



21st February 2007

Dear Friends in Christ

The eyes of the nation and of the Catholic world will be on Sydney in July 2008, when hundreds of thousands of young people will gather here to celebrate World Youth Day. That week-long event will be preceded by the visit of the World Youth Day Cross to many countries around the globe before it finally arrives here in Sydney.

Another focus of world attention is the continuing strife in the Holy Land. This is of particular importance to the Church, because Palestinian Christians are struggling for survival. The ongoing violence in that region has caused the number of pilgrims to dwindle. The resulting loss of income has caused many Christians to move to other countries, including Australia. The sad result is that there are very few Christians left in the land where Christ once walked. The Holy Father has asked us to find ways to help.

To enable us to join in the journey of the WYD Cross, the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission has offered to distribute simple yet beautiful olive-wood crucifixes made in the Holy Land by local artisans. The proceeds from the sale of these crucifixes will be sent back to the Holy Land to assist Palestinian Christians who are struggling to make ends meet. We may not be able to go to meet them as pilgrims, but we can try to express our solidarity with them through this small gesture.

This will be of benefit to ourselves as well, because these crucifixes can become focal points of prayer in our homes and the other places where we place them. They can be the silent proclamation of our willingness to follow Christ daily in the royal road of His Cross.

It would be good if every Catholic home, every Catholic classroom and hospital, every Catholic workplace would proudly display the Cross of Christ. There is a lot of talk these days about 'reclaiming our Christian heritage and culture'; perhaps this would be a small Catholic contribution to that cause.

I commend the Liturgical Commission for this initiative and invite you to participate. May the Lord Jesus, Who suffered for us upon the Cross and rose that we might live, bless this effort for our own good and for the good of Christians living in the Holy Land.

We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You: because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.

+ George Cardinal Pell
Archbishop of Sydney

I WILL GLORY IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

A Lenten Reflection and an Invitation to the Catholics of Sydney from THE ARCHDIOCESAN LITURGICAL COMMISSION to Join in a Special Lenten Project of Charity and Prayer

Dear Friends in Christ

The grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, *Who for our sake hung upon the Cross*, be with you all.¹

The solemn season of Lent is always a special time for us Catholics. Lent 2007 finds the thoughts of many of us turning to three different yet related events:

- ~ our immediate spiritual preparation for Easter
- ~ next year's celebration in Sydney of World Youth Day
- ~ the ongoing plight of our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

What is common to all three is the Cross of Christ.

Lent is a spiritual journey that moves us, week after week, to the climactic moment of the Paschal Triduum. In the centre of those holiest three days of our Church year, framed by the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, we find the Cross on Good Friday. Who of us has not been moved by participating in the solemn veneration of the Cross, *on which hung the Saviour of the world?*² Why have we been moved?

Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI says it is because *the Cross of Jesus is a cosmic event*.³ And as one writer put it more than a thousand years ago:

*By the Cross, death was slain
and Adam was restored to life.*

*The Cross is the glory of all the apostles,
the crown of the martyrs,
the sanctification of the saints.*

*By the Cross we put on Christ
and cast aside our former self.*

*By the Cross we, the sheep of Christ,
have been gathered into one flock,*

*destined for the sheepfold of heaven.*⁴

Most of us are very aware of the fact that the eyes of the nation and of the Catholic world will be on Sydney in July 2008, when hundreds of thousands of young people will gather around our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, to celebrate World Youth Day. That week-long event will be preceded by the visit of the World Youth Day Cross to many countries across the globe, before it finally arrives here in Sydney. That cross is one of the essential symbols of World Youth Day, devised by the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II, of beloved memory.

The ongoing hostilities in the Holy Land where Jesus was born and lived, where He died upon the Cross and rose from the dead, continue to grieve us. Many Catholics have left Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Nazareth. Those few who remain have traditionally earned their living by operating hotels and shops that catered to Christian pilgrims. War and terrorism have frightened off many Westerners, with the result that Palestinian Christians are struggling to feed their families. They are truly walking the way of the Cross.

We propose a small but powerful way to help them. But first, let us reflect on the meaning and importance of the Cross in our lives.

1. THE CROSS IN CATHOLIC TRADITION

Early Christians were unwilling to contemplate the Saviour's ignominy on the Cross. They preferred to see in it a symbol of His victory, a source of life. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) spoke of *'the figure of the precious, life-giving Cross of Christ'*.⁵

Although never publicly displayed during the time of Roman persecution, the cross, occasionally even the crucifix, was used for private devotion in the first three centuries of the Church's life.

When peace came in the 4th century, and the emperor Constantine claimed to have seen a vision of the Cross and had it inscribed on the shields of his soldiers, crucifixion as a form of execution was abolished and the cross began to appear everywhere in public places. Crosses were placed on altars as early as the 5th century.

Constantine's mother, St Helena, reportedly found the True Cross near Mount Calvary in Jerusalem in the year 326. Part of the Cross was enshrined in Jerusalem; the annual veneration of this important relic was the origin of the Good Friday ritual we have all experienced in our parish churches. Other parts of the Cross were taken to Rome and Constantinople, and from there small relics were sent to various places throughout the world. Contrary to popular myth, the sum total of all relics of the Cross known today would make up only a fraction of the entire Cross.

In the 5th and 6th centuries, reliquaries of the True Cross were exquisitely made, decorated with mosaic or studded with jewels. Some of these examples of the 'glorified Cross' can be seen in churches and museums today. Many artisans copied these reliquaries, with the result that altars throughout Christendom were adorned with these splendid portrayals of Christ's triumph.

In the early Middle Ages, the Irish developed the intricately geometrical Celtic cross that is still seen today. But the suffering experienced throughout Europe as a result of calamities such as plagues and wars led to the development of a

'Passion mysticism', promoted by the preaching and example of many saints. An emphasis on the suffering Christ grew from this, with the crucifix becoming a standard feature in most churches.⁶

Without a doubt, the Cross is the most widely used of all Christian symbols. It tops our church spires, marks the graves of our dead, and guides us along the 'Way of the Cross'. We trace it upon foreheads at Baptism and Confirmation, sign ourselves with it at Mass and in all our prayers, and are sent forth from this world anointed with the sign of the Cross.

2. THE CROSS IN CATHOLIC LIFE

Wherever Catholics gather, the Cross of Jesus may normally be found. It holds a place of honour in many homes, being placed over doorways, in bedrooms, and in various other places. It is a silent statement that 'this is a Catholic home, and Christ is a member of our family.'

Catholic hospitals traditionally have the Cross in each patient's room, to remind the sick that they should unite their sufferings to Him Who saved us through His sufferings.

The Church's schools and universities enshrine the Cross on the walls of offices and classrooms. This recalls the words of the patron of studies, St Thomas Aquinas, who, toward the end of his life, suddenly gave up writing on the 6th December, 1273. After Mass, he had been making his thanksgiving while gazing at the altar crucifix when he had a profound experience of mystical union with the Crucified Saviour. Responding to a question from his secretary Reginald about this experience, St Thomas said: *'I cannot go on . . . All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me.'*⁷

Devotion to the Cross is not reserved to private piety. In addition to the ancient rite of venerating the Cross on Good Friday, the universal Church has a special feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, dating back to the year 325 when the first churches at the sites of the Holy Sepulchre and Mount Calvary were dedicated.

It has become fashionable in our time to wear a cross around the neck as a piece of jewellery, even by those who have no real understanding of its meaning. But that popularity in itself is a small yet powerful statement. Those who may not know and love Jesus as we do still acknowledge the importance of His Cross as a symbol of goodness and love, and that is a beginning.



3. THE CROSS AS A FOCAL POINT FOR PRAYER

We who do know and love Jesus for what He accomplished for us by His death on the Cross should not hesitate to use the Cross as a focus for our prayer. Ideally this Cross has the image of the suffering Christ upon it, making the cross a crucifix.

