

The Sign of the Cross: Does It Still Matter Today?

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The Gen Z's attention span, according to the internet, lasts only for 8 seconds. After reading this, I immediately opened my timer app, I crossed myself. It took me just 5.16 seconds to do the sign of the cross solemnly and reverently. Doing it fast took me 2.75 seconds. I repeated the gesture, this time with no words, as if I were passing by our parish church or a funeral parade. It only took me 1.46 seconds! Apparently, the sign can be done within an 8-second attention-span!

The priest blesses people with his fingers extended, symbolizing Jesus' total self-giving and his five wounds on the cross. Most of us use our middle and index finger to do the gesture. The Eastern Church says it symbolizes the two natures of Jesus Christ, as God and Man. In our liturgy, we use this gesture (with only our thumb) before the Gospel is read. We cross our forehead, lips, and

heart. This calls us to open our mind, heart, and lips so that we may worthily receive and be witnesses to the proclaimed Gospel. Eastern Catholics use the middle, index, and thumb fingers in making the sign of the cross. These three symbolize the Holy Trinity. The Trinity's oneness in the work of our redemption is expressed by this gesture: the loving faithfulness of the Father, the paschal mystery of the Son which granted us salvation, and the continuous inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit to us believers.

Whatever form or way, always remember that the gesture is more than a sign, it is a way for preparing us to receive grace: the grace to profess who God is, to whom we adhere. Who is this God we hope for? Who is this God we believe in? Our God is the Father, Son, and Spirit! Our God, who is communion, gained for us hope and salvation! As such, this gesture is not something we should be ashamed of.

Why do it then?

First, with our fingers pointing at our forehead, we are reminded to pattern our will and mind to that of the Father. The challenge is, we cannot know the mind of the Father, can we? St. Paul says though, "For 'who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). It is through Jesus that we understand God's will for us: to love one another as God loves us (cf. Jn 13:34). May we always choose the will of God—to love both him and our neighbor—as he has made a bridge of love from him to us through the wood of the cross.

Second, with our fingers pointing at our abdomen, we are reminded that the Son, through his sacrifice, gained for us salvation. Through the womb of the Virgin Mary, Jesus was conceived as man. In the Second Reading St. Paul tells us: We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. He fed the five thousand, cured the sick, called sinners back to God, restored life to many, gave hope and joy to the desperate, and embraced all into his loving arms—where we truly belong. Jesus is the hope that does not disappoint.

Lastly, with our fingers pointing at the ends of each shoulder and crossing over our heart, we are reminded of the Holy Spirit as the source of true joy and strength. At times, life may steal our happiness and peace of mind, but, hopefully, not our steadfastness in faith and persistence in prayer. When life's difficulties make us blind and knock us down, we often let ourselves be drowned. We forget to cry out, to beg humbly for God's grace and healing. We forget to ask the Holy Spirit to be our consoler, joy, and strength. The Sign of the Cross calls us to reawaken our "eyes of faith." It is only through the eyes of faith that we are able to see grace despite the world's darkness. Faith enables us to see all the good things, the miracles, and the mighty works that God continues to perform in our lives every day.

Let us imitate the selfless love of the Trinity! Let us imitate the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! Let us heed God's call to love by reverently and faithfully doing and being Signs of the Cross ourselves to the men and women of today.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Recited when there is no opening song)

Blest be God the Father, and the Only Begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit, for he has shown us his merciful love.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These or similar words may be used to address the assembly.)

P—As Christians, our lives are marked by the Trinity. The Father has created us in love. The Son came to the world to make it possible for us to recover our exalted status as children of God, which we lost because of sin. The Holy Spirit continues the work of the Son in the Church and in history until the Lord Jesus returns in glory. Indeed, the mystery of the Trinity is both the origin and the final goal of our journey.

Today is also *Basic Ecclesial Community Sunday*. As one community of believers, we are invited to live out our faith in the Holy Trinity by walking together in the spirit of synodality, as disciples of Christ.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

Gloria

All—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Prv 8:22–31) *(Sit)*

The book of Proverbs describes the wisdom of God as intimately united with him in his work of creation. Jesus, the Word-made-flesh, personifies this wisdom.

A reading from the Book of Proverbs

THUS SAYS the wisdom of God: “The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago; from of old I was poured forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were

no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet the earth and fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world.

“When the LORD established the heavens I was there, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; when he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the fountains of the earth; when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command; then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race.”

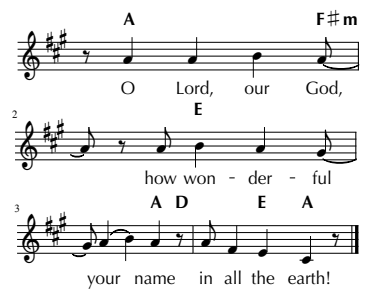
—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 8)

R—O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!

E. C. Marfori



1. When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,/ the moon and the stars which you set in place—what is man that you should be mindful of him,/ or the son of man that you should care for him? **(R)**

2. You have made him little less than the angels,/ and crowned him with glory and honor./ You have given him rule over the works of your hands,/ putting all things under his feet. **(R)**

3. All sheep and oxen,/ yes, and the beasts of the field,/ the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea,/ and whatever swims the paths of the seas. **(R)**

Second Reading (Rom 5:1–5)

Paul describes the Trinitarian gift to Christians: peace with God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (cf. Rv 1:8) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: to God who is, who was, and who is to come. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Jn 16:12–15)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to his disciples: “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Profession of Faith *(Stand)*

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Confident in your love for us all in Christ, we implore you, Father, to help us be sensitive to the movement of your Spirit in and among us. Full of trust we pray:

R—God, One and Triune, be with us.

C—In the spirit of your communion, may our Church leaders become faithful exemplars and mirrors of your love and glory to the lay faithful

and all people of good will. We pray: **(R)**

C—Inspired by your eternal love, may our national and local leaders, and we, the citizenry, vigorously preserve and promote the dignity of every human being in all levels of our society. We pray: **(R)**

C—Following the example of your loving, undivided union, may all families foster loving and long-lasting relationships in, with, and among each other. May husbands and wives, parents and children be moved to love unconditionally. We pray: **(R)**

C—May Basic Ecclesial Communities strive to work with greater harmony and peace among members of the Church amidst their limitations and littleness. We pray: **(R)**

C—May all of us gathered here share Christ’s glory together with your Holy Spirit through our care for one another. We pray: **(R)**

C—As have hoped in their earthly lives to be with you, welcome our departed loved ones to your kingdom. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—Loving Father, you have loved us even before time began through your Word and your life-giving Spirit. Continue to lead us back to your loving arms by stirring in us the Spirit of love and truth, through Christ our Lord. **All—Amen.**

LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Sanctify by the invocation of your name, we pray, O Lord our God, this oblation of our service, and by it make of us an eternal offering to you.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface

(The Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit you are one God, one Lord: not in the unity of a single person, but in a Trinity of one substance.

For what you have revealed to us of your glory we believe equally of your Son and of the Holy Spirit, so that, in the confessing of the true and eternal Godhead, you might be adored in what is proper to each Person, their unity in substance, and their equality in majesty.

For this is praised by Angels and Archangels, Cherubim, too, and Seraphim, who never cease to cry out each day, as with one voice they acclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

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(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Gal 4:6)

Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

May receiving this Sacrament, O Lord our God, bring us health of body and soul, as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and undivided Unity.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May almighty God always keep every adversity far from you and in his kindness pour out upon you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May God keep your hearts attentive to his words, that they may be filled with everlasting gladness.

All—Amen.

P—And so, may you always understand what is good and right, and be found ever hastening along in the path of God's commands, made coheirs with the citizens of heaven.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.