

Laudare

A LITURGICAL RESOURCE FROM THE DOMINICAN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE LITURGY

SIGN OF THE CROSS

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The sign of the Cross is a liturgical gesture and prayer that reminds the faithful of both the Cross of salvation while invoking the Holy Trinity. Technically, the sign of the Cross is a sacramental, a sacred sign instituted by the Church which prepares a person to receive grace and which sanctifies a moment or circumstance. This gesture has been used since the earliest times of the Church to begin and to conclude prayer and the celebrations of the Eucharist, the other sacraments, and to permeate every activity.

The early Church Fathers attested to the use of the sign of the Cross. Tertullian (d. c. 250) described the commonness of the sign of the Cross: "In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupies us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the Cross" (De corona, 30). St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) in his Catechetical Lectures stated, "Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in everything; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings and in our goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake;

when we are traveling, and when we are at rest" (Catecheses, 13). Gradually, about the ninth century, the sign of the Cross was incorporated in different acts of the Mass, such as the three-fold signing of the forehead, lips, and heart at the reading of the gospel or the blessing and signing of the bread and wine to be offered.

The earliest formalized way of making the sign of the Cross appeared about the 400s, during the era of the Monophysite heresy which denied the two natures in the divine person of Christ and thereby the unity of the Holy Trinity. The sign of the Cross was made from forehead to chest, and then from right shoulder to left shoulder with the right hand. It was a gesture covering an individual's body. This practice was universal for the western Church. The practice for the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches has the individual move from the left shoulder to the right.

An instruction of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) evidences the traditional practice but also indicates a shift in the Latin Rite practice of the Catholic Church: "The sign of the Cross is made with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity. ...This is how it is done: from above to be-

low, and from the right to the left, because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth, and from the Jews (right) He passed to the Gentiles (left)." While noting the custom of making the Cross from the right to the left shoulder was for both the western and eastern Churches, Pope Innocent continued, "Make the sign of the Cross from the left to the right, because from misery (left) we must Cross over to glory (right) just as Christ Crossed over from death to life, and from Hades to Paradise."



Some priests blessed themselves this way so that they and the people will be signing themselves in the same way. Therefore, about this time, the faithful began to imitate the priest imparting the blessing, going from the left shoulder to the right shoulder with an open hand.

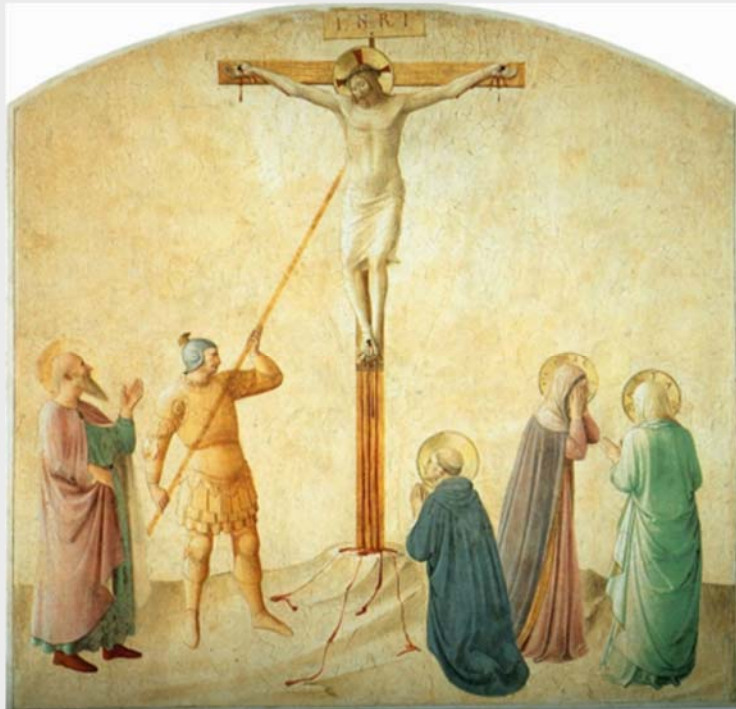
Eventually, this practice became the custom for the Western Church.

