



# The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross

## *Readings & Hymns*



*The feast of the Exaltation, Like the Nativity of Christ and the Theophany have appointed readings for the weekends before and after the feast. On the forefeast, September 13<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection (Church of the Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem. The date of this dedication determined the date for the feast of the Exaltation. Because of the historical ties of these feasts, the readings for the Dedication, (which are also used whenever a Church is consecrated) are included. The number of readings is 14 for the Exaltation, and five more for the feast of the*

*dedication, so there are 19 readings in all presented here. If that seems daunting, note that the forefeast, feast, and afterfeast, September 13 – 21, is nine days so these readings can be done one in the evening and one in the morning starting on the evening of September 12, and finish on the leavetaking or end of the after-feast on Septemeber 21. Alternately, as the Saturday and Sunday before Feast of the Exaltation almost always occur before the forefeast, the readings may be started on the Saturday before the feast, and spread out over an even longer period.*

## Saturday before the Exaltation of the Cross

### Epistle

§ 126: I Corinthians 2: 6 – 9 (*Saturday before the Exaltation*)

**The reading from the [first] Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.**

BRETHREN, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect,

yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the princes of this world,  
that are doomed to pass away.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden,

which God ordained before the ages unto our glory;

which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it,

they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,

neither have entered into the heart of man,

the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

### Gospel

§ 39: Matthew 10: 37 – 11: 1 (*Saturday before the Exaltation*)

**The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

THE LORD SAID: He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me:

and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

<sup>38</sup> And he that takes not his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me.

<sup>39</sup> He that findes his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

<sup>40</sup> He that receives you receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me.

<sup>41</sup> He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

<sup>42</sup> And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple,

Amen I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

<sup>11:1</sup> And it came to pass,

when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

## Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross

### The Prokeimenon

The Prokeimenon in the 6<sup>th</sup> Tone: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. (*Sunday before the Exaltation*) (Ps 27 [28]: 9)  
*verse:* To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me. (Ps 27 [28]: 1)

### Epistle

§ 215: Galatians 6: 11 - 18 (*Sunday before the Exaltation*)

#### The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians

BRETHREN: See how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand!  
 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh,  
 these try to compel you to be circumcised,  
 only that they may not suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ.  
 For not even they themselves who are circumcised keep the law,  
 but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh.  
 But God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.  
 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision,  
 but a new creation.  
 And as many as walk according to this rule,  
 peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.  
 From henceforth let no man trouble me,  
 for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.  
 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

### The Alleluia

Alleluia in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tone.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* I have exalted one chosen out of My people. (*Sunday before the Cross*) (Ps 88 [89]: 20)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* For My hand shall defend him, and My arm shall strengthen him. (Ps 88 [89]: 22)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

### Gospel

§ 9: John 3: 13 - 17 (*Sunday before the Exaltation*)

#### The reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

THE LORD SAID, NO MAN hath ascended up to heaven,  
 but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.  
<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,  
 even so must the Son of man be lifted up:  
<sup>15</sup> That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.  
<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,

that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

<sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;  
but that the world through him might be saved.

## September 13<sup>th</sup>: Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Cross Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection (Holy Sepulcher) at Jerusalem

### Troparion Dedication - Tone 4

Thou hast revealed the beauty of the holy dwelling place of Thy glory on earth  
to be like the splendor of the heavenly firmament, O Lord.  
Through the prayers of the Theotokos,  
strengthen it for ever and ever  
and accept our supplication  
which we ceaselessly offer Thee therein, //  
the life and resurrection of all!

### Troparion, Forefeast - Tone 4

We offer in supplication  
the life-creating Cross of Thy goodness, O Lord,  
which Thou hast granted to us  
although we are unworthy. //  
Through the Theotokos, save all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of man!

### Kontakion, Forefeast - Tone 4

Thy precious Cross rises like the sun  
and mystically makes all things holy and pure. //  
Let us prepare to welcome it with faith.

### Kontakion, Dedication - Tone 4

The Church has been revealed to be a heaven filled with light,  
which enlightens all the faithful. //  
Standing within it we cry: Establish this house, O Lord!

### Vespers Readings

**The reading from the [third] Book of Kings.**

*3 [1] Kings 8: 22-23, 27-30 (Dedication of a Church)*

NOW Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord  
in the presence of all the assembly of Israel,  
and spread forth his hands toward heaven;

<sup>23a</sup> and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like thee,  
in heaven above or on earth beneath,

<sup>27b</sup> "Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee;

how much less this house which I have built in thy Name!

