

## ***The Elevation of the Cross***

*Come, all ye nations, let us worship the blessed Tree, through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he that by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam, is himself ensnared by the Cross; and he that by tyranny gained dominion over the creation of the King, is by faith overthrown in utter ruin. By the Blood of God, the serpent's poison is washed away; and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed by the unjust judgment passed against the Just One. For it was fitting that the wood should be healed by wood; and that the sufferings of him who was condemned because of the tree should be done away through the Passion of Him Who is passionless. But, O Christ our King, glory to Thy dread dispensation toward us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, since Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.*

*—Doxasticon for the Elevation of the Cross*

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,*

*"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."*

*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? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

*— 1 Corinthians 1.18–25 (ESV)*

The Cross is central to the Christian life: we make the sign of the Cross several times daily, we wear a cross around our necks, and adorn our prayer corners and churches (inside and out) with crosses, we sing of the Cross — indeed one cannot go more than a few lines in our hymns without reference to it — our priests bless the faithful with a cross; in short, we glory in the cross.

We glory in the cross because it is the weapon of Christ whereby he ensnared the devil, releasing the dead from his dominion. In the Garden, humanity was beguiled by a tree and given over to death; it was thus fitting that we were redeemed from a tree and taken from death to life.

It was revealed to St Antony the Great that the only way to avoid the snares of the devil was humble-mindedness. And what greater example is there than that of our Lord who not only humbled himself to become human but died a humiliating death on the cross? In this, he defeated the devil and death and God gave him the Name above every name (Philippians 2:5–11). St Paul preached Jesus Christ crucified as a demonstration of the power of God, yet this was not the wisdom of this age. Indeed, had the infernal powers understood humility they would not have 'crucified the Lord of Glory' (1 Corinthians 2)

Glorying in the Cross, let us deny ourselves, pick up our own cross, and follow our Master. For there is no salvation without the Cross (Mark 8.34–38).

*O Son of God, Who wast crucified in the flesh, save us who sing unto Thee. Alleluia!*