

Saint Lawrence O'Toole Parish

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Office Hours

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✠ The Exaltation of the Holy Cross ✠

September 14, 2025

What does exalting the Cross mean? Is it not maybe scandalous to venerate a shameful form of execution? The Apostle Paul says: “We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles” (*I Cor* 1: 23). Christians, however, do not exalt just any cross but the Cross which Jesus sanctified with his sacrifice, the fruit and testimony of immense love. Christ on the Cross pours out his Blood to set humanity free from the slavery of sin and death.

Therefore, from being a sign of malediction, the Cross was transformed into a sign of blessing, from a symbol of death into a symbol par excellence of the Love that overcomes hatred and violence and generates immortal life. “*O Crux, ave spes unica!* O Cross, our only hope!”. Thus sings the liturgy. ~ *Pope Benedict, September 17, 2006*

SINCERE THANKS: to everyone who contributed to our children's First Holy Communion celebration: To the catechist Caitlin Rivett-Carnac, thank you for your time and commitment in preparing the children for this important step in their faith journey. Your shepherdess guidance was appreciated! To the parents and families, thank you for supporting your children throughout the preparation process and for being present on this special day. To Charlene Kluge for donating the beautiful First Communion cake. And to the Catholic Women's League, thank you for providing the pocket Rosary gifts for the children, hosting the reception and providing a welcoming space for families to gather and celebrate.

OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED: September 22 to 26.

SUNDAY SOCIAL: TODAY, Sunday, September 14th, there will be a coffee social in the church hall after the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Come downstairs for a hot drink and to chat with fellow parishioners.

Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

September 15 – September 20

Tuesday (with *Our Lady of Perpetual Help Devotions*)
 9:00 a.m. + Sean Murray by *Murray Family*
 Intentions of Mitch & Tammy Desrochers & Family
 by *Robert & Monica Radey*

Friday 9:00 a.m. + Pauline Coulas/Silkes by *Carmel Rumleskie*

+ Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time +

September 21, 2025

Saturday 4:00 p.m. + Ruth Cowan *by Terri MacLeod*
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Mass for the People

Liturgical Appointments	September 20	September 21
Readings	<i>John Morris</i>	<i>Beverly Gloscheskie</i>
Communion	<i>Neil O'Reilly</i>	<i>Ursula Jeffrey</i>
Offertory	<i>Bruce Sullivan</i>	<i>John Jeffrey</i>
	<i>Barry Dombroskie</i>	<i>Jason Dombroskie</i>

IN YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE REMEMBER:

- the children who recently received Jesus, the Bread of Life, with their First Holy Communion: *Remy & Lily Cannon, Gracie & Raylyn Mask, Jude Rivett-Carnac, Ryker Ronholm, David Sawiak and Cameron Tudell.*
- for parishioners and friends who are sick, especially: *Jean-Paul Patenaude, Ray Vananburg, Carmel Rumleskie, Linda Pilgrim.*
- for those who have died, especially: *Kevin Andrew Young, Conway McGrath, Joseph "Bud" Maika.*

ROMAN CALENDAR:

Monday	- Our Lady of Sorrows
Tuesday	- St. Cornelius, pope and St. Cyprian, bishop, martyrs
Wednesday	- St. Hildegard of Bingen, virgin, doctor & St. Robert Bellarmine, bishop, doctor
Friday	- St. Januarius, bishop, martyr
Saturday	- St. Andrew Kim Tae-Gon, priest, Paul Chong Ha-Sang, & Companions, martyrs

THE CROSS is a gibbet of death. Yet today we celebrate the exaltation of the cross of Christ, for on its wood Jesus took upon himself all our sin and the evil of our world and vanquished them by his love. The word of God that we have just heard tells us how, by contrasting serpents that bite with a serpent that saves.

First, serpents that bite. These serpents attacked the people who had fallen once more into the sin of speaking against God. Such speaking against God was more than simply grumbling and complaining; on a deeper level, it was a sign that in their hearts the Israelites had lost their trust in him and his promises. As God's people were making their way through the desert towards the promised land, they grew weary and could no longer endure the journey (cf. Num 21:4). They grew discouraged; they lost hope, and, at a certain point, they even seemed to forget the Lord's promise. They lacked even the strength to believe that the Lord himself was guiding them towards a land of plenty.

