



HOLY CROSS DAY

SEPTEMBER 14

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4b-9

A reading from Numbers.

¹From Mount Hor the Israelites set out,
^{4b}but the people became impatient on the way.
⁵The people 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.”
⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people,
and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

⁷The 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.
⁸And 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.”
⁹So 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.

The word of the Lord. or Word of God, word of life.

PSALMODY: Psalm 98:1-4 or Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

A reading from First Corinthians.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
¹⁹For it is written,
 “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
 and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

FIRST READING

Haste will lay this text waste. Take some time. A significant amount of time elapses in these five and a half verses. Pick the pauses with care. Use them to good effect. Consider pauses between verses 4b and 5, 5 and 6, 6 and 7, 7a and 7b, 7b and 8, 8 and 9. It will not prove too much.

SECOND READING

This is an apostolic “one-two punch” if ever there was one. Let ‘em have it. “Christ crucified!” It’s the gospel truth.

²⁰Where 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?

²¹For 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.

²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,

²³but we proclaim Christ crucified,
a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The word of the Lord. *or* Word of God, word of life.

GOSPEL: John 3:13-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Jesus said:

¹³“No one has ascended into heaven
except the one who descended from heaven,
the Son of Man.

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

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

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

The gospel of the Lord.

GOSPEL

Take care not to “recite” verse 16. Take care not to “spotlight” it. Keep it in the context of our Lord’s larger statement.