

Exaltation of the Holy Cross 14 September



About the Exaltation of the Cross

The feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross originally commemorated the dedication of Constantine's Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in the fourth century. After this celebration, the wood of the cross was venerated. The feast spread in the Western Church after the recovery of the relics of the cross from Persia in the seventh century. This feast is a feast of the Lord and celebrates the 'lifting up' of the Son of Man of the cross into glory. The cross to us seems a doomed failure and end because it is a sign of humiliation and death and was the worst possible punishment in Jesus' time - reserved for the worst of criminals. Yet the cross on which Christ died is not the end and becomes 'the tree of life' because it is the source of our victory and eternal life with Christ.

How can we apply the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross to our lives today?

The bronze serpent on a standard is a well-known symbol of the medical profession and continues to be so to this day. Its origins go back to when God healed the repentant Israelites in the wilderness through a bronze serpent that Moses fashioned and placed on a standard. In the Gospel reading for today's feast, Jesus applies the image of the bronze serpent to his own crucifixion. By Christ being lifted up on the cross he will bring healing and eternal life to all who believe in him.

Just as Christ took on our faults and failings, and helps us daily carry our crosses, so too, we must be open to carrying the crosses of others, be it a listening ear, a helping hand, a welcoming smile or simply making someone a cup of tea or coffee. In this way, people will be lifted up in their sufferings and we all share in the glory of the Cross on which Jesus died for us.

Prayer

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because by your cross you have redeemed the world.

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Collect

O God, who willed that your Only Begotten Son should undergo the Cross to save the human race, grant, we pray, that we, who have known his mystery on earth, may merit the grace of his redemption in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 3:13-17

God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'No one has gone up to heaven

except the one who came down from heaven,

the Son of Man who is in heaven;

and the Son of Man must be lifted up

as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,

so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,

so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost

but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world

not to condemn the world,

but so that through him the world might be saved.'

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Antiphon

When I am lifted up from the earth,
I will draw everyone to myself, says the Lord.

Hymn for the Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross

If **you will be Christ's disciple** – take up your cross.
You must offer up your trials – all else is loss.
Christ, you show us how to suffer with humility and patience,
nailing ourselves daily to the wood of the Cross.

We adore you, our Lord Jesus, for by your Cross
this world is redeemed every day, by your own Cross.
Only by you dying on that tree could pain of sin and death end,
may we join our faults and failings to Calv'ry's Cross.

May we daily help our neighbour bearing their pain.
Healing all their joy and sorrow, so peace they gain.
**By our sharing in their sorrow, may they know Christ's healing power,
rise with Him in glorious triumph and heav'n obtain.**

Ar Hyd Y Nos 84. 84. 8884

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono

Other Music Suggestion

[Only This I Want](#)

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