

## **Lenten season reflections**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every year we celebrate Easter after going through a rigorous reflection on the passion of Christ. In the tradition of the Catholic Church, we exercise several activities such as fasting and Meditation on the fourteen occurrences experienced by Christ on His way to the crucifixion and burial, Rosary and other form of prayer. The Catholic Church is very rich in tradition and biblical interpretation. She has given us given us guidelines to reflect on our relationship with the Almighty God. I am a witness that so many of us are challenged by other denominations who do have chances to understand, especially our Christian traditions. Be proud of what you do but at the same time understand the meaning of your faith, be it church traditions or biblical interpretations. As our starting point all of us should keep in mind that as Catholics we believe in both church traditions and the Bible.

Here, I want to highlight the fourteen stations of the Cross and how they originated. Some of the stations are non-biblical, e.g. the three falls of Christ, which means they fall under the tradition of the Catholic Church.

The fourteen station of the cross are:

1. Christ condemned to death;
2. the cross is laid upon him;
3. His first fall;
4. He meets His Blessed Mother;
5. Simon of Cyrene is made to bear the cross;
6. Christ's face is wiped by Veronica;
7. His second fall;
8. He meets the women of Jerusalem;
9. His third fall;
10. He is stripped of His garments;
11. His crucifixion;
12. His death on the cross;
13. His body is taken down from the cross; and
14. Laid in the tomb.

### **Historical Origins of the Stations of the Cross**

The practice of the stations of the Cross and meditation on the passion of Christ started in the 4th century. Many Christian pilgrims who used to visit the Holy Land and the sites of Jesus' passion used to pray and meditate on these mysteries on their way to the Calvary. The practice was promoted by Franciscans who were given custody of the Holy Places in the Holy Land in the 1300s.

After the Moslems recaptured the Holy Land (13th Century) pilgrimage to the Holy Land became too dangerous, the Stations of the Cross became a popular substitute throughout Europe around 16th century. The Stations represented critical events from

Scripture or tradition of Jesus' journey to Calvary. In the mid of 18th Century the stations of the cross which were practiced outdoors were allowed inside churches and eventually fixed at fourteen and they became more popular in the Catholic Church.

### **Benefits of the of the practice of the Stations of the Holy Cross**

It is a powerful way to help us contemplate the journey of Jesus to the cross and its significance for our lives. They allow us to reflect on the gospel and the mystery of our redemption, engages all our senses; the body, mind and heart. They also help us to live our common Christian heritage.

Dear friends let us not hesitate to keep what is good for us and teach our brothers, sisters and children how to practice this devotion. It is not through arguments that we touch hearts but through practicing what we believe and by being a living example.

As we prepare to celebrate the victory of Christ, I invite you, in the midst of our busy schedules, to dedicate some time for prayer, meditation and listen to our inner self.

May God Bless you all.

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