Far from being a denial of the Resurrection or a morbid fascination with suffering and death, as some have claimed, the crucifix is a confirmation of our faith in Christ. It depicts Him as fully human: *For our sake He was crucified for us; He suffered death . . .*⁸

But the crucifix also points to the Resurrection and the Second Coming, presenting to our eyes the image portrayed in Scripture: *Lo, He is coming on the clouds; everyone will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over Him.*⁹

Prayer before a crucifix helps us to focus on the mystery of the Incarnation, in which God became flesh; the mystery of the Redemption, in which God saved us by dying for us; and it underscores the importance of the mystery of the Resurrection, in which God triumphed over real suffering and death by rising from the dead. When we contemplate Christ in His suffering and death, and believe that He truly accomplished the seemingly impossible and rose to new life, it gives us hope that our own sufferings are not interminable, and our own death will be cancelled out by eternal life with God. *The tree of man's defeat became his tree of victory; where life was lost, there life has been restored through Jesus Christ our Lord.*¹⁰

This is vividly portrayed for us in the traditional Easter icon of the Eastern Churches, which depicts Christ trampling underfoot the gates of hell on his way to take the just to heaven. Those gates are broken into the shape of a cross, symbolising that it is through the Cross that we find eternal life.

In his first encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est* (God Is Love), Pope Benedict affirmed the Cross as the gateway to the resurrection:

'Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it' as Jesus says throughout the Gospels.¹¹ In these words, Jesus portrays His own path, which leads through the Cross to the resurrection; the path of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in this way bears much fruit. Starting from the depths of His own sacrifice and of the love that reaches fulfilment therein, He also portrays in these words the essence of love, and indeed of human life itself.¹²

There are Catholic families that gather for prayer before the family crucifix on the wall of the lounge room or bedroom. There parents and children can entrust their hopes and desires, their joys and sorrows into the outstretched arms of the loving Saviour. Children are especially capable of a profound sensitivity to the suffering of Christ, taking in the sight of Jesus' sacred head crowned with thorns, His hands and feet fastened to the cross by nails, and His pierced side gushing forth the saving blood.

4. THE CROSS AS A SIGN OF UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

The Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission proposes, as part of our Lenten spirituality this year, that we all renew our appreciation for the power of the Cross of Christ in our lives. This is not mere sentimentality, but is a scriptural exhortation for us to heed; St Paul says: *God forbid that I should boast, except of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*¹³

It would be good if every Catholic home, every Catholic classroom and hospital, every Catholic workplace in the Archdiocese that does not already do so would proudly display the Cross of Christ, beginning in Holy Week this year. There is a lot of talk these days about 'reclaiming our Christian heritage and culture'; perhaps this would be a small Catholic contribution to that cause.

5. THE CROSS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

To facilitate this, the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission is offering to distribute simple yet beautiful olive-wood crucifixes made in the Holy Land by local artisans, along with a brochure of prayers. The proceeds from the sale of these crucifixes will be sent back to the Holy Land to help our struggling Christian brothers and sisters who are making them. We may not be able to go to meet them as pilgrims, but we can try to express our solidarity with them through this small gesture.

And it will be of benefit for us as well, helping us to fulfil two of our three Lenten obligations: charity, prayer and fasting. These crucifixes can become focal points of prayer in our homes, classrooms and other places where they are honoured. They can be the silent proclamation of our willingness to follow Christ daily in the royal road of His Cross. Who knows – one of these crucifixes may arouse someone's curiosity and stimulate a conversation that will lead to a conversion of life.

Forms for the purchase of these crucifixes will be available in every church in the Archdiocese,

as well as in the Catholic Weekly, and can be downloaded from the Archdiocesan website (www.sydney.catholic.org.au).

A special leaflet will be included with each Holy Land crucifix, with prayers for use in the home or privately. Those who purchase a crucifix are encouraged to bring it to a priest or deacon to be blessed, in keeping with the tradition of the Church.

6. HAIL, O CROSS, OUR ONLY HOPE!¹⁴

Brothers and sisters, let us venerate in faith the eternal plan by which God has made the Cross of Christ the pre-eminent sign of His mercy.