No matter how one technically makes the sign of the Cross, the gesture should be made consciously and devoutly. The text of the Sign of the Cross is very short and simple: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Roman Catholics are not the only Christians who make this ritual gesture. All Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox make the Sign of the Cross well, along with many Anglicans and Lutherans and a small percentage of other Mainline Protestants do it as well. Because the Sign of the Cross is a creed that all Christians can assent to, it should not be thought of as just a "Catholic ritual."

In crossing oneself with this ritual gesture, the individual should be mindful of the Holy Trinity, that central dogma that makes Christians "Christians." The individual should remember that the Cross is the sign of our salvation: Jesus Christ, true God who became true man, offered the perfect sacrifice for our redemption from sin on the altar of the Cross. This simple yet profound act is a mini creedal statement and makes each person mindful of the great love of God for us, a love that is stronger than death and promises everlasting life. The sign of the Cross needs to be made with purpose and precision, not hastily or carelessly.

It is not simply a just a gesture from antiquity. It has meaning today. Pope Francis stated recently that to make the sign of the Cross is to mark ourselves as Christians, and that it is something we should do often to remind ourselves that we belong to God. He said, "The Cross is the badge that shows who we are: our speaking, thinking, looking, working [we are] under the sign of the Cross, that is, the love of Jesus, to the end."

The Pope continued, "Making the sign of the Cross when we wake up, before meals, before a danger, to defend against evil, [at] night before sleep means to tell ourselves and others who we belong to, who we want to be."



THE USE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN SOME SACRAMENTS AND OTHER RITUALS

1. Baptism:

N., the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead, and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same. (He signs the child on the forehead in silence. Then he invites the parents and (if it seems appropriate) the godparents to do the same.) - Rite of Baptism (79)

2. Confirmation:

Then the minister dips the tip of the thumb of the right hand in

the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Rite of Confirmation

3. Eucharist:

Then he says, A reading from the holy Gospel, making the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the book and on his forehead, mouth, and breast, which everyone else does as well.

- Gospel Reading (GIRM 134)

He joins his hands and makes the Sign of the Cross once over the bread and the chalice together, saying:

...so that they may become for us the Body and + Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Eucharistic Prayer 2

4. Reconciliation:

Then the priest extends his hands over the penitent's head (or at least his right hand) and says:

God, the Father of mercies... and I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

5. Matrimony:

May the Lord bless + these rings, which you give to each

other as a sign of love and fidelity.

He sprinkles the rings, as the circumstances so suggest, and gives them to the bride and bridegroom.

- Rite of Marriage (66)

6: Liturgy of the Hours:

The Sign of the Cross is made at the beginning and end of every hour and at the Gospel Canticles.

7: Rite of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:

He makes the sign of the cross over the people with the monstrance or ciborium.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

For centuries Christians have retraced the final steps of Jesus in a devotion known as the Way of the Cross (Via Crucis). It is a scripture based prayer experience that places the worshiper on the path, with Jesus that leads to the hill of the crucifixion, with eyes fixed on its ultimate goal, the resurrection on Easter Sunday. The "Via Crucis" or Way of the Cross is defined by faith and not by history.

The following are the traditional Stations of the Cross:

1. Jesus is condemned to die
2. Jesus is made to bear His Cross
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets His mother
5. Simon helps Jesus carry His Cross
6. Veronica wipes Jesus' face
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus is stripped
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus dies on the Cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb



THE VENERATION OF THE CROSS

In the seventh century, the Church in Rome adopted the practice of Adoration (Veneration) of the Cross from the Church in Jerusalem. This ritual is found within the Good Friday liturgy following the proclamation of the Passion. In kissing the Cross displayed worshipers are paying the highest honor to Jesus' Cross as the instrument of our salvation.

Because the Cross is inseparable from His sacrifice, in reverencing the Cross all, in effect, adore Christ.



"Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Salvation of the world. Come, let us adore."

WHAT ARE WE DOING WHEN WE MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

1. Praying. We begin and end our prayers with the Sign of the Cross, perhaps not realizing that the sign is itself a prayer.

2. Opening ourselves to grace. As a sacramental, the Sign of the Cross prepares us for receiving God's blessing and disposes us to cooperate with God's grace.

3. Sanctifying the day. As an act repeated throughout the key moments of each day, the Sign of the Cross sanctifies our day.

