



OUR PARISH PRAYS THE WAY OF THE CROSS



Opening Prayer

Leader:

God of power and mercy, in love you sent your Son
that we might be cleansed of sin and live with you forever.
Bless us as we gather to reflect on his suffering and death
that we may learn from his example the way we should go.

We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord.

All:

Amen.

During the stations, you are welcome to sit, to stand or to kneel.



FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

Condemnation is serious. It implies guilt. Jesus is, however, innocent yet as He said many times in his life, “Your will be done.” In the desert, Jesus is tempted three times, but faithful to the will of the Father Jesus is victorious three times over the tempter who then leaves Jesus to be ministered to by the angels.

People:

As for me, I am in Your hands; do with me what you think right and good. (Jeremiah 26: 14)

Leader:

The Father sent Jesus to speak the truth to us.

People:

Let us listen to the voice of the LORD.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

SECOND STATION

Jesus takes up his cross



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

Taking up the cross is a personal and communal act. When our individual strength weakens as it often does, does not it seem that we cannot continue to bear the cross? Yet, the cross we took up once is with us for the length of our lives. While we carry the weight no matter our weakness, Jesus and the people around us bear a proportional burden. How else do we explain the need to take up our crosses to feel the burden of all for whom Jesus took up his cross?

People:

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. (Isaiah 53: 7)

Leader:

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened.

People:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve-ra, est ve-ra: De-us i - bi est, De-us i - bi est.

The image shows a musical score for the refrain of the hymn 'Ubi Caritas'. It is written on a single staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words in italics. The score ends with a double bar line.

THIRD STATION

Jesus falls the first time



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

We know the expression ‘down but not out.’ Setbacks, discouraging moments and even failures are an expected part of life, but so are advances, encouraging times and our great successes. That Jesus falls is something to which we can relate. Our falls are expected but so are also our picking ourselves up and moving ahead. Our human will is a wonderful thing and must be used in cooperation with God’s grace to not only pick up the cross, but to fall and get up again.

People:

Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my call for help. (Psalm 88: 3)

Leader:

If anyone wishes to come after me.

People:

Let him and her pick up the cross and follow me.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve-ra, est ve-ra: De-us i - bi est, De-us i - bi est.

F

OURTH STATION

Jesus meets his sorrowful mother



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

The mother of Jesus shows great emotion for her flesh and blood, her only son. This abiding relationship represents compassion. Compassion is a necessary part of feeling the support of others who are around us. Without compassion, we only see distress and trouble without any emotion. Without compassion we give into selfishness which cannot help us or others. Mary shows us a model of compassion and makes herself present to her son and to his agony. This meeting alludes to a great moral support to Jesus.

People:

The watchmen came upon me as they made their rounds of the city: Have you seen him whom my heart loves? I had hardly left them when I found him. I took hold of him and would not let him go. (Song of Songs 3: 3-4)

Leader:

He shall be great and shall be called Son of the Most High.

People:

And he shall save his people from their sins.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

FIFTH STATION

Simon helps Jesus to carry his cross



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

Simon was singled out in a crowd and for what reason he helped Jesus we do not know. Perhaps, he showed some sorrow? Perhaps, he made himself available to be helpful? Or, perhaps it was by chance, but it does not matter because Simon did what was required of him. We might wonder if Simon recognized in Jesus a brigand or a Messiah. By the same token, we might ask ourselves how we react to others' difficult and public tasks and trials? Do we step away or get involved to simply be of help?

People:

I am a man who knows affliction from the rod of his anger, one whom he has led and forced to walk in darkness not in the light. (Lamentations 3: 1-2)

Leader:

Bear one another's burdens.

People:

And so you will fulfill the law of Christ.

UBI CARITAS

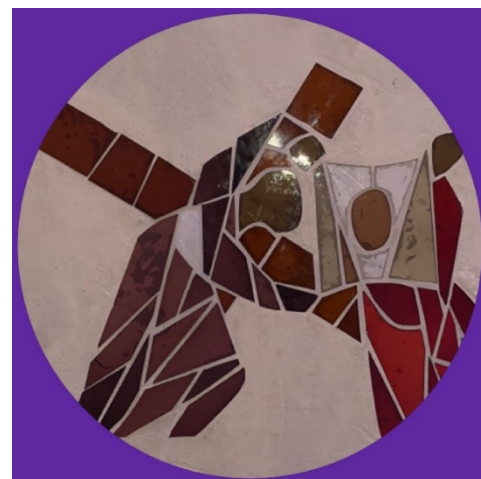
Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

SIXTH STATION

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

Veronica is not mentioned in the Bible, but this does not mean that she did not exist and come to offer Jesus a refreshing towel to dry his face, perhaps wiping salt from his eyes. Veronica means 'true icon' or 'real image.' In this sense, Veronica became the real image of Jesus, obeying his command to serve one another. "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. (Matthew 10:16)

People:

There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom men hide their faces; spurned and we held him in no esteem. (Isaiah 53: 2b-3)

Leader:

His appearance was marred beyond that of man.

People:

We saw no beauty in him to win our hearts.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve-ra, est ve-ra: De-us i - bi est, De-us i - bi est.

The musical notation is written on a single staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with an asterisk before the first line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus falls the second time



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

It is said that practice makes perfect. Jesus bore our practice of falling and by his rising again He made us capable of attaining perfection in the heavenly realm, at what we call the Beatific Vision, that is to be face to face with God our Creator who is perfection itself. We fall many times in life yet the promise of Eternal Life compels us to rise, to learn, to grow in perfection. Our suffering has meaning in Christ's own suffering.

People:

Come, all you pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like my suffering..."
(Lamentations 1: 14)

Leader:

To the weak he became weak.

People:

To save those who suffer.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

The image shows a musical score for the refrain of the hymn 'Ubi Caritas'. It is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with asterisks indicating the start of the refrain. The title 'UBI CARITAS' is centered above the staff, and the composer's name 'Bob Hurd' is to the right. The instruction 'Refrain: All' is written above the first few notes.

EIGHTH STATION

Women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

Weeping is many times an expression of deep emotional stress such as sorrow can be. Some women who saw Jesus on his way to Calvary were apparently moved to tears by what they saw. Their sensitivity to an apparent injustice caused to well up in them tears that revealed their sympathy and compassion for Jesus. He noticed but told them that they will encounter injustice long after Jesus would die on the cross. He does not dismiss their sympathy but encourages them to replicate it every time they face the ugliness of injustice.

People:

I pray to you, O LORD, for the time of your favor. In your great kindness, answer me with your constant help. (Psalm 69: 14)

Leader:

I am the vine and you are the branches.

People:

If you abide in me, and I in you, you shall bear much fruit.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

NINTH STATION

Jesus falls the third time



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

“Three strikes and you are out.” Jesus proves this is not true outside of the diamond. Time and time again, we are offered a rescuing hand, an inviting word and what a relief to finally heed this endless opportunity. What we are offered from God, should we not offer to others, to ourselves?

People:

I have waited and waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry. He drew me out of the pit of destruction, out of the mud of the swamp. He set my feet upon a rock; he made firm my steps. (Psalm 40: 2-3)

Leader:

My task is to do the will of Him who sent me.

People:

And to accomplish His work.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

TENTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

To lay bare means to be exposed. It usually refers to physical or to spiritual unmasking. Jesus is exposed physically to make his death more humiliating and more so to make it easier for the executioners. His spiritual exposure is a blessing because we learn that Jesus died willingly for us and that forgiveness is assured for those who bare themselves wholly to God's mercy.

People:

Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked I shall go back again. (Job 1: 21)

Leader:

They divided my garments among them.

People:

And they cast lots for my clothing.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to his cross



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

To be nailed to a cross must be painful, yet so many people have suffered even more excruciating pain. Most people, however, do not choose to suffer; It is cast upon them. Jesus did, however, chose to suffer; He accepted it as a crucial purpose for his life. His suffering alone gives meaning to human suffering, making it possible for us to accept our suffering as something that is not in vain. Jesus made all suffering redemptive because no matter the degree of suffering He alone suffered for all, not for himself.

