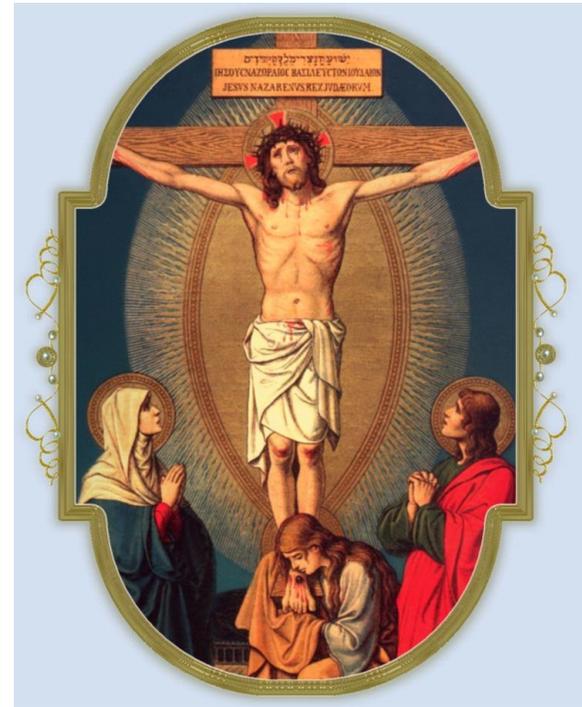


Link to Liturgy



Feast Day The Cross: Trophy of Victory

Lessons and Discussions

Page 5 – The Cross: A privileged place

“everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”

Page 8 – Lift high the Cross

“the Son of Man be lifted up”

Page 10 – No Greater Love

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son”

Page 12 – The Cross: Trophy of Victory

“the world might be saved through him”

Page 14 – The Cross: “In Hoc Vince”

“the world might be saved through him”

Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.

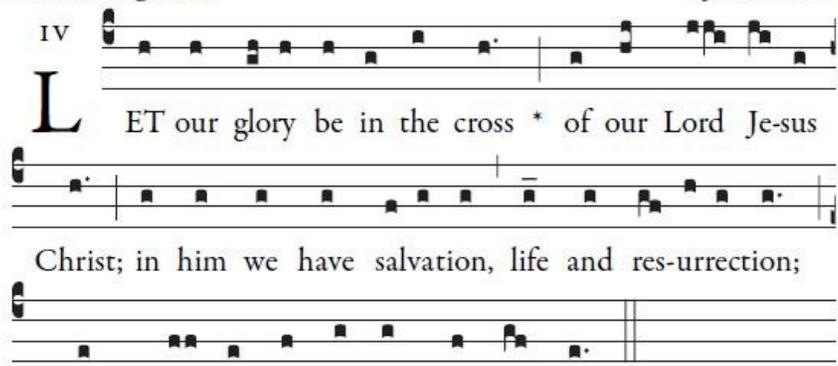


[See also Link to Liturgy Lenten Series - A Man of Suffering]

Entrance Antiphon (Gal 6:14) – Daily Roman Missal

This should be chanted three times so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Nos autem gloriari *Cf. Gal 6: 14*



IV **L** ET our glory be in the cross * of our Lord Je-sus
Christ; in him we have salvation, life and res-urrection;
through him we are rescued and set free.

Alternate options:

At the Name of Jesus
Crown Him with Many Crowns
Lift high the Cross
Take Up Your Cross
What Wondrous Love Is This?
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Lord I lift your name on high
Once again
We want to see Jesus lifted high
You are my King [Amazing Love]
Crossroads (Remnant)

Opening Prayer – Daily Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

O God, who willed that your Only Begotten Son
should undergo the Cross to save the human race,
grant, we pray,
that we, who have known his mystery on earth
may merit the grace of his redemption in heaven.

“The End” Notes

- [1] Luke 1:46
- [2] Rite of Baptism (Blessing of Water, prayer B)
- [3] Rite of Baptism (Blessing of Water, prayer A)
- [4] Hans Urs von Balthasar
- [5] Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini
- [6] Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.; Basic Catholic Catechism Course; page 22
- [7] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 941
- [8] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 1069
- [9] Matthew 22:14
- [10] Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.; Modern Catholic Dictionary; page 328
- [11] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 1426
- [12] Rite of Baptism (Clothing with a Baptismal Garment)
- [13] John 13:25
- [14] Romans 5:5
- [15] Blessed John Paul II; Homily September 14, 2003
- [16] Spirit of Saragossa; a Marianist Retreat
- [17] *Startlingly Human* published 30 August 2013 by [Richard J. Clark](#)
- [18] Blessed John Paul II; Homily September 14, 2003
- [19] Philippians 2:8-9
- [20] Blessed John Paul II; Homily September 14, 2003
- [21] Mark 15:39
- [22] Luke 15:22-23
- [23] Cf. Numbers 21:4-9
- [24] Blessed John Paul II; Homily September 14, 2003
- [25] Servant of God, Fulton J. Sheen, *The Divine Romance, the Pulpit of the Cross*
- [26] Servant of God, Fulton J. Sheen, *The Divine Romance, the Pulpit of the Cross*
- [27] Fr. Leonard Goffine's *the Church's Year*
- [28] Spiritual Reading in the Link to Liturgy packet
- [29] Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.; Basic Catholic Catechism Course; page 23
- [30] See Fr. John A. Hardon S.J.; Basic Catholic Catechism Course; page 23
- [31] Blessed John Paul II; Homily September 14, 2003
- [32] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 14, *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*
- [33] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 14, *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*
- [34] Hymn Sung by the Greek Church; Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 14, *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*
- [35] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 14, *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*
- [36] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.B. *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. 14, *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*
- [37] Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- [39] Saint Sophronius

and calling to mind the words which David,
Your prophet, said of You, my Jesus:
"They have pierced My hands and My feet,
they have numbered all My bones."
Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Marian Antiphon – Stabat Mater

S Tabat Mater do-lo- ro- sa Jux-ta crucem lacri-mosa, Dum pende-bat Fi-li-us.

2 Cujus a-ni-mam gementem, con-tris-tatam et dolentem per-tran-si- vit gla-di-us.

3 O quam tristis et af-flic-ta fu- it il- la benedicta mater U-ni-gen-i ti!

4 Quae maerebat et do-lebat pi-a mater, cum vide-bat Na-ti poe-nas in-cl-i-ti.

5 Quis est homo qui non fle-ret, matrem Christi si videret in tanto sup-pli-ci-o?

1. At the cross her station keeping, Stood the mournful Mother weeping, Close to Jesus to the last.
2. Through her heart, His sorrow sharing, All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had pass'd.
3. Oh, how sad and sore distress'd, Was that Mother highly blest, Of the sole-begotten One!
4. Christ above in torment hangs; She beneath beholds the pangs, Of her dying glorious Son.
5. Is there one who would not weep, Whelm'd in miseries so deep Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – John 3:13-17 – Daily Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – September 14

From a discourse by Saint Andrew of Crete, bishop

We are celebrating the feast of the cross which drove away darkness and brought in the light. As we keep this feast, we are lifted up with the crucified Christ, leaving behind us earth and sin so that we may gain the things above. So great and outstanding a possession is the cross that he who wins it has won a treasure. Rightly could I call this treasure the fairest of all fair things and the costliest, in fact as well as in name, for on it and through it and for its sake the riches of salvation that had been lost were restored to us.

Had there been no cross, Christ could not have crucified. Had

there been no cross, life itself could not have been nailed to the tree. And if life had not been nailed to it, there would be no streams of immortality pouring from Christ's side, blood and water for the world's cleansing. The legal bond of our sin would not be canceled, we should not have obtained our freedom, we should not have enjoyed the fruit of the tree of life and the gates of paradise would not stand open. Had there been no cross, death would not have been trodden underfoot, nor hell despoiled.

Therefore, the cross is something wonderfully great and honorable. It is great because through the cross the many noble acts of Christ found their consummation – very many indeed, for both his miracles and his sufferings were fully rewarded with victory. The cross is honorable because it is both the sign of God's suffering and the trophy of his victory. It stands for his suffering because on it he freely suffered unto death. But it is also his trophy because it was the means by which the devil was wounded and death conquered; the barred gates of hell were smashed, and the cross became the one common salvation of the whole world.

The cross is called Christ's glory; it is saluted as his triumph. We recognize it as the cup he longed to drink and the climax of the sufferings he endured for our sake. As to the cross begin Christ's glory, listen to his words: *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified, and God will glorify his at once.* And again: *Father, glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world came to be.* And once more: *Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven: I have glorified it and will glorify it again.* Here he speaks of the glory that would accrue to him through the cross. And if you would understand that the cross is Christ's triumph, hear what he himself also said: *When I am lifted up, then I will draw all men to myself.* Now you can see that the cross is Christ's glory and triumph.

Responsory – Office of Readings – September 14

O glorious Cross, your arms upheld the priceless ransom of captive mankind.
- Through you the world has been saved by the blood of the Lord.

Hail, O Cross, consecrated by the body of Christ; his members have made your wood more noble than precious pearls.

worshipper of the sacred Wood is he who carries out his worship in deeds.”[38]

Activity – How many Crucifixes do you have in your house?

The Cross is our Trophy of victory over sin. It is this reason that we proudly wear and display our trophy in public as well as in our homes. There are two options for this game. If you have a Facebook page for your group, a flockNote list or some other type of social network that allows a poll to be created, you can create a poll with the question, “How many crucifixes are in your home?” You might want to specify, “hanging on your walls or not counting necklaces.” You can create the poll prior to this lesson and then give the results during the lesson or let everyone know that the poll has been created and that everyone should participate that week and the results will be given at the next lesson. It is also good to specify whether you are going to allow just crucifixes or both crucifixes and crosses are allowed. Many people have cross walls in their homes, so it might be best to just count crucifixes, since they are sacramentals. An alternative option to the activity is to create a video, similar to a reality show, in which you can go to three or four parishioners homes and ask to count their crucifixes, you could do this with permission or on the spot. It would be important to ask them questions like, “What is your favorite one?”, “What is the oldest one?” etc. It would be good to tape this prior to the lesson and play it at the lesson.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer before a Crucifix

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus,
while before Your face I humbly kneel and,
with burning soul,
pray and beseech You
to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments
of faith, hope and charity;
true contrition for my sins,
and a firm purpose of amendment.
While I contemplate,
with great love and tender pity,
Your five most precious wounds,
pondering over them within me

How does the Cross bring about victory over Atheism, Relativism, and Secularism? Over the last two centuries the Cross has again been attacked and purposely removed from society. There is again an attempt to buried, what will never be buried.

In 2012, two Christian women brought a case to the European Court of Human Rights. Nadia Eweida and Shirley Chaplin, claimed that they were discriminated against when their employers barred them from wearing the symbols [The Crucifix and Cross]. The European Court states “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”[37] The Government’s official response stated that wearing the cross is not a “requirement of the faith” and therefore does not fall under the remit of Article 9. In short, secular governments which have fallen to relativism and atheism will not exalt the Cross but rather strive to bury it.

During the communist occupation of Albania in the early to mid-1900’s, the communist government forbid people to wear or have crucifixes. There was an older woman, whose house was searched by the communist guards. The guards knew the woman was Catholic and searched her house without giving the woman notice. The guards found no Crucifixes in the house. The woman taunted the guards by saying that she did have a Crucifix in the house, but that no matter how long the searched, they would never find it. The guards searched more, tearing the woman’s home apart in search of the forbidden Crucifix. Finally, the guards, not finding the Crucifix verbally and physically abused the woman trying to pressure her into telling them where the Crucifix was. She remained silent, stared at the guards and said, “Do you want to know where my Crucifix is?” Then she simply made the Sign of the Cross. This woman carried the Crucifix with her daily by living the faith and if necessary, being willing to die for the faith.

The true power of the Cross comes in our battle not only against Satan (destroyed at Calvary) or against the world (for power after power has fallen to the Cross). The true power of the Cross comes in our battle against the flesh, our own inclination to sin and rebel against God and His holy will. “The cross is brought before our minds; who will not crucify himself? The true

- Through you the world has been saved by the blood of the Lord.

The Cross: A Privileged Place – Lesson and Discussion

“everyone who believes in him may have eternal life”

Who was at the foot of the Cross? We know that the Blessed Mother, Mary the wife of Clopas, Saint John the Apostle, and Mary Magdalene were at the foot of the Cross. Blessed John Paul II called the Cross a, “privileged place”. It is a privilege to be not only at the foot of Christ, but also place ourselves alongside Our Lady, Saint John, and Saint Mary Magdalene.

Who is called to be at the foot of the Cross? Each of the three tells us something about this “privileged place” at the foot of the Cross. It is God who places each one of us there, and invites all to the Cross.

The Holy – Mary is at the privileged place of the Cross because of holiness. Our Lady is immaculate and free from sin. Therefore, a life of holiness in which we pursue good and avoid evil, will lead us to the Cross. The Cross is the source of holiness; the font of salvation. At the beginning of Jesus’s life Mary proclaimed, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.”[1] At the end of Jesus’s life, Mary is still proclaiming the greatness of the Lord as she is placed at the foot of the Cross and stands by her Son with dignity and courage proclaiming the victory of the Cross.

It is no coincidence that the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross falls within the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sept. 8). Mary is intimately connected with the Cross. This is expressed in the ancient prayer of the Church the *Stabat Mater* (found at the end of this packet) that is prayed verse by verse at the end of each Station of the Cross.

The beginning of our life with Christ took place at our baptism. At our baptism the priest or deacon prayed, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, the Father’s only Son, for you offered yourself on the Cross that in the blood and water flowing from your side and through your death and resurrection the church might be born.”[2] Therefore, at the beginning of our life, we are at the Cross and called to a life of holiness. If that call to holiness is lived out, we will end at the foot of the Cross, sharing in the victory of Christ. “We are buried with Christ in the death of

baptism” and “rise also with him to newness of life.”[3]

This newness of life is the call to holiness, a call to live the Life of Christ, to live the Gospel. Our Lady lived this life perfectly. It is a life of death and resurrection, of suffering and love. “If one does away with the fact of the Resurrection, one also does away with the Cross, for both stand and fall together, and one would then have to find a new center for the whole message of the Gospel.”[4] We start at the Cross, and we end at the Cross. In fact, as a Christian, we never truly leave the Cross, for it is our center, our Book of Life. In the words of Mother Cabrini, “My book will be the Crucifix. I will always keep it before my eyes to learn how to love and to suffer.”[5] Mary is our model in holiness. “She is also Mother of the Church by the generous sacrifice of her Son on the Cross, at which time Christ made us children of Mary when He told John, ‘This is your mother’ (John 19:27).”[6]

How to the lay faithful live out the call to holiness? The faithful, through baptism have been called to holiness, given a mother (Mary), who is the perfect example of holiness, and given the grace necessary to answer the call. “Lay people share in Christ's priesthood: ever more united with him, they exhibit the grace of Baptism and Confirmation in all dimensions of their personal family, social and ecclesial lives, and so fulfill the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized.”[7] The lay faithful are united intimately to the Cross of Christ and share the priesthood and redemptive work of Jesus Christ at every liturgy. “Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church.”[8] The “work of our redemption” is necessary and so to liturgy is necessary.

The Sinner – Saint Mary Magdalene is at the privileged place of the Cross out of gratitude and because of conversion. It is not only holy men and women who find their privilege place at the foot of the Cross, but also the sinner. The Cross is the privileged place for the convert. Many may not start at the Cross, but if they have a repentant heart and experience conversion, they will end at the Cross. Mary Magdalene is an example of a person, who cooperated with the grace that Christ merited for her on Calvary. The grace, which has been merited, is open to all, but not all will cooperate. All of Jesus' parables find the fulfillment in the Cross. In the parable of the wedding feast Jesus says, “Many are invited, but few are chosen.”[9] Saint Mary Magdalene

emperor, become Christian, raised it up from the bowels of the earth.”[34]

How did the Cross bring about victory over pagan Persia? In the 7th Century, Chosroes, King of the Persians invaded Egypt, Africa. “He then took possession of Jerusalem, he carried away into Persia the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which Helena had placed upon Mount Calvary.”[35] The cherished prize of Christianity was now again buried as it was stolen by the Persians. When it seemed that Chosroes and the Persians were invincible, Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor employed the help of God and was able to not only invade and conquer the Persians, but also reclaim the Holy Cross, fourteen years after it had been stolen. A remarkable event of humility followed.

“On his return to Jerusalem, Heraclius, with great pomp, bore it [the Cross] on his own shoulders to the mountain whither our Saviour had carried it. This event was signaled by a remarkable miracle. Heraclius, attired as he was in robes adorned with gold and precious stones was forced to stand still at the gate which led to Mount Calvary. The more he endeavored to advance, the more he seemed fixed to the spot. Heraclius himself and all the people were astounded; but Zacharias, the bishop of Jerusalem, said: Consider, O emperor, how little thou imitates the poverty and humiliation of Jesus Christ, by carrying the cross clad in triumphal robes. Heraclius thereupon laid aside his magnificent apparel, and barefoot, clothed in mean attire, he easily completed the rest of the way, and replaced the cross in the same place on Mount Calvary, whence it had been carried off by the Persians. From this event, the feast of the Exaltation of the holy cross, which was celebrated yearly on this day [September 14], gained fresh lustre, in memory of the cross being replaced by Heraclius on the spot where it had first been set up for our Saviour.”[36]

How did the Cross bring about victory over Islam? After the Persians fell to the Cross another enemy of the Cross, Islam, would arise and fall as well. It is no mistake that the sword of the Crusaders when turned upside down is in the form of a Cross. It was the Holy Cross which the Crusaders carried both in their hands and in their hearts that protected Europe against the threats and evil of Islam.

arises throughout time to conquer sin. It appeared in shadows in the Old Testament as a type. For example Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. In the New Testament it is shown in exaltation. "The cross indeed is the standard of God's armies, whereof Mary is the Queen; it is by the cross that she crushes the serpent's head, and wins so many victories over error, and over the enemies of the Christian name." [32] The Cross is the dagger which plunged into the skull of Satan at Golgotha (called place of the skull) gains victory over sin and death. The Cross buried in the shadows for so long arises giving victory to mankind. That which was the instrument of torture becomes the instrument of victory.

After the death of Christ in 33AD, the Cross again was buried and both Jew and Gentile alike began an intense persecution against those who bore the name of Christ. This attack launched by the Roman Empire and its emperors would soon come to an end. Rome attempted to push down, to bury the Cross but it would arise. Just as a balloon will not be pushed under water, the Cross will not be buried. It will arise and destroy, sin and death, not just in one age, but in every age. In the 4th century this dramatically came true in one of the most amazing and influential events in the history of the world.

How did the Cross bring about victory over pagan Rome?

"Above the legions, in a cloudless sky, the cross, proscribed for three long centuries, suddenly shone forth; all eyes beheld it, making the western sun, as it were, its footstool, and surrounded with these words in characters of fire: In Hoc Vinces: by this be thou conqueror!" [33] The Emperor Constantine witnessed this miracle and a few months later, October 27, 312 AD, he would march back into Rome with His army, but this time there would be a new insignia, one that would bring about the collapse of false idols and religion and usher in worship of the true God and Church of Christ. For 279 years the Cross, which had been and still was buried in Jerusalem, now arose to show its power over sin. Within three decades of the vision of Constantine, Saint Helen, the mother of Constantine would travel to Calvary to discover and unearth the true Cross and Constantine would dedicate basilicas over the Holy Sepulcher.

With this victory the Church exclaims, "Hail, O cross, formidable to all enemies, bulwark of the Church, strength of princes; hail in thy triumph! The sacred Wood still lay hidden in the earth, yet it appeared in the heavens announcing victory; and an

was invited, and with her life she said, "Yes," a "yes" that led her to the privileged place of the Cross. "The devotion she showed to Jesus was gratitude for the fact that He had driven seven demons out of her (Mark 16:9). According to tradition, she had been a harlot. Her faithfulness is clearly seen in that she was one of the few on Calvary at the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:56). She watched Jesus being buried and was one of the three women who went to the tomb on Resurrection morning (Mark 15:47; 16:1) and discovered that Jesus had risen (Matthew 28:1-8). The first one to whom He appeared that morning was Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18)." [10]

Mary Magdalene goes from having seven demons in her, to being the Bride of Christ; this is the mercy of Jesus, flowing from the Cross.

"Conversion to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish." Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls "concupiscence", which remains in the baptized and with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life. This is the struggle of conversion directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us." [11]

Mary Magdalene, the convert coming from a life of sin into the Church becomes the Bride of Christ and a new creation. The convert at their baptism is clothed with a baptismal garment and told, "...you have become a new creation and have clothed yourselves in Christ. Receive this baptismal garment and bring it unstained to the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that you may have everlasting life." [12] As a new creation, there is no turning back. Saint Mary Magdalene did not turn back. For her and the Christian, there is only one direction, one that leads to the Cross and to everlasting life.

The Lover – Saint John the Beloved is at the privileged place of the Cross out of fidelity and love. At the Last Supper, Saint John laid his head on the breast of Jesus. [13] It is the beloved apostle and the youngest apostles that is the only apostle that follows Christ all the way to the Cross. Saint John is living out the

theological virtues of faith and charity, which leads to hope, a “hope that does not disappoint”[14] even in the midst of great suffering.

MOVIE – The Passion of Christ – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 9:00

<http://youtu.be/BSbCyOMA9Us>

The clip is of the last moments of Jesus’ life on the Cross. We see Mary, Mary Magdalene and St. John present. We also see the converted Roman centurion who pierces the side of Jesus.

VIDEO - Remnant's Divine Mercy Chaplet 2 of 2 - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 10:00

<http://youtu.be/SMttN6JY66M>

This video is made of clips from the Passion of the Christ and has several characters and their response to the Cross. **What is the response, the emotion when each person is placed in the presence of the Cross?**

Has God placed us at the foot of the Cross? Why would He place us at the foot of the Cross? “Dear Brothers and Sisters, we are invited to look upon the Cross. It is the ‘privileged place’ where the love of God is revealed and shown to us.... On the Cross, human misery and divine mercy meet. The adoration of this unlimited mercy is for man the only way to open himself to the mystery which the Cross reveals.”[15] We are familiar with the song, “Where You There When they Crucified my Lord?” Many of us may have thought once or twice, “no”. Of course we were not physically and historically standing on Calvary two thousand years ago. Yet, in a profound way we are present at the foot of the Cross. Every time we go to Mass we are there at the crucifixion. We call the Mass the Holy Sacrifice; it is representation of the Sacrifice of the Jesus on the Cross. We are at the foot of the Cross along with Our Lady, Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint John each time we go to Mass. This realization can help us to have a proper attitude when participating in the Mass. Many times people want Mass to be fun.

Did Our Lady, Mary Magdalene and Saint John have fun during the Passion and Death of Jesus upon the Cross? Fun is defined as enjoyment, amusement, or lighthearted pleasure. **Is the passion and death of our Lord enjoyment, amusement, or lighthearted pleasure?** It is much more. Mass leads us to joy and the pleasure of life eternal. The Mass is an entering into the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord; it is far more

Christ said, “the prince of this world [that] is to be overthrown” (John 12:31) “The Cross is planted in the earth and would seem to extend its roots in human malice, but it reaches up, pointing as it were to the heavens, pointing to the goodness of God. By means of the Cross of Christ, the Evil One has been defeated, death is overcome, life is given to us, hope is restored, and light is imparted. O Crux, ave spes unica!”[31] We are free from sin, reconciled with the Father, free from both temporal and eternal punishment and free from the power of Satan. What mercy; it is no wonder that we pray, “We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.”

How do we share in the victory? Do we want the victory?

Christ said it is finished, but yet St. Paul says that we complete what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. It is finished, but not finished. We can think of the Cross as a bank in which victory (redemption, salvation, grace, etc.) has been merited by Christ and deposited by Christ. There is debt that each person has -- some more, some less. Christ knows the exact amount of each one of our debts, and he pays that debt on the Cross, and through his Passion, Death and Resurrection makes a deposit of grace on the Cross that can pay all of our debts. The deposit is made; it is finished; what is lacking is the withdraw. We must come to the Cross; embrace the Cross; pick up our Cross; participate in the Cross, and thus withdraw what has been given freely to us.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Roads to Heaven and Hell]

How is suffering a victory? We sometimes hear that Christ suffered so that we wouldn’t have to. This is correct in that Christ suffered so that we would not have to suffer the eternal punishment of hell (complete separation from God). This is incorrect if we think we do not have to suffer at all. The lesson of the Cross is the dignity and value of human suffering. Christ suffered so that we would know how to suffer, so that we would know the meaning of suffering, so that we could participate in the redemptive nature of suffering.

The Cross: “In Hoc Vince” – Lesson and Discussion
“the world might be saved through him”

Where is the Cross seen in the Old Testament? The Cross

Jesus is the fruit, which hangs on the tree of life. Just as the fruit of the tree in the garden, which was in the center of the garden, brought death; this fruit, which came from the womb of Mary and the center of history is lifted high on the tree, the wood of the Cross to bring about life. It is an honor to have a relic [sliver] of the Cross, if this piece of wood could talk, what a story and honor it would be.

How did the Cross go from being a sign of shame to a sign of honor? “When the Emperor Constantine [4th Century], had conquered his enemy, the cruel Maxentius, by the aid of the Holy Cross, which he saw in the heavens, radiant and glorious, with the inscription: “In this sign Conquer” he became animated with such veneration for the Cross, that he commanded it to be venerated throughout the Roman Empire, and from that time forward forbade any one to be crucified. He also resolved to build a magnificent church in Jerusalem in honor of the Holy Cross. His mother, the Empress Helena, in her very advanced age went herself to the Holy Land, and undertook, with the aid of St. Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, to find the sacred burial-place of Christ.”[27]

It is truly in the sign of the Cross that we conquer because Christ conquered. Saint Andrew of Crete says that the Cross is both a sign of suffering and the trophy of his victory. “The cross is honorable because it is both the sign of God’s suffering and the trophy of his victory. It stands for his suffering because on it he freely suffered unto death. But it is also his trophy because it was the means by which the devil was wounded and death conquered; the barred gates of hell were smashed, and the Cross became the one common salvation of the whole world.”[28]

The victory for us is threefold. “Christ wanted to suffer and die first of all to satisfy the divine justice for our sins...Christ willed to suffer and die in order to evoke our grateful love...and finally, the sufferings of Christ teach us to embrace the Cross as the sure means of achieving holiness; nothing is more sanctifying than uniting one’s own sufferings with those of the Savior in His blessed passion and death on Calvary.”[29]

What do we get out of the victory?[30] Christ redeemed us from the guilt of sin, and thus reconciled us with His heavenly Father. Christ redeemed us from the punishment we deserved for sin in this life and in the life to come. Christ redeemed us from the power of the evil spirit, who because of sin, became as

transcendent than amusement and more lasting than temporal pleasure.

Blessed William Joseph Chaminade founded the Society of Mary - which is also called the Marianists. The Marianists have always shown the Crucifix with Our Lady and the Beloved Apostle beneath. Part of the Marianist spirituality is to place themselves with Our Lady and Saint John at the foot of Christ. “The consummation of Jesus’ gift of self is preceded by the gift of His Mother to the Disciple and to each Marianist.” We can take a “Vow of Stability as love for Mary and alliance with her, living like the Beloved Disciple, who takes Mary “into his own” and allowing Mary to form us into the likeness of Her Son.”[16]

How can we place are self at the foot of the Cross? We commemorate the Passion and Death of Christ by our participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, our observance of Fridays as obligatory days of penance in union with Christ’s sufferings, our recitation of the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, and making the Way of the Cross. Blessed John Paul II said that the Cross is where “human misery and divine mercy meet”. There is perhaps no better meditation on mercy and misery than in the Psalms. We can place our self at the foot of the Cross each time we pray Liturgy of the Hours, especially if we are mindful to look for misery and mercy. The Liturgy of the Hours and the Divine Liturgy (the Mass) is one Liturgy; therefore faithfulness to the Liturgy of the Hours will help us to be more attending at Divine Liturgy (the Mass) “The Psalms of David often reveal both the ugliness of humanity and his unwavering faith in God. That humanity is entwined in the divine is no more evident than in the Book of Psalms. Consider that ‘the Psalter is the basic songbook of the Liturgy.’ (GIRM, no. 102.) Therefore, our greatest prayer, the Mass, weds the human with the divine, as does the crucified Jesus. This is a notion of great beauty, considering how fragile our humanity is.”[17]

Lift High the Cross – Lesson and Discussion

“the Son of Man be lifted up”

We cannot look at the Cross and remain neutral and without emotion. The Cross demands a response, one way or the other.

ACTIVITY – The Cross in Scripture

What do we think about the Cross? What is its meaning in our life? Does the Cross really have a meaning for us or is it

just a symbol? Take time to read, reflect and meditate on the verses found on the activity sheet. The activity sheet may be found on the packet page. It will be good to ask the questions stated above before the reflection and mediation and then again after to see if there is a change in both thought and attitude in regards to the Cross.

What do we see when we look at the Cross? “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15), says Jesus. What do we see then when we bring our eyes to bear on the Cross, where Jesus was nailed (cf. John 19:37)? We contemplate the sign of God’s infinite love for humanity.”[18] Saint Bernard saw the following, when he saw the Cross where Jesus was nailed. He said that when we see the hands of Jesus nailed to the Cross with His arms open, we know that His arms are always open for us, welcoming us into His embrace. When we see the feet of Jesus nailed to the Cross, we are assured that He will never run from us. When we see the side of Jesus opened on the Cross, we understand that in His mercy He opened for us the path to His Sacred Heart, a path from which both water (Baptism) and blood (the Eucharist) flow.

In the Franciscan tradition, there is a famous piece of art that shows Saint Francis embracing Jesus while Jesus is on the Cross. In the picture, Jesus reaches down to embrace Saint Francis as well. Franciscans, as well as other religious orders, take vows to live the evangelical councils. These councils are the same virtues that Our Lord lived and can be seen by all, when the Cross is lifted high. The evangelical councils are poverty, chastity and obedience, they are not just for the religious, who take vows to live by them, but they are for all who follow Christ, who call themselves Christian

How are the evangelic councils seen by the Cross? The hands of Christ are nailed and open, showing that He is not holding onto any possessions. He is poor, owning nothing. The heart of Christ is opened and opened to all, showing that His love is for God and neighbor, and the love is pure. He is chaste and gives the gift of self. The feet of Christ are nailed to the Cross showing us that Jesus was obedient even unto death. In obedience, He walked the path that the Father willed, even when that path took His steps up the hill of Calvary and nailed His feet to the Cross.

Activity - Most recognized symbols

The Cross is one of the most recognized symbols in the world. Have everyone write down what they feel are the top three most recognized symbols in the world. These sheets can be turned in and a tally can be made and presented at the end of the class. It would be important to ask not what their top 3 are, but what they think the top 3 in the world are. Don’t give examples to the group but some examples would be the McDonald’s arches, the Nike symbol, etc.

The Crucifix around someone's neck is kind of an odd symbol. Crucifixion was a state mandated form of capital punishment for over 300 years in the Roman Empire. It would be like an American walking around with an electric chair necklace or a syringe necklace. Some people could think, “Why do we wear crucifixes and hang them in our homes?”

What is the difference between a Cross and a Crucifix?

A Cross does not have the Body of Christ, the corpus on it. The crucifix has both the cross and the corpus. Some feel the use of a crucifix instead of a cross shows a lack of “appreciation for the Resurrection”, and a desire to “keep Jesus on the Cross.” Others feel that it places too much emphasis on suffering, or that the Passion of Christ is a thing of the past. We have to remember that the Passion, death and resurrection are one. We cannot have the Resurrection without the Cross, and the Cross is meaningless without the Resurrection. We can also think of three events in the Life of Christ. These events are also mysteries of the Rosary: The Institution of the Eucharist (the Last Supper), the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection.

A good way to illustrate the individual importance yet oneness is to think of three people in a single file line. The first person holds their hands out. They are Christ, giving the Eucharist; the second person, the one in the middle puts their hands out, they are Christ crucified; the third person, the one at the back of the line, puts their hands up in the air toward the sky, they are Christ resurrected. If this is done in back of a cloth and back lit, the three people will be seen as one image, the cross, but if the lights are turned on and the cloth removed, the three people and their actions will be seen.

VIDEO - The Legend of Three Trees - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 24:02

<http://youtu.be/ktYroQP5A1c>

Tell every one that you meet —
That there is a man on the Cross.”

There is no greater love than the Cross. **Are we willing to tell every one that we meet about this great love? How can we tell people that there is a man on the Cross?**

We honor, sacrifice, and love. The virtues of honor, sacrifice, and love are found in all of the greatest movies throughout time and in fact these virtues are what draw people to the blockbuster movies. These virtues should remind of us Christ if we are Christian and for the non-Christian they should point to the transcendent reality of Christ. **What are some examples of sacrifice and love in imitation of the Cross?**

SKIT - Short Story of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Pick 10 people. 8 Should be randomly picked, one person will be St. Maximilian Kolbe, and one will be the prisoner that was going to be put to death. The quick story is this: St. Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish Priest that was sentenced to the concentration camp (Hitler killed 1 million Polish Catholic, mostly priests and religious). A prisoner tried to escape from St. Maximilian's prison block but was caught. To punish the person, the Nazis chose to send 10 prisoners from that block to the starvation cell, all 10 in the same cell. The Nazi guards called the men by their number [in the skit you can call them by name], and they each stood up. One man, when he was called began to cry and begged that he not be killed. He said that he had a wife and children. St. Maximilian, moved with compassion, stood up quietly and then said, "I will take that man's place." The guard said to him, "Who are you?" Kolbe replied, "I am a Catholic Priest." St. Maximilian Kolbe showed the perfect example of Christ on the Cross; there is no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend. This short skit of St. Maximilian can be semi-acted out; the 8 people do not have a speaking role. Maximilian Kolbe, the prisoner and the guard, would need to be planned and scripted.

VIDEO – Saint Maximilian Kolbe – Saint of Auschwitz – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 7:00

http://youtu.be/U3R-7feP__s

The Cross: Trophy of Victory – Lesson and Discussion

“the world might be saved through him”

CHANT - Christus Factus Est - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:06

<http://youtu.be/ULEVFGx9eqE>

The Gradual for this feast uses the writing of Saint Paul in his epistle. “For us Christ became obedient to death, even to death on a cross. V. Therefore God also has exalted Him and has bestowed upon Him the name that is above every name.”[19] This same scripture is also prayed on Good Friday.

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Packet Cycle C - OT13 - The Evangelical Counsels\]](#)

“O Crux, ave spes unica! Saint Paul speaks of the same theme in the letter to the Ephesians.... Not only did Christ Jesus become man, in everything similar to human beings, but He took on the condition of a servant and humbled Himself even more by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a Cross (cf. Philippians 2:6-8).”[20] The mystery of the Cross is such that when one looks at the Cross they don't see a servant but rather a Son of God. The Roman Centurion witnesses the Cross and said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”[21] The prodigal son came to realization that he would have to return home as a servant. He has squandered his inheritance and felt as if he lost his status as a son. His only hope was to beg his father's forgiveness and return home as a servant.

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Packet Cycle C - Lent 4 - The Prodigal Son\]](#)

How are we like the prodigal son? How is Jesus like the prodigal son? Humanity squandered its inheritance in The Garden, losing heaven and the friendship of God. Jesus took on the condition of the prodigal son as He was placed on the Cross. In the parable, the son returns home as a servant, but the Father will not allow his son to be a servant. Instead, He puts the finest robe on Him, puts a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet and kills the fattened calf.[22] Jesus walks the Way of the Cross returning to the Father as a suffering servant, but the Father will not allow His Son, nor those connected to His Son, to be a servant. We are reminded of the glory of being a Son of God and the way of the Cross as a path to that glory each time we pray the Angelus. “that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection”.

What does the robe, ring, sandals and fatten calf represent?

The Father puts on each Christian the finest robe (baptismal garment), a ring on the finger (the Bride of Christ), sandals on our feet (we are missionaries, sent out) and kills the fatten calf (The Mass and Eucharist). We are sons and daughters of God and have, through the merits of Jesus, been given back the inheritance of eternal life and friendship with God.

Why did Jesus reference Moses and the Serpent? The story of the serpent takes place during the Exodus of the Israelites, who had begun complaining to God and questioning why He took them out of Egypt. In punishment God sent serpents into their camp and these serpents began biting the Israelites. The Israelites went to Moses to ask for God's help. God told Moses to take his staff, kill a snake, and tie the snake around his staff high enough for all to see. Anyone who gazed upon the staff would be instantly cured. Moses did as he was told and people who were bitten recovered.[23] This story foreshadowed what Christ says in the Gospel reading. He would be the one on the Staff raised high enough for all to see and to be healed not physically, but spiritually and in a permanent way.

Where do we see this sign today? The Star of Life or EMS symbol is the most common. This symbol has a rod with a serpent, and is usually seen on ambulances. This sign has origins in Greek mythology, with the rod of Asclepius and is a sign of healing. It reminds us of the healing that God gave through the staff of Moses.

No Greater Love – Lesson and Discussion

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son”

“Yes, ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only Son’ (John 3:16). We admire — overwhelmed and gratified — the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge (cf. Ephesians 3:18-19)! O Crux, ave spes unica!”[24]

We know and see that people are good and that people love. Many times we are amazed at the goodness and love of humans. Servant of God, Fulton J. Sheen said,

“...if man can be so good, God must be infinitely better; that if man can love so much, God can love infinitely

more? Shall we not say this, and find in the Cross of Calvary the perfect expression of love by an All-Perfect Being, of whom perfect condescension and sacrifice were required by naught in heaven or earth save by His own perfect and inconceivable love, which He now preaches from the Pulpit of the Cross? If we do say this, that He is very God of very God, and love is now reaching its climax in the redemption of mankind, then no longer can men say, ‘Why does God send men into the world to be miserable when He is happy?’ — for the God-man is miserable now. No longer can men say, ‘God makes me suffer pain while He goes through none’ — for the God-man is now enduring pain to the utmost. No longer can men say that God has a heart that cannot understand, for now His own Sacred Heart understands what it is to be abandoned by God and man as He suffers — suspended between the kingdoms of both, between heaven and earth, rejected by one and abandoned by the other. Now it is true to say of Love Itself that It is really dying for us, for greater love than this no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friend. For Calvary is not just a mere historical incident, like the battle of Waterloo; it is not something, which has happened — it is something, which is also happening. Christ is still on the Cross.”[25]

SKIT – There is a man on the Cross[26]

The following can be acted out as a skit or simply read and reflection upon.

Whenever there is silence around me
By day or by night —
I am startled by a cry.
It came down from the Cross —
The first time I heard it.
I went out and searched —
And found a man in the throes of crucifixion
And I said, “I will take you down”,
And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
But He said, “Let them be
For I cannot be taken down
Until every man, every woman, and every child
Come together to take me down.”
And I said, “But I cannot bear your cry,
What can I do?”
And He said, “Go about the world —