

☞ The Sign of the Cross ☞

– Mystery of Numbers 13, 33 and 666 –

After our immersion *Into the supernatural of the Holy Mass*, let us linger over the sign of the cross, over that mysterious sign everyone makes in too quick and mechanical a way at the beginning and end of any prayer.

A sign of the cross, what is it then? This often botched gesture few people understand is by no means insignificant. Essentially used to initiate prayers, to bless or to protect oneself, the sign of the cross refers to the crucifixion of Jesus. Sanctified by His sufferings, the sign of the cross must therefore have a very high intensity and should, in no way, be drawn casually. From these remarks, a question springs to mind: is there any way to draw the sign of the cross that turns this very high intensity quite clear?

The question may seem disconcerting but deserves to be raised... first of all because of a deep schism that took place among our Orthodox brothers during the course of the year 666 of the second millennium, the very year London, the Babylon of the *Revelation*, went up in flames!

In 1666, during the reign of Alexis I, there sprang an unprecedented schism which still echoes nowadays in the Russian Orthodox Church; a schism, one motif of which focused on how to cross oneself! Let us briefly outline the historical facts.

On May 29th, 1453, Mehmed II's Ottoman troops took over Constantinople. As time went by, the place left vacant by Constantinople, now called Istanbul, was to be held by Moscow to become the Third Rome. From 1653 onwards, Nikon, the authoritarian Patriarch of Moscow, undertook profound liturgical reforms by republishing, according to his supporters, corrected versions of holy books. What is more, he demanded a modification to the sign of the cross, traditionally made with two fingers, the index and middle fingers, and ordered that it be made with three fingers from then on to comply with the churches of the East. But his proposals were very poorly accepted. Many people rose up against these reforms, particularly the Archpriest Avvakoum Petrov and a woman named Feodosia Morozova.

Avvakoum demanded Nikon's resignation, and Tsar Alexis I convened a council in 1660 to get out of the crisis. Nikon was disavowed by his peers and dismissed. However, this in no way appeased the earthquake primed by Nikon and a Great Council was held in 1666 by Tsar Alexis I in an attempt to defuse the powder keg of a Russian church rid of its then leader. The decision was made to exile Nikon to a monastery for the rest of his days. In spite of the confinement, the reforms were carried out and the Council Fathers declared that whoever opposed the reforms was excommunicated. This triggered off an unprecedented tsunami that still echoes nowadays, a schism¹ of millions of Russian believers called *Old Believers*.

¹Called *raskol* in Russian.

The repression was fierce and Avvakoum, like so many others, was burned alive by order of Tsar Fedor III.

His autobiography, which was banned by censorship until 1895, and his letters to the Tsar, to Feodosia Morozova and to the *Old Believers* are considered as masterpieces of Russian literature. They include the following (source French Wikipedia):

... *“how they are tearing out the tongue of whoever refuses to recite the prayers in their new versions, how they are cutting off the hand of whoever refuses the sign of the cross with three fingers.”*

This tragedy impressed many famous Russian artists. The reader will appreciate some works by the painter Sergey Miloradovich² or by Vasily Surikov³, at the end of this text, illustrating this period in Russia. Quarrels over the correct way to cross oneself were biting, and the sign of the cross with two fingers instead of three was handed down by the *Old Believers* to claim their attachment to the grasp they had. As such, observe that Surikov’s magnificent painting shows Feodosia Morozova chained on a sled, defiantly raising her index and middle fingers, to which a beggar carrying a heavy cross responds.



Such a warfare about the correct way of crossing oneself seems incomprehensible nowadays. After all, the Orthodox believe in the Trinity. Crossing oneself with three fingers instead of two matches this symbolism. However, the *Old Believers* considered that only Christ was intimately linked to the Cross and that one should therefore symbolically cross oneself with two fingers, representing the humanity and divinity of the Man-God Jesus Christ.

I am now setting out more personal facts. I am indebted to Master Philippe de Lyon⁴ for the grace of a finer insight on daily life. For instance, when a priest kisses

²Sergey Miloradovich (1851-1943).