As we look upon the Cross, let us call to mind that on it Christ brought to completion the sacrament of His love for the Church.

As we bow before the Cross, let us remember that in His own Blood Christ has removed all divisions, and out of the many nations created the one people of God.

As we venerate the Cross, let us reflect that we ourselves are Christ's disciples and must therefore follow Him, willingly taking up our own cross each day.

As we move from Lent into Easter, let us recall these words of the Second Vatican Council:

By the Cross the incarnate Son, the Prince of peace, reconciled all people with God. . .

For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the Cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.¹⁵

With Cardinal Pell's support and blessing, we ask all of you, the whole Church of Sydney, to join in this Archdiocesan initiative to

'lift high the Cross' in every Catholic home, classroom, hospital and workplace, that we may grasp the mystery of the Cross more clearly and experience its power more deeply.¹⁶

May Mary, who stood faithfully near the Cross of her dying Son,¹⁷ help us all to remain faithful to Him Whose Cross we trace upon ourselves throughout our lives, so that our own moment of death may fully reveal Him to us at last, no longer bloodied and rent with scourges, but glorious and triumphant as our Risen Lord for ever.

We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You: because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world.¹⁸



ENDNOTES

¹ Order of Blessing of a New Cross, from The Roman Ritual.

² Liturgy of Good Friday.

³ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), 12th Station from 'Meditations for the Way of the Cross', 24 March 2005.

⁴ from a sermon of St Theodore the Studite (9th c)

⁵ Acts of the II Council of Nicaea, art. 7: Mansi 13:378; Denzinger-Schoenmetzer no. 601.

⁶ adapted from the article 'Cross' in The New Catholic Encyclopedia, © 1967 by The Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

⁷ Tocco, *Vita* no. 47; *Fontes* 4:376-377.

⁸ Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

⁹ Apocalypse 1:7

¹⁰ Preface of the Triumph of the Cross.

¹¹ Luke 71:33; cf Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; John 12:25.

¹² Benedict XVI, encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 6.

¹³ Galatians 6:14.

¹⁴ Liturgy of the Hours, Feast of the Triumph of the Cross.

¹⁵ Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 5

¹⁶ adapted from the opening exhortation in the Order of Blessing of a New Cross.

¹⁷ cf John 19:25.

¹⁸ Liturgy of Good Friday.

Study Guide for the Lenten Reflection

I WILL GLORY IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

This Study Guide is intended for use in schools and parishes (adult education, youth groups, RCIA, prayer groups). Leaders may choose questions from each section that are most suitable to the age level and ability of their groups.

Answers for some questions are included here.

INTRODUCTION

1. How does Lent prepare Catholics for Easter? What do we do?

Lent is intended to be a spiritual preparation for Easter, through increased prayer, fasting (acts of self-denial) and almsgiving (works of charity toward the needy). The liturgies of Lent help Catholics to focus on themes of repentance and conversion, leading to the Easter themes of baptism, enlightenment and commitment.

2. When will World Youth Day be celebrated in Sydney? How does the Cross figure into that event?

World Youth Day will be 8-15 July 2008. The World Youth Day Cross, kept in Rome between events, is sent around the world and especially around the nation that is hosting WYD, as a reminder of the Christian call to discipleship. The use of the WYD Cross is modelled after the Olympic Flame.

3. Why are Christians struggling in the Holy Land at this time?

(see the Reflection)

4. What are the three days of the Paschal (Easter) Triduum?

Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday (the Easter Vigil)

5. What do you think Pope Benedict mean by saying 'the Cross of Jesus is a cosmic event'?

Christ is Lord of the entire universe, not just one

of its planets. Thus His redemptive death on the Cross applies to the universe as a whole.

1. THE CROSS IN CATHOLIC TRADITION

1. What did early Christians focus on when they honoured the Cross?

(see the Reflection)

2. What is the legend of Constantine and the Cross?

On the eve of a battle for control of the Roman Empire, Constantine is said to have had a dream in which Christ told him to have his soldiers paint the Cross on their shields. Then the Cross appeared in the sky, with the Greek inscription 'In this sign, conquer.' Constantine obeyed the dream and won the battle that was fought on 28 October 312 at the Milvian Bridge leading into Rome. The following year he issued an Edict of Toleration, legalising the Christian religion. Constantine authorised the building of churches and also turned over a number of state buildings to the Church for use as houses of worship.

3. How do Catholics venerate the Cross on Good Friday? What is the origin of this devotional act?

After the Liturgy of the Word, a cross or crucifix, veiled in red, is carried into the church. The priest unveils the cross in three stages, singing each time: 'This is the wood of the Cross on which hung the Saviour of the world.' The people respond, 'Come, let us worship.' Priest and people then genuflect to the Cross after each invocation as

an act of reverence. Following this, the people may come forward individually to genuflect and then reverence the Cross – with a kiss or a touch. This ritual is derived from a similar action first done in Jerusalem, where the people were actually venerating the relic of the True Cross.

4. How were the first altar crosses decorated?

(see the Reflection)

5. What does a 'Celtic cross' look like?
Where have you seen one of these?

A 'Celtic cross' has a circle intersecting the bars of the cross. The cross itself may be plain, or adorned with various intertwining designs of vines, flowering branches, etc. Celtic crosses are usually found atop churches and graves in Ireland and in countries the Irish settled.

6. Why did medieval Catholics prefer the crucifix to the 'glorified cross'?

(see the Reflection)

7. Why is the Cross the most famous Christian symbol?

(see the Reflection)

8. What is the difference between a cross and a crucifix?

A crucifix has a corpus (figure of the body) of the dying Christ on it.

2. THE CROSS IN CATHOLIC LIFE

1. Who was St Thomas Aquinas? What did the Cross mean to him?

St Thomas (1225-1274) was a Dominican friar and one of the Church's greatest theologians. His works, including the *Summa* (soo'ma), are valuable in understanding the philosophy and theology of Church doctrine. Despite all his academic knowledge, however, he was humble enough to realise that knowing how to bear one's own cross in life and accept it as a share in Christ's sufferings is more important than book learning.

2. How does the Church honour the Cross liturgically:

-- on Good Friday?

-- in solemn Masses?

-- in the liturgical year?

(see above for a description of the Good Friday Veneration of the Cross) At solemn Masses the Cross is honoured with incense. Each year on 14 September the Church celebrates the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross, recalling the anniversary of the return of the relic of the True Cross to Jerusalem in 630 by the Emperor Heraclius after its capture by the Persians in 614.

3. What does the Cross mean to the sick and suffering?

(see the Reflection)

4. Should the Cross be used as jewellery?
What are the pro's and con's of this?

While some are opposed to using the Cross as jewellery, especially by 'unbelievers', others see this as a sign of openness to the values that Christ taught, and a possible opening to accepting the gift of faith at some time in the future. The Gospel words of Jesus, 'Whoever is not against us is for us' (Mark 9:40) may apply here.

3. THE CROSS AS A FOCAL POINT FOR PRAYER

1. What three mysteries of our belief about Christ are represented by the crucifix?

(see the Reflection)

2. How is the Cross the gateway to the Resurrection?

(see the Reflection)

3. When children make a drawing of the Crucifixion, they often focus on the blood. How can this be turned into an advantage when teaching them about Jesus?

Children usually express sympathy when they study a crucifix, saying things like 'Poor Jesus!' and asking questions like 'Why did they kill Him? Did it hurt? How much?' Many adults tend to minimise the truth of Christ's sufferings (note the extreme reluctance to accept Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, as 'necessary' and the outcry deploring its 'extreme violence'). Children, however, do not hesitate to colour in as much blood as possible, demonstrating their understanding that Jesus actually did suffer and die for our sins.

4. Do you have a crucifix in your home? If so, where?

4. THE CROSS AS A SIGN OF UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

1. What does St Paul mean when he says that we should boast of nothing but the Cross of Christ?

St Paul is saying that our ultimate 'boast', the thing of which Christians can be most proud, is that Christ died for us on the Cross. This ultimate act of self-sacrifice demonstrates how much we are valued and loved by God. Everything else is second to this fact.