4. Committing our whole self to Christ. In moving our hands from our foreheads to our hearts and then both shoulders, we are asking God's blessing for our mind, our passions and desires, our very bodies. In other words, the Sign of the Cross commits us, body and soul, mind and heart, to Christ.

5. Recalling the Incarnation. Our movement is downward, from our foreheads to our chest "because Christ descended from the heavens to the earth," Dominican Pope Innocent III wrote in his instructions on making the Sign of the Cross.

6. Remembering the Passion of Our Lord. Fundamentally, in tracing out the outlines of a Cross on ourselves, we are remembering Christ's crucifixion.

7. Affirming the Trinity. In invoking the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are affirming our belief in a triune God.

Continued on next page...

WHAT ARE WE DOING WHEN WE MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS?

8. Focusing our prayer on God. One of the temptations in prayer is to address it to God as we conceive of Him—the man upstairs, our buddy, a sort of cosmic genie, etc. When this happens, our prayer becomes more about us than an encounter with the living God. We address our prayers to God as he has revealed by Jesus: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
9. Affirming the procession of Son and Spirit. In first lifting our hand to our forehead we recall that the Father is the first person the Trinity. In lowering our hand we “express that the Son proceeds from the Father.” And, in ending with the Holy Spirit, we signify that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, according to Francis de Sales.
10. Confessing our faith. In affirming our belief in the Incarnation, the crucifixion, and the Trinity, we are making a sort of mini-confession of faith in words and gestures.
11. Invoking the power of God’s name. In Scripture, God’s name carries power. St. Paul tells us that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” (Phil 2:10)
12. Crucifying ourselves with Christ. Whoever wishes to follow Christ “must deny himself” and “take up his Cross” as Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 16:24. “I have been crucified with Christ,” St. Paul writes in Galatians 2:19.
13. Asking for support in our suffering. In crossing our shoulders we ask God to support us—to shoulder us—in our suffering.
14. Reaffirming our baptism. In using the same words with which we were baptized, the Sign of the Cross is a “summing up and re-acceptance of our baptism,” according to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.
15. Reverse the curse. The Sign of the Cross recalls the forgiveness of sins and the reversal of the Fall by passing “from the left side of the curse to the right of blessing,” according to de Sales. The movement from left to right also signifies our future passage from present misery to future glory just as Christ “crossed over from death to life and from Hades to Paradise,” Pope Innocent II wrote.
16. Remaking ourselves in Christ’s image. In Colossians 3, St. Paul uses the image of clothing to describe how our sinful natures are transformed in Christ. We are to take off the old self and put on the self “which is being renewed ... in the image of its creator,” Paul tells us.
17. Marking ourselves for Christ. In ancient Greek, the word for sign was *sphragis*, which was also a mark of ownership—branding as it were. For example, a shepherd marked his sheep as his property with a brand that he called a *sphragis*,” In making the Sign of the Cross, we mark ourselves as belonging to Christ, our true shepherd.
18. Sealing ourselves in the Spirit. In the New Testament the word *sphragis* is also sometimes translated as seal, as in 2 Corinthians 1:22, where St. Paul writes that, “the one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.” In making the Sign of the Cross, we are once again sealing ourselves in the Spirit, invoking His powerful intervention in our lives.
19. Witnessing to others. As a gesture often made in public, the Sign of the Cross is a simple way to witness our faith to others.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 10:38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Matthew 27:32 As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

Matthew 27:40 and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Matthew 27:42 “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

Mark 15:32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

Luke 14:27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

John 19:17 and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

John 19:19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Phil 2:8 ... He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Gal 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

