



LENT/LITURGICAL SEASONS/MY FAITH

To the Cross I Run

by RACHEL PENATE

“How beautiful it is to stand before the Crucifix, simply to be under the Lord’s gaze, so full of love.” (Pope Francis)

It’s a bit hard to see at first, but when you step back, and really look at it, the gift of the Cross is incredible. On the Cross, God shows us that His love has no bounds. But, He doesn’t stop there, although He totally could, because WOAH. God also shows us that our suffering has purpose. That no matter what happens, He has conquered it all. Death is not the end. Our suffering has merit for eternal life.

But, for some reason, the Cross – this incredible gift – makes so many of us uncomfortable. We want happy Jesus: smiling, hugging, carrying-an-adorable-lamb-to-safety Jesus. And, the moment we look pain in the eyes we run away for fear it will swallow us whole. But, **if you were to ask me, in which moments of my life I have felt Christ’s presence the most, I would confidently answer you: In the hardest and most painful.** It’s in those times I’ve realized, I seriously cannot do this alone.

We can surely try to go about our lives without looking at a Crucifix or talking about Christ’s brutal death, but it wouldn’t change the reality that Christ has redeemed the whole world by His Cross. His Cross: that ugly, undeserved, bloody,

brutal Cross. THAT is the avenue in which He chose to redeem us. That is the avenue in which we are called to meditate and imitate.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

We are called as disciples to follow Christ – to the fields, the churches, the workplace, the Cross. To deny the Cross is to deny Christ.

It may seem a little daunting... how is it that we can grow in that kind of discipline, in order to follow Him everywhere, even to the Cross? A beautiful practice of the Church to grow as disciples is called the Stations of the Cross. The Stations (as they are commonly called) is a prayerful meditation of the journey Christ took to the Cross, and the many different ways He said, “I love you” along the way.

This is a prayer I absolutely love during the season of Lent as it prepares us to more deeply encounter Christ at Easter. By recognizing the reality of His Cross we come to rejoice in His Resurrection even more. For it is in understanding and encountering sorrow that we can profoundly experience joy.

As often as you can, spend time gazing upon the Cross, meditating on Christ’s love for you. And when you have the opportunity, on your own or at a local parish, pray The Stations of the Cross. I promise you, you won’t be disappointed!

And, this Lent, be reassured that:

You are courageous enough, through the power of God, to face your fears.

You are strong enough, through the power of God, to pick up your crosses,

And your sacrifices, through the power of God, can draw you closer to Christ and to eternity with Him.

Editor’s Note: “Come Walk” a guide to praying the Stations of the Cross, is now available on our app – [goBooks](#), and in our store – [store.LifeTeen.com](#).

About the Author



Rachel Penate

I am a Wisconsin girl at heart who has a slight obsession with the band Switchfoot. When I was little I dreamed of becoming a professional figure skater, but instead found myself studying Education. Currently I reside in the great, yet terribly hot state of Arizona, and serve as Assistant to the Executive Vice President of Life Teen. I love most: my job, the ocean, running half-marathons, my sweet daughter Cecilia, husband Robbie, and above all — my Lord. Follow me on Instagram [@r_penate](#) and Twitter [@LT_rachelp](#).