2. How is the Cross a sign of Christian heritage and culture in our secular society?

Crosses on the exterior of buildings, especially atop spires and towers, proclaim the Christian presence

in a neighbourhood. They often point out places that are architecturally and historically significant, built by earlier generations at great financial sacrifice, and demonstrating their appreciation for artistic beauty even when they themselves may have lived in simplicity and austerity. Crosses are silent reminders that Christian values are not lost in a society that sometimes gives the impression that these values are of little importance.

3. Where does the Cross feature prominently in your neighbourhood or other places?

5. THE CROSS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

1. What do you think of the Cardinal's proposal to have a cross in every home?
2. Are there other ways or other times of the year in which we can 'reclaim our Christian heritage and culture'?

Christmas and Easter, being so heavily commercialised today, are important times when Christians can publicly display symbols of the Faith that gave birth to these celebrations. Public processions (Corpus Christi, various parish or ethnic celebrations, etc.) are also occasions when the general public can be exposed to our Christian heritage and culture. It is also good to remind the public, through media publicity, of the Christian connection with customs like hot cross buns, Mardi Gras celebrations, Easter eggs, etc.

3. Have you ever seen a cross or crucifix in a place where you didn't expect it?

6. THE CROSS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

1. What do you think of the Liturgical Commission's proposal to use the purchase of crosses as a way to provide financial aid to Christians in the Holy Land?
2. What do you think of this proposal as a way of showing solidarity with Palestinian Christians?
3. What are some other ways in which we can or do help Palestinian Christians:
 - ~ on Good Friday?
 - ~ at Christmas time?
 - ~ at other times?
 - ~ by various groups?

The annual collection in all churches on Good Friday is sent to the Holy Land, for the upkeep of the holy places there, and also for the support of Catholic schools, clinics, and child care facilities – heavily patronised by Muslims as well as Christians. The donations left by Nativity scenes in Catholic churches are sent to the Holy Childhood Association specifically for the needs of orphans and other children in the Holy Land.

The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre is a Catholic order of chivalry that raises funds for various projects of the Church in the Holy Land.

4. Have you, or someone you know, ever been to the Holy Land? What are your/their impressions of the people and their needs there?
5. Do you think the sight of a cross or crucifix could actually lead to a discussion that would start a person thinking about changing his/her life?

7. HAIL, O CROSS, OUR ONLY HOPE!

1. How did Christ complete His love for the Church through the Cross?

If Had lived amongst us and taught us, but not died for us, we would not have been saved.

2. How can the Cross be a sign of unity for the peoples of the world?

It transcends churches and proclaims Christian values more eloquently than words. For example, the Red Cross is acknowledged worldwide as a symbol of charity and compassion.

3. Why is the Cross an important reminder of our own call to follow Christ?

We cannot experience the fruits of the death of Christ – our own resurrection with Him to new life – without accepting our own share in His saving death through our patient dealing with sufferings of various kinds.

4. What parallel is there between the creation of Eve in Genesis chapter 2, and the death of Jesus and the creation of the Church?

According to Genesis, God put Adam into a deep sleep, and while he slept, God drew forth a rib from Adam's side and from it made a woman. Christ, the new Adam, slept the sleep of death on the Cross, and while He 'slept', a soldier pierced His side, and 'immediately there came forth both blood and water', (cf John 19:31-34). This symbolises the two foundational sacraments of the Church: baptism (the water) and Eucharist (the blood), which give life and nourishment to the Church.

5. Why is the Blessed Virgin Mary a model of faithfulness for the Church?

Standing faithfully by the Cross as her Son suffered and died (cf John 19:25-27), Mary shows us that we must be with Christ not only in the good times but also in the bad. In other words, it matters to Christ whether we are willing to make the sacrifices and accept the self-discipline necessary to live the Christian faith when it is most difficult. It is easy to be Christian when all is going well; it is another thing to be faithful when our faith requires a sacrifice.