

# TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Sunday, September 14, 2008  
Num 21:4b-9; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17  
Sister Mary Mark Schoenstein, O.P.

The Responsory to the first reading for the Office of this feast is: "We must glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; in him is our salvation, life and resurrection." (Gal 6:14)

Paul, in his usual masterful way, wraps the whole of the meaning of the mystery of Christ's life and death into one neat statement. In him, and him only is our salvation, our life and our resurrection.

OUR SALVATION - As we celebrate this feast of the holy cross we are faced primarily with the awesome truth of the humility of our God, who in Christ Jesus, surrendered his dignity as God and came to be one with us in our struggle against evil. In that struggle he goes so far as to embrace death, even death on a cross, thus taking upon himself the curse of "anyone who is hanged on a tree." Christ has delivered us from the power of the law's curse, there-by making it possible for us to receive the promised spirit through faith. On the cross, and through the cross and for its sake the riches of salvation that had been lost by Adam's sin are restored for us.

OUR LIFE - It is through Christ's death on the cross that the streams of immortality poured from his side, blood and water for the world's cleansing, the source of life eternal for us. Had there been no cross, life itself could not have been nailed to the tree. As John tells us in his gospel: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." As Moses raised the bronze serpent on the pole at Mount Hor, and those critically bitten looked upon it and were saved from death, so even more wondrously we who are wounded by sin look to Christ upon his cross with contrite hearts and are restored to life, indeed, fullness of life, life beyond our expectations.

OUR RESURRECTION - As we join with Christ in his death on the cross we join in his triumph over sin and death. We are assured of our own resurrection. At the Last Supper Jesus spoke of the glory of the cross and of his and our resurrection when he said: "When I am lifted up, then I will draw all men to myself." Our antiphon for Morning Prayer on this feast reads: "We worship your cross, O Lord, and we praise and glorify your holy resurrection, for the wood of the cross has brought joy to the world." For we know and believe that united with Christ in he sacrifice on the cross we shall live with him forever in the glory of resurrected life.

With Paul we exclaim: "May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal 6:14)