

# Crosses Are Forever

By Sister Ellen Frawley, RC

Crosses are forever — and all over. They come in all sizes, shapes (provided one bar is somewhat vertical, the other somewhat horizontal, and that they intersect), materials — and meanings.

A cross can mean "jewelry," an intriguing design. It may symbolize a certain culture or history, as when we think of a Maltese cross, a Russian cross, a Jerusalem cross. It can mean "worship," as in church spires that point heavenward, and tip these points with a cross.

A cross may have a human figure nailed to it; then it means only "Jesus our Savior."

The symbol of the cross has been worn by many organized religious groups in the Church, from the crucifix in the cincture of missionaries who raised it in blessing those to whom they preached Jesus crucified, to the tiny symbols worn by chaplains in the armed services.

The symbol is also worn by congregations of Sisters. In the Cenacle, Sisters now wear a newly designed cross in bronze, each bar about an inch and a quarter long by five-eighths of an inch wide. The cross is heavy for its size because it is an eighth of an inch deep. There is a smaller version for lapel wear in which each bar measures seven-eighths by three-eighths of an inch.

After two months of wear, we notice the bronze has become more beautiful, shining more softly than gold. The same has happened to the chain, with its long, narrow, angular links; two months of being touched by gentle human hands, and by clothing.

And the square shape, with pieces reaching out the same distance? Does this seem to suggest a cross must reach out both ways with equal strength or with all its strength? Up to heaven, clearly, as human beings have always understood since they saw Jesus hanging on the one and only cross, with heaven beyond His bowed head.

Does this shape suggest we don't reach out at all if we don't reach out horizontally too and strongly as Jesus Himself? He said:

"Love God with all your heart and mind and soul and with all your strength, and love your neighbor — your fellow men and women — as yourself." "Greater love than this no one has than to lay down his life for his friend . . ." The beams of the cross here go both ways all the way!

But what holds us most as we look at these crosses — those of others across the dining room table, or our own as we put it on or take it off — is the surface undulating into smooth high spots and little "rough" valleys slightly darker in tone. This undulating bleeds right off the very edges. We look at a few a little more closely — all are alike at a distance; close by, all are different.

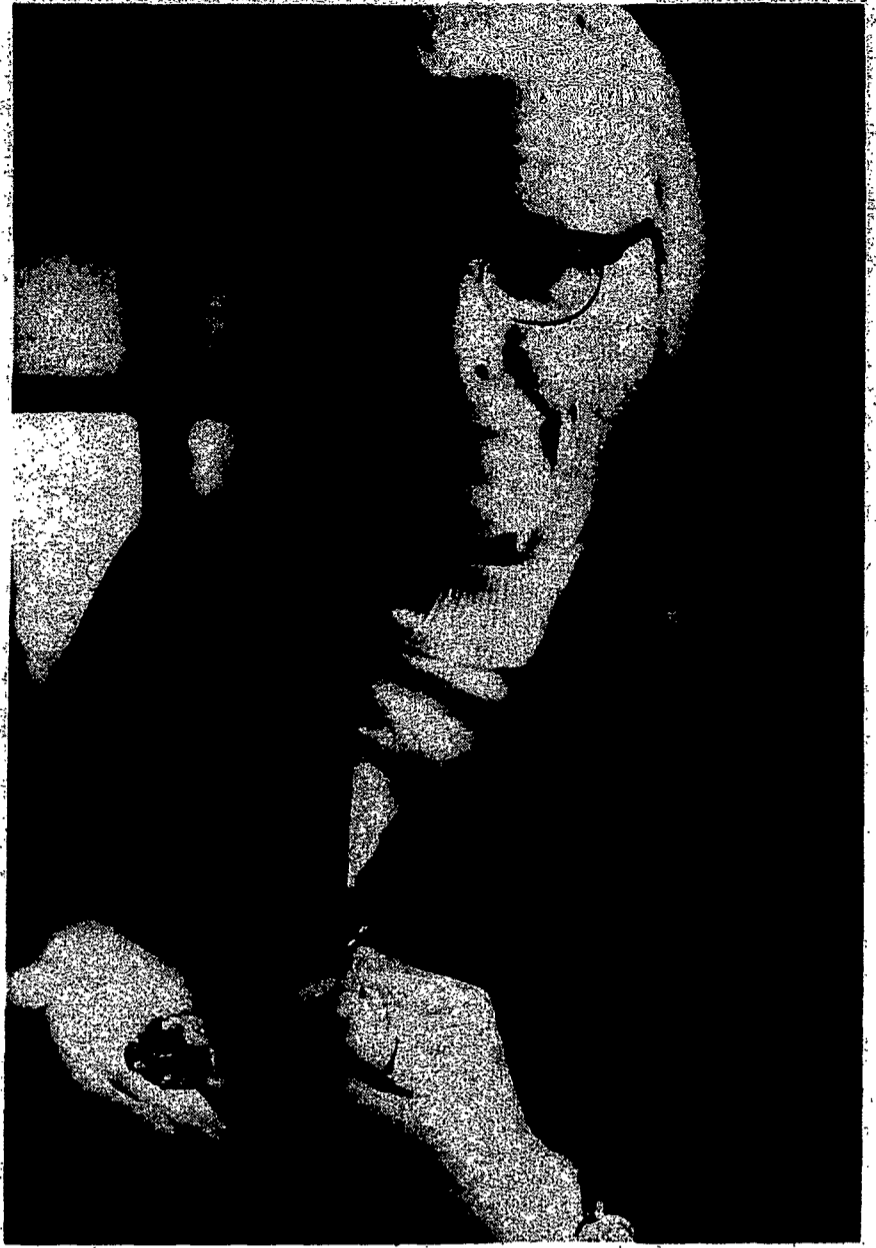
We visualize the artist's design being impressed on a huge sheet of soft metal, which at a certain time is cut into smaller squares, squares most likely never again to lie side by side in the original overall pattern, except in the eternal mind of God. All are scattered over the world, each speaking of all the others, yet each now alone, accepted by a certain person as symbolic of her life. This bleeding design tells us that the shape or size of the cross does not constrict its movement; what we see, we see. The movement beyond is unlimited. Just so, no one's limitations really constrict the Holy Spirit, who "goes wherever He wills."

