

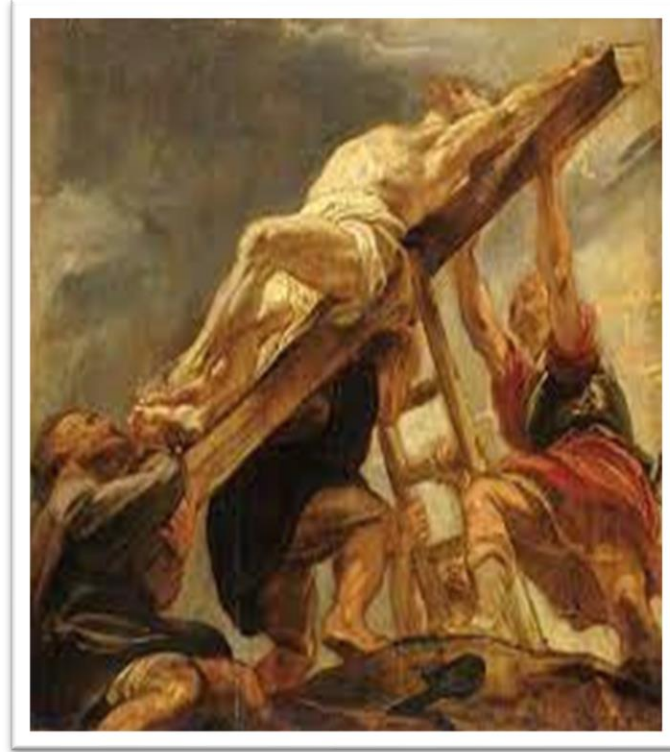
Raising of the Cross

When the executioners had finished the crucifixion of our Lord, they tied ropes to the trunk of the cross, and fastened the ends of these ropes round a long beam which was fixed firmly in the ground at a little distance, and by means of these ropes they raised the cross.

Some of their number supported it while others shoved its foot towards the hole prepared for its reception—the heavy cross fell into this hole with a frightful shock—Jesus uttered a faint cry, and his wounds were torn open in the most fearful manner, his blood again burst forth, and his half dislocated bones knocked one

against the other. The archers pushed the cross to get it thoroughly into the hole, and caused it to vibrate still more by planting five stakes around to support it.

A terrible, but at the same time a touching sight it was to behold the cross raised up in the midst of the vast concourse of persons who were assembled all around; not only insulting soldiers, proud Pharisees, and the brutal Jewish mob were there, but likewise strangers from all parts. The air resounded with acclamations and derisive cries when they beheld it towering on high, and after vibrating for a moment in the air, fall with a heavy crash into the hole cut for it in the rock. But words of love and compassion resounded through the air at the same moment; and need we say that these words, these sounds, were emitted by the most saintly of human beings—Mary—John—the holy women, and all who were pure of heart? They bowed down and adored the 'Word made flesh,' nailed to the cross; they stretched forth their hands as if desirous of giving assistance to the Holy of Holies, whom they beheld nailed to a cross and in the power of his furious enemies. But when the solemn sound of the fall of the cross into the hole prepared for it in the rock was heard, a dead silence ensued, every heart was filled with an indefinable feeling of awe—a feeling never before experienced, and for which no one could account, even to himself; all the inmates of hell shook with terror, and vented their rage by endeavouring to stimulate



the enemies of Jesus to still greater fury and brutality; the souls in Limbo were filled with joy and hope, for the sound was to them a harbinger of happiness, the prelude to the appearance of their Deliverer. Thus was the blessed cross of our Lord planted for the first time on the earth; and well might it be compared to the tree of life in Paradise, for the wounds of Jesus were as sacred fountains, from which flowed four rivers destined both to purify the world from the curse of sin, and to give it fertility, so as to produce fruit unto salvation.

The eminence on which the cross was planted was about two feet higher than the surrounding parts; the feet of Jesus were sufficiently near the ground for his friends to be able to reach to kiss them, and his face was turned to the north-west