

The bell to you is an artificial sign, which reminds you of Holy Mass, because of the understanding of its being rung at stated times to invite the faithful to go to Mass or Vespers, or the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, etc. The bell of the fire brigade station is rung, and you say there is a conflagration, this fire bell is an artificial sign, supposing the previous understanding that whenever there will be a house or fire a bell will be sounded in a certain way to point out both the conflagration and the locality where it has taken place. (3) A sacred sign is that which by its nature, institution, its meaning, and the effects it produces is holy and the instrumental cause to us of many spiritual advantages; such, is the sign of the cross. It is holy and sacred, because it was instituted by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, instructed by Him and guided by the Holy Ghost; because we cannot make it without being reminded of our crucified Saviour. This sacred sign is an emblem of Catholicity, because in tracing it we point out to the four corners of the globe. By it we make an open profession of the three principal mysteries of our holy religion: (1) The Holy Trinity, (2) the Incarnation, and (3) the mystery of redemption. (1) We make a profession of the Holy Trinity, because, in making it, we call on the three Divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. (2) We profess our belief in the incarnation, because, in saying the word "Son," we touch our heart to be reminded that the Eternal Son of God, out of love for us, came down from heaven, and became a man, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (3) We profess that it was by His sufferings and death on the cross that Jesus Christ was satisfied for our sins and threw open to us the gates of paradise, because in making it, we trace upon ourselves a representation of the cross on which he died.

THREE MANNERS OF MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

There are three manners of making the sign of the cross:—(1) With the thumb of the right hand; (2) with the three middle fingers of the right hand, the palm of the hand spread out; (3) In the air. 1st.—The sign of the cross made with the thumb of the right hand on our foreheads, lips, or hearts was very common among the early Christians, as may be seen from the writings of the apostolic Fathers. This small sign of the cross is called the German or Greek sign of the cross, because it represents a German or Greek cross (Tert de cor Mil c, m) "We trace the sign of salvation on our foreheads, on our eyes, on our lips and hearts," says St Ephrem, "In frontibus, et in oculis, et in ore, et in pectore, et in omnibus membris nostris (St Ephrem, serm in ret. et viv erue)." Hear now St Ambrose: "Trace the sign of the cross continually on your heart, on your lips, on your forehead." (St Ambros, Sermon, xlviii). St Jerome relates of St Paula that when she was dying she made the sign of the cross on her lips (S Hier. ad Eust, de Epiaph Paulae). St Augustine declares that it is by the will of Christ that we trace His holy cross on our foreheads: "Signum suum Christus in fronte nobis figi voluit." (St Aug In Psal, cxxx). St Elith, daughter of King Edgard of England, was in the habit of frequently making the sign of the cross on her heart with the thumb of her right hand. One day that she was talking to St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, she made a little cross on her heart. St Dunstan noticed her, and said to her: "My child, mind what I am going to tell you. When you die your body shall crumble into dust, except that finger with which you have traced the sign of salvation." This prophecy was fulfilled. When the grave of St Edith was opened after her death all her body was found to have crumbled into dust, except her right thumb, which was as fresh as if she had been still alive. In the life of St Wolfgang, of the Order of St Dominic, it is recorded that he was, like St Edith of England, in the habit of making very often the sign of the cross on his heart, whenever he was tempted or wanted to obtain a special favour from God. When he was dead a most brilliant cross was found on his heart, which no one could efface. God had worked this miracle to show how He was pleased with this holy monk for his devotion to the sign of the cross, and also to give evidence of his enjoying heavenly bliss through Jesus crucified he had so much loved and honoured on earth. 2nd.—The other way of making the sign of the cross is called the solemn or Latin sign of the cross, because it represents a Latin cross. We trace it by keeping our right hand extended and touching our forehead, our heart, and our left and right shoulders with the three middle fingers of our extended palm, saying whilst touching the forehead, "In the name of the Father," because as the forehead is the first part of our body, so is the Father the first of the three Divine Persons. In touching our heart we say, "And of the Son," because as the heart is the second most noble part of our bodily frame, so the Son is the second person of the Blessed Trinity. Lastly, going from the left shoulder to the right we say, "And of the Holy Ghost," because as the distance from the forehead to the right and left shoulders, and likewise from the heart to the two same shoulders is equal, we thereby profess that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and the Son, and is equal to them in all things, since all the three Divine Persons have the same essence and the same substance, that is, the same divine nature, which is common to them all. We should make the solemn or

