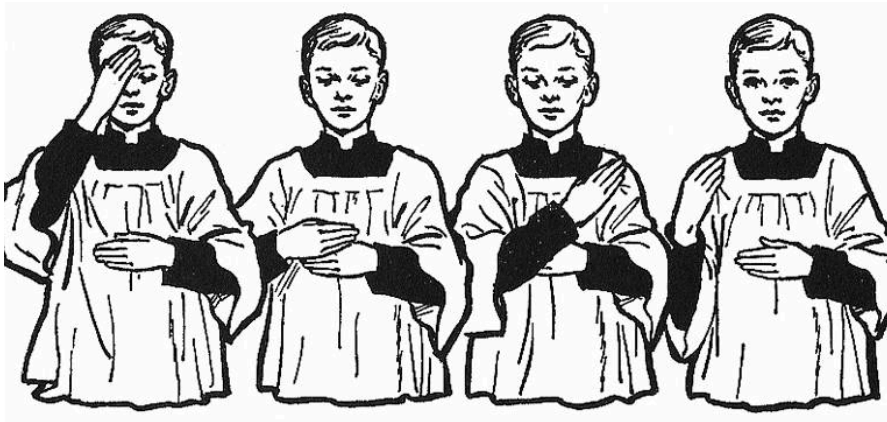


Marianist Moments



"In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen."

"There is nothing so natural to Catholics as making the sign of the cross. We cross ourselves before and after we pray; we cross ourselves in the liturgy of the mass; we make the sign of the cross when we bless ourselves with holy water. *Yet, while we often make this sign unthinkingly, it is one of the most powerful spiritual weapons we have at our disposal.*" -[The Catholic Gentleman](#)

During the season of Lent, we spend a lot of time focusing on the Cross of Christ. We enter Lent on **Ash Wednesday** with a cross of ashes traced on our foreheads. Hopefully we take time to pray [The Stations of the Cross](#) before lining up for our weekly Fish Fry. During the **Triduum** we venerate the Cross. On **Easter** we celebrate Christ's power over the Cross.



It is curious to think however, that the first Christians saw the cross in a very different light. In modernity, we often depict the Cross as romanticized beauty and heroism. But the first Christians saw an instrument of excruciating torture designed by the Romans to be the most physically and mentally humiliating form of execution.

This month, the Marianist Moments will take a little time to look at why Catholics make the Sign of the Cross, consider the power of this short prayer, and when to best use it.

“How can we put the Sign of the Cross into practice? Here are some ways you can make the Sign of the Cross a part of your daily life.

1. Immediately after waking and before sleeping – Making the sign of the Cross immediately after waking and before sleeping is as ancient as Christianity. It is a powerful way to consecrate our day to Our Lord.

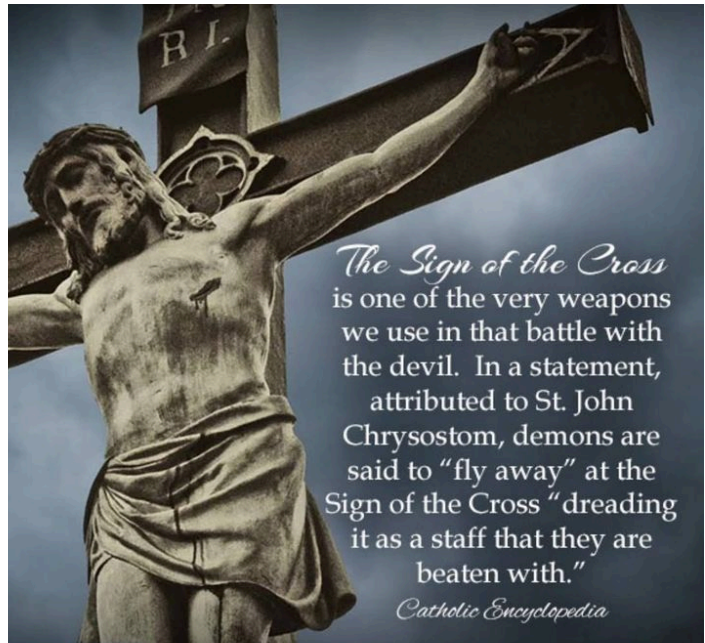
2. When passing a Catholic Church –

There is a beautiful Catholic tradition of crossing oneself while passing a Catholic Church in order to recognize Jesus present in the tabernacle and to show him honor and dignity.

3. At the Name of the Holy Trinity – In Catholic prayer, the name of the Holy Trinity is often invoked. To show honor to the Holy Trinity, it is a good idea to Cross yourself when saying the Glory Be or any other time the Name is invoked.

4. In reparation for blasphemy – The name of God is abused frequently in daily conversations. If you want to make an act of reparation to God for this abuse of his name, you can quietly make the sign of the Cross.

5. Before entering a room or house – G.K. Chesterton, the famous Catholic convert and all-around genius, **was said** to have made the sign of the cross before entering any room. This Catholic custom also applies to entering a house, and many (including this Catholic gentleman) have Holy Water fonts next to the door for blessing oneself when entering or leaving the home.



Because the sign of the Cross is the mark of our redemption, Satan hates it. Demons flee from the sign of the cross when it is devoutly made. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 386), Bishop of Jerusalem, says the following of this powerful sign:

Let us, therefore, not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ; but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it upon thy forehead, that the devils may behold the royal sign and flee trembling far away. Make then this sign at eating and drinking, at sitting, at lying down, at rising up, at speaking, at walking: in a word, at every act.

6. Blessing people or things – A small sign of the cross can be traced on the forehead of a child or upon an object which you wish to bless.

7. When afraid – In old movies that involve Catholicism, you will often see people cross themselves when in the presence of death, upon receiving bad news, or when generally afraid. Sadly, this custom has fallen out of use, but it is an excellent way to drive away fear and to inspire courage." -[The Catholic Gentleman](#)