People:

My spirit is broken, my lamp of life extinguished; my burial is at hand. (Job 17: 1)

Leader:

With Christ I am nailed to the cross.

People:

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on his cross



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

All creation shares in a mortality. Things with the breath of life stop breathing and things that are without breath eventually wear to basic matter. Remember man that you are dust and to dust you shall return. The death of Jesus seems to be a completion, but it is not. While we are all mortal, we share in the immortality of the resurrected Christ, the anointed one who will one day cause us to rise to unending life.

People:

And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. (Philippians 2: 6-7)

Leader:

And if I, be lifted up from the earth.

People:

I will draw all things to me.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

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THIRTEENTH STATION

The body of Jesus is taken down from his cross



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

It is difficult to know the emotions of those who actually took the body of Jesus down from the cross. Perhaps, it was all in a day's work and perhaps even rushed because of the fall of Shabbat. Surely some sort of human emotion was exhibited if not for Jesus, but for the women who were present. More important is the recovery of the body than the removal from the cross. It is they who receive the body who must weep, most especially Mary who is famously depicted in the Pietà, which means compassion. Here we encounter love as emotion, deep and truly human.

People:

Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

Leader:

Stronger than death is love; its flames are a blazing fire.

People:

Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

FOURTEENTH STATION

The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb



Leader:

We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. *Genuflect*

People:

Because, by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world. *Rise*

Leader:

The lifeless body of Jesus is locked away from life and never the two should meet. God the Father says otherwise for it was to redeem us from our sins that the Son was sent to the world, which means that death would no longer have power. The Father raised the son from the tomb leaving it empty to show the world that sin gives way to grace and mortality gives way to eternity.

People:

Hear the word of the Lord. Thus, says the Lord God to these bones: I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life. (Ezekiel 37: 5)

Leader:

If we have died with Christ, we shall live together with him.

People:

For Christ, having risen from the dead, dies now no more.

UBI CARITAS

Bob Hurd

Refrain: All

*U - bi ca - ri - tas est ve - ra, est ve - ra: De - us i - bi est, De - us i - bi est.

The image shows a musical score for the refrain of the hymn 'Ubi Caritas'. It is written on a single staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with an asterisk before the first line. The score ends with a double bar line.

Closing Prayer:

Leader:

Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

*Please return this booklet to a box at each doorway.
This booklet is available to view, download or print at www.smgaz.org*



Sources

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Elements of Gathering: To Assemble, To Process, To Bear the Cross

Rev. Thomas J. Hallsten, O.S.B.

This article has three distinct sections: gathering; the cross; and the procession with processional cross. Each section relates to the other in that they all concern the entrance procession—an important and often forgotten part of liturgy.

By means of procession, people move. Such movement symbolizes the Church on earth as a pilgrim Church—a Church on pilgrimage with the Lord. It is no small matter, then, that the important aforementioned elements of procession should require a brief review as to their individual contribution to the procession.

Gathering

Christian worship takes, as its natural model, some worship practices of Judaism. The early links between both religions endured, at least in tolerant terms, until the end of the first century of the common era. Sometime after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE) Rabban Gamaliel II added a 19th Benediction to the *Shemoneh Esrei*. This “blessing” against heretics and slanderers “was composed in response to the threats of such heretical Jewish sects as the Sadducees, Boethusians, Essenes, and the early Christians.”¹

Even so, the Christians kept many Jewish worship practices and, after transferring them to the Lord’s Day, made Sunday the day of their coming together. The *Didache*, thought to date from 70-90 CE, provides the Christian response to the aforementioned 19th Benediction by quoting the Matthean maxim: “. . . love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. . . .” (Mt. 5:44). The *Didache* also prescribes the following:

On every Lord’s Day—his special day—come together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure. . . .²

This feature of worship—the coming together (*synagethai*)—is, perhaps, the greatest single gift of Judaism, aside from cultic prayer texts, to Christianity. To this day, the coming together of Christians is the singular highlight of Christian life; it is the communal worship and praise of God, through the remem-

brance of the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, that sustains those who gather and those for whom Christians gather.

It is not surprising, then, that the Roman Eucharistic prayers emphasize the gathering of all for whom the prayer is offered.

Remember, Lord, your people,
Especially those for whom we now pray, N. and N.
Remember all of us gathered here before you.
Eucharistic Prayer I

Lord, remember your Church throughout the
world. . . .
Eucharistic Prayer II

Father, hear the prayers of the family you have
gathered here before you.
In mercy and love unite all your children where-
ever they may be.
Eucharistic Prayer III

Remember those who take part in this offering,
those here present and all your people. . . .
Eucharistic Prayer IV

The Roman Eucharistic Prayers, in a sense, beg to “remember,” to bring “together” in profound unity all people living and dead. Such gathering makes it possible for Christians to fulfill Christ’s Eucharistic command to remember him through sharing in the bread and in the cup.

Coming together on the part of early Christians was not to be taken lightly. The secret gatherings during centuries of persecution gave witness to the seriousness with which they accepted this call to meet often.

The Cross

Having previously noted the close liturgical relationship between first century Christians and Jews, it is likely that the Christians would have adhered to the commandment forbidding graven images. The eventual allowance of first century Jewish men to inscribe “the sacred Letter Yod in the thongs which bound the

phylactery to the hand” was replaced in Christian circles by “the use of the Chi (X), the first letter of the title of Christ in Greek. That this letter X should also be the form of a familiar version of the cross—technically known as the *crux decussata*—made it inevitable that the signing in ‘his name’ should become identical with the signing of the cross.”³

It is important to remember that the early cross was an unobtrusive sign marking and making the Christian. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107 CE) and Tertullian (145-220 CE) encouraged the frequent signing of oneself and, in fact, with the frequency with which the Jew offered special prayers through the day with each simple act as, for example, rising, donning the tzitzis and tallis [prayer cord and prayer shawl]. In a Christian context, Tertullian wrote in *De Corona*:

At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes; when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign.⁴

Because of persecution in the early centuries, it is unlikely that the cross was ever prominently displayed; more likely it was a physical sign as described above.

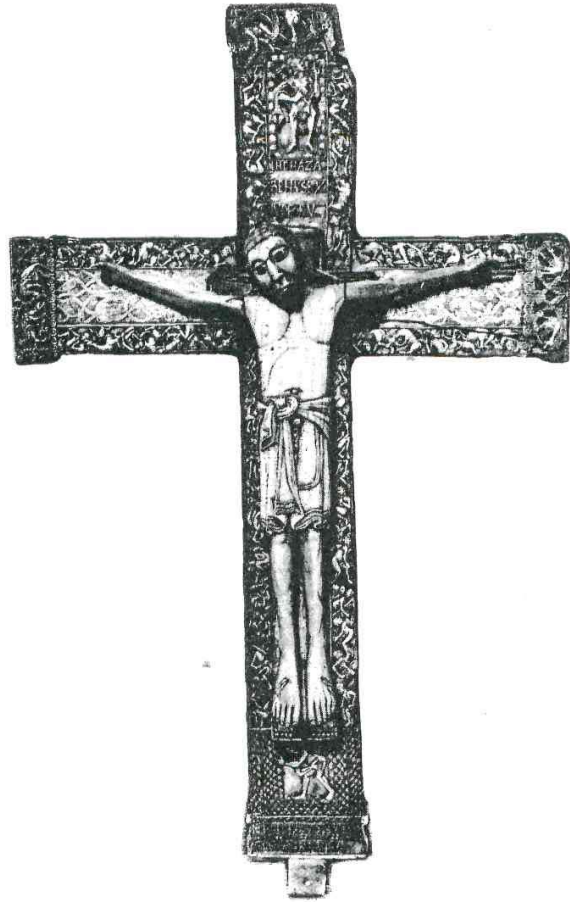
It was not until the fourth century that the cross became a widespread symbol of the Christian. This is due largely to the Emperor Constantine’s dream in which he was instructed to have his soldiers mark the *Chi* and *Rho* on their shields. This was done, and Constantine subsequently savored victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge.

Under Constantinian protection and support, Christianity flourished. The cross became a visible sign used proudly. In fact, “Constantine abolished crucifixion throughout the empire out of reverence for the Crucified One. . . .”⁵

Slowly but surely, the cross evolved to all sorts of embellished designs and later, perhaps in the fifth century, Christ was represented on the cross. Before this time, a lamb on the cross served as the symbol for Christ, the lamb of God.

The Procession with Processional Cross

The first procession with a cross might be justly seen as the way of the cross followed by Jesus. This provides the theological typology for the procession which concerns me in this article—a procession preceded by the cross. In this sense, the first such procession with a

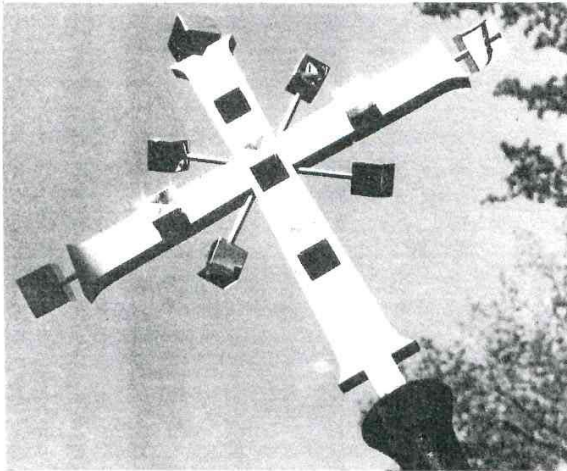


cross may have been, and ironically so, “the outdoor processions which so helped to popularize Arianism. St. John Chrysostom countered by introducing Orthodox processions of even greater splendor.”⁶

Processions with crosses were popularized by the imperial processions of Constantine. The liturgical processions took, as their model, these processions while establishing the ecclesiastical *statio*. Roman ecclesiastical processions were usually arranged as follows: thurifer, crucifer with two acolytes carrying candles, clergy, celebrant and members of the faithful.

Among such processions was the typical entrance procession which is to be distinguished from other liturgical processions that do not include a cross. The entrance procession may be said to constitute “the gathering par excellence of the local church.”⁷

Today, the cross and procession draw all the worshippers together. Accompanied by incense and hymnody, the procession generates an inspirational reaction to gather, which I discussed in the first part



Processional cross designed by Br. Obl. Frank Kacmarcik, O.S.B.
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of this article. The procession and hymnody should initiate “*synagethai*”—the coming together, the highlight of Christian worship.

The power of the procession is that “the faithful are made aware that they have become the holy temple, inhabited by the Spirit. They become a true temple made of living stones, where Christ will manifest his presence while associating their praise with his Word and his sacrifice.”⁸

The use of the cross to lead the procession further accents the call of those who have gathered to enter into the redemptive mystery of Christ, whose cross bore our sinfulness and, paradoxically, reminds Christians of the source of their hope. Such use is rich in spiritual insight:

Above all, the Cross of Jesus Christ, the primary symbol of Christian faith, should serve as the model of the liturgical expression of this faith. This symbol represents, on the one hand, the inhumanity of human beings toward the incarnate Son of God; on the other hand, it represents the victorious love of God for all humanity.⁹

Conclusion

The previous three sections of this article provided a brief review of important features of gathering: the gathering itself; the cross as symbol of Christ, the one in whom we gather; and the procession that gathers us together.

The immediate liturgical implication of gathering is that the procession should provide the expression of invitation to all to draw near, to follow and to assemble. This expression should have a solemn character and feature a processional cross which can be seen from a distance and which bespeaks the reality of Christ’s presence in the gathered group.

The processional cross, as pointed out earlier, need only be a cross—not necessarily a crucifix—but a simple cross which recalls and symbolizes Christ: not only his crucifixion but the Lord’s entire life including that which the assembly itself lives. The cross can aid those assembled to see beyond themselves to the transcendent reality of gathering in praise and thanksgiving with the communion of saints, with those marked with this sign of faith.

NOTES

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