**2017 9 10*"THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK"***

 ***“But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”***

 St. Paul on this Sunday before the elevation of the precious and life-giving Cross puts into brilliant perspective the meaning of our lives as Christians. To be a Christian means to have our Lord Jesus living in us. But we must remember it is the crucified Christ that lives in us. Our Lord Jesus lives in us with the marks of his crucifixion- those marks are a constant memorial and reminder of his Love for us. The Lord, Himself glories in those marks of the crucifixion. He told Thomas, ***"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. (Joh 20:27 NKJ)***. We are loved by God to the extent that He poured out His blood for us- He was willing to give up everything, even His life for us. This is why we glory in the cross of our Lord, for we know and are assured that the God who created the heavens and the earth, who is all-powerful, is the same God that loves us and will never abandon us. In our good times and in our bad times, He will be with us and lift us up unto Himself.

 Beloved, in our Lord Jesus Christ, what must our response be to this incredible love? How do we enter into this love and have Christ dwelling in us with power? We must each enter into it by the mystery of the Cross. We must not only wear crosses around our necks but they have to be planted deep within our hearts. It is the cross that St. Paul says “***by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.”*** By the world St. Paul does not mean the earth with its beauty, but rather that all of those fleshly enticements of the world. St. Chrysostom explains **“By world he means not heaven nor earth but the affairs of life, human praise, distinguished positions, reputation, wealth and all things that have a show of splendor. All such things are dead to me. Such should be the case for all Christians.”**

 And as we progress in the Spiritual life, St. Paul tells us, these things will not only be dead to us but we will be dead to them. This means that as we progress in our journey to God, even our desire for these things will be destroyed. As we enter more and more into the love and trust of our meek and gracious Lord, we will desire only two things- to be with Him and to please Him. We will be with Him as our hearts burn with love for those around us, those far from us, and for all of His creation. We will please Him by doing as He did- that is sacrifice our own desires and pleasures for those of our families, our church, our friends, and even those who are our enemies. Amen.