

The Cross is probably the most emblematic symbol for Christianity in all its forms. How it moved from being a dreaded symbol of Roman torture to being a core symbol of faith is quite a journey. It has a power that defies comprehension. Victims of abuse have identified with it, the unjust assault on an innocent is captured in it.

A powerful memory I have is of a woman with advanced dementia. She had forgotten everything and everyone and was quite distressed. A daughter brought a crucifix that had been hanging on the wall in their family home to her mother. She received it smilingly and held it close to her. She died a short time later. We think that she recognised the cross for the message of self-giving love that it carries. Love is the ultimate language that dementia can never take away. Some call Christians 'people of the cross' and it is reckoned that countless numbers have suffered – in this century alone – for the sake of Christ's name. We are truly people of the cross. Traced lovingly and without words on our foreheads. Traced upon our children's foreheads from countless Fonts. Made reverently and hurriedly on our very being, sometimes in churches which are shaped ... like a Cross.

CRUX OF THE MATTER

I read a piece once by US author Brennan Manning. He served with a friend, Ryan Brennan, in the army and one time, in a foxhole with his friend, they were reminiscing about their childhood places when a grenade landed between them. Brennan Manning recalled, his friend Ryan smiled at him and threw himself on the grenade. He was killed instantly but Manning's life was spared. He later became a Franciscan priest and took 'Brennan' as a religious name in his honour. Some years after he remembered being with his friend's mother and foolishly said 'Do you think Ryan loved me to do that?' Furiously, Mrs Brennan stood up, waved her finger in his face and

shouted 'What more could he have done for you?' It was a moment that revealed what love was for him.

On today's Feast, as we hold the Cross aloft, we think of such great love and pray quietly to ourselves 'We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you – because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.'

— Tom Cox

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...
Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ... **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

**Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,**

**but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon *Jn 12:32*
**When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw
everyone to myself, says the Lord.**

Prayer after Communion

Having been nourished by your holy banquet, we beseech you, Lord Jesus Christ, to bring those you have redeemed by the wood of your life-giving Cross to the glory of the resurrection. Who live and reign for ever and ever. that, receiving the grace by which you bring us to new life, we may always glory in your gift. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reflection

When we gaze upon the crucifix, what do we perceive? Are we capable of recognising the love of God for us?

Lesson

Every time we look at the cross, we are invited to remember that love is stronger than hatred and that life overcomes darkness.

Prayer

Lord, may the cross of Christ inspire us to carry our daily burdens with faith, trusting that through them, God's transformative love is at work in our lives and the world.x