- <sup>28</sup> Yet, O Lord God of Israel,  
 have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication,  
 hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays  
 before thee this day;  
<sup>29</sup> that thine eyes may be open night and day toward this house,  
 the place of which thou hast said, 'My name shall be there,'  
 that thou mayest hearken to the prayer  
 which thy servant offers toward this place, night and day.  
<sup>30</sup> And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant and of thy people Israel,  
 when they pray toward this place; yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place;  
 and when thou hearest, be merciful.

**The reading from Proverbs.**

*Proverbs 3: 19-34*

- God by wisdom founded the earth;  
 by understanding he established the heavens;  
<sup>20</sup> by his knowledge the deeps broke forth,  
 and the clouds drop down the dew.  
<sup>21</sup> My son, let not this pass thee by,  
 keep my counsel and understanding,  
<sup>22</sup> and thy soul may live  
 and grace around thy neck.  
 And it shall be healing unto thy flesh  
 and care unto thy bones,  
<sup>23</sup> Then thou wilt walk all thy ways confidently in peace  
 and thy foot will not stumble.  
<sup>24</sup> For if thou sittest down, thou will not be afraid;  
 if thou liest down, thy sleep will be sweet.  
<sup>25</sup> And thou shalt not be afraid for terror when it comes upon thee,  
 or of the assaults of the wicked, when they come at thee;  
<sup>26</sup> for the Lord will be over all thy ways  
 and will establish thy foot  
 that thou mayest not be shaken.  
<sup>27</sup> Do not withhold good from the needy,  
 when thy hand can help.  
<sup>28</sup> Do not say, "Go, and come again,  
 tomorrow I will give it" – when thou art able to do good,  
 for thou knowest not what the next day will bring.  
<sup>29</sup> Do not plan evil against thy friend  
 who dwells trustingly beside thee.

- <sup>30</sup> Do not contend with a man for no reason,  
lest he do thee some harm.
- <sup>31</sup> Do not acquire the reproach of evil men,  
and do not strive after his ways;
- <sup>32</sup> for every transgressor is an unclean before the Lord,  
neither doth he sit among the righteous.
- <sup>33</sup> The curse of God is on the house of the wicked,  
but he blesses the abode of the righteous.
- <sup>34</sup> The Lord opposes opposes the arrogant,  
but he gives grace to the humble.

### The reading from Proverbs.

#### *Proverbs 9:1-11*

- <sup>1</sup> Wisdom has built her house,  
she has set up her seven pillars.
- <sup>2</sup> She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine,  
she has also set her table.
- <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her maids to call  
from the highest places in the town,
- <sup>4</sup> "Whoever is foolish, let him turn to me."  
To him who is without sense she says,
- <sup>5</sup> "Come, eat of my bread  
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
- <sup>6</sup> Abandon folly, and you will live;  
and seek understanding that you may have life,  
and set aright your understanding with knowledge.
- <sup>7</sup> One who rebukes the impious will get blame for himself;  
for to the impious rebukes are blows.
- <sup>8</sup> Do not rebuke the wicked, lest he hate you;  
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- <sup>9</sup> Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;  
teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,  
and the counsel of saints is understanding.  
While to know the law is the part of a good mind.
- <sup>11</sup> For by me your days will be multiplied,  
and years will be added to your life.

### The Prokeimenon

The Prokeimenon in the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone: Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore.

*(Dedication) (Ps 92 [93]: 5b)*

*verse:* The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty. *(Ps 92 [93]: 1)*

### Epistle

**The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.**

HOLY BRETHREN, partakers of the heavenly calling,  
 consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ,  
 Who was faithful to Him that made Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.  
 For this Man was accounted worthy of greater glory than Moses,  
 inasmuch as he who built the house hath greater honor than the house.  
 For every house is built by some man, but He that created all things things is God.

### The Alleluia

Alleluia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tone.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* His foundations are in the holy mountains. *(Dedication) (Ps 86 [87]: 1 - 2)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. *(Ps 86 [87]: 3)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

### Gospel

*§67: Matthew 16: 13 - 18 (Dedication)*

**The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

AT THAT TIME, When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,  
 he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?  
<sup>14</sup> And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist:  
 some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.  
<sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?  
<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.  
<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona:  
 for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,  
 but my Father which is in heaven.  
<sup>18</sup> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,  
 and upon this rock I will build my church;  
 and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

### Communion Hymn

O Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwells.  
*(Dedication) (Ps 25 [26]: 8)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

**About the Commemoration of the Founding of the Church of the  
 Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre) at Jerusalem  
 Commemorated on September 13**

The Dedication of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ at Jerusalem celebrates the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection, built by Saint Constantine the Great and his mother, the empress Helen.

