

HOLY WEEK REFLECTIONS

"In the face of unjust and painful situations, faith brings us the light which scatters the darkness."

Pope Francis



Ana, Colombia

 **SCIAF**
Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland

**WEE
—
BOX**

60 years of change

SCIAF IN THE WORLD

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland. With our local partners, we provide real, long-term solutions to the challenges people face. We nourish communities, fight for peace, give opportunities to those who are downtrodden, and campaign to break the structures that keep people poor.

Together, we believe that a better world is possible – and the SCIAF family won't stop our work until everyone, everywhere has access to the opportunities, resources and justice they need to survive and thrive.

WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE

This year's WEE BOX Lenten Appeal focuses on SCIAF's work in Colombia, where conflict lurks around every corner. Thanks to your generosity, we've been present in the poorest region, Chocó, since the 1980s – and we continue to be there for those most in need. Today, we provide basics like food, medicine and water, as well as supporting safe havens for children during war.



Rodrigo (L) and Bernadino, Colombia

REFLECT WITH SCIAF

During Holy Week, please use these reflections to bring the events of Holy Week to life. On each day, we've included messages from the people we work with in Colombia, so you can journey together during this special time for Catholics around the world.

Especially in this Jubilee Year, we hope these reflections show how you can be Pilgrims of Hope – by engaging with SCIAF's WEE BOX Appeal and believing that a better world is possible.

Colombia IN THE BOX

Continue your reflections with 'Colombia in the Box' and journey with Canon Hutson, SCIAF Board Member and Parish Priest of St Mary's, Benbecula.

Watch online now:
sciaf.org.uk/inthebox

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalm 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14; John 12:1-11

Today's readings present us with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah, one who brings justice and hope, and Mary's humble but extravagant anointing of Jesus in John's Gospel. Isaiah shows us the quiet yet transformative work of Jesus, who brings freedom for captives and sight to the blind. In the Gospel, Mary's act of love reminds us that true discipleship is about pouring out our hearts for Christ, holding nothing back.

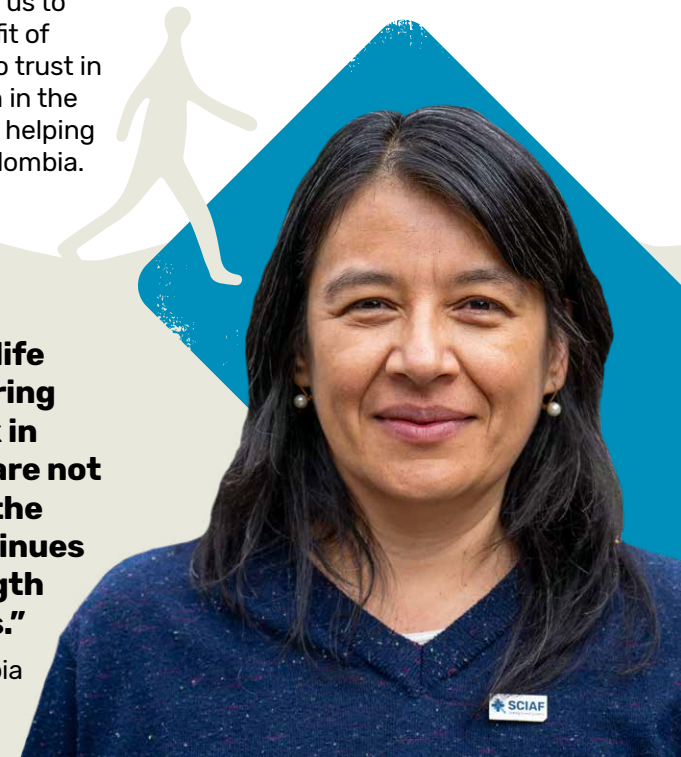
As we journey through Holy Week, these readings invite us to reflect on sacrificial love. Love, that asks us to give of ourselves for the benefit of others. Psalm 27 reminds us to trust in God's light and salvation, even in the darkest times, just as SCIAF is helping to bring hope to families in Colombia.

This Holy Week, your prayers and acts of sacrificial love can help alleviate suffering today and ensure Colombia finds peace tomorrow. Mary's gift inspires us to give generously of ourselves, confident that a peaceful world is possible. Following Christ's example, we are called to build peace, work for justice and care for those trapped in poverty and caught in conflict around the world.

Let us follow the example of Mary, and of Jesus, bringing healing and hope wherever we go.

"SCIAF's work is full of life and hope. I love partnering with them as they work in places like Chocó that are not so easy. Regardless of the challenges, SCIAF continues to be a source of strength in these difficult places."

