

Way of the Cross

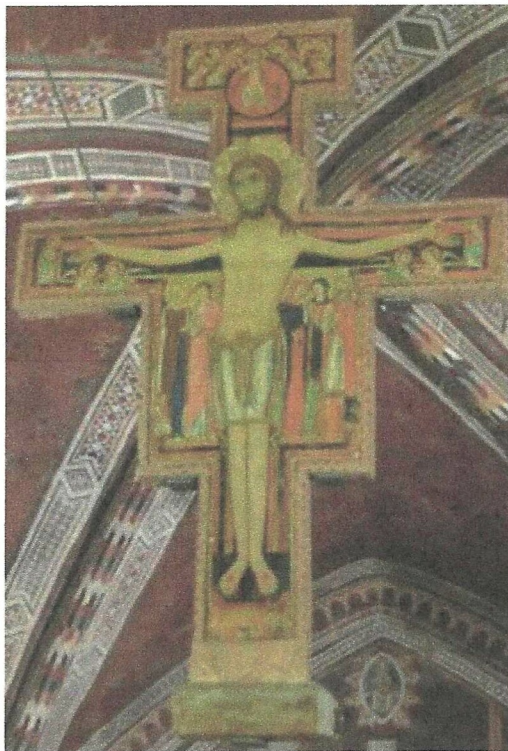
Sunday, January 1, 2023 12:40 PM

The Way of the Cross

"The cross is the school of love" - St. Maximilian Kolbe

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 "When I came to you, brothers, proclaiming the mystery of God, I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except **Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**"

Opening Prayer: O Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart. Give me, Lord, a firm faith, sure hope, and perfect love, profound humility-the sign and knowledge so that I may carry out all Your commandments. Amen. - Saint Francis prayer before the crucifix.



Particularly dear to Francis was an ancient chapel long allowed virtually to fall into ruins, dedicated to San Damiano. In it hung a Byzantine wooden crucifix. Before it, Francis loved to pray for the light which would shine through the darkness of his mind. As he looked up one day, he saw the lips of the Christ move, and he heard the words, "Francis, you see that my house is falling down; go and repair it for me." And Francis answered simply, "Willingly, Lord."

History on the Way of the Cross/Stations of the Cross/The Sorrowful Way

Tradition holds that our Blessed Mother visited daily the scenes of our Lord's passion. After Constantine legalized Christianity in the year 312, this pathway was marked with its important stations. St. Jerome (342-420), living in Bethlehem during the later part of his life, attested to the crowds of pilgrims from various countries who visited those holy places and followed the Way of the Cross.

St. Francis himself, inspired by a desire to evangelize, went to the Holy Land during the Fifth

Crusade. It was a dangerous time to be in the Holy Land, but St. Francis desired to share the Gospel with everyone. He even managed to appear before the sultan, who was the nephew of Saladin, the original leader of the forces opposing the Crusaders. St. Francis presented the Good News of Jesus Christ to the sultan in a bold gesture of zeal; a gesture that St. Francis knew could end in martyrdom. Instead, the sultan graciously received St. Francis, and eventually, he returned home to Italy unharmed.

Francis later established a priory in Jerusalem, known as the "Custody of the Holy Land," devoted to guarding and promoting holy Christian pilgrimage sites. In 1342, because of St. Francis's connection to the Holy Land, combined with the well-known Franciscan devotion to the Passion of Christ, Pope Clement VI entrusted the care of holy sites in Jerusalem to the Franciscan Order. This meant that the Franciscans would be in charge of leading pilgrims along the Via Dolorosa, and afterwards, the stopping points along the way began to be referred to as "stations."

Thanks to the rapid, widespread growth of the Franciscans in Europe, outdoor shrines that duplicated the "stations" of the Via Dolorosa began to be erected in places where the Franciscans resided, and this is how the "Stations of the Cross" as we know them came to be. Many of these Stations were elaborate, and where these sites still exist today, you can see the exquisite, skilled work that went into creating them.

Eventually, the Stations of the Cross were also moved to the inside of Franciscan churches. In 1731, Pope Clement XII granted permission for all churches to have the Stations of the Cross, as long as they were erected by a Franciscan. At the same time, he fixed the number of Stations at 14. Then in 1857, Bishops in England were permitted to erect the Stations without a Franciscan present, and in 1862 this right was granted to the Bishops throughout the entire Church. The Stations of the Cross are now very commonly found in churches of many denominations, and especially in Roman Catholic churches.

