

Statement for Website  
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22 April 2020

Most organizations have a logo or symbol associated with them. In Canada, it is the maple leaf. In the United States, it is the eagle. For McDonald's Restaurants, it is the yellow "M". The purpose of the logo is to send a message about the organization. The maple leaf indicates the natural beauty of Canada. The eagle signifies the freedom and power of the United States. The yellow "M" makes it easy to remember the name of the McDonald's Restaurant chain. In many cases, organizations will spend a lot of time and effort to come up with the ideal logo to communicate their core values and aspirations.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells Nicodemus "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" and by doing so completes the important message about God's plan for humanity revealed earlier. Christ's reference about the "Son of Man" being lifted up in yesterday's Gospel clearly foreshadowed his future death on the cross. Crucifixion was a painful and humiliating means of executing people in the Roman Empire. How could it possibly be connected to love? Such an anomaly invited the question "What is the defining quality of love?" The mission of Jesus was the restoration of the broken relationship between humanity and God. The depth of one's love for another is defined most clearly by one's willingness to undergo sacrifice for the beloved. The pain and humiliation inflicted on Christ revealed the intensity of his (and His Father's) desire for the redemption of human sin. For this reason, the followers of Jesus saw the cross as the "logo" best suited to communicate their appreciation of such a sacrificial love. It also inspired their commitment to emulate that kind of love in their dealing with others.

As I have mentioned in previous posts, Catholics and other people of faith have made sacrifice part of their spiritual life. During this Covid-19 pandemic they, like others, have been required to make sacrifices like social distancing, self-isolation and sharing scarce resources. Yet, such actions are simply small signs of a larger sacrifice required of them. Among the things valued within our secular society are freedom and self-sufficiency. Yet, none of us knows how this crisis will end? It is possible a cure may never be found. None of us knows if we might be infected and die from the disease. No one knows what our economy and society will look like when this is over. The greatest sacrifice which may be required of us is to give up control over our lives and live with this condition. Catholics and other people of faith often claim they have done so. The coming months and years will test this commitment.

The reason the cross is such an effective logo for disciples of Jesus at this time is that it encapsulates the message we need to send to ourselves and others. It is a sign of how at certain times in our lives we are powerless before forces we cannot control. However, we do not simply resign ourselves to our fate, but trust in God's providence. Our willingness to sacrifice control over our lives returns the love of the one who said "Father, let this cup pass from me, but only if it is your will".