

LITURGY BYTES

The Sign of the Cross



We do it all the time, you might say, when you think of the Sign of the Cross! We do it before all prayers, perhaps before you eat and before bedtime. Take a moment and think about how often you make the sign of the cross each day!

One thing I do when I am flying is to bless myself upon take off and when we land. I have noticed others on a plane doing likewise. This action does not mean that we are suspicious or scared, but we are entrusting ourselves completely to God and also being grateful that we landed safely.

So, what are we exactly doing when we make the sign of the Cross? First, there is the action of doing it, and also the words which are a way of calling upon God. When we call upon God, and call upon that beautiful name of Jesus, we're present with him. In Matthew's Gospel, we read Jesus' words: "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" The Mass for us is the greatest presence of God on earth. It is the real presence of God on earth. When we begin Mass with the sign of the Cross, we are actually gathering in His name, and He is with us.

When we make the sign of the cross, we remind ourselves of several things: (a) We are identifying and reaffirming our Baptism in Jesus. When we were baptized, original sin was taken away. We were also made part of the family of God, the Church. (b) We call upon God by name. In the early pagan cultures, each temple had a god that they called upon which was kept by the temple priest and a few others who had access to that name. We all are privileged to have access to our God. God is inviting us into a relationship. No longer are we alone. No longer do we need to feel abandoned in the world with all of our problems. God invites us into communion with Him which we experience through the Eucharist that we receive --- the real Presence.

So, the next time you begin a prayer, or at the beginning of Mass, carefully pray those words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

Have a blessed, healthy, and safe week ahead! ~*Michele Hall*