

Christ, the Cross and Holiness

As with all things Catholic, today's holy Gospel from Mt 24, points to **the Cross** of our Savior Jesus, Christ, "...and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ... and all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty."

✠ **Jesus Christ and His Cross will make us holy.**

- ➔ At the Last Judgment, Christ the King will judge the world with and by His holy **Cross**.
- ➔ For now, as we await His coming in glory, Christ calls *and makes us holy* with and by the same **Cross**.

✠ Fr. Jean Nicolas Grou (+1803) lists six characteristics of our Lord's sanctity.

- ⇒ Jesus sought only God's glory.
- ⇒ Jesus' piety was interior.
- ⇒ Jesus strove for the eternal, not the temporal.
- ⇒ Jesus was a model of simplicity.
- ⇒ Jesus was merciful.
- ⇒ Jesus accepted suffering.

✠ It is especially Our Lord's **Cross** which helps us to adhere ever more perfectly to Jesus and be ever more closely united to Him.

- ➔ This is the perennial testimony of the Saints.
 - ◆ "I understood that to become a saint one had to suffer much." – St. Therese of Lisieux
 - ◆ "If you really want to love Jesus, first learn to suffer, because suffering teaches you to love." – St. Gemma Galgani
 - ◆ "All those who belong to Jesus Christ are fastened with Him to the cross." – St. Augustine
 - ◆ Consider "*Letter to the Friends of the Cross*" by **St. Louis de Montfort**

✠ **Holy Mass**

- ➔ The Sacrifice of the Mass is a *perpetuation* of the Sacrifice of the Cross.
- ➔ Holy Mass is the *extension* of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross across all time and space.
- ➔ The Sacrifice of the Cross merited our redemption, the Sacrifice of Mass applies the fruits to our souls.
- ➔ Holy Mass and the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary *are one*.
- ➔ The Sacrifice of the Mass is the soul of faith, the center of the Catholic religion, the compendium of all the good and beautiful to be found in the Church of God – *St. Leonard*

But the Cross and the Mass are one, so...

† **The Cross**

- ↳ The Cross is the soul of faith, the center of the Catholic religion, the compendium of all the good and beautiful to be found in the Church of God.
- ↳ For twenty centuries we may say that the Church has lived on the Sign of the Cross. She has not, for a single instant, ceased to employ it.
- ↳ The Sign of the Cross is the most terrible weapon against the devil!
- ↳ *Without the Sign of the Cross nothing is holy.* We can't grow in holiness without It!
- ↳ Holy Mother Church wishes that we should have the Sign of the Cross continually before our eyes and mind *at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*
- ↳ Every aspect and every detail of Holy Mass *must* point to the Sacrifice of the Cross.
- ↳ This is what the Mass is! Yet because this is a *great mystery*, we need all the help possible of visible signs in the Mass which direct us to this Mystery.

† **The Cross** is the greatest sign of Christ's infinite love for sinful man.

It is the great sign of *the truth about God* and *the truth about man*:

- ➔ The truth about God → His infinite love and mercy
- ➔ The truth about man → a sinner

† **The Cross** gives perfect glory to God, opens the gates of Heaven, and sanctifies man.

It is God's grand work and great grace.

Some Examples of the Sign of the Cross at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

- At the beginning and end of Mass
- At the center of the Altar and the five crosses *on* the center of the Altar
- On all the vestments; in particular, on the back of the priest's chasuble
- On all the sacred vessels
- On the sacred linens
- At the end of the great prayers of the Mass, e.g. Gloria, Credo, Sanctus
- At the Gospel (including the Last Gospel): the signing of the Gospel and of oneself
- As the paten and chalice are placed on the Altar at the Offertory
- Blessing of the water at the Offertory
- Throughout the Roman Canon
- Five crosses over the bread and wine right *before* the Consecration (blessing)
- Five crosses over the Body and Blood of Christ right *after* the Consecration (Five Wounds)
- Three crosses right before the Minor Elevation
- Five crosses with the Body of Christ at the Minor Elevation
- Priest signs himself with the paten during the *Libera nos* prior to the *Pax Dómini*
- Three crosses with the Body of Christ (particle) during the *Pax Dómini*
- Priest signs himself with the Body of Christ immediately before consuming It
- Priest signs himself with the Blood of Christ immediately before consuming It
- The faithful receive Holy Communion with the Sign of the Cross

Together with Holy Mother Church, we offer our adoration and praise to **the Holy Cross**:

*Alleluia! Sweet the wood, sweet the nails, sweet the load that hangs on thee:
thou only wast worthy to bear the King and Lord of Heaven. Alleluia.*