



SACRO MILITARE ORDINE COSTANTINIANO DI SAN GIORGIO

IL GRAN PRIORE

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

September 14th, 2019

Dear Knights and Dames of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St. George,

the annual anniversary of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which for our Order is one of the most important holidays of the liturgical year, commits us to keep our eyes fixed on the crucified Jesus. It also invites us not to be afraid to look faithfully at that crucified man, the Son of God, who loved us to the point of giving his life through that supreme and absolute act of love. Looking at the crucifix, we learn how to live because he reminds us of the essential: we will discover that life has authentic value only if we consider it and offer it as a gift.

This holiday brings us back to the day of our Baptism, during which we were marked with the sign of the cross; during the rites of acceptance of the sacrament of baptism, the celebrant expresses himself thus: *"Dear son, with great joy our Christian community welcomes you. In its name I sign you with the sign of the cross. And after me, you, parents and godfather or godmother will also make the sign of Christ the Savior on your son"* And, without saying anything, he makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead. Then he asks the parents, and even the godparents, to do the same.

The contemplation of the crucifix reminds us of our baptism, that moment of grace that has marked our whole life, which is also called the sacrament of true birth. We read in the Catechism of the Catholic Church *"Holy Baptism is the foundation of all Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door that gives access to the other sacraments. Through baptism we are freed from Sin and regenerated as children of God, we become the body of Christ; we are incorporated into the Church and participate in its mission"* (n. 1213).

Dear friends, let us never fail to witness our baptism, let's remember Jesus' harsh words: *"Everyone who gives witness to me before men, the Son of man will give witness before the angels of God, but if anyone says before men that he has no knowledge of me, I will say that I have no knowledge of him before the angels of God"* (Lk 12,8 - 9). First of all we are Christians because we are baptized!

In this circumstance, I would also like to invite you to rediscover the daily importance of prayer, which should begin and end with the sign of the Cross. Pope Francis wrote: *"Nowadays the Church invites us to contemplate the cross of the Lord, the holy cross, which is the sign of the Christian. The cross is that sign that, when we were children, we learned to make ourselves on our chest and shoulders, the holy cross of God"*. The holy father continued to explain the moments of a special gesture: *"when we make the sign of the Cross we pronounce the words Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen:*

Father: we touch our heads because He is high, He is the one who created us. And he is the center of our thoughts and our intelligence.

Son: let us put our hands on our hearts because Jesus loved us so much that He gave his life for us. He incarnated, died and rose again for our salvation.

Holy Spirit: our hand touches the shoulders because the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Jesus to us, represents the embrace of God.

Amen: it means "so be it" and indicates our confidence in the Trinity".

Dear friends, do not spend any day without remembering to make this *sacred sign* with faith that helps us to lift our spirit and protects us; when you use the mantle with the Constantinian Cross, do not forget that the Cross of Jesus is the true seal of our salvation and the strength of our Christian and chivalrous testimony.

In inviting all of you to participate in the solemn liturgies organized by the Order to celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, I would like to wish you to live this beautiful Christian and Constantinian holiday with faith, joy and in charity.

I greet and bless you in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Renato Raffaele Card. Martino