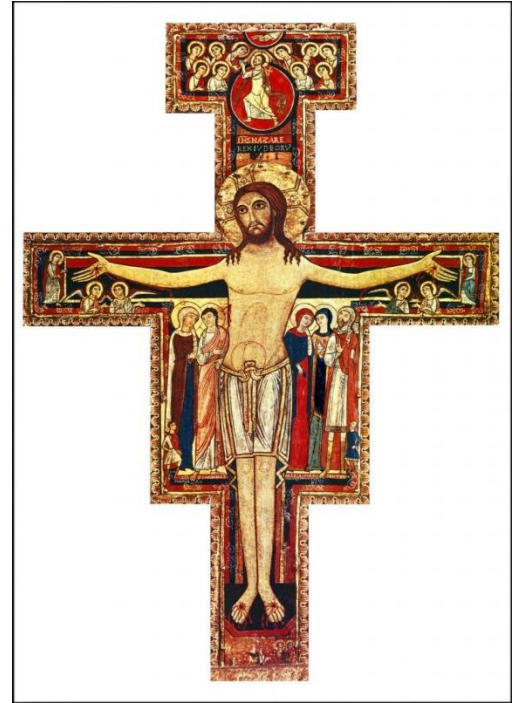


St. Francis'
Prayer before the Crucifix

All highest glorious God
cast your light into the darkness of my heart.

Give me right faith, firm hope,
perfect charity and profound humility
with wisdom and perception, O God,
so that I may do what is truly your holy will.

Amen.



A Reflection

Each of us is faced with the inner struggle which leads us to total surrender. On that journey we may find an inner resistance which is afraid to embrace the weakness and the foolishness of the cross which Paul reminds us is the wisdom and the power of this world. The cross is not based on any human criteria – remember that God’s strength and wisdom are revealed to us through Jesus’ cross! Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini challenges us as followers of the Poor Crucified One to reflect on these questions:¹

- What does it mean to live out my ministry (insert yours here!) as one who is *poor*? Do I seek strength and security in what I have, what I know, and who I am?
- The opposite of trust is a sort of restless tension in our lives that causes excessive unrest, anxiety, and fear. Do I experience this at times? When?
- Do I seek God’s will for my life and the lives of those under my care, both as a sign of self-deprivation and of self-renunciation? Where is the *cross* in my ministry?
- What kinds of resistance and what *worldly* logic do I see in myself most frequently? A longing to be successful? A search for approval? A lack of attention to the needs of others?

¹Father Faniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. CAP. and Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, *St. Francis and the Cross: Reflections on suffering, weakness, and joy*. St. Anthony Messenger Press, ©2003.