It is no coincidence that, once the people no longer trusted in God, they were bitten by deadly serpents. We are reminded of the first serpent mentioned in the Bible, in the Book of Genesis: the tempter, who poisoned the hearts of Adam and Eve and made them doubt God. The devil, in the form of a serpent, tricked them and sowed seeds of distrust in them, convincing them that God is not good, and is even envious of their freedom and happiness. Now, in the desert, serpents reappear, this time as "fiery serpents" (v. 6). In other words, original sin returns: the Israelites doubt God; they do not trust him; they complain, and they rebel against the one who gave them life, and so they meet their death. That is where distrustful hearts end up!

Dear brothers and sisters, this first part of the narrative asks us to examine closely those moments in our own personal and community lives when our trust in the Lord and one another has failed. How often have we grown dry, disheartened and impatient in our own personal deserts, and lost sight of our journey's goal! Here too, in this vast country, there is a desert. For all its great natural beauty, it can also remind us of the weariness and aridity that we at times bear in our hearts. Moments of fatigue and trial, when we no longer have the strength to look up towards God. Situations in our lives when, as individuals, as Church and as a society, we can be bitten by the serpent of distrust, poisoned by disillusionment and despair, pessimism and resignation, and caught up only with ourselves, lacking all enthusiasm.

And so we come to the second image: the serpent that saves. As the people are dying from the fiery serpents, God hears Moses' prayer of intercession and tells him: "Make a fiery serpent and put it on a pole. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live" (Num 21:8). And indeed, "if anyone was bitten by a serpent, he looked at the bronze serpent and lived" (v. 9). Yet, we might ask: Why did God not simply destroy those poisonous serpents instead of giving these detailed instructions to Moses? God's way of acting reveals to us his way of dealing with evil, sin and distrust on the part of humanity. Then, as now, in the great spiritual battle that continues throughout history, God does not destroy the vile and worthless things that men and women choose to pursue. Poisonous serpents do not

disappear; they are always there, lying in wait, ever ready to bite. What has changed then, what does God do?

Jesus tells us in the Gospel: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (Jn 3:14-15). This is the decisive shift: the serpent that saves has now come among us. Jesus, lifted up on the pole of the cross, does not allow the poisonous serpents that attack us to cause our death. Confronting our misery, God gives us a new horizon: if we keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, the sting of evil can no longer prevail over us, for on the cross he took upon himself the venom of sin and death and crushed their destructive power. That was the Father’s response to the spread of evil in the world: he gave us Jesus, who drew near to us in a way we could never have imagined. “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21). Such is the infinite grandeur of divine mercy: Jesus “became sin” for our sake. Jesus, we could say, on the cross “became a serpent”, so that by gazing upon him we might resist the poisonous bites of the evil serpents that assail us.

Yes, for on the wood of the cross Christ removed the venom from the serpent of evil. Being a Christian, then, means living without venom: not biting one another, not complaining, blaming and backbiting, not disseminating evil, not polluting the earth with the sin and distrust that comes from the evil one. Brothers and sisters, we have been reborn from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus. May we be free of the poison of death (cf. Wis 1:14), and pray that by God’s grace we can become ever more fully Christian: joyful witnesses of new life, love and peace. ~ *Pope Francis, September 14, 2022*

The Cross is steady while the world is turning.

Stat crux dum volvitur orbis.

LAST WEEK’S SUNDAY OFFERINGS:

Total: \$3,544.00 (Envelopes: \$2,757.00; Loose: \$317.00; Visitors: \$110.00; E-transfer: \$340.00; Needs for the Church: \$20.00).

EVENING OF PRAISE, WORSHIP AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER: Thursdays at St. Lawrence O’Toole Parish Hall from 7:00 until 8:30 p.m. All are welcome.

BIBLE STUDY: The Gospel of John (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture by Fr. Francis Martin). Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. in the St. Lawrence O’Toole Hall. For more information contact John Morris, 613-729-6647.

TRANSITUS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI: here at St. Lawrence O’Toole on Friday, October 3rd at 7:00 p.m. Join us for a solemn & prayerful commemoration marking the passage of St. Francis from earthly life to eternal life. Let us gather in the spirit of Saint Francis—humble, joyful, & full of peace — as we remember his final moments & celebrate his legacy of love for Christ, creation, & all people. *All are welcome.*