



# Knights of Columbus Council 9542

## THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Washington, DC 20064

*In Service to One, In Service to All*

If you Google “the week that changed the world”, you’ll mostly be offered results pertaining to President “Nixon going to China” in February 1972. As we enter into Holy Week, however, I invite you to reflect on [the version offered by EWTN](#) and the whole of Christendom: the celebration of the salvific event of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord. Tonight, let us contemplate that great exemplification of Christianity in the symbol— and believe me when I say there is no other symbol aside from the Eucharist so real as this— lifted upon Golgotha on Good Friday for the world to gaze upon: the Cross.

“Behold the wood of the Cross on which hung the salvation of the world.”<sup>1</sup> It’s a strange symbol, isn’t it? An instrument of ignominious death, the Cross is not a sign of defeat but of certain victory! Rare is the Catholic home or school that does not have at least one prominently displayed in it somewhere—but perhaps rarer still are Catholics who pray while actually holding not a cross, but a Crucifix. The cross has little significance apart from the One who hung upon it the first Good Friday; it leaves no challenge to the beholder. We see crosses being worn by believers and nonbelievers alike as an item of adornment as well as a Christian symbol. The scandal begins when Salvation is hung upon it.

The crucifix challenges people to make a decision: a decision about the Lord Jesus Christ, Who hung upon the Cross, becoming the salvation of the world. People must choose what to do about Him, whether to accept His death and, with it, the fullness of all that He revealed, or to reject Him. For the faithful, it remains a powerful prayer tool, one that does not require elegant words to be meaningful. Back on September 11, 2001, Bishop Daly of Brooklyn advised New Yorkers to simply hold on to the crucifixes of their rosaries if they found themselves unable to pray due to the magnitude of the crimes which had been perpetrated that infamous day. Similarly, it was a priest who said that, when you feel you don’t have it in you to reverently pray the entire rosary, just hold on to the crucifix. In addition, St. Augustine testified, “There is no remedy so powerful against the heat of concupiscence as the remembrance of our Saviour’s Passion. In all my difficulties, I never found anything so efficacious as the wounds of Christ. In them I sleep secure. From them, I derive new life.”<sup>2</sup> As another example, during the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the suffering believer may be asked to kiss a crucifix which is held up to his or her lips. This beautiful scene is acted out in the epic film, *The Cardinal*, in which Cardinal Glennon (John Huston) holds a crucifix to the dying Father Ned Halley (Burgess Meredith) to kiss before the ritual anointing.

<sup>1</sup> *Missale Romanum*, “Rubrics for Good Friday” (GF, no.1.).

<sup>2</sup> A parish priest. *The Teaching Wisdom of the Saints*. (London: Aeterna Press, 2015), n.p.

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In holding a crucifix, one is offering a very powerful prayer: it is easier to meditate upon the precious wounds of Christ. Indeed, one is reminded of our Lord's words to St. Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands"<sup>3</sup>, while tracing one's fingers over the tiny replica of His wounded hands, feet, side, and the crown of thorns upon His head. Similarly, Fulton Sheen asks us, "Show me your hands. Do they have scars from giving? Show me your feet. Are they wounded in service? Show me your heart. Have you left a place for divine love?"

Each of us is called to take up our cross and follow Christ.<sup>4</sup> Our lives should model the Way of the Cross, which soon-to-be canonized Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad calls, "the most beautiful of all because on this path I have met and known my Lord and Savior." St. Josemaría Escrivá, however, urges:

Don't drag the Cross... Carry it squarely on your shoulder, because your Cross, if you carry it so, will not be just any Cross: it will be... the Holy Cross. Don't bear your Cross with resignation: resignation is not a generous word. Love the Cross. When you really love it, your Cross will be... a Cross, without a Cross. And surely you, like Him, will find Mary on the way.<sup>5</sup>

Whenever we are weak, how surely will our Mother at once fly to our aid when we faithfully call upon her name!

Finally, when bearing our crosses, we may be tempted to cry out, "My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?"<sup>6</sup> While this is especially true during exams, this utterance of Christ from the cross was not merely a lamentation but Him offering Psalm 22 to His Father. Let our every word, then, be a prayer, let our every action be an act of faith, our every thought be of kindness, and our every deed, one of love, the same kind offered upon the Cross. And, Pope Francis gently offers, "When everything seems too much, when it seems that the world is crashing down on you, embrace Christ's Cross, draw close to him, and please, never let go of his hand."<sup>7</sup>

May God bless you, and God love you!

Fraternally,

SK Thomas Wong

<sup>3</sup> John 20:27 (NABRE).

<sup>4</sup> See Matthew 16:24.

<sup>5</sup> St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way of the Cross* (New York: Scepter, 1990), n.p.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 22 (NABRE).

<sup>7</sup> Pope Francis. (address, Morelia, Mexico, February 16, 2016), the Vatican,

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160216\\_messico-giovani.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160216_messico-giovani.html).

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