



The feast of **The Exaltation of the Holy Cross** celebrates the discovery of the True Cross by Saint Helena, in 320 under the temple of Venus in Jerusalem, and the dedication in 335 of the basilica and shrine built on Calvary by Constantine, on the site of the Crucifixion.

First Reading: (Num 21:4-9) The people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Ps 77:1-2, 34-38

R. / Never forget the deeds of the Lord.

Second Reading: (Phil 2:6-11) Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not

count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, 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: (Jn 3:13-17) Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And 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." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

REFLECTION

On the feast of the exaltation of the cross St. John takes us to the Old Testament background of the erection of the bronze serpent that brought healing to the people of Israel en route to the Promised Land. In the Old Testament the bronze serpent was lifted up and all those who looked up to the serpent were healed. In today's gospel however there is a double lifting up. Jesus was lifted upon the cross in atonement for our sin, and after three days He was lifted up into glory as the foreshadowing of our resurrection. The Old Testament healing was not by the serpent, but it was only an instrument with which their thoughts were turned to God. But it was the will of the Father that His only Son be lifted up on the cross, be raised up on the third day, and that whoever believes and puts their trust in Him be saved and enter into eternal life. The fact that God did not send His Son into the world to condemn but to save the world through Him reveals to us that, **human salvation is God's initiative and what we need to do is to turn our thoughts to God our loving Father, revealed in and through Jesus His Only beloved Son.**