

March 24, 2017

HOS14:2-10

MK 12:28-34

As the Lebanon cedar blossoms, so must we. We must bear the fruit of our faith. Initially, though, our first parents chose the forbidden fruit and separated all of mankind from God our Creator. They ate the fruit from the forbidden tree, and it, and all of the trees and plants of the Garden of Eden died. The plants and trees no longer bore fruit. The tree was cursed and died. But, because God so loved the world, he sent his only Son to redeem us. Alas, the wood of the tree provided the manger in which the Christ child was placed. Joseph was a carpenter and taught the trade of woodworking to Jesus. Yes, wood and wood products would once again provide us so many benefits in our daily lives. The church bench we sit on, the stairs we walk on, the Bible which contains the Word of God, the altars of sacrifice, the beds in which we sleep. Yes, even the bread we eat contains wood.

So we ask: Why the Cross? We are redeemed when Jesus died for us on the wood of the Cross. The wood which separated us from our heavenly Father united us with him as well. Jesus became the bread of life for us, which is our food for the journey back to our heavenly Father.

**Reflection questions:**

- 1) What divides you from God?
- 2) Do you actively listen to God's wishes for your life?

*Reflection by Deacon Michael Hogan, Saint James the Less Parish, Highland.*