



“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” – 1 Cor. 1:18

My Cross

What does it mean to bear my cross?

The Cross of Christ

- “...that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” (Eph. 2:16)
- “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Col. 2:13-14)

My Cross

- “Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Lk. 9:23)
- *“When the personal cross of each of us is united with Christ’s Cross, the power and effect of the latter is transferred to us and becomes, as it were, a conduit through which “every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17) is poured forth upon us from the Cross of Christ. (St. Theophan the Recluse)*

1. Outward Cross

- The trials and tribulations of life
- Neither position, riches, honor, glory, nor any earthly greatness can deliver one from them.
- Why does God allow us to experience these difficulties?
- How to bear them?

2. Inward Cross

- Struggle against the passions
- “And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Gal. 5:24)

2. Inward Cross

- Abram and Lot
 - “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.” (Gen. 13:9)
 - “Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.”
- “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11)

2. Inward Cross

- *“Anger burns, envy dries one up, lust enfeebles one, miserliness does not let one eat or sleep, and offended pride murderously eats away at one’s heart... Everyone has them. As soon as there is self-love, there are all the passions, for this is the mother of the passions... (St. Theophan the Recluse)*
 - “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Lk. 9:23)

2. Inward Cross

- What to do?
 - “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.” (Heb. 4:4)
 - “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” (Matt. 5:30)

3. Spiritual Cross

- “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Matt. 26:39)
- “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

3. Spiritual Cross

- *Many have the idea that Christianity is the same as other kinds of life, but this is not so. It begins with repentance, ripens through the fight against passions, and is perfected when the pure, inner man, immersed in God, is crucified with Christ... If Christians do have pleasures they are purely incidental. The most distinguishing characteristics of their existence are sufferings and sickness—inward and outward, voluntary and involuntary. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom, and into that which is within it.....If you want good for yourself, get rid of pleasures and enter on the path of the cross of repentance, burn up in the fire of self-crucifixion, be tempered in tears of heartfelt contrition—and you'll become gold, or silver, or a precious stone, and in due time you'll be taken by the Heavenly Householder as an adornment for His most bright and most peaceful mansions. (St. Theophan the Recluse)*