

◆ ◆ ◆ THE CROSS "ELEVATES" OUR FAITH! ◆ ◆ ◆

Depicted on the cover of this morning's Church Bulletin is a beautiful icon of the Feast Day of the Elevation and Exaltation of the Holy Cross. It commemorates an actual historical event: the finding of the true Cross of Christ by St. Helen, who led an expedition to the Holy Land in the 4th century for the purpose of recovering this most precious of all Christian relics. Yet the real significance of this great holy day has nothing to do with HISTORY, but rather with MYSTERY - the mystery of discovering why the Cross is so important to our Faith.

Why do we venerate and exalt the Cross? Why do we kiss it and bow down before it? Why do we wear it around our necks and place it on our walls at home? Why is it the most predominant of symbols in a Faith full of symbolism? We hold the Cross in such reverence and awe because the Crucifixion which occurred on it - that treacherous, murderous act - brought us our salvation. Christ, the only sinless person who ever walked this earth, took the blame of all of our sins upon Himself and gave His life on the Cross. He died so that we may live. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF GOD." Notice that Paul uses the phrase "being saved." Christ promises salvation for all who believe in Him and yes, we say that our sins are washed away by the precious Blood our Lord shed upon the Cross. But there is much soul searching that we all must do. We must be sorry for those sins. We must seek forgiveness and repent for those sins. Our Lord tells us plainly that there will not be one unrepentant sinner in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the Cross inspire us all to do a thorough and honest evaluation of our relationship with the Lord as we take our own cross upon our shoulders and follow Him.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

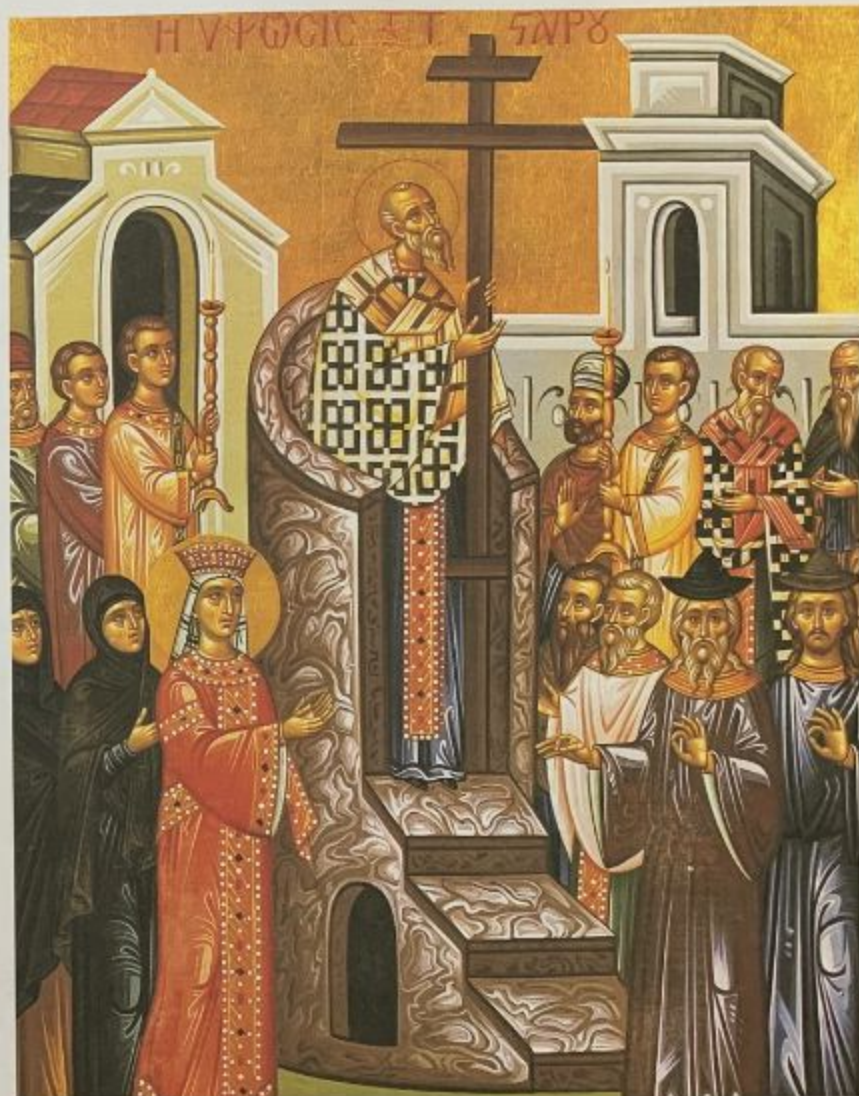
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Church Calendar: Check the Link. <http://www.stgeorgevicksburg.org/service.html>

