

It is our happiness to be Christians: this is a grace and a privilege which has not been accorded to all men, and for which we owe God our gratitude.

Christians have a symbol which distinguishes them from those who have not received that grace. I speak not of the interior and indelible character received in Baptism, which is visible but to God and the angels, but of the sign of the cross, which is exterior and visible to the eyes of men.

1. The term cross has various significations; it may be understood as signifying: (i) the instrument of the Passion of our Saviour that is, the true Cross on which Jesus Christ died for us, and of which many fragments and relics are preserved;

the image of that instrument, which the Church everywhere places before our eyes, and which we should have in our homes when the cross bears the figure of the crucified Saviour we call it a Crucifix-

the term cross is also used in reference to the trials and temptations which the Christian should bear in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ;

finally, it indicates the sign which we make on ourselves when saying: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. We know how to make the sign of the Cross; we must also understand its meaning.

2. When we make the sign of the Cross we profess our faith in two great mysteries of holy religion: the mystery of the Holy Trinity and that of the Incarnation; the first being expressed by the words we use, the second by the movement of the hand.

3. We should frequently make the sign of the Cross, and always with the greatest reverence. Practical Christians never fail to make the sign of the Cross before their principal actions, in the morning, at night, before and after meals, before and after prayer, in temptations and trials; because they find in it a protection, a source of strength and blessing.

Indeed, the making of the sign of the Cross is not only a profession of our faith and a most efficacious prayer, but also a holy ceremony, possessing a divine virtue, by reason of the merits of Jesus Christ, to protect us, to instruct and to sanctify us.

The same may be said of the Cross or of the Crucifix, which by the merits of the divine Redeemer is enriched with an especial efficacy to protect, to instruct, and to sanctify those who make it the object of their meditation and veneration. Let us have a Crucifix, my brethren, in our home, in our bedroom. Let us frequently make the sign of the Cross, always with reverence, and with confidence in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.