



Sunday, Sept 14, 2025

Holy Cross Day

So, a few weeks ago, we heard Jesus talk about the importance of taking up our cross, remember that parable. And as we make Jesus the center of our lives, right? Today is Holy Cross Day, an ancient festival that commemorates the thunder of the sight of the crucifixion in the cross. The other remains of the cross by St. Helena, who was the mother of the Emperor Constantine, and the ultimate dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on that site on September 13, 335.

So, our feast day reminds us and invites us to reflect on the power of the cross, the centrality of the cross in our lives as Christians. And as our him of the day reminds us, today we lift high the cross proclaiming the love of Christ for all people as we do so. Our gospel lesson tells us something deep and important and why the cross matters. Jesus made this comparison. He talked about the story of Moses, who lifted up a bronze snake in the wilderness where the people were bitten by the snakes. And when the Israelites looked up at the bronze snake, they were healed. So, Jesus says, just like Moses lifted up the snake, the Son of Man also must be lifted up. Now he's talking about himself being lifted up on the cross. Think about that. Jesus is telling us that his being lifted up on the cross is a way for us to be saved. This wasn't just some tragic accident. It was part of a larger plan, a plan rooted in love, God's love for a world lost, a world that has been struggling with pain and fear and death.

Now who here would agree with me that John 3:16 is probably one of the most famous verses in the entire Bible, right? I remember as a teenager reading it for the first time and it changed my life. I committed my life to Christ as a result of that verse. The verse tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him would not be lost but have eternal life. And that heart is the heart of the festival of the Holy Cross. It's about God's ultimate gift to us, the gift of love.



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Now we might ask, why does this matter today? The truth is, all of us here have felt the sting of imperfection at some time or sin.

And moments when we have fallen short, yes, when things haven't gone the way that we hoped, when the weight of life just seems too much to bear.

And so the power of the cross comes right into that reality and is a promise to us that even when things get dark, there's a light that never goes out.

The cross at its heart is about relationship, this connection between us and our creator who understands every part of our story. And the extraordinary thing is, is this connection isn't earned. We can't earn it by being perfect or doing good things. It's just offered freely out of love. A love that is powerful that changes hearts and transforms lives.

Think about the power it takes to forgive, to set aside anger and hurt, to reach out in kindness instead of bitterness. That's at the essence of what the cross represents, ultimate acts of love and forgiveness. Throughout his life, Jesus revealed the heart of God, did he not? He healed the sick, welcomed outcast, embraced sinners. Every act of compassion was this clear message that you are loved because God is loved. The love of God in Jesus is not just for a few, but it is inclusive and inviting to all people. All creation. God's love reaches out to the marginalized and lost.

And today we are called to reflect on how that love of God in Christ is touching our lives today. Have you experienced the love of God in text once us to know? More to the point, who is Jesus to you? Take a moment and reflect how God has loved you through Jesus in church, through your family, through friends, through the circumstances of your life. God has created a web of love connecting your life with others and ultimately to his Son, our Lord. So, in our darkest hour, and we all have one or two, when humanity was steeped in sin, God does not abandon us. Instead, God provides a way back, a way of redemption through Christ's death and resurrection.



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So, the cross stands as that symbol of love, willing to bear the weight of our shame, our pain, and our sin. We can only try to comprehend the magnitude of God's love through this amazing gift of grace. So, this feast today of the Holy Cross reminds us, tells us to recall that love is the strongest force in the universe. Love, not hate, not power, not wealth, but love is what brings us to life. When we look at the cross, we look at a love that is willing to suffer, to forgive and to heal.

Now we all know the cross was the symbol of shame and suffering in Jesus' day. But through his sacrifice, it has become a symbol of hope and new life. And that's why we celebrate the festival of the Holy Cross, not just as a look back, but to call us forward into the future. Living with the power of the cross means looking beyond our own struggles and seeing humanity in all who are around us. It means stepping up in moments of challenge, choosing love over hate, hope over despair, and it means remembering that each one of us has value and that we are all part of something greater.

So today, I encourage all of us to reflect on this power and what it can do for our lives. You don't have to be perfect to experience it. You only have to be willing to try to understand how much you are loved, how deeply you are loved and unconditionally. And from there, your life can take on a powerful new meaning and purpose.

So, as you go through your days, keep this in mind that the power of the cross is real. It is a call to open our hearts to that love that is seeking to transform us to a hope that never fades into a life that is new. Let this message inspire you to live in gratitude and extend grace to others and to embrace the unchanging love that brings us all together at the cross of Jesus. And let us invite you now to seal that truth, making the sign of the cross. Please join me in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.