

HOMILY OF HIS EMINENCE *EDWIN CARDINAL O'BRIEN*,  
GRAND MASTER OF THE OESSH INVESTITURE OF NEW  
KNIGHTS AND LADIES OF THE CANADA VANCOUVER  
LIEUTENANCY

Thursday October 9, 2014  
Holy Rosary Cathedral  
Vancouver, British Columbia

“He emptied himself... becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this God greatly exalted him.” (Phil 2:7-9)

We have just heard the central message of the Gospel preached by Paul until his very martyrdom.

Paul, who in a flash was converted from an ardent persecutor of the Church, to a zealous believer that the crucified Christ is risen and alive in the persecuted members of Christ's Body, the Church.

Such also must be the core belief of you, our new members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre who were just presented – solemnly – with the Cross of Christ and urged to pray incessantly: “We adore you, O Christ and we praise you, because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world” (Rite of Investiture).

To our friends outside the Church – and even to some nominal Christians – the Cross is today as in Paul’s day, a stumbling block, foolishness, to be avoided at all cost, for the pleasure of the moment... their gods are their bellies (Cf. 1 Cor 1:23; Cf. Phil 3:19).

For us, the Cross is an almost irrational manifestation of God’s undying love for us. It illumines the way that points to the Kingdom of heaven.

And while it is a triumphant Cross we celebrate, the Cross doesn’t deny Christ’s suffering or our need to share in it, for we are still victims of the venomous bite of Adam’s sin. But in Christ Crucified, sin too, has been nailed to the tree.

I doubt there is any more convincing witness to those outside the Faith, than Christians facing sickness and death, calumny and persecution, all the while convinced that we are sharing in the Cross of Christ and making up in our own bodies what is lacking in Christ’s sufferings for the sake of the Church.

For us who wear His Cross and embrace it in the light of Easter's empty Tomb, the Cross is our only way to be lifted up to heaven with the exalted Lord, the Cross no longer the gibbet of death.

May we, unique among all other believers, boast always in the Cross of Jesus Christ and cling to it as the splendid trophy of God's victory. For only with and on His Cross will we be lifted up to our true and eternal home.