

5. The mystery of the Cross

28. *The scandal of the Cross*

The Mosaic Law was totally fulfilled in Jesus, who revealed God's wisdom and love through the mystery of the Cross, "a stumbling block to Jews and an absurdity to Gentiles; but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23-24).

*Homily on the Feast of St. Joseph
March 19, 2006*

29. *The Cross of Christ*

The Apostle Paul says: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:23). Christians, however, do not exalt just any cross but the Cross which Jesus sanctified with his sacrifice, the fruit and testimony of immense love.

*Angelus
September 17, 2006*

30. *Knowledge of the Cross*

The Apostle can affirm that he wants nothing except "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). It is true: the Cross shows "the breadth and length and height and depth"—the cosmic dimensions is the meaning—of a love that surpasses all knowledge, a love that goes beyond what is known and fills us "with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:18-19).

*General Audience
April 12, 2006*

31. *A sign of love*

The manifestation of divine love is total and perfect in the Cross where, we are told by St. Paul, "*God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us*" (Rom 5:8). Therefore, each one of us can truly say: "*Christ loved me and gave himself up for me*" (cf. Eph 5:2). Redeemed by his blood, no human life is useless or of little value, because each of us is loved personally by Him with a passionate and faithful love, a love without limits.

*Message for the Twenty-Second World Youth Day
January 27, 2007*

32. Christ, our peace

The beauty of the vision described by the Apostle Paul (cf. Eph 2:13-18) is striking: Christ is our peace. He reconciled one to another, Jews and pagans, uniting them in his Body. In his Body, on the Cross, he overcame animosity. He overcame enmity with his death and united us all in his peace.

*Prayer service at the Parish of Rhêmes-Saint Georges, Aosta Valley
July 23, 2006*

6. The way of the Cross

33. *The example*

In a famous passage from his Letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul says that Christ “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7). He, Christ, is the example at which to look. In the Gospel, he told his disciples he had come “not to be served but to serve” (cf. Mt 20:28).

*Address to the permanent deacons of Rome
February 18, 2006*

34. Kenosis

St. Paul says to all, especially of course to those who work in God’s field: “have in yourselves the mind of Christ Jesus” [Phil 2:5]. His mind was such that, faced with the destiny of humanity, he could hardly bear to remain in glory, but had to stoop down and do the incredible, take upon himself the utter poverty of a human life even to the point of suffering on the Cross. This is the mind of Jesus Christ: feeling impelled to bring to humanity the light of the Father, to help us by forming the Kingdom of God with us and in us.

*Meeting with priests and permanent deacons of Bavaria
September 14, 2006*

35. *For others*

Referring to Paul’s words to the Corinthians, “the love of Christ urges us on” (2 Cor 5:14), I stressed that “the consciousness that, in Christ, God has given himself for us, even unto death, must inspire us to live no longer for ourselves but for him, and, with him, for others” (*God Is Love [Deus Caritas Est]*, no. 33).

*Homily for Ash Wednesday
March 1, 2006*

36. *The stigmata*

In the dispute on the right way of seeing and living the Gospel, it is not, in the end, the arguments that decide our thought: it is the reality of life that decides, communion lived and suffered with Jesus, not only in ideas or words but in the depths of our existence, also involving the body, the flesh. The bruises that the Apostle received in the long history of his passion are the witness of the presence of the Cross of Jesus in St. Paul’s body; they are his stigmata [see Gal 6:17]. Thus, one can say that it is not circumcision that saves:

these stigmata are the consequence of his Baptism, the expression of his dying with Jesus, day after day, the sure sign of his being a new creature.

*Homily in Assisi on the eighth centenary of the conversion of St. Francis
June 17, 2007*

7. The Risen One

37. The joy of Easter

God's love for us, which began with creation, became visible in the mystery of the Cross, in that *kenosis* of God, in that self-emptying, that abasement of the Son of God which we heard proclaimed . . . in the magnificent hymn to Christ in the Letter to the Philippians [cf. 2:6-11]. Yes, the Cross reveals the fullness of God's love for us. It is a crucified love which does not stop at the scandal of Good Friday but culminates in the joy of the Resurrection.

*Homily at the penitential celebration for the youth of the diocese of Rome
March 29, 2007*

38. Triumph over evil

Evil in all its forms does not have the last word. The final triumph, the triumph of truth and love, is Christ's! If we are willing to suffer and die with him, St. Paul will remind us . . . his life will become our life (cf. Rom 6:9 ["We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him"]). Our Christian life is supported by and built upon this certainty.

*General Audience
April 4, 2007*

39. The fact of the Resurrection

The Resurrection of Christ is central to Christianity. It is a fundamental truth to be reasserted vigorously in every epoch, since to deny it, as has been, and continues to be attempted, or to transform it into a purely spiritual event, is to thwart our very faith. St. Paul states: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14).

*Regina Caeli
April 30, 2006*

40. The mandate

In St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, we find the oldest account we have of the Resurrection. Paul faithfully received it from the witnesses. This account first speaks of Christ's death for our sins, of his burial and of his Resurrection which took place the third day, and then says: "[Christ] was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve . . ." (1 Cor 15:4). Thus, the importance of the mandate conferred upon Peter to the end of time is summed up: being a witness of the Risen Christ.

*Homily at the Mass of possession of the chair of the Bishop of Rome
May 7, 2005*

41. Witnesses of the Risen One

“If, then, you have been raised with Christ,” St. Paul exhorts us, “seek the things that are above. . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Col 3:1-2). This does not mean cutting oneself off from one’s daily commitments, neglecting earthly realities; rather, it means reviving every human activity with a supernatural breath, it means making ourselves joyful proclaimers and witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ, living for eternity.

*General Audience
April 19, 2006*

42. The Lamb of God

The Cross—for the world a folly, for many believers a scandal—is in fact the “wisdom of God” for those who allow themselves to be touched right to the innermost depths of their being, “*for God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength*” (1 Cor 1:25). Moreover, the Crucifix, which after the Resurrection would carry forever the marks of his passion, exposes the “distortions” and lies about God that underlie violence, vengeance and exclusion. Christ is the Lamb of God who takes upon himself the sins of the world and eradicates hatred from the heart of humankind. This is the true “revolution” that He brings about: love.

*Message for the Twenty-Second World Youth Day
January 27, 2007*