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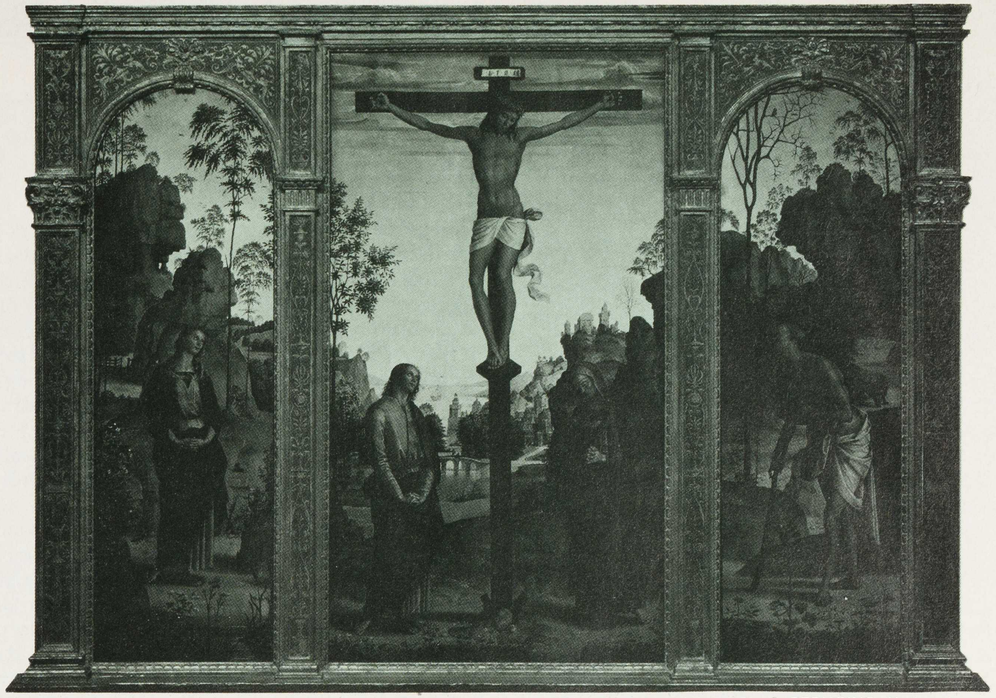
On The Cover

No other symbol has received such veneration and has had such a lasting effect on nations as the Cross. The postage stamps on the cover have carried the saving message of the Cross across the frontiers of this planet. Top, Paraguay, bottom from left to right, Argentina, Vatican City State, Germany and Vatican City State.



The Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John, Saint Jerome, and Saint Mary Magdalene; Pietro PERUGINO; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937.

Behold, Behold The Wood of The Cross, on Which is Hung our Salvation!

The symbol of the Cross is an expression of faith and some of the dogmas of our Christian religion, and an act of consecration to God. The Cross historically was the symbol of scandal and ignominy. It is the most wide spread and important of the Christian symbols. It is for us the sign of our redemption, dignified by Jesus Christ who impressed upon it the mark of salvation. From a symbol of darkness the Cross now mandates a symbol of light.

Vatican II teaches: "In the human nature which He united to Himself, the Son of God redeemed man and transformed him into a new creation *(cf. Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17)* by overcoming death through His own death and resurrection." And: "For this the church was founded: that by spreading the kingdom of Christ everywhere for the Glory of God the Father, she might bring all humankind to share in Christ's saving redemption."

As an act of faith, of consecration, the signing of ourselves with the cross professes a threefold act. After joining our fingers we lift them to our forehead, the seat of our intellectual knowledge, to indicate our faith in God the Father, who is the first person of the Holy Trinity. Secondly we follow a line from our forehead to our heart, whereby we profess our faith in the word made man, in the person of the Son of God, who from Heaven came down to redeem mankind. Third and finally, in moving our hand from our heart to our shoulder from the left to the right, we call to mind the fact that our lungs and heart are located in our breast which is the seat of our life-giving breath and blood. We should rightfully call to mind the third person of the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God.

What other sign has had such an influence on people and nations as the Cross? The cover of this issue of the Bulletin illustrates fourfold the instrument of our salvation through the use of postage stamps issued by various countries during previous Holy Years.

These stamps proclaim our faith in the redemption —Christ dying on the cross for our salvation.

As this Holy year draws to a close the symbol of the Cross will remain. When we view the stark penetrating truth of the Cross, may our hearts silently cry out; "Lord, I give you my mind. — Lord, I give you my heart and love. — Lord, I give you good actions. — Lord, forgive me my sins."