WHAT DOMINICANS UNDERSTAND AND SAY ABOUT THE CROSS

- The passion of Christ can bring about a complete reformation of our lives. Whoever wishes to live perfectly need do nothing other than despise what Christ despised on the Cross, and desire what Christ desired. There is no virtue that did not have it's example on the Cross. - St. Augustine
- "The Cross exemplifies every virtue." - St. Thomas Aquinas
- "We cannot produce or give any other fruit but the fruit that we have taken from the tree of life." - St. Catherine of Siena
- "Embrace Jesus on the Cross, loving and beloved..." - St. Catherine of Siena
- "We do not seek joy elsewhere than in Jesus and we avoid any glory which is not that for the Cross." - St. Catherine of Siena
- "Let your heart and soul burn with the fire of love drawn from Jesus on the Cross!" - St. Catherine of Siena, Letters, no. 165
- "Apart from the Cross there is no ladder by which we may get to heaven." - St. Rose of Lima, Office of Readings, 23 August
- "Catherine's [Siena] proposed encounter with Christ Crucified, our bridge to God, can form part or our regular, even, daily spiritual life." - Andrew Brooks, OP, Reflections on St. Catherine
- "St. Martin de pores is often seen in statues, stained glass, and pictures holding a broom and a crucifix. By the wood of both the broom and the Cross, St. Martin sought to conform himself to Christ and achieve union in God."
- "St. Martin knew that a world with great poverty, illness, racial prejudice, and many other hardships, mankind could find something appealing, on a deeper level than the tree of knowledge, in the Cross of Jesus Christ. - Br. Martin Davis, OP, The Wood of Salvation (Martin of Porres)
- "I am the way and the truth and the life," says Jesus and he is nailed to the Cross. - Meister Eckhart
- "The crucifixion event symbolized the potential of suffering to serve as the gateway to vision." - Meister Eckhart
- "It was at the foot of the Cross, where Jesus gave his mother and the beloved disciple to each other, that the community of the Church was born." - Timothy Radcliffe, *The Promise of Life*
- "Forgiveness comes before the Cross..." - Timothy Radcliffe, *The Seven Last Words*
- "To preach the Gospel of peace is to preach the life given in abundance by a crucified Messiah....Go Preach!" - Bruno Cadore, Opening of the 800th Jubilee, video
- "I would like to invite preachers to become more cognizant about the possible deleterious effects of some of the ways we preach about the Cross, and to explore others that have not been adequately mined for the liberative potential." - Sr. Barbara Reid, OP, Preaching the Cross of Christ
- "Only when we have become completely oblivious of self are we ready to bear the Cross for his sake." - Gustavo Gutierrez, OP

ECCLESIAL DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 599-618

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 112-124

John Paul II, "The Redemptive Value of Christ's Passion," Catechesis: 7 September 1988, 8 September 1988, 5 October 1988, 19 October 1988, 26 October 1988.

John Paul II, "Christ's Death: It's Redemptive Character," Catechesis: 14 December 1988, 11 January 1989.

The Sign of the Cross in the Celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours: [Info/CLIOP No. 7, July 2010: Page 27](#)

THE SIXTH WAY OF PRAYER

The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic presume a connection between the body and the soul, devotion and prayer.

Each of the ways speaks to the importance of what is called “vocal” prayer. Such prayer goes beyond words that are said out loud. Bodily though it is, such prayer reaches for that true and total spiritual worship advocated by St.

Paul in Romans 12:1-2. This style of prayer takes up gestures of the body which move the soul with devotion so that the grace-filled and Holy Spirit imbued soul might move the body in true worship to make Christ-like sacrifices of love. In the Sixth Way of prayer, Saint Dominic was seen to pray standing erect with his hands and arms outstretched forcefully in the form of a Cross. Jesus prayed thus while hanging on the Cross, that is, with his hands and arms extended and “with a loud cry and tears ... he was heard because of his reverent submission” [Heb. 5:7].



BLESSED FRA ANGELICO

Why does Bl. Fra Angelico so frequently depict St. Dominic at the foot of the Cross?

What is it that binds St. Dominic to the Cross?



His compassion.

A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

The gesture of the sign of the Cross is one steeped in the Church's theology. It is important to learn the underpinnings of this gesture so that it does not become an empty ritual gesture. The meaning of creation is determined by its supernatural end, which is union with God. However, sin profoundly upset the order of creation: humankind ceased to see the world as a place of goodness and turned it into something equivocal. People placed their hope in creatures and established false earthly goals for themselves.

The purpose of Jesus Christ's coming into the world is to re-establish God's plan and lead the world to its true destiny of union with God. To do this, Jesus, the true Head of the human race, took upon himself the whole of human nature degraded by sin, made this nature his own, and offered it as a Son to the Father. In this way, Jesus restored to every human relationship and situation their true meaning, which is their dependence on God the Father.

This meaning or purpose of Christ's coming is fulfilled through the whole of his life, through each of the mysteries in his life, in which Jesus fully glorifies the Father. Each event and stage in Christ's life has a specific purpose ordered to this salvific goal.

MEANING OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

Meaning of the Mystery of the Cross
The real purpose of the mystery of the Cross is to cancel out the sin of the world (cf. Jn 1:29), which is necessary if we are to achieve filial union with God. This union is, as stated above, the ultimate goal of God's plan (cf. Rom 8:28-30). Jesus rids the world of sin by taking it upon his own shoulders and destroying sin in the justice of his holy heart. [3] The mystery of the Cross consists essentially in the following:

a) He took our sins upon himself. This is seen, in the first place, in his passion and death as related in the Gospels. Since these events happened to the Son of God incarnate and not just to a man, however holy, they have a universal value and effectiveness that applies to the whole human race. In the Gospels we see that Jesus was given by the Father into the hands of sinners (cf. Mt 26:45) and that he himself allowed their wickedness to determine his fate. As

Isaiah says in his powerful portrait of the "Suffering Servant": He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth (Is 53:7).

A lamb without blemish, Christ freely accepted the physical and mental suffering imposed on him by the injustice of sinners, and through it, he took upon himself all the sins of human kind, every offence committed against God. Every human affront is, in some way, the cause of Christ's death. In this sense we say that Jesus "bore" our sins on Golgotha (cf. 1 Pet 2:24).

b) He eliminated sin through his self-giving. Christ did not limit himself to bearing our sins, he also "destroyed" them. They were eliminated because he accepted his sufferings with filial righteousness, in obedient and loving

submission to his Father God; and with innocent righteousness, as one who loves sinners even though they do not deserve it; seeking to forgive our offences out of love (cf. Lk 22:42; 23:34). He offered his sufferings and death to his Father on our behalf and for our forgiveness: With his stripes we are healed (Is 53:5).

The fruit of the Cross is the elimination of sin. We can make this fruit our own through the sacraments (especially the Sacramental of Reconciliation), and we will do so definitively after this life, if we have been faithful to God. The Cross offers all women and men the possibility of avoiding sin and of integrating Christ's sufferings and death into their own path to holiness.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AND THE MORAL LIFE

The two lines of the Sign of the Cross, the horizontal and the vertical, are often understood as representing the two Great Commandments, which Jesus declared when the Pharisees asked him, "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest." What is interesting about the commandments in the Old Testament is that Hebrew scholars say that there are roughly 613 explicit commands in the Old Testament. So the Pharisees ask Jesus, "Of the all of the commandments in the law which are the greatest?" And Jesus says, "Love God and love your neighbor." The vertical line of the Sign of the Cross represents the love of God and the horizontal line represents the love of neighbor.

Not only does the Sign of the Cross represent the theological mysteries of our creed but it also signifies the morality of our faith. The Christian moral life is boiled down to two things: Love God and Love neighbor. And if that is too confusing for some it can actually be boiled down to one thing: love persons. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are known as the three Persons of the Trinity and my neighbor is also a person. So really, you can say the one fundamental commandment of the human person is: love people, God first, neighbor second.

THE CROSS REVEALS GOD'S MERCY AND JUSTICE

God chose to save the world by way of the Cross, but not because he loves pain or suffering, since God only loves good and does good. The Cross exists because sin exists. But love also exists. The Cross is the fruit of God's love in response to people's sins.

God chose to send his Son into the world to bring about the salvation of humankind through the sacrifice of his own life, and this tells us much about God himself. Specifically the Cross reveals to us the mercy and justice of God:

1. God's mercy: Scripture frequently refers to the Father giving his Son into the hands of sinners (cf. Mt 26:54), not sparing his own Son. Through the unity of the divine Persons of the Trinity, the Father who sent him is always present in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word. Therefore, behind Jesus' free decision to give his life for us, there is the Father's surrender of his beloved Son for us, handing him over to sinners; this surrender shows, more than any other gesture in the history of salvation, the Father's love for humankind and his mercy.
2. The Cross also reveals to us God's justice. This does not consist so much in making human beings pay for their sins as in setting us again on the path of truth and goodness, and restoring the gifts destroyed by sin. Christ's faithfulness, obedience and love towards his Father God; his generosity, charity and forgiveness of humankind, his brothers and sisters; his truthfulness, justice and innocence, maintained and reaffirmed at the moment of his passion and death, do all of this. They empty sin of its power to send us to hell, and open our hearts to holiness and justice, since he gives himself for us. God frees us from our sins through justice, Christ's justice.

