



RECTOR'S LETTER



14 June 2024

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Dear Parishioners,

It seems that we are not always sure when to make the sign of the Cross – *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”*

I prefer to refer to the sign of the Cross, as a prayer which is rich in meaning. References to the sign of the Cross already appeared in Christian writings dating back to 240 AD. While it often seems that when making the sign of the Cross as a routine action, it is much, much more. Making the sign of the Cross marks us as Christians and is a visible expression of our belief and hope in God.

The question is often asked, when do we make the sign of the Cross? Well, it can be made at almost anytime. There is no specific rule. For example, I regularly make the sign of the Cross, when, from time to time, I'm entering a different space, or if I find it difficult to believe what I'm being told, making the sign of the cross with a smile.

Normally, when we make the sign of the Cross it is when we receive a blessing, and also at significant points at our liturgical worship together. Although it is customary to make the sign of the Cross at different times, I read the other day that there are at least nine points at which it is common practice to make the sign of the Cross upon oneself.

They are at the Eucharist, at the words: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”* at the words of the Absolution, after the general Confession, at the beginning of the Gospel Reading, at the end of the Prayer for the Dead in the Intercessions, during the prayer of Consecration, when the Consecrated Host is raised, and when the Chalice is raised, at the Holy Communion, before receiving the Host, and before receiving the Chalice and when receiving the final Blessing.

In almost all of Catholic and some Anglican Church buildings, you will find a small bowl of *“holy water”* (called a Stoup) near the entrance. Upon entering and or leaving the church building it is also common practice to dip a finger in and make the sign of the Cross.

I also want to encourage you, to intentionally take note when the gospel is read at the celebration of the Eucharist. The priest makes the sign of the Cross at the beginning of the gospel in a slightly different way. It is made with the thumb of the right hand, and consists of three crosses in one. A small cross is traced on the forehead, and then on the lips before the hand is moved to the breast. In doing this we acknowledge our belief in the Word of God, our commitment to spread God's Word in our day to day lives, and our awareness of God's presence in our hearts.

This indeed shows that there is a lot of meaning behind our holy gestures we make in our liturgical gatherings. I do encourage you to watch a short YouTube Video called, *“Why Anglicans Make the Sign of the Cross: Please let me explain.”*

This is all for now,

With love, *Selwyn*