

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

The Church celebrates today the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Saint Paul says that the Christ Crucified is “a stumbling block ... and foolishness,” to those seeking signs or human wisdom, “but to those who are called... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Corinthians 1: 23-24). The world hates the Cross because it is a sign of self-denial, yet the Cross has become the greatest sign of LOVE! – because of Jesus’ love for us, and the triumph of the Resurrection.

Over the years, I have been asked why our Churches have Christ still on the cross (most non-Catholic Christian churches have crosses without the body of Jesus on it). I never quite understood why they had problems with Jesus being on the Cross. This is the moment where God shows us His greatest love – He shows us what He is willing to do for us. In our lives, we like to remember the moments of greatest love – we have pictures of our weddings, the first time we held our babies, we have pictures of the people we love on our computers, in our homes, and at the cubicle at work. It’s a great reminder of that love. So too, when we look at the Crucifix, we see and are reminded of the immense love that Almighty God has for each of us!

When we look at the Crucifix with love, we are drawn into the mystery of God’s love for us. We see the physical suffering He endured from the crown of thorns, the scourging, the nails. We feel the emotional suffering He felt in His deep loneliness – being abandoned by His circle of friends, denied by one of His closest friends, and betrayed by a confidant. We sense His spiritual suffering as He felt distance from God – He who had always been close to His Abba, His Daddy. We see in all of this not a love of sadism, but God’s great love for us – what He is willing to endure, how close He is willing to come to us!

As we reflect today on the mystery of the Cross of Christ, may we grow ever mindful of God’s intimate love for us, and may we return that love from the depths of our hearts.