DIVINE LITURGY SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

****DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM****

SUNDAY AFTER THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

THE EPISTLE

{For Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross}

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (2:16-20)

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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THE GOSPEL

{For Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross}

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (8:34-9:1)

The Lord said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Very Rev. Father Gabriel Karam, Pastor

Saturday Great Vespers 6:00 p.m. - Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. - Confessions: By Appointment

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 17, 2023

TONE 6 / EOTHINON 4

SUNDAY AFTER THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE ONE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliver of Captives: And defender of the Poor, Healer of the Infirm, champion of Kings, Victorious Great Martyr George, Intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation

KONTAKION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE FOUR

*(**Thou Who wast raised up**)*

Do Thou, Who of Thine own good will was lifted up upon the Cross, O Christ our God, bestow Thy bounties upon the new Nation which is called by Thy Name; make glad in Thy might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Thine aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

We Celebrate Today

On September 17 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we continue to celebrate the Elevation of the Holy Cross; and we commemorate the Martyrs Sophia and her daughters Faith, Love and Hope.

Verses

When Sophia's Faith, Hope, and Love were beheaded,

Then was wisdom justified of all her children.

On the seventeenth, they beheaded Love, Faith, and Hope.

This blessed family lived and suffered in Rome during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. Sophia was wise, as her name implies; she was widowed, and had established herself and her daughters well in the Christian Faith. When Hadrian's persecuting hand extended over the virtuous home of Sophia, Faith was only twelve years old; Hope, ten; and Love, nine. Brought before the emperor, these four held each other's hands "like a woven wreath," humbly but steadfastly confessed their faith in Christ and refused to offer sacrifices to the pagan idol Artemis. Before

their suffering, the mother encouraged her daughters to endure to the end: "Your heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, inexpressible beauty and eternal life. When your bodies are slain by torture, He will clothe you in incorruption and the wounds on your bodies will shine in the heavens as stars." The torturers inflicted cruel torments on each daughter and killed them. Sophia took the bodies of her daughters and honorably buried them. She remained at their grave for three days and nights, praying to God. Then she gave her spirit to God, flying off to Paradise, where the blessed souls of her daughters awaited her.

By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Healing & Recovery. Bobbie Nasif. Gail Lee. Joe Durst. Lynn Abraham. George Nasif Jr. Butch Nasif. Joy Logue. Sue Thomas. Dolores Nossier. Richard Lutton. Riley Davis. Hugh Cummings. Rick Collins. Nana Dottle Rocconi.

+Birthdays & Anniversaries Sept. Bobby Lutton, Janet Angelo (17), Stavros Tzotzolas (20), Michael Moses (21), Susie Angelo (22). Janet Gleason (24), Dani Kay Thomas, Richard & Peggy Thomas (26), Dobie Nossier (28), Mary Grace Mousa (29), Alan & Sandra Evans, Nicholas James Angelo (30).

+Keep in your prayers. Our Catechumens, Zachary & Synthia Crouch and their family. who are preparing themselves for the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation.

+Sunday School Kick-Off. Registration and Ice Scream Social-Sunday Sept. 17th @ 5:00pm. In Baroudy Hall. Bring the whole family for this fun Sunday School Event!

+Parish Council Meeting. Tuesday September 19th @ 6 pm.

+2023 The Fall Retreat. Is hosted at St. Elias Orthodox Church, in Atlanta, GA. On September 22-23. Registration is open to everyone. <https://domse.org/fallretreat2023>

+Antiochian Men Meeting. Monday Sept. 25th @ 6pm. (Eating & working)

+Ladies Paint Night. Tuesday Oct. 10th @ 6 pm. Sponsored and Hosted by the Antiochian Women.

The Fathers Teach

"Christ prayed for those that crucified Him: 'Father, count not this sin against them; they know not what they do.' Archdeacon Stephen prayed for those who stoned him so that the Lord would not judge this sin against them. And so, we if we wish to retain grace, must pray for our enemies. If you do not find pity on a sinner who will suffer in flames, then you do not carry the grace of the Holy Spirit, but rather an evil spirit; and while you yet live, you must free yourself from his clutches through repentance." (St. Silouam the Athonite)

Welcome Visitors! We invite you to venerate the cross at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. However, only Orthodox Christians who are in good standing and who have prepared by prayer, fasting, and Confession may receive Holy Communion.