³Vasily Surikov (1848-1916).

⁴Master Philippe de Lyon (1849 - 1905). Consult www.jesus-christ-philippedelyon.com. He revealed to some very close friends this: *“I was there at the Creation, I will be there at the end”*...

the altar, I feel on my lips the imprint of his kiss and even its shape, as if he were kissing me. This also happens when watching a similar scene in a movie, or when a person kisses a cross. Better yet, when a priest blesses us at Holy Mass, I see an immaterial cross emanating towards us; I feel it going through my body from top to bottom and then from my left shoulder to my right shoulder. Similarly, if someone crosses oneself in a movie, I perceive the power of Life of the cross he is drawing on him. I could then notice that the emanations of a sign of the cross from left to right or from right to left are different.

I am writing this to point out that the question asked at the beginning about the way of crossing oneself that would maximize this very high intensity is not meaningless. For years, I crossed myself with three fingers in reference to the Holy Trinity. For years, I realized that the intensity of my sign of the cross was what it was. For years, I did not go into that question in depth. But around April 2017, Providence brought me closer to a co-worker; Roland. He left for Moscow in August 2017 and brought back a touch of Orthodoxy and the sign of the cross of the Russian *Old Believers* in our theological discussions. What is behind this sign of the cross that they're so attached to it, they who, like us, believe in Holy Trinity?

That's for everyone to find out. Let it be noted here that the intensity of this sign of the cross, for us from left to right, is far, far beyond what I have experienced in the past and for months I crossed myself in this way... until April 15th. Until this day, because if Heaven had granted me to feel the sign of the cross, I had not yet perceived anything of the sign of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the one on the back of the Miraculous Medal:

Miraculous Medal⁵



For years, I have been drawing this sign of the Blessed Virgin on my heart before falling asleep. And nothing! Even with the *Old Believers'* way, I did not feel any powers of Life. I had concluded that the sign should be symbolic, until the day of

⁵Private Photo. Medal blessed by Our Lady in Fatima in April 2017. Note that *M* is the **13**th letter of the Latin alphabet and that the Virgin embodies number **13** (= 1+12) according to chapter 12 of the Revelation in which She is represented clothed with the sun (= 1) and covered with 12 stars...

April 15th, 2018.

A few months earlier, Roland had lent me a book⁶ on the seer of La Salette, Mélanie Calvat (1831 - 1904), prefaced by one of the greatest authors of the 19th century Léon Bloy (1846 - 1917), forgotten by his peers like many Christian writers in a France that had turned republican. During a careful reading of this book, I surprised Mélanie, one of the mystical wives of Christ, describing the Blessed Virgin Mary making... the sign of the cross!!! This description is on page 61. Let's read:

“Je priai mon très doux Frère de me donner une entière absolution ; ce qu’il fit avec sa main droite. Puis Marie, oui Marie très Sainte, la vraie Mère de la miséricorde, passa en forme de croix l’index de sa bénie main droit sur le miroir qui devint très beau et très lustré ; et Jésus s’y regarda avec complaisance, le serra, le pressa sur son cœur, me bénit et tout disparut. Je me retrouvais au pied de l’autel, la paix dans le cœur”. **That is:** “I prayed to my very gentle Brother⁷ to give me complete absolution, which he did with his right hand. Then Mary, yes, Mary Most Holy, the true Mother of Mercy, drew a cross with **the index finger of her blessed right hand** upon the mirror⁸, which turned very beautiful and shiny; and Jesus looked at it with kindness, held it tight, clasped it to his heart, blessed me, then everything vanished. I was at the foot of the altar and peace was in my heart.”

The Blessed Virgin had made the sign of the cross only with her right index finger upon Mélanie's soul! Note that the surface symbolized by the mirror is small and that the Blessed Virgin did not cross Herself but imprinted the sign of the cross upon the soul of the Saint. Why didn't She make this gesture with two or three fingers? I cannot answer. Yet, in the evening, before saying Ave Maria, I imprinted on my heart the sign of the Miraculous Medal with my right index finger only, and never hitherto have I received such an intensity in my chest... Even my sign of the cross was changed...

Yet, how to proceed whenever we have to cross ourselves and not to draw a sign of the cross upon something? The answer is found in a testimony of Jacqueline Aubry, one of the seers of Our Lady during the apparitions at Île Bouchard (France) in 1947, who saw the Virgin crossing Herself. The sign of the cross is the first prayer the Virgin insisted. Join your hands together. Then put your right hand on your forehead, “in the name of the Father” for the Father has authority over every spirit, then slowly, slowly but firmly, lower this hand vertically and place it between the navel and the pubic symphysis, “and of the Son”, for the Word became flesh. Slowly, go up to the left shoulder, “and of the Holy Spirit”, for the Son carried the cross on

⁶(*Life of Mélanie, Shepherdess of La Salette*) *Vie de Mélanie, Bergère de La Salette écrite par elle-même en 1900. Son enfance (1831 - 1846)*. Introduction by Léon Bloy. Paris MERCVRE DE FRANCE. (French version available in Appendix)

⁷When she was a little girl, rejected by her mother, Melanie would go into the woods. Therein, she came upon a luminous little boy who revealed to her the existence of another family... Jesus, appearing as a little boy, called Mélanie “*sister of my heart*” and Mélanie, failing to understand at first, called Him Brother.

⁸Her soul (top of page 61...).

his left shoulder⁹, then slowly direct your hand to your right shoulder “Amen”. Join your hands together, for this multiplies the intensity of the sign of the cross¹⁰ !

To cross oneself from left to right, and not from right to left like the Orthodox, seems to be the will of God. It is quite clear in the gesture of the Virgin; it is quite clear whenever Heaven traverses us with an imposing sign of the cross at the end of every Holy Mass. It is quite clear again in one of Mélanie’s visions which suggests an even more mystical understanding of this sign.

At the right hand of God the Father, the Son sits; everyone knows this. But who sits at his left hand? Let us read the bottom of page 68 and the top of page 69:

... *“mon Frère était devenu grand personnage, mais c’était toujours Lui ; Il s’assit sur un trône magnifique tout resplendissant, à la droite d’un très haut personnage tout lumineux qui paraissait être l’Éternel Père, par la raison que de Lui-même, Il était lumière ou la Lumière éternelle; à la gauche s’assit ma Mère, sur un trône d’une blancheur variante, éblouissante et orné d’or le plus pur”*. **That is:** “my Brother turned Himself into a great figure, but it was still Him; He sat on a magnificent throne which was all resplendent at the right hand of a very high and luminous figure who seemed to be the Eternal Father, because from Himself came the light everlasting; **at his left hand**, my Mother sat, on a throne shining in a varying and dazzling shade of white and adorned with the purest gold”.

This vision of Mélanie contemplating the Virgin seated at the left of the Father suggests a singular explanation of the sign of the cross. Put your right hand on your forehead, “in the name of the Father” (Heaven), then go down below the navel (Earth), symbolizing the supernatural Incarnation of God in matter, “and of the Son”, then go up to the left shoulder (for the Virgin sits at the left of the Father) to signify that the Incarnation could not have been accomplished without the Blessed Virgin Mary, “and of the Holy Spirit”, then end by “Amen”, meaning: may this be done. And so it was; the Son rose from the dead, ascended and sat at the right hand of God, which is the location that our right hand indicates at the end of the sign of the cross!

Isn’t it amazing? However, a question is lingering in your mind and here is a part of the answer which will be refined in our last text, *The original sin is a symmetry breaking*. Master Philippe de Lyon had said¹¹ page 112:

“The highest being of all is the Virgin. She is the highest spirit of mankind. You cannot understand the Virgin. If you could understand the Virgin, you could understand the Spirit.”

If we could understand the Virgin... we could understand the Spirit! I presented

⁹Read our text on the Holy Shroud: www.jesus-christ-philippedelyon.com.

¹⁰We perceive the reason why Our Lady often presents Herself with her hands joined together...

