world, as they are forced to walk miles from their homes to collect water at the beginning of each day... The heavy buckets of water then weigh on their shoulders as they return home… the walk to and from the well can often place them in situations where they are vulnerable and in danger… All are invited to take a moment in silence to reflect.)*

**Reader:** We pray for all women and mothers. May God watch over them as they carry the burden of their poverty on their heads and shoulders. We pray for children who carry burdens of water beyond their years and who are denied a chance to go to school or simply spend time with their families as a result. Lord, in your mercy

**All: Hear our Prayer**

**Station 4** *(The fact about water is read; how its pattern is affected by climate change. All are invited to take a moment to pause in silence.)*

**Leader:** We bring to mind anyone known to us personally or through our television screens who has been affected by the recent flooding. Anyone