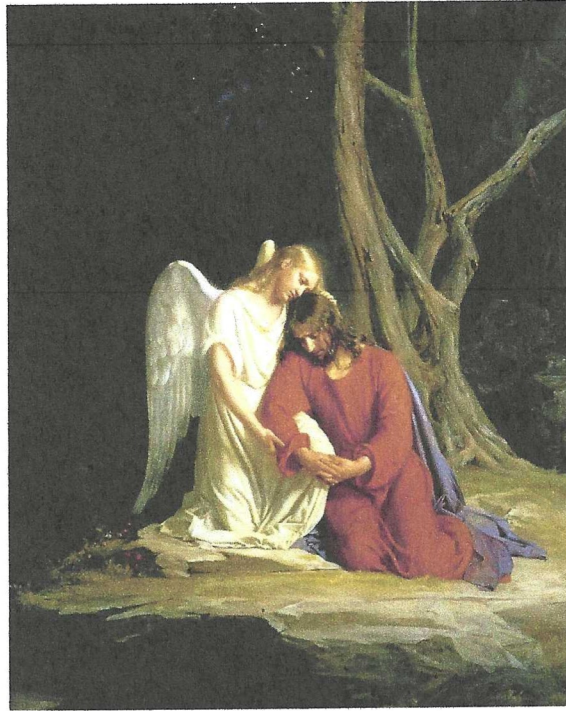
"There is more merit to one hour of meditation on My sorrowful Passion than there is to a whole year of flagellation that draws blood; the contemplation of My painful wounds is of great profit to you, and it brings Me great joy." (St. Faustina's Diary, 369).

"My daughter, try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and if you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Blessed Sacrament, My Heart, which is full of mercy; and should you be unable to step into the chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant. I claim veneration for My mercy from every creature, but above all from you, since it is to you that I have given the most profound understanding of this mystery." (St. Faustina's Diary, 1572).

Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary contemplate the Way of the Cross	Fruit of the Mystery
The Agony in the Garden	Acceptance of God's Will
The Scourging at the Pillar	Purity of Intention
The Crowning with Thorns	Contrition
The Carrying of the Cross	Patience
The Crucifixion	Perseverance

We are not to be afraid of suffering and death. People were terrified of the cross, but Jesus overcame them both for us.

"What really hurts is not so much suffering as the fear of suffering. If welcomed trustingly and peacefully, suffering makes us grow. It matures and trains us, purifies us, teaches us to love unselfishly, makes us poor in heart, humble, gentle, and compassionate toward our neighbor. Fear of suffering, on the other hand, hardens us in self-protective, defensive attitudes, and often leads us to make irrational choices with disastrous consequences." Fr. Jacques Philippe, p. 47



Luke 9:23–24 - "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and **follow me**. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever wishes to lose his life for my sake will save it.

"Jesus said I am **the way** and the truth and the life. No one comes to Father except through me."
John 14:6

John 15:12-13 - "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you."

Jesus is telling us actively to take up our crosses, to seek them out, to carry them as he willingly carried his. What Jesus did on the cross was bear the burden of the world's sin. He bore others' burdens in love. And this is what we must do: actively, proactively seek out ways to lighten other people's loads.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer commented that when the Lord summons a person to discipleship, he calls him to come and die. When the blind Bartimaeus received his sight, at the midpoint of the Gospel of Mark, he followed Jesus up the road that would lead to Calvary. The way of the Christian life begins and ends with the man who is God dying on a cross.

We are to humble ourselves in order to be exalted

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
Luke 18:9-14

The cross is the lowest place, the truest act of humility. God teaches us to choose the lowest place at a banquet. True humility requires great strength.

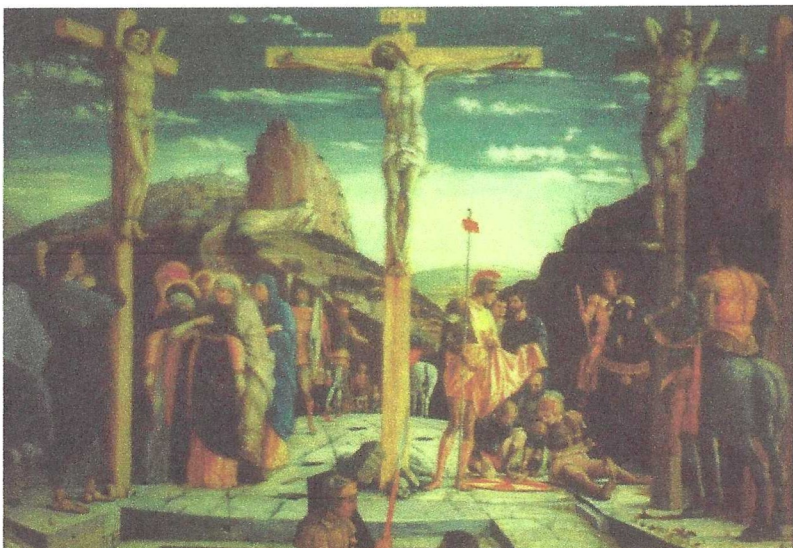
"Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied himself**, taking the form of a **servant**, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he **humbled himself** and became **obedient** unto death, even death on a cross," (Phil.2:5-8). [1]

"My child, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God." Sirach 3:17-18



"It shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:43-45

Suffering has redemptive value, offer it up for the salvation of souls, especially when it is undeserved.



The mother of James and John ask Jesus if her two sons can sit one on his right and one on his left in his kingdom. Jesus said you don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? Matthew 20:21-22. Jesus is crucified with one on his right and one on his left.

