

St. Francis of Assisi Parish Ann Arbor.

September 8, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Monday, September 14th we will celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The focus of this feast day is the Cross of Jesus, by whose death and resurrection we have been redeemed and healed. In these current challenging times for our nation and world we need to experience that divine healing all the more.



Since the Covid Virus hit, our world has been turned upside down and more and more I am meeting people of all ages who feel fearful or are separated from family and friends. On the surface, it might seem that life is going on as normal but let's be honest- it is not! Think of all the ways our lives have changed in the past six months- the things we used to do but are now no longer permitted or are now restricted in some way- from family celebrations to education activities to social events and gatherings. Think also of how many times we have sighed when hearing about the next possible spike in the Virus, or the introduction of more precautions? And when added to this the continuing

search for justice and peace for all in our nation- we know that these are not normal times!

Yet, it is in these difficult and abnormal times that we need to rely all the more on our Christian faith and on one another. The Feast of the Holy Cross is a good moment for all of us to pray for our nation and world. It's an opportunity for us as Christians to move beyond just keeping our fingers crossed in the hope that we get a vaccine and to pray for real healing and redemption.

So here are a few thoughts about how we as a parish community could use this special feast day:

- At our regular 9:15am morning Mass we invite you to bring a family cross to be blessed. This cross can then be hung (or re-hung) in your home and used for times of family prayer.
- The Church will be open all day for private prayer and opportunities to pray the Stations of the Cross.
- I am encouraging our SFA school teachers and students to do something special to honor this day and to join us in prayer. Each grade will decide on how this is best done.

- On Monday at 3:30pm when our students are going home I will be available to bless family crosses and other religious items at the front door of the Church. You are welcome to join us then.

As I write I am reminded of that old familiar prayer, a favorite during the Lenten season- ***“We adore you O Christ and we bless you, because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.”*** What a great prayer for all of us to have on our lips on Monday as we celebrate the Holy Cross and seek Christ’s healing for our world and nation.

So please join us in some way on Monday- don’t leave it to others- the task of praying for our nation and world deserves the attention of all of us. May the Lord continue to bless us with the gift of his healing peace and loving presence.

Fr. James