¹¹*Vie et Paroles du Maître Philippe (Life and Words of Master Philippe)*, by Alfred Haehl. Éditions Dervy. Consult www.jesus-christ-philippedelyon.com for an English version. He had confided this to some closed friends: “*I was there at the Creation, I will be there at the end*”...

my first part before the crucifix of my local church on December 25th, 2014. While saying the chaplet of Divine Mercy, I saw God the Father, the Light Himself. On the crucifix of the church, the Heart of Christ was radiating. At the end of the chaplet, Jesus said to me: *“No one comes to the Father except through me”*. I gave a start. On June 3rd, 2017 (Pentecost), I presented my second part. I had been in Fatima around April 20th, for the centenary. On May 20th, I was stunned by a card of Saint Lucia praying to Our Lady of Fatima laid on my small altar. On the card, there was written in French, *“My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the road that will lead you to God”*. I took this as an invitation and replied that I accepted it gladly. The next day, Sunday, May 21st, that is **13** days before I offered my work before the very crucifix which had welcomed my first part, as I was praying the Rosary of the Virgin on my knees, my head spontaneously bowed, and I was enraptured in the Spirit. I could see myself from the outside. As I was saying the *Ave Maria*, all around me turned black and dark, suddenly there springs up the Dove shining in an intense shade of white, swooping down over my skull, then rising vertically to a certain height and swooping down again over my skull and rising again etc... How many times did the Holy Spirit go down and up? I didn't count, but it seemed to last a while.

Thirteen days before Pentecost, Our Lady had offered me her Heart to thank me for my second work. I give this testimony here to remove a theological ambiguity that you have surely perceived. Christ affirms that no one can go to the Father except through Him, and Our Lady affirms that her Heart leads to God. Contradiction? Of course not! Two paths; two Hearts; two uniqueness! Only through God the Son may one comes to God the Father... but through the Heart of the Virgin one comes to God the Holy Spirit! Reader, it's high time to bestow upon the Virgin the entire celestial place¹² that is rightfully hers!

Ce que tu attendais devant toi
 Dans le Temps, a surgi derrière toi
 Comme un voleur, Il s'est faufilé
 De son Sacré-Coeur, Il t'a convié
 Auras-tu dans ta lampe assez d'huile ?
 Rallier l'Époux dans l'attente fébrile
 Dans la Tente, l'amour inouï...
 Que choisiras-tu ? l'ignorance
 Quand Sa Miséricorde s'accomplit
 Entends mon cri percer ta conscience
 Tourne ton coeur vers le Seigneur ; Vis !

What you've been expecting ahead of you
 As Time went by, sprang up behind you
 As a thief, He wove through
 By his Sacred Heart, He has invited you
 Will you have enough oil in your lamp?
 To rally the Bridegroom in a feverish wait
 In the Tent, unheard-of love...
 What will you choose? Contempt
 While His Mercy is being at work
 Hear my cry piercing your conscience
 Lift up your heart onto the Lord; Live!

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

¹²This affirmation of Our Lady should evoke Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531 supplanting the Aztec mother goddess Tonantzin, also called "Snake", whose rays are evil... Our Lady of Guadalupe is NOT a Christian version of this idol. This apparition should be regarded, on the chessboard of Time, as a strategic choice of the Virgin who wages war to pluck us from the grip of the Forces of divisions. Today more than 20 million pilgrims a year come to pray and scientific analyses of her eyes have shown **13** human forms mirroring themselves in them...

APPENDIX

Black Council. Rise of the Solovetsky Monastery against the new printed books in 1666. Oil on canvas (1885) by Sergey Miloradovich. Tretyakov Gallery.



The trial of Patriarch Nikon. Oil on canvas (1885) by Sergey Miloradovich. History of Religion Museum (Saint-Petersbourg).



Avvakum's Exile in Siberia. Oil on canvas (1898) by Sergey Miloradovich. History of Religion Museum (Saint-Petersbourg).



Boyarina Morozova. Oil on canvas (1887) by Vasily Surikov. Tretyakov Gallery.



Some details:



I nearly dropped my Nikon camera (like the Patriarch) out of my hands on seeing the number of the picture...