We turn the metal over now, interested in the other side. It is perfectly smooth and warmly shining. Imprinted in clear, large and angular lettering is a text from St. Luke, the words of Jesus, "I came to cast fire upon the earth." Each can complete the sentence in her own heart: ". . . and how I wish it were blazing already!" This text of course reaches the heart of everyone touched by Jesus — everyone who has come to believe that He is indeed the Son of God, and would want to share this great realization and revelation of a lifetime.

For many years Cenacle Sisters wore a large silver cross with bevelled edges. Two hearts — one surrounded by thorns, the other pierced by a sword — filled the intersection in front, in silver bas-relief. And the reverse? The same text of St. Luke, complete and in Latin. (Now the quotation is in each one's native language.)

For the Cenacle Sisters, obviously the text has a special significance. Like most special things in our lives, the specialness is imperceptible to the casual observer, but speaks much to one given the gift to see.

This specialness is a spiritual reality, part of the charism or gift from God, out of which people live the uniqueness of their call. The fire Jesus speaks of can be the flame of enthusiasm following the discovery of Him. A further gift makes this much more: the very Spirit of Jesus, the fire of love between the Savior and His-Father. We all know of the explosion of the first Pentecost when this fire was seen in the form of tongues. We do not all know the Christian tradition that places this event in the original Cenacle of Jerusalem, after the first retreat in the Christian era.



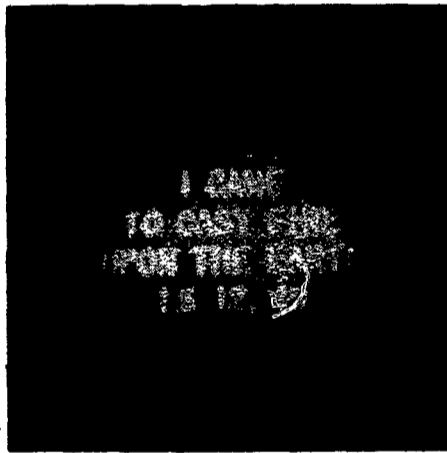
Sister Ellen displays the new cross.

We do not all know, either, that the Cenacle is the supper room, place of the "cena" of the Lord, on a night He gave Himself to His followers to be their food for the long journey across their lives.

nourishment, the reality of mission to carry the fire. As it catches others, it becomes a bigger blaze within her own being.

(Sister Ellen Frawley is coordinator of ministries, a "sort of traffic manager," for the Cenacle Renewal Center on East Avenue.)

For the Cenacle Sister, the words on her cross have a special message: the reality of



The reverse of the new cross.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

## If You Can't Say Something Good, Then . . .

Some letters I'll probably never write:

To the daily papers: Your new design up is not appreciated. Culture shock sets in anew every day, particularly at breakfast. A little more italic, a little less bold type would be easier on the system with that first sip of coffee. Publicz!

To the Sunday New York Times Magazine: Put back your border! I simply can't read a news magazine without a border. So there!

To the local bagel company: Your raisin and honey combination is very nice, but have you thought how exciting something with peanut butter might be?

To the diet food inventors: What do you mean you can't come up with a calorie-free chocolate?

You're not trying hard enough.

To the women in the adjoining pews (and some men): If you resist wearing your perfume at early Mass, I'll do the same.

To a local department store: The lamp you sold me at 70 percent off arrived in a box which showed the real savings to be less than five percent. Shame on you.

To the university which is allegedly installing a combination pizza parlor-video game in our town: That's what I call a real intellectual endeavor. Thanks for nothing!

To the writer of this column: If you can't say at least one nice thing, it may be time to hang up the typewriter for the day.

## Business in Diocese



H. RONALD BUTTARAZZI

H. Ronald Buttarazzi, grandson of businessman Enrico Buttarazzi and son of Fiore Buttarazzi, builder, is moving into private law practice after two years as an associate in the firm of Gallo & Iacovaccio.

A 1975 finance and marketing graduate of Notre Dame (MBA) and a 1978 Delaware Law School graduate, concentrating in corporate law, Buttarazzi will be practicing general law at Exchange St.

His interests include cross-country skiing and the raising of Irish Setters. Incidentally, he is presently seeking homes for 13 puppies.

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