

**"The sense of the Cross of Christ in the view of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI.
Universal meaning - contemporary context"**

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the dissertation is to try to show, on the basis of the writings of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, the universal sense of the Cross of Christ and its present meaning. Christ's Paschal Mystery was the culmination of the history of salvation and an epiphanous event. For this reason, the Cross of Christ - interpreted as actual Revelation - is a particular focus of fundamental theology. In the context of atheism and nihilism of the present, in accordance with the paradigm of dynamic integration, this dissertation justifies the supernatural meaning revealed in the Cross of Christ and thus shows its credibility.

The treatise consists of four chapters. The first chapter discusses the issue of the timeliness of the human question of sense. Man, despite the rapid changes of civilization and culture, does not give up the search for sense. It discusses the issue of sense in modern and post-modern thought and attempts to characterise the identity of modern man in the context of the question of sense. Based on the observations of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, an analysis of modern nihilist currents was carried out, which constitute a serious obstacle to finding the existence of objective sense. In the end, Christianity was shown as a universal trident of sense revealed by God.

The second chapter was an attempt to show the Cross of Christ as the central point of Divine Revelation. The Paschal Mystery: the ordain, death and resurrection of Jesus were the space of the unique manifestation of God and His inner life. This chapter presents a synthetically Ratzinger's reflection on Revelation. Then, in view of Ratzinger's/Benedict XVI's thoughts, it was demonstrated that the Cross is the place of action of the Holy Trinity and the revelation of the individual Divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and their mutual relationship of love realized as a gift.

The third chapter demonstrates that, because of the human nature of Christ, the Mystery of the Cross has also revealed the identity of man. The chapter opens with a presentation of Ratzinger's/Benedict XVI's anthropological vision. It then discusses

the truth of human sinfulness revealed in the Cross and the staurological interpretation of the meaning of human suffering and death. At the end of the chapter, the question of the meaning of human life was addressed, because from the perspective of faith the Cross reveals its supernatural character: it is an epiphany of the dignity of every human person, its unique value and destiny to eternal life with God.

The fourth chapter revealed the soteriological meaning of the Cross. The historical cross - a tool of the ordeal - has become a summary of the Christian faith and a sign of salvation since Christ's death. The Paschal Context of the Mystery, Death and Resurrection of the Son of God explains the meaning of His "leaving this world and going to the Father" (cf. John 13:1), and the resurrection of Christ confirms the divine nature of His mission. Christ's resurrection was a sign of His victory over the powers of evil and death, and thus a foreshadowing of God's universal rule. Because for Ratzinger/Benedict XVI the resurrection of Christ is an integral part of the mystery of His suffering and death, hence in staurological reflection it has its privileged place: it is, in a sense, the hermeneutic key of the Cross and reveals its full, saving meaning. The chapter fourth ends with a reflection on the cosmic meaning of the Cross, that is, the meaning which it has not only for man, but also for all created reality.

Based on the reflection of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, the dissertation shows that that in the Cross of Christ, modern man can find a revealed and at the same time meaningful answer to questions about the foundations of his existence. The Cross is a place of meaning and thus contains a divine answer to questions concerning the essence and purpose of human life, as well as its ultimate destiny. The discovery of the meaning revealed in the Cross can become for modern man the discovery of God's proposals and an invitation to enter into a relationship of faith with Him.

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