



# Holy Trinity Church, Horfield, Bristol

Creating connections through the inclusive Catholic  
tradition in worship, welcome and service



## Stations of the Cross, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024

This reflection on the Stations of the Cross was written in response to the recent attacks and murders of young people in our City. A nationwide increase in 'knife crime' is being played out in Bristol and it felt important to relate the Passion of Christ to the pain and grief of our own city in 2024, and to identify resurrection hope in community response.

The content of this reflection was largely taken from media reports relating to local and national events.

The chant, 'Behold the Lamb of God' by John L. Bell and Graham Maule was sung between each station and the hymn 'My Song is Love Unknown' was sung at the end of the service.

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**First Station:** Jesus is condemned to death.

Matthew 27:22,24,26b

Pilate washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!".

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

In the year ending March 2023, there were around 50,500 offences involving a sharp instrument (or knife) in England and Wales. Whilst this was 4.7% higher than in 2021/22 slightly lower than the pre lockdown height in 2019, it is double the level of knife crime that was experienced in 2012.

There are a range of criminal offences covering the possession, sale and supply of knives and other offensive weapons.

In some cases, a conviction for a knife crime offence can result in a mandatory minimum custodial sentence, which requires the court to sentence the offender to at least six months in prison unless there are exceptional circumstances. <sup>1</sup>

Don't Stop Your Future Campaigners say: The government promised to ban zombie knives and machetes. But four months later, the legislation needed has only just started its slow journey through Parliament. We're asking for the ban to be implemented immediately.

We're also calling for a new Coalition to End Knife Crime. We need a group that can operate across party lines to bring together everyone with a role to play in tackling this issue – from Government to grassroots orgs, sporting bodies to young people themselves. And for this coalition to be truly transformative, it needs to invite tech companies to the table. Weapons are being advertised and sold to kids online every day. They should be stepping up to help – and stopping those who profit from putting weapons in the hands of young people.

Lastly, it's been proven that cuts to youth services manifest in a rise in youth violence. The last decade of cuts has stripped our communities of the tools they need to provide our kids with opportunities, support and hope. Without those three things, their future – and ours – will be stopped.

It may seem like we're asking for a lot, but things can move at speed if there's political will to do so. American XL Bully dogs were banned quickly because they were considered an immediate threat. Yet serious youth violence killed far more people than dogs in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

Heavenly Creator, we pray for all those unjustly condemned by the violence of knife crime. May Your justice and peace prevail in our streets.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04304/SN04304.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dsyf.com/>

**Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross.**

John 19:15-17

They took Jesus, carrying his own cross, to what is called the Place of the Skull.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

2023 was reported as a year of tragedy due to what was called the knife crime epidemic in Bristol  
Bristol Live reported on an incidents involving a knife on average more than once a week during  
2023, and far too many of them ended in tragedy

The incidents involved threat, assault, injury, and in four cases deaths. Eddie King, Paul Wagland,  
Mikey Roynon and 'Isaac' Brown lost their lives in Bristol due to knife crime.

Their age range was 16 to 61. One of these deaths was in Horfield and a further assault in Horfield  
resulted in life changing injuries.<sup>3</sup>

Lord, grant us the strength to bear the burdens of those affected by knife crime, and inspire us to  
act with courage and compassion.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/year-tragedy-2023-knife-crime-8993015>

**Third Station:** Jesus falls the first time.

Isaiah 53:1

Who would have believed what we now tell? Who could have seen God's hand in this?

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

22 July 2023

A man in his late teens has died after being found injured in Bristol.

The man, believed to be from the city, was found in Grosvenor Road in St Pauls at just after 11pm on Friday and died in hospital.

Another man, also in his late teens, was arrested and police said they believe other people were involved.

Avon and Somerset Police said, while no formal identification had taken place, the victim's immediate family was aware and had their "deepest" sympathies.

"A young man has been arrested who is in his late teens and from the Bristol area, its not clear yet what his involvement in the matter might have been,"

"It was still relatively early in the evening, so we would anticipate there would be a large number of people in the area.

