

ELEVATION TO THE MOST HOLY NAME OF GOD BY THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

by Fr. Carlo Colonna s.j.

1. In general, the sign of the cross is a gesture that accompanies the beginning of a prayer and liturgical rites. It is made by tracing the shape of a cross on our own body with the right hand while saying the words: "*In the Name of the Father* (one touches their forehead), *and of the Son* (one touches the centre of his chest, corresponding to the solar plexus), *and of the Holy Spirit* (one touches his left shoulder on the word "Holy" and his right shoulder on the word "Spirit"). Sometimes the sign of the cross is made *without* saying the words as some people do before a meal, in front of a church or of a funeral, but this is a very imperfect way of making the sign of the cross because its primary *meaning is in the words* that are said while crossing ourselves.
2. Why is it so important saying the words "*the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" while we make the sign of the cross? Because by these words we indicate the sense of deep communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and our closeness with Him, the closeness between us and God. This deep communion and closeness are given by the fact that the Christian, if he really lives in the grace of God as he should, is the temple of God, where God has put His dwelling. Consequently, the Three Divine Persons live in the Christian as in their temple with all the wealth and splendour of the Divinity and His works. The presence of the Most Holy Trinity is recalled by the "Name", similarly to what happens when I shout: "John" to call a person named John, who is walking down the street. This person will turn towards me, hearing his name called. In the same way, invoking "the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" while crossing ourselves, recalls the presence and power of God Who is within us, in our mind, in our heart, in our force.
3. In effect, when I touch my forehead saying: "*In the Name of the Father,*" I indicate the place where the Father, the source of the Divinity and all His attributes, has put His dwelling: within my mind of which the forehead represents the physical place. The mind is placed at the top in the human being to show his most important part. It is like the crown of a king that, placed on his head, shows his kingship. The mind is what makes man king of the creation, only subject to the Supreme Mind that created everything, the Father. Touching our forehead while saying: "*In the Name of the Father,*" means that our mind believes and submits itself to God and wants to work in His light. In this way one becomes abode of the supreme Mind, the Father.
4. When I touch the centre of the chest saying: "*and of the Son,*" I indicate where the Son dwells by saying His Name. The centre of the chest is the symbol of the heart in the human being, of his breast where all his mental, psychological and physical vital energies are gathered. Human being's heart is like an abyss with the same width, height, width and depth of his mind. The heart, together with the mind constitutes the inner reality of the human being, while the body represents the outer man. In the Holy Trinity, the Son is the Wisdom, generated by the Father in His image and dwelling in His womb. For this reason human being's breast as equivalent to his heart, recalls the place where in the human being the Word of God, His Son, has His dwelling place.
5. Finally, while saying: "*and of the Holy Spirit,*" we indicate the Holy Spirit by touching ourselves on our shoulders. Why this sign? The shoulders are a symbol of activity and strength. Attached to the shoulders are the arms with which man works. Attached to the shoulders are the wings of the Holy Spirit, symbol of the spiritual forces that move us when we are moved and guided by the Holy Spirit. These wings are two and indicate the worship and love of God which are the most important activities of the Holy Spirit and by which we unite with the Father and the Son.
6. The sign of the cross is therefore a symbolic expression of the state of covenant by which God has united Himself with men believing in His Name and obedient to Him and, at the same time, by which the believers are united with Him. Christians are the temple of God, and God is the One who dwells in them.

7. This is one of the secrets of the sign of the cross, the understanding of which will help us to enter the presence of God in His temple that is us, and to raise us to the communion with Him.

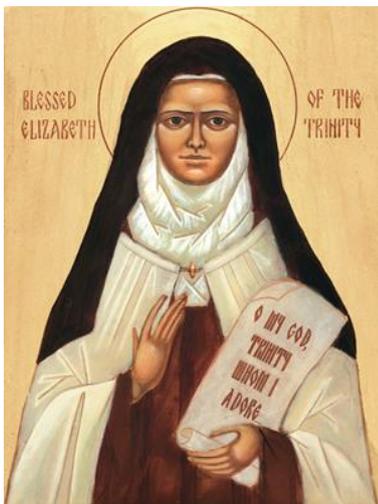
PRACTICAL EXERCISE

1. Make silence within you and around you. Close your eyes to be more engrossed and get more attention within you. With your right hand touch your forehead and say aloud: *In the Name of the Father*. Remain in this position for a while in a contemplative silence, contemplating the presence of the Father in your mind and your union with Him.
2. Touch the center of your chest while saying: *and of the Son*. Silence, contemplating the Son, as per the Father.
3. Touch your shoulders, while saying: *and of the Holy Spirit*. Silence, contemplating the Holy Spirit, as per the Father.
4. Finally, you can offer spontaneous prayers or sing songs of adoration, praise and trust in the Most Holy Name of God as the Spirit will suggest you.

After making the sign of the cross in this way, say this glorification of the Father by Saint Paul (Ephesians 3:20-21):

Glory to God who shows his power in us (10 times)
and can do much more than we could ask or imagine (10 times);
glory to him in the Church and in Christ Jesus (10 times)
through all generations forever and ever (10 times). Amen.

This exercise will also help to memorize this prayer of praise and worship so that it will be easy to recall and repeat it entirely.



By Elizabeth of the Trinity, Letter 269

I leave you my devotion to the Three, to “Love”.
Live within yourself with Them in the heaven of your soul;
the Father will overshadow you,
placing like a cloud between Him and the things of this earth
to keep you all His, He will communicate His power to you
so you can love Him with a love as strong as death;
the Word will imprint in your soul, as in a crystal,
the image of His own beauty, so you may be
pure with His purity, luminous with His light;
the Holy Spirit will transform you in a mysterious lyre,
which, in the silence, beneath His divine touch, will produce
a magnificent canticle to Love; then you will be “the praise of His glory”,
what I have dreamed to be on the earth.

You will replace me; whereas I will be “Laudem gloriae*” before the throne of the Lamb
and you will be “Laudem gloriae” in the center of your soul.

*means “the praise of His glory”