



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
September 14, 2014
Mass with the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Sometimes we just get tired. We grow weary of the struggles we have in life. We have to worry about bills, we have to worry about our kids, we have to worry about the dangers that are out there, and don't forget how we have to worry about our own weaknesses and failings. We can grow weary of all of the fighting, and backbiting, and politics, and arguments that rage on around us. We can get weary of life. It gets to the point sometimes that we just throw our hands up and say, "Forget it, Lord. I'm done." Complaining against our God, we say enough is enough.

We know this is wrong, though. All of us know the amazing things our Lord has done for us. He's given us our lives and all our blessings. He's given us a chance to make a mark on this world and to help other people. Some of us have been blessed with amazing family or friends, and even our challenges can sometimes lead to greater blessings. We know it is wrong to complain against God. Look how badly it worked out for the Israelites in the desert in today's first reading. For to complain against God is to complain against goodness, and justice, and life itself. If you reject all of that, what is left but emptiness and suffering?

So what are we supposed to do in the hardships and low points of our lives? Today's feast is our answer. We exalt the Cross! Many people accuse Catholics of rejoicing in suffering or of being obsessed with guilt, but the opposite is true. We exalt the Cross, not because it brings death, but because it conquers it! "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.” When Jesus was lifted up on that Cross, just like that serpent was lifted up in the desert, all the sins of the world were placed on him, and were crucified, destroyed forever. And so now, we can live in a world where the sufferings due to sin do not have to condemn us, do not have to define us. We are the daughters and sons of God, the Cross is our sign of salvation, and we have life forever through that sign.

Our beloved, late Holy Father, Saint John Paul II, can teach us the truth of this. In so many of his pictures, we can remember him carrying his crosier, topped with the crucifix. Indeed the Holy Father who walked our streets 25 years ago carried his cross well. His was most notably the cross of his long time struggle with Parkinson’s Disease. His body was crippled by it; it sapped his energy, impeded his speech, and made his life incredibly difficult. But rather than hiding away so that his cross would stay hidden, he strode out into the world, tirelessly carrying out the work of Christ, consequently displaying his burden for the world. By doing this his “weakness” was revealed as courage and strength. The world heeded his message even more because of the brave witness of a man carrying his cross and loving his people.

Our crosses can be borne, not because we are so great, but because our God is great. We carry our crosses by the strength of him who became “obedient to death, even death on a Cross.” May we exalt the Cross today, not because we want to seek out suffering and hardship, but because suffering and hardship have no power over us.

This weekend we have being our great Season of Welcome here in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. May we, those saved through him who came down from heaven, proclaim our great faith as evangelists who wear the cross in our lives proudly, thankfully, and with great hope. Our witness can lift up all those lost in the wilderness, because through the power of the Spirit living in us, in the will of the Father, it can proclaim the glory of God. Hope is ours in Christ. Our victory is won. Lift high the power of the Cross, and welcome back those who have been lost in the darkness. Show them the light of Christ, triumphant in the Cross, triumphant in your life, and bring them home. Lift high the Cross of Christ, because “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.”