

Sunday, Sep 14, 2025

Understanding cross culture

It's not always easy to face the things that hurt us or our loved ones. So why would we lift up the cross, honoring that which symbolizes pain and the death of Jesus? As Christians we choose to face the cross. In doing so we confront not only the reality of suffering and death but also the hope and belief in new life, in that "something more" of salvation. And somehow in facing our pain, instead of pretending it isn't there or whitewashing the reality, there is acknowledgement of our vulnerability. We become open to healing. The exaltation of the cross is not only a reminder of Jesus' death but of his Resurrection. It is an invitation to lift up our own pain and find in it a path to healing and wholeness.

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638). *"So must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."*

Monday, Sep 15, 2025

Seven ways to know Mary

Pop quiz on Catholic tradition: Name the "seven sorrows" in the life of the Virgin Mary. OK, time's up! While all seven may not have come to mind quickly, here's a tip: They're all found in gospel passages. Today is a good day to read and ponder them: the Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34); the Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13); the Boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:43); the Way of the Cross (Luke 23:27); the Crucifixion of Jesus (John 19:26); the Descent from the Cross (John 19:39); the Burial of Jesus (Luke 23:55).

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS
1 Timothy 2:1-8; John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (443/639). *"He said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.'"*

Tuesday, Sep 16, 2025

United in welcome

Cornelius and Cyprian are remembered and celebrated together because of their united efforts to welcome people back into the church. At the time (ca. 250) there was rancorous and strident debate over how and even whether to allow "sinners" to rejoin the Christian community. One group advocated severe punishment and often permanent excommunication. Cornelius and Cyprian, on the other hand, pushed for leniency grounded in the forgiveness modeled by Jesus. Ostracism can never lead to oneness and wholeness. In honor of Cornelius and Cyprian we might ask ourselves, "In what ways have I excluded others, even briefly, and how can I make amends?"

MEMORIAL OF CORNELIUS, POPE, AND CYPRIAN,
BISHOP, MARTYRS
1 Timothy 3:1-13; Luke 7:11-17 (444). *"God has visited his people."*

Wednesday, Sep 17, 2025

Allow wisdom in

When the wisdom of God comes calling at your door, it's always a good idea to receive her—and, oh yes, Hebrew scripture compares holy wisdom to a woman. The smart person allows wisdom to enter their life because she comes from God, has always been with God, and embodies God's creative power and teaching (Torah), three pretty important things. Saint Paul called Christ the wisdom of God, as have Christian saints and scholars ever since.

"When we speak about wisdom, we are speaking of Christ," said Saint Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan. How can you entertain wisdom today?

1 Timothy 3:14-16; Luke 7:31-35 (445). *"Wisdom is vindicated by all her children."*

Thursday, Sep 18, 2025

Take bold steps to break barriers

As much as society creates and perpetuates divisions and privileges based on gender, color, orientation, ability, income, religion, Christians must be equally persistent in breaking those barriers, just as Jesus did. Jesus' actions were often condemned as audacious and rebellious. But he was actually modeling reciprocity and inclusivity. In a 2022 speech on welcoming people with disabilities, Pope Francis explained that Christ's gaze on the people he met was "a gaze of tenderness and mercy above all for those who were excluded. For this reason, every time the Christian community transforms indifference into proximity, and exclusion into belonging, it fulfills its prophetic mission." What part will you play in advancing this audacious mission of universal welcome?

1 Timothy 4:12-16; Luke 7:36-50 (446). *"If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him."*

Friday, Sep 19, 2025

What will you leave behind?

We've all heard the adage, "You can't take it with you." Although it's a true statement, it's not a very inspiring one. Another way to say the same thing is to ask, "What will you leave behind?" Consider the wisdom of the ancient Greek statesman Pericles: "What you leave behind is not what is engraved on stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." What stories and witness will you bequeath to your heirs? Saint Paul urges us to "compete well for the faith" and pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. That would be quite a legacy for the next generation.

1 Timothy 6:2c-12; Luke 8:1-3 (447). *"For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it."*

Saturday, Sep 20, 2025

Cultivate a death-defying faith

While an underground and prohibited faith in Korea, Catholicism had taken root among laypeople 12 years before a priest arrived in 1836. Some 4,000 Catholics had learned the faith from pamphlets smuggled in from China. Catholics in Korea faced many hardships in those years, including the martyrdom of today's saints, but they kept their faith alive until finally gaining religious freedom in 1883. When the desire is there, faith is possible under all kinds of circumstances. Stay strong in your faith as you deal with hardship in your own life. For inspiration, remember the words of Saint Paul Chông Ha-sang when he was asked to renounce his faith: "I have told you that I am a Christian, and will be one until my death."

MEMORIAL OF ANDREW KIM TAE-GŎN, PRIEST, AND
PAUL CHÔNG HA-SANG, AND COMPANIONS,
MARTYRS

1 Timothy 6:13-16; Luke 8:4-15 (448). *"Some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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