

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

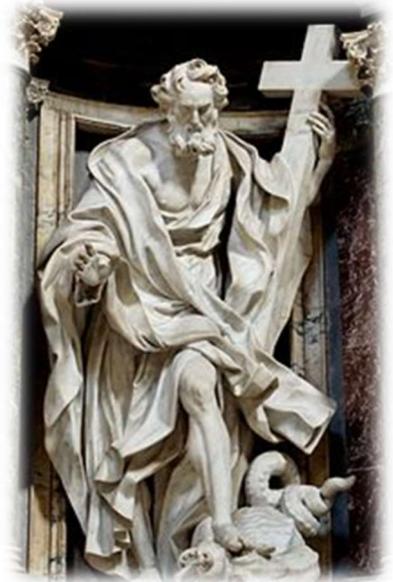
Monday, September 14, 2020

- Monday of the Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time
- Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

With their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!"

In punishment the Lord sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died. Then the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned in complaining against the Lord and you. Pray the Lord to take the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said to Moses, "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if any who have been bitten look at it, they will live." Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.



Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 78:1-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38

Do not forget the works of the Lord!

Hearken, my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable,
I will utter mysteries from of old. *R/.*

While he slew them they sought him
and inquired after God again,
Remembering that God was their rock
and the Most High God, their redeemer. *R/.*

But they flattered him with their mouths
and lied to him with their tongues,
Though their hearts were not steadfast toward him,
nor were they faithful to his covenant. *R/.*

But he, being merciful, forgave their sin
and destroyed them not;
Often he turned back his anger

and let none of his wrath be roused. *R/.*

Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Brothers and sisters: Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: John 3:13-17

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Reflection

So must the Son of Man be lifted up. (John 3:14)

In the medical world, vaccines protect us from disease by training our immune system to recognize and attack a virus or bacteria. Vaccines inject antigens from the disease into our bodies — small bits, in laymen’s terms — so that we produce antibodies to fight off that disease in the future. The very thing that overpowers us and brings sickness and death now empowers us to resist and overcome it.

This is similar to what Jesus’ cross has done for us. Today, we celebrate that cross as the source of our life, our hope, and our salvation. How ironic that this instrument of death would bring us life! Yet this had happened before, as we heard in our first reading. In the time of Moses, a serpent that had brought sickness and death became an instrument of healing (Numbers 21:9). In the same way, the cross of Jesus, where he was condemned, wounded, and sinned against, brings us forgiveness, healing from the wounds of sin, and freedom from death. No wonder we have a feast devoted entirely to declaring the mighty work of the cross!

The true victory of the cross is that Jesus overcame death when he rose again. So when we “lift up” the cross, we are proclaiming Jesus’ *resurrection* as well as his suffering and death. Without the resurrection, there would be no triumph. “If Christ has not been raised,” St. Paul says, our faith is in vain and we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). But because Jesus both died and rose in a human body, “everyone who believes in him” can share his victory and have eternal life (John 3:15). *Everyone.*

Today, rejoice that Jesus died and rose — for you. Gaze upon a crucifix: the instrument of death that is now your source of strength and power. Exult that Jesus’ love is stronger than death. Lift up the cross and proclaim the victory of Jesus’ death and resurrection and watch as your faith grows stronger. Like antibodies surging through your body, the cross will bring eternal life to your soul. *Lord, today I lift high your cross over every struggle. Strengthen my faith, my love, and my obedience.*

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.