

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

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We often ask people, or have been asked ourselves, to produce some form of proof to confirm and verify our identity: that we are indeed who we say we are. If we were to ask for the same verification to confirm the authentic identity of God and God's love, there is indeed an incontrovertible proof: the Holy Cross, where Divine Love is overtly expressed to humanity in no uncertain terms.

And so today, we celebrate the feast of The Exaltation of the Holy Cross. As I said, the Cross is itself an "ID" of God, reflected through the sacrifice of His only Son so that we may understand the depth and meaning of the love and the mercy that God has for us. The Cross teaches and is a symbol of how much we are loved and how much God cares for us. This is what Jesus proclaimed to Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

This proclamation was fulfilled and made manifest on the Cross, and the Cross became the identity of the everlasting, ever-merciful, and ever-loving act of God. The Holy Cross should then also become our identity. It is not just a religious ornament or an accessory to wear on our body, or just a gesture as we make the Sign of the Cross before we start praying. One person even told me that he makes the Sign of the Cross before watching horror movies to get more courage! The Holy Cross should become part of our identity as we love, make sacrifices, show mercy, forgive, and embody hope; transcending the spiritual darkness within us to ultimately surrender to the Will of the Lord.

Today's Readings recount how Salvation is poured out through Divine Intervention. In the First Reading, Yahweh delivered the Israelites from the venomous snake bite through the raising of a bronze serpent coiled around a wooden cross. The lifted serpent in the Old Testament and the lifted cross of the New Testament has the same mission: human salvation!



If the serpent lifted by Moses in the wilderness saved mankind from death by snakebite, the cross raised on Golgotha is the salvation and hope of mankind bitten and are being bitten by the ancient serpent, Satan.

In our Christian lives, the Holy Cross shines as a beacon of hope to lift our eyes upward when we are burdened by sin, the challenges of life, and wrapped in fear and despair. As the Holy Cross shines as the “Identification Document” of God’s love, mercy and salvation, let us meditate on the Holy Cross of Christ and ask the Saviour to help us find salvation and meaning in the midst of our suffering, tribulations, and the spiritual darkness in our lives.

Throughout his life, St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists, meditated deeply on the mystery of the Cross. Knowing its intrinsic value, St. Paul of the Cross advised his followers to contemplate on the Holy Cross to learn what the Cross teaches. He instructed: "When you are alone in your room, take your crucifix, kiss its five wounds reverently, tell it to preach to you a little sermon, and then listen to the words of eternal life that speaks to your heart; listen to the pleading of the thorns, the nails, the precious Blood. Oh, what an eloquent sermon!" May we also proclaim with him: “Oh cherished cross! Through thee, my most bitter trials are replete with graces!"

My dear brothers and sisters, whenever we look at the Holy Cross, let us see and believe it is the “Identity Document” of God the Father that reveals His Love through the Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. Let us meditate on the Cross to experience the greatest love the world has ever seen and to follow Jesus, and what His Holy Cross teaches us. Let us experience the real love of the Crucified Jesus and proclaim with St. Paul:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 5:35, 38)