



Tree of Life

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (King James and Douai, *Genesis*, 2, 9. The Douai Version says, “And the Lord God brought forth of the ground all manner of trees, fair to behold, and pleasant to eat of: the tree of life also in the midst of paradise: and the tree of knowledge of good and evil”). The tree has been an ever present witness to the change of seasons with its pattern of hope, fulfillment, and resurrection after decline. The Christmas tree and the May Pole are two adaptations from the pagan world of myth and folklore which are well known to modern man. In Christian symbolism the Cross has been seen as the true Tree of Life and the tree in the garden of Eden a prefiguration of it. Those who eat of the tree in the heavenly Jerusalem do so as a result of the redemption wrought on the Cross. The medieval turn of thought is exemplified in the hymn sung during the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday in the Roman Rite:

*Eating of the tree forbidden,
Man had sunk in Satan's snare,
When his pitying Creator
Did this second tree prepare
Destined many ages later,
That first evil to repair.*