

3-18-1940

# The Power of the Cross, 1940

O.P. Kretzmann  
*Valparaiso University*

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Noon-day Service  
Fort Wayne, Ind.  
Tuesday, March 18, 1940  
O. P. Kretzmann  
Chicago, Illinois

Copy sent to  
Rev. Wm. Weisler  
Kreg. Ind. - 2-9-61

### THE POWER OF THE CROSS

It is very easy that the fiftieth generation of the men and women after the Cross to lose the vision of its continuing power and victory. We have seen the tremendous contradiction between the faith proclaimed by the Church and the faith by which men and women actually live and die in the streets of a mocking world. We see the tremendous odds against which the Church of God must fight, the crushing weight of a decaying social structure, the awful gap between the faith we profess and the faith we live. We know that the things for which we stand and the faith by which we live are today openly hated and despised and cursed as they were when men and women screamed their hate and defiance of God under a Cross nineteen hundred years ago.

There is always the immediate and eminent danger that our personal lives and the life of the Church will be dominated by a crippling spirit of doubt, anxiety, and fear. There are many who feel that there is only weariness in the years before us, the pitiful stirring of burnt-out ashes of fires, the deadly routine of tending altars which the world has forgotten.

Such a spirit of doubt and fear is neither reasonable nor Christian. There is a continuing power about the Cross which towers over the momentary wrecks of time. Everything else may change, the truths by which men attempt to live might sink into chaos and night, the world may grow weary and old, but in the Cross of Jesus Christ is the fountain of eternal power and everlasting youth. The year of our Lord 1940 is still the day of the power of the Cross.

*under the sign of the Cross - the sign of Power.*

Although the Church seems to be beaten back from one area of human life after another and apparently lives only on the crumbs of men's time and talents, it is nevertheless true that as long as she lives close to the Cross it is the most powerful phenomenon in the modern world. The Scriptures testify to the fact that the entire period of the New Testament Church, which began with the sunrise of Calvary and will end only with the last red sunset of the world, is a day of power and victory. As members of the Church, we stand in the long tradition of the day of power against the night which men have made for themselves. As we sing our hymns and speak our prayers, we are in line with all the true wealth and power of two thousand years -- the sudden light over Bethlehem, the Man from Nazareth who spoke words as never yet man spoke, the dark hour on Calvary, and the glorious hour in the resurrection garden, the long dragging years with their red line of saints and martyrs, the conquering faith of *crusaders* and scholar and reformer -- all these testify to the continuing power of the Cross.

Today we may sometimes feel that the center of power has finally shifted elsewhere. Surely men no longer live and die for God and Christ and His Church. They live by guns and fear and hate. They follow hypnotic voices shouting to the ends of the earth. [They die for blood and race and soil.] And yet, again and again, the continuing power of the Cross demonstrates itself in the lives of men. It is strange how often modern man pausing for a moment in the madness of life without God sees the power and glory of the crucified on the dark horizon of his world. Somehow he seems to know that the figure of the Son of God bearing the sins of the world is the answer to all

the problems which trouble and perplex the souls of men.

Perhaps we can see this most clearly if we notice that the full forces now aligned against Christ and His Church pour the most striking testimony to the continuing power of His Cross. Somehow they cannot leave Him alone. No one in the world this morning hates Caesar or Napoleon or Genghis Khan. Men do not hate the dead. Hate dies with the object hated dies. Men no longer clinch their fists against a Bismarck or stand guard over the tomb of a Nelson.

But they still clinch their fists against Christ and they still stand guard over His tomb. They say He is helpless and dead, but they pour out literature against Him and His Church, they build philosophies of government and life constructed to shut Him out, they clinch their fists when His very Name is mentioned. Why? Men do not fight ghosts. There are two kinds of faith -- the saving faith of the redeemed and the protesting faith of the damned -- and both of them always testify to the continuing power of Christ and His Cross.

It is this sense of power which the modern Church must recover. We must again be stirred by the promise of the Cross, by its everlasting power and by the sure knowledge that through the forgiveness of sins it can make our succession of common days a triumphant march to a better world and the high fulfilment of our Cross-given destiny. Seeming defeat will be turned into victory. Human indifference and human bitterness will only cause us to turn from earth to heaven. Weakness will compel us to turn to the Cross for strength and hope.

The life of the world and the individual proceeds by two's. There is an evident duality in life, body and soul, good and evil, light and darkness, night and day. One day this duality will end.



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There will be only one victory. It is ours. Through the shadows of the evening time of the world our eyes should be fixed once more today on the Cross of Jesus Christ, eternally young, eternally strong, and finally, eternally victorious.