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√American Christians for the Abolition of Torture

"UNITED IN FAITH AND HOPE"

THE WAY OF THE CROSS GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

SETTING - You must decide if you are going to have the service inside or outside. We recommend, outside, if at all possible. Choose twelve "stations" in your community. Choose places for their symbolic relevance and their connectedness to a particular station, ie. the City Jail. If inside, choose a place large enough to move from scene to scene. Create and build tableaus, something different for each station., ie. a torture tableau, Jesus before Pilate. Be creative.

PREPARATION - You need the following people and materials:
- Coordinator, someone to keep the service together and flowing.
- Several readers, at least two voices--one woman, one man to read the meditative reflections. Involve as many people as possible.
- Song leader, someone who can move their instrument from place to place.
- Song sheets.
- symbolic representations for each station, either a cross, photos, something on which to focus. Visuals always help, banners, thorns...
- Leader of Intercessory prayer,
- Names of prisoners currently being held in torture centers, or names of"disappeared" persons on whom we focus prayers of intercession.

GATHERING *Get to know each other, talk for a few minutes. Practice the singing. Begin with the song, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"*

1. *WHEN DARKNESS REIGNS*

LEADER: "Forgive us for crucifying You again in their flesh."
ASSEMBLY: "For we knew not what we did."*
SCRIPTURE: Luke 22: 47-54; 63-65

READER #1: Jesus taught a new way of life among a people whose country was occupied by troops from a foreign power and whose indigenous leaders played politics at the expense of their brothers and sisters. Across the land, the people were restless. They hoped for a liberator to improve their lot and set them free. And so, the authority of the truth spoken by Jesus threatened those in power and troubled those who did not understand. Jesus was arrested.

READER #2: Today, most people in Latin America live in acute rural or urban poverty. Owning little or no land, the peasants must work for subsistance wages on coffee, cattle, sugar, banana, and cotton plantations, which are the major sources of the region's export and wealth. Often undernourished and illiterate, they have no access to economic or political power. Most of the land and all of the industry is controlled by a few wealthy families, who share the political power with military leaders. People of Faith have long supported this pyramid of power and the Church has deep roots among all classes of people.

Now, winds of the Gospel's liberating "good news" are blowing through the Church. In the last twelve years, a growing number of priests, nuns, bishops,lay leaders and church people have joined village workers, labor leaders, student leaders and political activists in efforts to improve the social, economic, and political conditions in order to benefit all of the people, not just a few. Their efforts have been met by repression, violence, and torture.

READER #1: And Jesus said, "This is the hour when darkness reigns." And the guards mocked and beat him.

* Pope John's prayer for forgiveness for sins committed against the Jews.