Liliana, SCIAF Partner, Colombia



TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

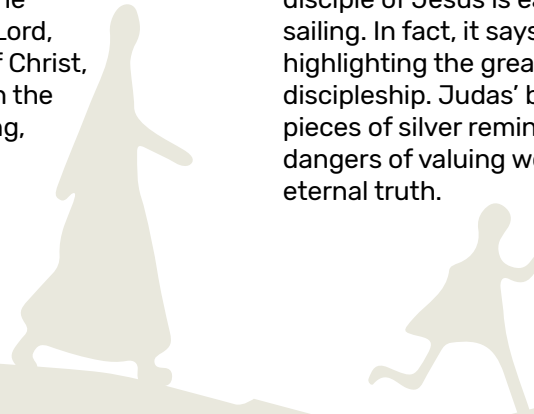
Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15 and 17;
John 13:21-33, 36-38

Today's readings speak of light, restoration and salvation reaching to the ends of the earth. In the Gospel, Jesus predicts his betrayal from Judas and of Peter's denial, highlighting the emotional, spiritual and mental pain, as well as the physical pain to come.

In the Gospel, we are confronted with the painful reality of betrayal by those closest to Christ. We must consider this tension between hope and betrayal in ourselves too, recognising that we are not exempt from temptation or the frailty of human loyalty.

In this Jubilee Year, as Pilgrims of Hope, we are asked to be tangible signs of hope in our world. SCIAF's work in Colombia reflects this call, helping communities to build peace and find hope after conflict.

Let us draw strength from the psalmist's words: 'In you, O Lord, I take refuge.' As disciples of Christ, we are called to persevere in the face of betrayal and suffering, trusting in God's promise of salvation and peace.



"The Church is always in the midst of the conflict - it always has been and always will accompany the people. In all the years of armed conflict, the Church has never hidden. We, the Church, facilitate conversations between armed groups and the general civilian population. We tell the paramilitary groups to stop controlling people's lives - we act as intermediaries. People feel the presence of the Church, regardless of their religion."

Brother Marcial, SCIAF partner, Chocó

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 69:8-10, 21-22, 31 and 33-34;
Matthew 26:14-25

An unwavering faith in God amidst insult and suffering is not an easy thing. The Psalm echoes this theme, lamenting rejection and persecution while trusting in God's saving power.

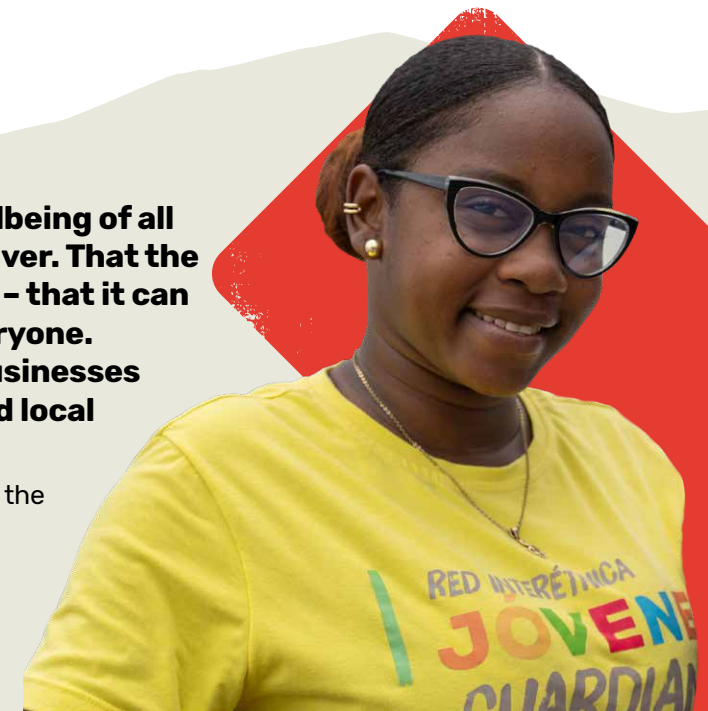
Nowhere does it say that being a disciple of Jesus is easy or plain sailing. In fact, it says the opposite, highlighting the great cost of discipleship. Judas' betrayal for thirty pieces of silver reminds us of the dangers of valuing worldly gain over eternal truth.

As we prepare for the Triduum, these passages challenge us to examine our own fidelity to Christ. As Pilgrims of Hope, let us remember to stand firm in faith, trusting that God's justice will prevail. A pilgrimage denotes a journey where we need patience and perseverance. SCIAF is there for the long-term working with communities in Colombia, rebuilding lives fractured by conflict.

Let us commit ourselves anew to being disciples of hope.

"I hope for the wellbeing of all people along the river. That the river is cleaned up - that it can be enjoyed by everyone. And not just for businesses either, tourists and local people too."

