

## **HOMILY EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

**September 14, 2025**

When you're weary, feeling small,  
When tears are in your eyes, I will dry them all;  
I'm on your side, when times get rough.  
And friends just can't be found,  
Like a bridge over troubled water.  
I will ease your mind.

Jesus can be that bridge over troubled water if we let him. Today we celebrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The cross is a sign of the great suffering that Jesus endured for our salvation. It is also a sign of the new life that came through this suffering in the Resurrection. Most of all it is a sign of the great love that God has for each one of us. This is what we heard in the Gospel today "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." This gives us great hope in the midst of the crosses, the troubled water we encounter in our lives. It is not what happens in our life that is important; it is how we choose to respond to it. Most of what happens in our lives is beyond our control, but we can control how we choose to respond to it. We need to let God affect how we choose to respond. That gives us hope.

We do encounter the crosses, the troubled waters in our lives. Sometimes when we encounter them we see them as obstacles to faith; how could God let this happen? But it is in the crosses where we can meet God. It is in the troubled waters that we need him. We have a lot of troubled water in our country and in our world today. Much of that is beyond our individual control. God is not making the troubled water go away, he allows us to exercise our free will, but he will work with each of us to make the world a better place. Out of frustration we sometimes act out in negative ways. But because we know Jesus I think we can safely say that the problems in the country, in the world today are not going to be resolved with more hatred, more divisions, people yelling at each other, people shooting each other. How is God calling you to make the world a better place?

Times of transition in our lives can be difficult. If you are a parent, when your last child leaves home it is a time of transition. We have to let go of our children a little more each day and that is hard. God will help you navigate your way through this and find your new purpose. Taking care of a sick friend or relative is very difficult. Stay connected to the Lord and he will give you the strength to do it. You will be glad that you did. Some day you will look back at this as a very blessed time with your loved one. Retirement is a big transition. Unless you are totally disabled you cannot sit around doing nothing. You need to find your new purpose. Let God help you. It may be something totally new for you or something you always wanted to do but did not have the opportunity. God may lead you to a whole new life. When you leave childhood and enter the world of full time work, you have to make some big decisions that will set the course for your life. Let the Lord lead you to the work where you can use your gifts and talents to serve others. That is where you will be fulfilled. It may not be the easy choice, the most logical choice, or the one where you will make the most money. Jesus can be that bridge from the cross of transition to the Resurrection of your new purpose in life.

The death of someone you love is a tremendous cross. I think the only thing that is worse than the loss of a loved one is never having given or received love at all. That love will always be your gift. That love will never die. Jesus can help us to live through that cross. Our faith tells us that our loved one lives on and is with us spiritually. While they are not with us in the same way, they are not far away. When you share love with someone, they become part of you and they live on through you. And while you want them to be with you physically the way they were in the past, you are only separated for a short time. You will be with them again for all eternity.

Life is hard and there is a lot of troubled water, but it is not what happens in our lives that is important, it is how we choose to respond to it. It is in the crosses that we can encounter God. Jesus can bring that suffering of the cross to the new life of the Resurrection. Let Jesus be that bridge to new life. In Jesus and his unconditional love, we always have hope.