



The Cross – symbol, sign and inspiration

Entering the Lenten Season, the Cross as symbol becomes a prominent feature and constant reminder of the Passion and Death that gives way to the Resurrection and Easter.

Throughout the centuries, the Cross symbolised Christianity and the struggles that are part of life. It was a sign of burdens but also of hope, death but also life.

The phrase, 'I will carry my cross' was a common utterance. Unfortunately it was understood as silent submission and resignation to one's fate. To carry the Cross was synonymous with blind obedience, enduring the unbearable with formidable virtue, just like a sheep to the slaughter that opens not its mouth, or following in the imitation of Christ who came to die for us. Yet how could such pious resignation to our 'crosses' be in any way inspirational?

The Cross was not the purpose of Jesus' mission but an inevitable consequence of Jesus' call for justice and mercy. His mission placed him at odds with those in authority and this would ultimately lead to his crucifixion, unless he renounced his teachings, which Jesus was loathe to do. Thus to remain faithful to Jesus' way and to his death on the Cross, the same is asked of us. We are called to the path that leads to the Cross, which according to Micah 6:8 is as follows:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

This was the path of Jesus that ultimately led to his crucifixion on a cross and it is this call to greatness that inspires us. This vision, this mission, may lead us to the Cross of shame and injustice, the Cross of hatred and betrayal and possibly death, but it is worth a life lived in truth and love.

Yes, we are entering the Lenten Season and the Cross remains a symbol of what is to come and a sign, pointing us towards discipleship in Christ. The road to Calvary and the burden of the Cross can only come as a result of our commitment to Christ. If there is justice, or mercy, or forgiveness, or hope, or love, that we aspire to, then there will be obstacles and struggles along the way. Yet that desire for a life lived in truth, is our inspiration and is the meaning behind the Cross of the Christians.

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