THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM  
 The Cross of Jesus has a great significance in our lives as Catholics. We often refer to it as the “Tree of Life.” The cross replaces the tree that once stood in the center of the Garden of Eden. The crucifix is prominently displayed in our churches. We begin and end our prayers with the sign of the cross. The footprint of our classical churches is in the shape of a cross.   
In the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the cross is traced on the crowns of the heads of the baptized to mark the arrival of the Holy Spirit, whom they have received. In speaking of the Mass, we refer to the Holy Sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and to the “Mystery of Faith”, i.e., the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. In baptism, we believe that we enter that very same, “Mystery of Faith”, and willingly choose to live it.   
The cross reminds us of God’s greatest expression of love, the love He showed when Jesus offered His life to save us, in His dying and His rising. His death and rising also provide us with the pattern, for our movement from the slavery of sin to the new freedom of the sons and the daughters of God. We enter the death of Christ when we freely choose to sin no more and enter His rising when we freely choose to live and love for God and for others.   
Meditating on the love of God found in the cross of Jesus touches our hearts and moves us to a life of love that we enter through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Remember that, “the way of the Cross is the way to the Kingdom!” Lift high the Cross!   
God bless.   
Father Nick