

HOMILY HINTS

SEPTEMBER 14: FEAST OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

- It is important to pay attention to the words spoken to a newly ordained priest as the Bishop presents him with the chalice and paten: “Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross”.
- Every Eucharist is a celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Our Lord or in other words the mystery of the Cross.
- For quite some the Cross was considered as a symbol of scandal, something to be hidden from because it was a sign of torture and punishment for criminals. And it was difficult for the followers of Jesus to be associated with such a sign of unspeakable pain and torture. Gradually as the disciples began to see the larger picture, of the immensity of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, of his readiness to be crucified on it for the sins of humanity that they began to preach a crucified Christ.
- The cross was also a reminder of the humility of Jesus who took on human flesh for us and also the fulfilment of the promise of God to send His Son into the world. The fidelity of God in His relationship with us is beyond comprehension. Even with the people of Israel who kept faulting on their end of the bargain, he never ever let them down. As we find described in today’s first reading the whole episode of the people of Israel suffering from the menace of serpents but protected by the Lord who asks Moses to fashion a bronze serpent for them to look on when attacked. And it is this that Jesus hints at in the Gospel when he speaks of being lifted up for everyone to believe in him and enjoy eternal life.
- Every Eucharist reflects the cross of Jesus. It not only celebrates hope, but it also brings in the elements of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus in order to give people the nourishment to face their own passion, death and resurrection in life. In every Eucharist we see quite literally the horizontal and vertical beams of the cross being fulfilled in our own worship of God completing the vertical dimension and our own outreach to people around us completing the horizontal dimension.
- When we gather for the Eucharist, we bring our own crosses in prayer and we leave the Eucharist strengthened to carry our crosses and also to share the crosses of others. The transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus also strengthens us as we offer ourselves and our difficult situations to the Lord, knowing that these situations will also be overcome by us through the power of the Cross.
- And that is why we exalt the cross, we celebrate its triumph because it is by the Cross that Christ has redeemed the world.