Psalm 22 - God reminds of this Psalm as he is dying on the cross. "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? God doesn't abandon us in our suffering. He hears our cries and delivers us just as the Father delivered his Son.

Psalm 9:13 - "For the avenger of bloodshed remembers, does not forget the cry of the afflicted."

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10.

"After recalling the apostles they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worth to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name." Acts 5:40-41

"It is a faithful saying: that if we have died with him, we will also live with him. If we suffer, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us." 2 Timothy 2:11-12

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all." Psalm 34:19

"The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble." Psalm 9:9-10

Comments

Just as Jesus suffered on the cross for our redemption we too can and should offer up our sufferings for the redemption of our soul (grow in holiness) and for the redemption of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones souls. We can turn our suffering into saving power. We can tell God that we are offering up our suffering for the salvation souls or to ease the suffering of those in purgatory.

So if some picks on you, blames, you, accuses you and you know you are innocent and have done nothing wrong you can turn that suffering or cross into redemptive suffering. Jesus didn't commit the sins he paid for on the cross, but he chose to bear the weight of our sin and offered it to the Father in order to save us. Jesus suffered voluntary because he was not guilty. So when we do this we can merit grace too. If you are sick and don't feel good offer your suffering up to the Lord as a sacrifice for others and for God. Don't waste these opportunities. This is how we can learn to love suffering/our crosses.

Saint Quotes

"Let us love the cross very much, for it is there that we discover our life, our true love, and our strength in our greatest difficulties." St. Maria de Mattias

"Let us love the Cross and let us remember that we are not alone in carrying it. God is helping us. And in God who is comforting us, as St. Paul says, we can do anything." St. Gianna Molla

"Fix your minds on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Inflamed with love for us, he came down from heaven to redeem us. For our sake he endured every torment of body and soul and shrank from no bodily pain. He himself gave us an example of perfect patience and love. We, then, are to be patient in adversity." St. Francis of Paola

"I know well that the greater and more beautiful the work is, the more terrible will be the storms that rage against it." St. Faustina

"You must accept your cross; if you bear it courageously it will carry you to Heaven." St. John Vianney

The cross is meaningless without the resurrection.

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with

Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:1-4

The Cross Heals our body and soul and saves us from sin and death. It purifies our body, mind and soul and brings us back to life. - By looking at the cross we are healed. The blood of a lamb is used as to make anti-venom.

"He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been **healed**. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and **guardian of your souls**." 1 Peter 24-25

Never forget that our salvation story doesn't end on the cross. Jesus resurrected on the 3rd day after dying on the cross and he will never leave us hanging on the cross either. We will resurrect with him in heavenly glory if we are patient and persevere. Our life on Earth is a cross, but we also have crosses that come and go throughout earthly journey. Don't ever lose Hope, there is always light at the end of the tunnel and they are always for a greater good.

Number 21 4-9 - Story of Moses and the bronze serpent

John 3:13-17 - "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the dessert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Whoever looked at the serpent was healed.

9/14 "Exaltation of the Cross Meditation"

September 14th is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (also known as the Triumph of the Cross). Early in the 4th century St. Helena, mother of Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the actual locations where the events of Jesus' life took place. She found the True Cross which immediately became an object of veneration for the Church. Constantine built a basilica on Calvary marking the site of the Crucifixion and dedicated it on this day in the year 335 A.D. The basilica was later destroyed by the Persians and the true cross was stolen. This day also marks the recovery of the cross by Emperor Heraclius II who returned it to Jerusalem, carrying it on his own back and restoring it to the Church in 629 A.D.

The Cross Protects us

The Sign of the cross - We do this at the beginning and ending of prayer. Also, at the beginning and ending of Mass. It represents the Trinity, (North, South, East, and West all the corners of the earth), Love, laying down your whole self. God had the Israelites mark the door posts with the blood of the lamb. We mark ourselves with the sign of the cross and we drink the blood of Christ. This protects our bodies and souls from evil. The mouth is the doorpost to our soul which is where we receive the body and blood of Christ.

We hang crucifixes in our houses. Handheld crosses and rosaries are often carried and we wear crucifixes. Sometimes they are in the shapes of swords or made to look like trees.

The Cross is the ultimate Weapon

1Corinthians 1:18 "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power of God**."

It is how we fight evil. Through compassion, forgiveness, nonviolence. Not with the weapons of the world or by employing strategies of worldly rulers. By laying down our life for our neighbors for Jesus.

The crucifix is so powerful it makes the devil flee and is used in exorcism and for the anointing of

the sick.

"Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!" Matthew 27:39-40 Also, he told Peter to get behind him Satan when he tried to rebuke Jesus after he told the disciples he must suffer. Matthew 16:23

When you hear people say "My Jesus is not on the cross anymore." It should concern you, along with churches without a cross and for that matter a crucifix. It should make you want to turn the other direction.

The Cross is an instrument for peace

"For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making **peace by the blood of the cross** (through him), whether those on earth or those in heaven" - 1 Colossians 1:19-20

[Saint Faustina's Way of the Cross](#)

Eucharistic Adoration with the [Litany of the blood of Christ](#)