

## **Sept. 14, Holy Cross Day**

### **Opening Prayer:**

For the healing of the nations, O God,  
you raised up your Son on the wood of the cross  
and exalted him as Lord of all creation.  
Grant that all who believe in him  
may have the gift of eternal life  
and share in the glory of your dominion.  
We ask this in union with your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who offered his life for our salvation  
and who now reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in eternal glory  
forever and ever.

### **Numbers 21:4b-9:**

In those days, the people became impatient by the way . Tthe people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

### **1 Corinthians 1:14-24:**

The message about the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.  
For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

**John 3:13-17:** Jesus said to Nicodemus, no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.  
And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.  
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

*God gave the Israelites a sacramental sign of love back in their wilderness days. The Israelites had rebelled yet again, and grumbled and complained against Moses and against God. In judgment, God sent snakes into the camp, fire snakes that caused horrific wounds and death. In mercy, God gave a curious antidote, an image made of bronze (something ordinarily forbidden), a bronze serpent, the very image of the disease, raised up on a pole so that all the eyes of Israel could look on it. And in looking on it, they would live.*

*That bronze serpent on a stick, rather hideous to look at, and were it not the direct command of God Himself, idolatrous as well, was a tangible token of God's love for His people, rebellious, stubborn, and sinful though they were. To look on that image trusting in the promise of God was to live, to survive the venomous bite of the fire snakes. And it was the only way to survive. There was no other.*

*It's a picture of humanity and of us. Snake-bitten with the venom of Sin coursing through our systems. We are born into this world snake-bitten.*

*In mercy and love, God gave His Son. "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. In His death on the cross, Jesus is the bronzed serpent on the pole, the Antidote, the Cure, the Medicine of Immortality. To look on Him is to believe in Him, that is, to trust Him. Taking any medicine is an act of trust. We trust our doctor when he or she says, "Take this three times a day." You look at the data sheet that comes with the drug. If you know a thing or two about chemistry, you cringe at the molecular structure of this drug and wonder what it will do to you. I heard one doctor describe drugs as poisons with some potentially beneficial side-effects. And what about that list of side-effects ranging from bad dreams to depression and death. And yet the good physician said, "Take this three times a day," and so we do in trust.*

*God gave His Son, lifted up on a cross, marred and disfigured almost beyond recognition. And He says, "Look on my Beloved Son in faith and you will live." Look on Him, and don't avert your eyes. He is your Sin and He is your Salvation. The Cure looks terribly much like the disease.*

*God loved the world in giving His Son. The Son loved the world by giving His life. God loved you by bringing you to Baptism, by joining you to His beloved Son in His death. God loves you in His beloved Son. The Son loves you in giving you His Body and Blood to eat and drink. He loves you in putting His Word into your ears to hear. To reject these whenever they are offered to you is to refuse the token of His love. You are baptized. You have been brought to the Light. You are loved in the Beloved Son. Look on Him, lifted up for you. Look on Him in faith and live.*

*Christ's work on the cross goes straight to the root of the world's real problem, the sinful nature of humans past, present and future. He attacks and defeats the root of what causes the world's trouble, sin, evil, rebellion and deceit, and in doing so, he allowed people to be free of the evil which encumbers them and live under the love and in the light of the God who created them.*

*Jesus didn't simply think and write about the solution to our peril, nor did he lead armies to fight a temporary foe, he rescued us by undermining the sin upon which evil is built.*

*The foolishness of God brought sin its death blow, allowing us to be free.*

*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

**Concluding Prayers**

Let us pray for **Let us pray for the church, called to serve.**

**Let us pray for our Bishop, Todd,  
and all who serve our diocesan ministries.**

**Let us pray for one another, and for our parish:**

God, whose glory is revealed

in the foolishness of the cross;

May we be wise, embrace the cross,  
and live its message.

May the whole world see in us

the sign of your salvation. *We pray to the Lord:*

**Let us pray for the world:**

God who loves both Jew and Greek, sinner and saint;

Let the whole world know that freedom and peace  
comes from the One whom you raised up.

We pray also for all who lead the peoples of the earth,  
especially for the Charles, our king.

**Let us pray for those who live in fear and misery:**

God who loves the world;

hear those who call upon you.

Through the power of Christ's cross,  
bring mercy and forgiveness to all in need. :

**Let us pray for the poor and hungry:**

God who saves; hear your children's plea for bread.  
Inspire us, baptized into the mystery of the cross,  
to be those who answer the hunger of others.

**Let us remember the dead**

As you once fed your people with manna in the desert;  
Even now, feed the beloved  
with the bread of Life at your heavenly table.  
Let all the faithful look upon the One who was raised up on the pole and be  
saved from death.

Lord of the ages,  
you call the Church to keep watch in the world  
and to discern the signs of the times.  
Grant us the wisdom  
which your Spirit bestows,  
that with your courage,  
we may proclaim your prophetic word and,  
as faithful disciples  
and witnesses of the cross,  
complete the work you have given us to do.  
We make our prayer through your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**For our Parish.**

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful: Sanctify this parish by thine  
abiding presence. Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more with the light  
of the everlasting Gospel. Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour;  
and those who are walking in the way of life, keep steadfast unto the end.  
Give patience to the sick and afflicted, and renew them in body and soul.  
Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous.  
Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace, and make us all to be fruitful in good  
works; O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together  
we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in  
the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be  
amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen*