**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 14 – XXIV WEEK O.T. [C]**

**EXALTATION OF THE CROSS**

**And just 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.**

**We are in the Third Chapter of the Gospel according to John and Jesus is talking to Nicodemus, to whom He has revealed the mystery of the Baptism: "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can this happen?" Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand this? Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just 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." (Cfr. Jn 3,1-15).**

**Why can Jesus speak to Nicodemus about the things of heaven? Because he speaks about the things he has seen, he sees in heaven. Why has He seen and sees the things of heaven? Because He is the Son of man who ascended to heaven, because He descended from heaven. Ascending and descending, descending and ascending are one only mystery for Christ. It is as if the mystery of his glorious resurrection had been accomplished. Jesus reveals this same truth – the vision of the things of heaven – to the Pharisees, too, even if with other words: “Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also. For the Father loves his Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes. Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.” (Jn 5,19-23). This truth of Christ Jesus that is in the bosom of the Father had already been announced by the Apostle John in the Prologue: “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.” (Cfr Jn 1,1-18). Jesus is in the bosom of the Father and on earth. In the bosom of the Father, He sees what the Father does, He listens to the Words of the Father and reveals them to men.**

**Now, always to Nicodemus, Jesus proclaims the mystery of his death: “And just 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." The relation is not only that of believing that Jesus is the life of the one who looks at Him with faith. Christ Jesus is the life of the one who eats his Word with faith. Of the one who eats his body and drinks his blood with faith. Jesus is the life of the one who is quenched with his Holy Spirit with faith. If one does not eat his Word, does not eat his body, does not drink his blood, is not quenched with his Holy Spirit, if one does not let himself be immersed in the water of the baptism to be born again as new creatures, one remains in the death. Christ is the way of life. It is Christ, if one walks in Him, with Him, through Him. Not only is He the way, he is also the grace and the truth, the life and the light. He is life, truth, grace, light that we must always eat if we want to remain alive. Eating his Word and being born from water and from Holy Spirit, we are born to life, we become new creatures. Eating Him true body, drinking Him true blood, perennially being quenched with his Holy Spirit, we remain in life, we grow in life.**

**Let us read the text of Jn 3,13-17**

**No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. And just 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.**

**If we do not nourish ourselves with Him and if we are not quenched in his Holy Spirit, we remain in death, for we are already in death. May the Virgin Mary obtain for us the grace of believing in Christ according to most pure truth.**