

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Sep 14th 2016

Wednesday, September 14. Exaltation of the Cross.

John 3:13-17: “*So the Son of Man must be lifted up*”

Today`s feast was instituted in 335, when two basilica in Jerusalem were open; both built by order of Emperor Constantine. But, what is the meaning of this feast?

Liberation sign: In the Roman Empire, the cross was one of the most terrible tortures reserved to criminals. Jesus did not commit any crime. His Gospel is good news for every one suffering, but also his word and behaviour put into question the governor`s behaviour. The cross was the consequence of his life: what he had done and what he had said. But this instrument of torture is for us, a sign of love and liberation. For that reason we celebrate the Exaltation of the cross.

Sign of salvation: In the first lecture (Num 21:4b-9), the people of God, after having sinned, receive from God salvation: look at a bronze snake risen up in a standard and all bitten will be saved. The evangelist John saw in this snake lifted up, a figure of Christ on the Cross and Resurrection. Looking to the History of Salvation, the Cross is the greatest humbling of the Son; also his Exaltation. The biggest expression of love: He humbled himself; because of this God greatly exalted him and raised him from the dead (Cf. Phil 2:6-11).

When we celebrate the exaltation of the cross, we are not exalting the distress. We are exalting the love of God; God, who has shared our human condition, and is committed with the Kingdom. We are also exalting the Crucified, who had loved those who were his own in the world, with perfect love. And we exalt the God who, like Abraham, gave his only Son, his beloved, so that all may have life in his name.

Eduardo Madrazo cmf