Latin sign of the cross: (1) When we wake up in the morning; (2) Before going to bed; (3) before and after meals; (4) at the beginning and end of all our principal actions; (5) whenever we are in any danger for soul or body; lastly, at the moment of death. 3rd.—The sign of the cross in the air is an emblem of authority or jurisdiction. Only those who, as representative of God, exercise superior authority can bless by tracing a cross in the air. When the Pope gives his blessing to the whole world "Urbi and orbi" he makes the sign of the cross towards the four cardinal points, to signify his spiritual authority over all the bishops, priests, religious and faithful of the whole Christian world. When a bishop gives his blessing he makes three crosses, to express his authority over the priests, religious and faithful of his diocese, subject, however, to the supreme authority of the supreme Pontiff. When a priest blesses anyone or anything he forms but one cross, because he can bless only those over whom he has delegated or of ordinary jurisdiction. Thus a parish priest can bless all his parishioners, superiors of religious communities can bless those under their care, and parents their children. In every blessing imparted, whether by the Pope or a bishop or a priest, or anyone else having power to do so, it is Jesus alone who blesses us, and applies to us the merits of His sufferings and death, although He does it through the instrumentality of His legitimate representatives.

THE CROSS IN PROCESSION.

We carry the cross in procession (1) to remind us that we are followers of Christ and have no other master but Him. (2) Because the cross of Jesus is the standard of His soldiers; they must fight and, if necessary, die for it. (3) Because it is an impenetrable shield when protected by Jesus crucified represented on the cross, we have nothing to fear, if Jesus is for us who shall be against us? (4) To remind us that life is a journey from time to eternity, and that to reach the shores of the heavenly Jerusalem, we must follow Jesus as the Israelites in the desert followed the angel who walked before them. The cross carried in front of a bishop is a simple one, that of an archbishop is a double cross, and that of the Pope is a triple one.

THE CROSS IN ARCHITECTURE.

In architecture, there is the Greek cross, whose four arms are equal, and the Latin Cross whose perpendicular is longer than the transverse arms. The church of St Sophia in Constantinople is a Greek cross with a cupola in the centre. St Genevieve of Paris is another beautiful model of the same kind of architecture. Most Western churches, however are in the shape of a Latin cross. St Peter's in Rome is the most remarkable in all the world. Many of the Christian Churches are lively representations of Jesus crucified, they are indeed gigantic and artistic crucifixes. The sanctuary represents the head of our Saviour, the stained windows around it the crown of thorns, the nave, the body of our Saviour stretched on the cross; transept, his extended arms; the lateral doors, and the principal entrance door, the nails which pierced his hands and feet; the side chapels, the wounds of his lacerated body; and the side windows, the precious blood which flowed from those wounds; and the slight inclination of the sanctuary towards the right is a figure of the dying Christ with his head resting on his right shoulder. The entrance door divided into two parts is an image of the two feet of our Lord nailed to the cross. The pillars around the Church represent our Blessed Lady, St John and the holy women standing around our Saviour whilst he was being crucified. The altar with its rising steps is a representation of Mount Calvary, and the cross on the tabernacle portrays the never-to-be-forgotten scene of the crucifixion. It is also to remind us that the Mass is a mystical representation of the sacrifice of Calvary.

DEVOTION OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

Let me add a few words on the devotion of the way of the Cross. From the earliest times, Christians, from all parts of the world, were wont to go to Jerusalem and visit the Holy Places, especially the way trodden by our Saviour from Jerusalem to Calvary, with a heavy cross on his shoulders, to accomplish the work of our redemption. Later on, pictures were erected along the way of the cross, at which people stopped for some time, contemplating the mystery represented by it. When the Turks conquered the Holy Land, and pilgrims could not easily go to Jerusalem, pictures representing the various scenes of the Passion of our Lord, were erected in churches and other places, in order to give to the faithful an opportunity of contemplating the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord and meditating upon them. This custom was introduced by the Franciscans. It spread all over the world and was enriched with indulgences by several Popes: Innocent XII, Benedict XIII, Clement XII, etc. This is a most impressive devotion, which often draws tears from Christians who perform it with faith and fervour. Indeed, what can be more useful and profitable to us than the meditation of the Passion of Christ, and what can help us more to meditate upon it profitably than the contemplation of these statues or pictures which exhibit so forcibly to our view the various scenes of the drama of Calvary. Oh, what a pity our separated friends will not understand that in this there is no superstition, no idolatry, but a most sublime expression of our faith and love for our dying Saviour. (3) Having explained the nature

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