Nely, Young Guardian of the River Atrato, Chocó



HOLY THURSDAY

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

On this sacred day, we reflect on the institution of the Eucharist, and of Christ's act of humility in washing the disciples' feet. The Passover lamb foreshadows Christ, whose sacrifice delivers us from sin. Paul's account of the Last Supper reminds us that every Eucharist represents Christ's gift of himself.

The Gospel challenges us to follow Jesus's servant heart. By washing his disciples' feet, Jesus calls us to humility and service, a reflection of his ultimate act of love on the Cross. Our acts of service are signs of hope pointing people towards Jesus.

As we celebrate the Eucharist, let us also embrace the call to serve one another. By following Christ's example of humility, we can build a more peaceful and just world, where no one is left behind.



"The help that we receive from SCIAF is very important. We always acknowledge SCIAF in our prayers. We ask the Lord that the faith of people in Scotland is strengthened, so that we can continue to walk together. We are thankful that your work reaches those most in need."

Bishop Mario, Quibdo, Chocó

GOOD FRIDAY

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1 – 19:42

Good Friday invites us to stand at the foot of the Cross, contemplating the suffering and death of Christ. Isaiah's prophecy reveals the suffering Christ, who bears our sins to bring us healing. The psalmist's cry, 'Into your hands I commend my spirit' which echoes Jesus' final words on the Cross.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is our compassionate High Priest, who understands and cares for us. In John's Gospel, we witness the depth of Christ's love as he willingly lays down his life for humanity.

We do not associate the word 'Good' with suffering and death, but we stand this side of the crucifixion and

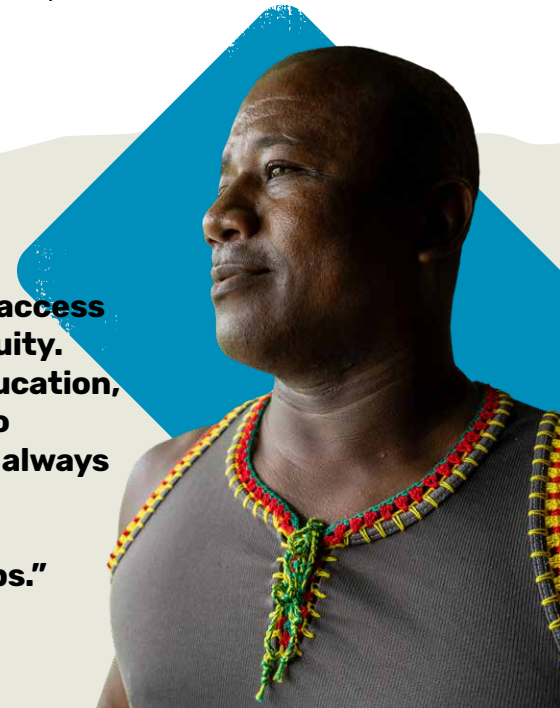
resurrection and know that Jesus' sacrifice was to our gain through the forgiveness of sins.

As we reflect on Christ's Passion, we are called to respond to his sacrificial love by embracing the mission of reconciliation and peace. SCIAF's work in Colombia reflects this mission, as we support our partners to build peace, provide shelter, and care for families caught in conflict.

Let us remember that a peaceful world is possible, made real by our acts of hope and love.

"Reconciliation is possible. Reconciliation is about having access to good homes, dignity, and equity. We need businesses, better education, better schools – this will lead to reconciliation. The Church has always facilitated reconciliation and dialogues between everyone, including with the armed groups."

Enrique, Chocó



HOLY SATURDAY


Luke 24: 1-12

Early in the morning, some of the women took prepared spices to the tomb. However, when they arrived at the tomb, the stone was rolled away and Jesus' body was not inside. While they considered what had happened, angels appeared and said, "why are you looking for the living among the dead?"

The women are then reminded that Jesus said he would be crucified, but on the third day he would rise again. The women then leave the tomb and share the news with the Apostles, but they do not believe them. Peter ran to the tomb to see it empty for himself and was left wondering what had happened.

Sometimes we struggle to believe things that are difficult for us to comprehend. Dead people don't come back to life on earth, so we can forgive the Apostles for their disbelief even though Jesus said he would be raised back to life. Difficult circumstances can challenge our faith. But, together, we are determined at SCIAF to nourish the hungry, seek justice, bring hope to those in despair and believe that a better world is possible.

Help us Lord to trust in you, in both good and bad times. When we are challenged in our faith, help us to remain strong, to remember that we are loved, and that you conquered death through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen



"To SCIAF, all I would say is please don't forget us: the women, the young people, our communities. We need peace and tranquillity here. It's difficult but not impossible, as long as you don't forget us."

Ana, Indigenous Leader, Chocó

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY.
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Photos by James Cave (SCIAF).

