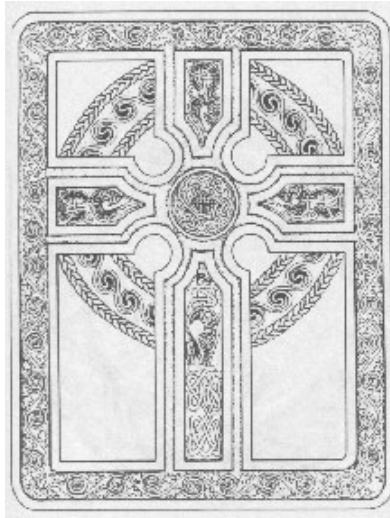


HOLD HIGH THE CROSS



A Homily for Crucifers

Hold high the Cross. You carry the battle standard of the Church Militant. Hold high the Cross. You are leading the Family of God under this battle standard. Hold high the Cross. You are showing the Crux of Being to all the cheering creatures of all the wonderful worlds of God.

Hold high the Cross. When you start up the aisle, a thunderbolt of lightning cracks from the Cross into all realms, cheering the courageous and frightening doubters. All creatures of all the worlds of God merrily spectate your battle standard streaming forward. Your procession tells them that Truth, Goodness and Beauty persist and, moreover, prevail. This is Good News. Even the Devil applauds your progress. For, all creatures love the Creator and want to know that He is supreme.

Hold high the cross. You are the van of the Family of God, which, in this realm, is an Army comprising three branches of service. As an acolyte,

you represent the Religious, men and women who live in special restrictions in order to communicate easily with the Commander-in-Chief. These are the commanding officers of the Army of God. Behind you, the choir represent the Laity, men and women who live in ordinary restrictions in order to inspire, by example, Godly living everywhere in the world. These are the enlisted grades of the Army of God. Behind the choir, the clergy represent the Clergy, men and women who live in temporary restrictions in order to communicate between the Religious and the Laity. These are the executive officers of the Army of God. You carry the victorious escutcheon of this most auspicious Family and Battle Formation.

Hold high the Cross. The Cross is the Secret of Life, the Royal Road to Happiness. The Cross is the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. The Cross is the Crux of Being which all creatures, including the Devil, pine to possess.

Hold high the Cross. What is the Good News that is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus the Christ? Is it that God loves us? No. Everyone experiences love to some extent and knows on that account that God loves them. The Good News is that God's love persists and, moreover, prevails. Only a handful knows that. Is the Good News that God is all-powerful? No. Everyone knows that He is. The Good News is that God is in charge. Very few know that. Many positively hate and rebel against the fact. Is the Good News that we survive death? No. Everyone knows that we survive death. This is why there is fear. The Good News is that love -- Christ -- survives death. That knowledge few have. It makes one fearless. Be

grand, be strong, be fearless and hold high the Cross because God's Army is almighty and you lead it.

The Rev. David R. Graham

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A.M.D.G.