September 14th: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Gospel text (*Jn* 3:13-17): Jesus said to Nicodemus: “(...) As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For 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.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross: the new desired worship has become a reality in the Cross of Jesus

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, Nicodemus, who "took out the nails" from Jesus Christ, receives an anticipated revelation: the Son of man will be "ex-alted" (high and lifted up from the Earth) and will draw all men unto Himself. The emerging Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was slowly getting deeper into this truth. One thing was clear from the onset: with the Cross of Christ, the ancient sacrifices of the temple were definitely outdone. Something new had happened!

God did not want to be glorified by sacrificing bulls and rams, whose blood cannot purify man nor atone for him. The new desired worship, but still undefined until then, had become a reality. In the Cross of Jesus it had been verified what in vain had been attempted with animal sacrifices: Christ has occupied their place. The temple was still a venerable place of prayer and announcement. Its sacrifices, on the other hand, were no longer binding upon Christians.

—We adore you, Oh Christ!, and we bless you, because with your Holy Cross you redeemed the world.

The Exaltation of the Cross

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Today, the Gospel is a prophecy far beyond what our own senses tell us: the Cross, the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ is the Savior’s Throne. That is why Jesus asserts, "the Son of man must be lifted up".

We do know the Cross was the most ignominious and heinous torture of its time. To exalt the Holy Cross would therefore be some sort of cynical joke, were it not for the crucified Christ hanging on it: with the Son of man the Cross is the new tree of Wisdom. By freely submitting Himself to the passion, Jesus Christ

has opened the substance for our lives: to be lifted up with Him to the Holy Cross to fling open our arms and our heart to God's heavenly gift, in an admirable exchange. To be crucified with Jesus and resurrect with Him: that is the reason for it all!

—Jesus, we Christians, during the Paschal Vigil, in a most solemn way, sing a hymn of praise to the original sin: "O happy fault! O necessary fault of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!", who, through your pain has infused a new “significance” to pain.