

Readings for Sunday, September 14, 2025

Feast of the Holy Cross

First Reading: Numbers 21:4b-9

[From Mount Hor the Israelites set out,] ^{4b} but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ They spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

(In place of the Psalm)

Love's As Warm As Tears C. S. Lewis

Love's as warm as tears,
Love is tears:
Pressure within the brain,
Tension at the throat,
Deluge, weeks of rain,
Haystacks afloat,
Featureless seas between
Hedges, where once was green.

Love's as fresh as spring,
Love is spring:
Bird-song hung in the air,
Cool smells in a wood,
Whispering 'Dare! Dare!'
To sap, to blood,
Telling 'Ease, safety, rest,
Are good; not best.'

Love's as fierce as fire,
Love is fire:
All sorts—infernal heat
Clinkered with greed and pride,
Lyric desire, sharp-sweet,
Laughing, even when denied,
And that empyreal flame
Whence all loves came.

Love's as hard as nails,
Love is nails:
Blunt, thick, hammered through
The medial nerves of One
Who, having made us, knew
The thing He had done,
Seeing (with all that is)
Our cross, and His.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Gospel: John 3:13-17

[Jesus said:] ¹³ “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son-of-Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son-of-Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God loved the world in this way, that God gave the Son, the only begotten one, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”