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Why Pray the Stations of the Cross? 8 Reasons from Pope Francis

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The Stations of the Cross are an ancient tradition in the Catholic Church going back to the fourth century when Christians went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Like many of our Catholic traditions, the Stations of the Cross can be rich, deep, and meaningful, but at the same time we can lose sight of their significance and how to relate them to our everyday lives.

Here are 8 reasons from our Holy Father on why we should pray the Stations of the Cross.

1. They Allow Us to Place Our Trust in Him

“The Cross of Christ contains all the love of God; there we find his immeasurable mercy. This is a love in which we can place all our trust, in which we can believe.... let us entrust ourselves to Jesus, let us give ourselves over to him, because he never disappoints anyone! Only in Christ crucified and risen can we find salvation and redemption.” —Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

2. They Put Us into the Story

“And you, who do you want to be? Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?” —Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

3. They Remind Us That Jesus Suffers with Us

“The Cross of Christ bears the suffering and the sin of mankind, including our own. Jesus accepts all this with open arms, bearing on his shoulders our crosses and saying to us: ‘Have courage! You do not carry your cross alone! I carry it with you. I have overcome death and I have come to give you hope, to give you life’ (cf. Jn 3:16).” —Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

4. They Compel Us to Action

“But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action.” —Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

5. They Help Us Make a Decision for or Against Christ

“[The Cross] reveals a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. If I embrace his love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but by my own self, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves.” —Address, Good Friday, March 29, 2013

6. They Reveal God’s Response to Evil in the World

“The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world. Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness.” – Address, Good Friday, March 29, 2013

7. They Give Us the Certainty of God’s Love for Us

“What has the Cross given to those who have gazed upon it and to those who have touched it? What has the Cross left in each one of us? You see, it gives us a treasure that no one else can give: the certainty of the faithful love which God has for us.” – Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

8. They Guide Us from the Cross to the Resurrection

“O, Our Jesus, guide us from the Cross to the resurrection and teach us that evil shall not have the last word, but love, mercy and forgiveness. O Christ, help us to exclaim again: ‘Yesterday I was crucified with Christ; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him, today I live with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today I am raised with Him’.” – Address, Good Friday, April 18, 2014