"We're asking for anyone with any information to get in touch, any dashcam footage or ring doorbell footage to get in touch."

The inspector said police were called to reports the man had "substantial injuries". He was taken to hospital and later died.<sup>4</sup>

This was Eddie Kinuthia aged 19.

Merciful God, when we fall under the weight of our challenges, lift us up and renew our determination to fight against the scourge of violence.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-66277623>

**Fourth Station:** Jesus meets his mother.

**Luke 2:22,25,34,35**

He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.'

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

*These are Irene Muthemba's words as she prepared to mark her son Eddie King Muthemba's 20th birthday on Monday 22 January this year – six months after his death.*

"Today marks six months since that dreadful day last July when Eddie was brutally attacked and killed on Grosvenor Road in St Paul's, just yards away from our doorstep.

"Today is also Eddie's birthday. The day he would have turned 20 years old. It is a day we've always celebrated with so much joy, as the special day I held him in my arms for the first time.

"Six months ago, on the 22 July, I held my child in my arms as we desperately tried to save his life as he lay bleeding on the street. There are no words to express our pain, our grief and our trauma as we continue to mourn the loss of Eddie's life.

"Today, we won't be singing happy birthday with joy and celebration

"Instead we will commemorate his birthday in anguish and with utterly broken hearts, knowing with deep sadness and regret that he didn't see this day that he was so excitedly looking forward to.

"He was gonna travel and see the world and work towards becoming a mentor. He had big dreams and aspirations. He was so enthusiastic, positive and confident.

"He had much hope in the face of many challenges that come with growing up. And while I didn't always approve of some of his choices, I love him unconditionally, endlessly and continually. Our whole of our family loves and misses him dearly.

"Our community is still trying to heal and learn, so that no other family has to go through what we've gone through.

"Justice may not bring Eddie back, but it may bring closure. And so fighting for justice for him will bring healing to many. It may change another life or even save another life."<sup>5</sup>

Comforting Spirit, be with the mothers and families mourning the loss of their children to knife crime. Surround them with Your love and consolation.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2024/01/irene-muthemba-a-mother-seeking-justice-for-her-son/>

**Fifth Station:** Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross.

Mark 15:21

On their way through Jerusalem they met a man named Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Idris Elba, the acclaimed actor and prominent campaigner on knife crime, emphasizes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this pressing issue. His insights shed light on the complexities surrounding knife-related incidents.

Elba acknowledges the importance of deterrents to discourage knife possession, but he also recognizes that some individuals carry knives out of fear. For many young people, especially young men, the decision to carry a knife is often influenced by personal experiences—having been stabbed themselves or witnessing someone else being stabbed.

He advocates for a nuanced approach, recognizing that the issue has multiple gradients. While deterrents play a role, it's equally crucial to address the underlying reasons why some individuals feel compelled to carry knives.

In addition to legal measures, Elba calls for more youth services and community interventions. His commitment to raising awareness and seeking effective solutions underscores the urgency of tackling knife crime.

Recently, Elba has urged the UK government to take stronger action by banning the sale of "zombie" knives and machetes. He believes that swift implementation of this ban is essential to prevent further loss of young lives.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus, help us to recognize our brothers and sisters in need of support, and move us to be like Simon, offering our help selflessly.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/08/idris-elba-calls-for-immediate-ban-on-machetes-and-zombie-knives?ref=upstract.com>

**Sixth Station:** Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

**Matthew 25: 40**

Whenever you did this – you did it for me.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

In 2008 Ben Kinsella was just 16 years old when he was stabbed to death in a horrific act of senseless violence. After his death Ben's family formed the Ben Kinsella Trust – which campaigns for action and justice for those affected by knife crime and educates young people so that they can make positive choices to stay safe. The trust says: Our workshops change young people's attitudes to knife crime; debunking the myth that carrying a knife will protect you. They strengthen peer values; ensuring young people give better advice to each other and challenge peers who are carrying (or thinking of carrying) a knife.

The trust has now worked with thousand's of children and young people in schools, youth clubs, churches, sports clubs, showing a different way to respond to the pressures, influences and threats that they experience and minimising risk to young people's lives.<sup>7</sup>

Lord, let us see Your face in every act of kindness, and motivate us to reach out to those scarred by violence with a healing touch.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>7</sup> [The Ben Kinsella Trust | #StopKnifeCrime](#)

**Seventh Station:** Jesus falls the second time.

Mark 12:10-11

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

An investigation into the fatal stabbing of two boys with “their whole lives in front of them” has gathered pace as police said they had arrested two more men in connection with the killings.

Max Dixon, 16, and Mason Rist, 15, were attacked by a group at about 11.20pm on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January in Knowle West, south Bristol. They died later in hospital.

Avon and Somerset police said two men, aged 20 and 22, had been detained, while two others, a 44-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy, had been arrested previously. All four remain in custody.

There was much speculation among the shocked community in Knowle West as to the motive behind the killing.

Speaking in front of floral tributes left for the boys, the police commander said: “Bristol is a large city. And it’s described by many as a city made up of many villages. So there are people who have pride in the neighbourhoods that they come from and that’s part of their identity. But I don’t believe that this is rooted in a gang war.”

Max and Mason are understood to have been friends and both attended the Oasis Academy John Williams secondary school, a mile from the scene.<sup>8</sup>

God of perseverance, when efforts seem futile and violence persists, remind us that every effort to restore peace is precious in Your eyes.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/29/bristol-stabbings-police-make-more-arrests-after-death-of-two-boys>



## **Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.**

Luke 23:28

Jesus turned to them and said, 'Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me, but for yourselves and for your children.'

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

A friend of Dixon's, Mitchell Lyth, 22, was working at nearby Filwood Community Centre on Saturday night and saw the police helicopter above the streets around the time of the stabbing. He said he had known Dixon since he was a baby and had seen him earlier in the evening at about 7pm.

"He was a very quiet kid, very respectful. You would never ever think of him being in this sort of situation. He was always on his PlayStation."

"He would never be a target, he would never get mixed up with anyone," he said. "He's never been in trouble."

In a tribute on Facebook, Mason's sister, Kayleigh, said: "My baby brother ... one of a kind you are. You sleep tight. A beautiful, kind soul gone. Just taken 16 years so young and innocent oh my heart is broken.

"I really hope you know how much we love you. How much I love you. You will be missed kiddo I'll always look out for you in every sunset, shine bright lil' bro."

Tributes were placed near the scene including flowers and cards. A letter had been taped to the fence behind, addressed to Mason from his "Mum, brother and sister", paying tribute and appealing for information.

The City Police commander said more than 100 police officers were working on the investigation with support from neighbouring police forces.

He said: "Any death is awful, but the loss of Mason and Max, who had their whole lives in front of them, is particularly tragic and my heart breaks for the families who have to endure such unimaginable pain and suffering. Our thoughts remain with them during this time."<sup>9</sup>

Mother God, we pray for the women of our communities, that their tears may turn into actions that foster change and bring an end to violence.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/29/bristol-stabbings-police-make-more-arrests-after-death-of-two-boys>

## **Ninth Station:** Jesus falls the third time.

Isaiah 53:4–5

He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain we should have borne. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

A boy who was stabbed to death by two masked attackers in Bristol has been named by police as 16-year-old Darrien Williams.

A murder investigation was launched after the teenager was attacked in Rawnsley Park in the St Philip's area of the city by two people who fled the scene on bicycles, it had previously been reported.

A police spokesperson said "The loss of another young life is devastating and my thoughts are with Darrien's family. I would like to thank everyone who has come forward with information so far and encourage anyone who has information but has yet to speak to us to do so as soon as possible."

Officers met headteachers on Friday to discuss police support before the return of pupils from half-term and the force said officers will be making extra patrols outside schools next week.

Two boys, both aged 15, were arrested on suspicion of murder on Thursday and remain in police custody while inquiries continue, police added. Officers were called to West Street, where the victim had run to after the assault, at 6pm on Wednesday.

The city police commander, said on Thursday evening that more police patrols in the area were necessary in response to the attack. Police in Bristol were also given enhanced stop-and-search powers from 5pm on Thursday. "This is not a decision we have taken lightly," he said. "We understand the fear that exists in some communities around stop and search."

The killing comes weeks after Mason Rist, 15, and Max Dixon, 16, died after being stabbed in the Knowle West area of the city though police said there was "nothing to indicate" Wednesday's stabbing was linked to the one in Knowle Wes.

The police said: "We fully appreciate the magnitude of this incident, and other similar incidents we have seen in recent weeks. We are keeping an open mind as to whether last night's tragedy is linked to other recent assaults.

"We know these incidents are causing concern in our communities, which is why we have launched an operation to tackle serious violence among young people.<sup>10</sup>

Almighty God, in moments of despair, help us to rise again, trusting in Your unfailing support and guidance.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/16/boy-16-who-died-after-stabbing-in-bristol-named-as-darrien-williams>

**Tenth Station:** Jesus is stripped of his clothes.

Mark 15:22

They crucified him and divided his clothing among themselves.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

The Don't Stop Your Future campaign ran an event in Parliament Square, London on the day that Parliament returned from its Christmas recess in January this year. This was also the day that schools reopened after the Christmas holiday.

Clothes were laid out representing those killed by knives in the UK in 2023. In a statement the organisers noted, we are laying these out in the hope that our politicians note that when they are able to return to work, too many of our children will not be returning to school.

Yemi Hughes, whose 19-year-old son Andre Aderemi was murdered, has supported the campaign and donated the outfit her son was wearing when he was killed in 2016.<sup>11</sup>

Lord, strip away the prejudices and fears that lead to violence, and clothe us in garments of understanding and respect.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-67911730>

**Eleventh Station:** Jesus is nailed to the cross.

Luke 23:35,49

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him; the people stayed there watching him, the leaders jeered at him and the soldiers mocked him.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

On Tuesday this week a community has been left "shocked" at another fatal stabbing in a city where three lives have already been lost this year due to knife crime.

A 30-year-old man died after being attacked in the St Pauls area of Bristol on Tuesday evening.

The attack came the night before an open letter calling for knife crime in the city to be stopped was published.

Police officers believe Tuesday's attack happened near the junction of Ashley Road and Grosvenor Road, where the victim sustained life-threatening injuries during an altercation, and later died in the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

A 43-year-old man, arrested on suspicion of murder, remains in police custody.

The City police commander said he does not believe Tuesday's incident poses a risk to the wider public.<sup>12</sup>

We pray for an end to the finality of knife crime, for the wounds it inflicts on our community, and for the courage to prevent such tragedies.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-68500101>

**Twelfth Station:** Jesus dies on the cross.

Luke 23:35,49

the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father into your hands I place my spirit.' He said this and died.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

In the stillness of this station, we remember those lost to knife crime and pray for a resurrection of hope and safety in our community.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

**Thirteenth Station:** Jesus is taken down from the cross.

Mark 15:42–46

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He took the body down and wrapped it in a linen sheet.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

Terre Baptiste has been checking her teenage son’s whereabouts compulsively since a 16-year-old boy was fatally stabbed two weeks ago in a park a mile away from their home in the east of Bristol. “It is very worrying,” says Baptiste, in her living room. “Bristol isn’t a perfect city. But there weren’t stabbings one after the other. It was few and far between. Now it is on our doorstep.”

This bloody three-week period has left parts of the West Country city shocked and uneasy, with the authorities desperately seeking to reassure jittery parents. Last week, Bristol’s mayor and the city’s police commander felt the need to write to parents promising more police patrols and urging them to continue to send their children to school.

Baptiste’s 13-year-old son is still catching the bus to school but she is calling him even more than normal. She says losing a son or daughter is every parent’s worst fear: “No parents should have to bury their child.”

This outbreak of violence has not come out of nowhere. There was a 33% increase in knife violence on the city’s streets between 2022 and 2023, with the largest increase in east-central Bristol. While most of the offenders were over 26, there was also an increase in the number of offenders in the 14-17 age group. There had been four stabbings of teenagers in February before Darrian was killed.

To counteract this rise in violence, some parents are demanding the return of youth centres to provide free activities, safe spaces and support all week round saying “What do you expect when you don’t have youth services? When the children don’t have anything to do? It leads to knife crime, grooming, exploitation, and drug dealing.”

“The less help there is out there, the more we are going to see more young people carrying knives, getting stabbed and getting killed,” said a youth coach. “The city needs to come together to stop this before it becomes a reality.”<sup>13</sup>

Help us, O God, to dismantle the structures that contribute to violence, and to build a society grounded in peace and justice.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/24/its-on-our-doorstep-bristols-fearful-parents-seek-answers-after-three-knife-deaths-in-three-weeks>

## **Fourteenth Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb.**

Mark 15:46

Joseph placed the body in a tomb which had been dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

On Wednesday this week a coalition of media outlets and community organisations was formed: Today we come together as a city united to say enough is enough. We must see an end to the scourge of knife crime that has hit the city in recent weeks, months and years. Knife crime has a devastating effect on the communities it impacts. And never has this been more clear than what's happened so far in Bristol in 2024.

Over just 18 days at the end of January and the start of February, three teenagers in the city have lost their lives. There have been other incidents and all this comes after 2023, a year in which there was an incident involving a knife on average more than once a week. Knife crime is a public health issue, worsened by cuts that have decimated vital services and youth provision, hitting some of the poorest communities hardest.

We know there is no magic way to make this problem go away, but we – the city's media, community leaders, campaigners and more – have joined forces with the following six-point plan:

- \* Set up a task force – We will develop a community-driven task force to meet and discuss the issue, how best to tackle it and how we can make a real difference with those in power.
- \* Getting knives off the street – We will work with the campaigners to raise awareness of initiatives designed to get knives off the streets.
- \* Social media – We will look at the Online Safety Bill and see if it goes far enough where it comes to harmful knife-related content on social media and how easy it is for children to see.
- \* Raise awareness – We will work together to raise the awareness of how knife crime is linked to poverty, education, employment, social exclusion and the collapse in youth services
- \* Lobby the government – We will cover the issue in the context of the General Election, using our findings from the taskforce and our reporting to lobby for change
- \* Hold power to account – We will scrutinise and hold Avon and Somerset Police and Bristol City Council to account on their plans and models to make Bristol safer

Of course, we don't have all the answers. This campaign will be a moving thing that will develop as time passes. But the key message is, we must see change in the city. The best way of giving ourselves a chance of making that happen is by working together.<sup>14</sup>

As we lay to rest the attitudes that perpetuate violence, we look forward to a new dawn where our community thrives in harmony and security.

God in your mercy,

**All: Receive our prayer.**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://thebristolcable.org/2024/03/open-letter-together-for-change-a-city-wide-campaign-against-knife-crime-in-bristol/>

**Fifteenth Station: The resurrection.**

John 20

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you

**All: Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

My resurrection hope is that as a church within this community, of this community and for this community, we can speak to and reply by name to the people of our community. That we can actively continue and enhance our work with children and young people to show a real alternative to fear and violence.

As we make progress with the Welcome Project we will have increasing opportunity to respond to and engage with the needs of our community. May we have the courage and strength to make clear decisions that will support our gift of service to the community; that we have the fortitude to stop at times and reflect on where we are going and shift our direction as our own resources and the presenting needs of our community change.

May we always proceed prayerfully and seeking the guidance and energy of the holy Spirit.

The prayer Jesus taught us: Our Father....

Hymn: My Song is Love Unknown

We end by sharing the words of the grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the community of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.**

Nick Stephenson

Church Warden. March 2024.