

A Reflection from The Rev. Ben Robertson

September 20, 2023

Last Thursday, 14 September, the Church marked Holy Cross Day, a day when the faithful celebrate, not the crucifixion of Jesus which we remember on Good Friday, but the cross itself and the powerful symbol it became: a symbol of triumph, victory, and the promise of the resurrection. The Church began to celebrate Holy Cross in 335 after the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which sits on the site where scholars believe the crucifixion of Christ occurred, and the commemoration continues to this day.

During a bit of Googling about Holy Cross Day, I came upon a reflection by James Kiefer. He compared the cross with a monogram and that somewhat odd comparison resonated with me (perhaps because I am somewhat odd myself). Like many a good southern boy, I own many monogrammed things, from shirts to cups to cufflinks. And these monograms communicate ownership: this shirt or cup or whatever belongs to, or was given to, Ben. But much more important things bear the sign of the cross, indicating something much more meaningful and majestic than mere ownership. When we inscribe something with the cross, we remember that all things are ultimately His since, “all things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being (John 1:3). And the most important things marked by the cross are people. During our baptism, the priest made the sign of the cross on our foreheads and proclaimed, “you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever.” Through this most holy sign, we know that we were fearfully and wonderfully made, we were given gifts to make the world a better place, and we are promised that Christ loves us and walks alongside us every day.

In these days when so many seek to label or divide, we can be glad for all are marked as beloved of God. And this reality can be a balm to a weary soul as well as a lens through which we encounter the world. I give thanks for the cross and the mark it has made on God's world.