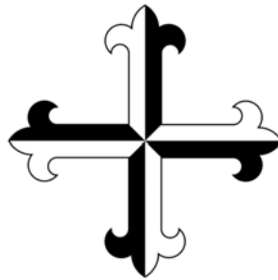
As the result of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and through the presence of his saving power, we are always able to behave as children of God, whatever the situation in which we find ourselves.

CHRIST REDEEMS FROM THE CROSS

Jesus died for our sins (cf. Rom 4:25), to free us from them and redeem us from the slavery that sin introduced into humankind's life. Holy Scripture says that the passion and death of Christ are: a) a covenant sacrifice, b) a sacrifice of expiation, c) a sacrifice of atonement and reparation for sins, d) an act of the redemption and liberation of humankind.

The Redemption worked by Christ on the Cross is universal: it extends to the whole human race. But the fruit and merits of Christ's Passion need to be applied to each person, principally by means of faith and the sacraments.

Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and humankind (cf. 1 Tim2:5). But God the Father has willed that we should not only be redeemed but also be co-redeemers (cf. Catechism , 618). He calls us to take up his Cross and follow him (cf. Mt 16:24), because he suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps " (cf. 1 Pet 2:21).



EFFECTS OF THE CROSS

The main effect of the Cross is to eliminate sin and everything opposed to our union with God. As well as destroying sin, the Cross also frees us from the Evil One, who, while remaining hidden, engineers the whole trauma of sin and eternal death. The devil can do nothing against those who are united to Christ (cf. Rom 8:31-39), and death ceases to be an eternal separation from God, and becomes instead the gateway to our final destiny (cf. 1 Cor 15:55-56).

The Cross, then, removes all the obstacles and opens up the way of salvation and the possibility of grace for all humankind. Together with Christ's Resurrection and his glorious Exaltation, the Cross is the cause of our justification, that is, not only the destruction of sin and all the other obstacles, but also the infusion of new life (Christ's grace which sanctifies the soul). Each sacrament is a different way of participating in Christ's Pasch and of making our own the salvation that flows from it. Baptism in particular frees us from the death introduced by original sin and enables us to live the new life of the risen Christ.

REFLECTION

- In the Sacrament of Baptism, you were claimed for Christ with the sign of the Cross traced on your forehead. What effect does that have on your life and ministry today?
- From the Cross Jesus entrusts his life to the Father. Have you put your life and, indeed, your life beyond this life, in God's hands? How will you experience God's salvation through the Cross of Christ in your life today?
- How do you preach the Cross as good news for the poor and a stumbling-block for the comfortable?

ACTION

We sometimes forget that our actions should flow from our prayer life. The Cross of Christ is not just a furnishing for the house, an ornament to wear, or a ritual gesture, but a call to the love with which Jesus sacrificed himself to save humanity from evil and from sin," intimated by Pope Francis in a presentation on March 12, 2018.



These words are a powerful call to action for followers of Jesus as every day we redouble our commitment to take up our Cross. In doing so, we learn anew to die to the sin that continues to hinder us as we follow Jesus; as we seek to lift the burdens of others through our preaching, service, and ministry so as to one day find ourselves in the glorious good life of God's kingdom.

CONCLUSION

We preach Christ crucified and so, let us bring to Christ's Cross our joys, our sufferings, our successes, and our failures. There we will find a Heart that is open to us and understands us, forgives us, loves us and calls us to bear this love in our lives, to love each person, each brother and sister, with the same love.



O Father, who willed to save us by the death of your Son on the Cross, grant that we who have known on earth the mystery of his love, may be his witnesses, in our words and actions, in our daily lives, before all those whom you place on our path. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOTES

