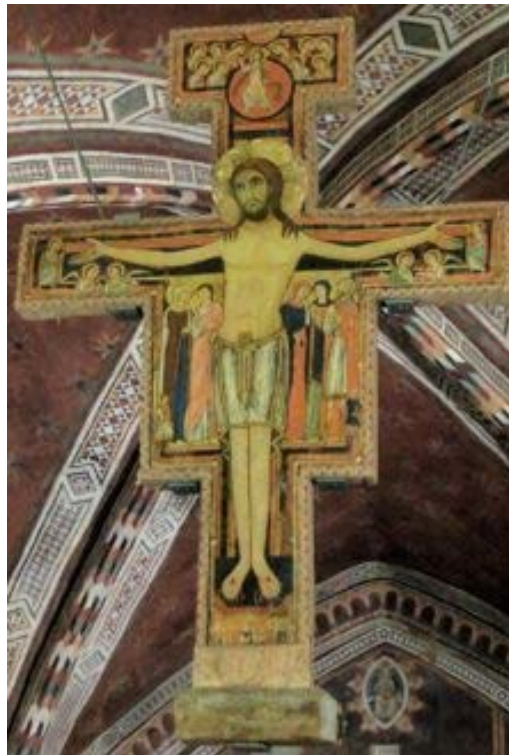


## The Way of the Cross

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

Particularly dear to Saint 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."

**Opening Prayer (St. Francis prayer before the crucifix):** 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 Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians (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.**"

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

"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



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

#### **What is Jesus's Way and What does he command?**

"**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.**" John 15:12-13

"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.** Luke 9:23–24 -

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.

**The virtue of Humility is required to accept and carry our crosses, but we are humbled in order to be exalted.**

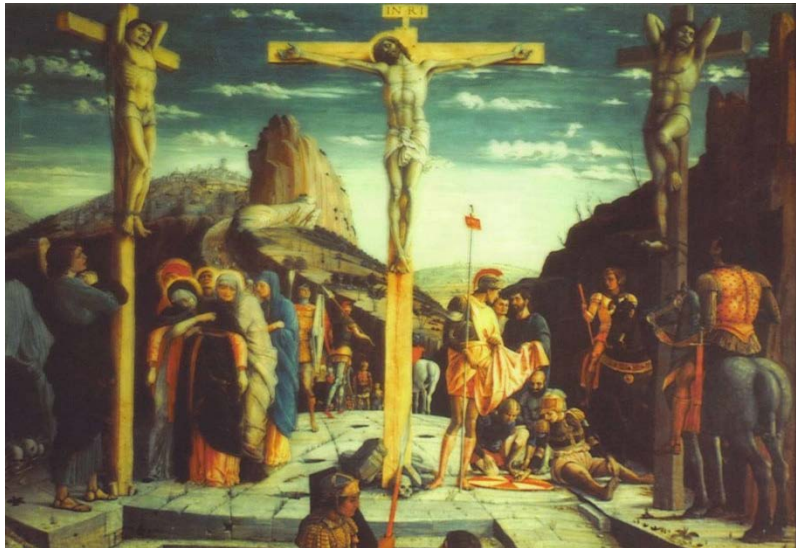
"For everyone who exalts himself will be **humbled**, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted." Luke 18:9-14

"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



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.

"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 is meaningless without the resurrection.**

**Psalm 22** – Read it.

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

"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

"This saying is sure: If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; If we endure, we shall 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

"What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written: "For your sake we are being slain all the day; we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us." Romans 8:35-37

## **Grow to Love the Cross**

### **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 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 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 2:24-25

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

"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**. John 3:13-17

**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

### **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

### **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).

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

<b>Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary contemplate the Way of the Cross</b>	<b>Fruit of the Mystery</b>
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

**Pray the Stations of the Cross through the Eyes of Mary.**