After the voluntary Passion and Death on the Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the holy place of His suffering was long trampled on by pagans. When the Roman emperor Titus conquered Jerusalem in the year 70, he razed the city and destroyed the Temple of Solomon on Mount Moriah, leaving there not a stone upon a stone, as even the Savior foretold (Mt.13:1-2).

Later on the zealous pagan emperor Hadrian (117-138) built on the site of the Jerusalem destroyed by Titus a new city named Aelia Capitolina for him (Hadrian Aelius). It was forbidden to call the city by its former name.

He gave orders to cover the Holy Tomb of the Lord with earth and stones, and on that spot to set up an idol. On Golgotha, where the Savior was crucified, he constructed a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Venus in 119. Before the statues they offered sacrifice to demons and performed pagan rites, accompanied by wanton acts.

In Bethlehem, at the place the Savior was born of the All-Pure Virgin, the impious emperor set up an idol of Adonis. He did all this intentionally, so that people would forget completely about Christ the Savior and that they would no longer remember the places where He lived, taught, suffered and arose in glory.



At the beginning of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (306-337), the first of the Roman emperors to recognize the Christian religion, he and his pious mother the empress Helen decided to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. They also planned to build a church on the site of the Lord's suffering and Resurrection, in order to reconsecrate and purify the places connected with memory of the Savior from the taint of foul pagan cults.

The empress Helen journeyed to Jerusalem with a large quantity of gold, and Saint Constantine the Great wrote a letter to Patriarch Macarius I (313-323), requesting him

to assist her in every possible way with her task of the renewing the Christian holy places.

After her arrival in Jerusalem, the holy empress Helen destroyed all the pagan temples and reconsecrated the places desecrated by the pagans. She was zealous to find the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and she ordered the excavation of the place where the temple of Venus stood. There they discovered the Sepulchre of the Lord and Golgotha, and they also found three crosses and some nails.

In order to determine upon which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius gave orders to place a dead person, who was being carried to a place of burial, upon each cross in turn. When the dead person was placed on the Cross of Christ, he immediately came alive. With the greatest of joy the empress Helen and Patriarch Macarius raised up the Life-Creating Cross and displayed it to all the people standing about.

The holy empress quickly began the construction of a large church which enclosed within its walls Golgotha, the place of the Crucifixion of the Savior, and the Sepulchre of the Lord, located near each other. The holy Apostle and Evangelist John wrote about this: "Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day, for the tomb was nearby" (John 19:41-42). The Church of the Resurrection was ten years in building, and the holy empress Helen did not survive to see its completion. She returned to Constantinople, and reposed in the year 327. After her arrival in Jerusalem, the holy empress built churches in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane and in many other places connected with the life of the Savior and events in the New Testament.

The construction of the church of the Resurrection, called "Martyrion" in memory of the sufferings of the Savior, was completed in the same year as the Council of Tyre, and in the thirtieth year of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great. Therefore, at the assembly of September 13, 335, the consecration of the temple was particularly solemn. Hierarchs of Christian Churches in many lands: Bythnia, Thrace, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, participated in the consecration of the church. The bishops who participated in the Council of Tyre, and many others, went to the consecration in Jerusalem. On this day all the city of Jerusalem was consecrated. The Fathers of the Church established September 13 as the commemoration of this remarkable event.

# The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross - Septemeber 14

*Verse on "Glory ... now & ever ... " at "Lord, I Call ..."*

*From the Meanion, for the Elevation*

## Tone 2

Come, all ye peoples, / and let us venerate the blessed Wood, / through which the eternal justice has been brought to pass. / For he who by a tree deceived our forefather Adam, / is by the Cross himself deceived; / and he who by tyranny gained possession of the creature endowed by God with royal dignity, / is overthrown in headlong fall. / By the blood of God the poison of the serpent is washed away; / and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed / by the unjust punishment inflicted on the Just. / For it was fitting that wood should be healed by wood, / and that through the Passion of One who knew not passion / should be remitted all the sufferings of him who was condemned because of wood. / But glory be to Thee, O Christ our King, / for Thy dread dispensation towards us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, // for Thou art good and lovest mankind.

## Vespers Readings

*Reader:* The reading from Exodus.

*Exodus 15: 22 - 16: 1*

Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" He cried out to the Lord; and the Lord showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. He said, "If thou wilt listen carefully to the voice of the Lord thy God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon thee any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals thee."

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there by the water. And they set out from Elim; and the whole congregation of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai.

**The reading from Proverbs.***Proverbs 3: 11 - 18*

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline  
or be weary of his reproof,  
for the Lord reproves the one he loves,  
chastises every child he receives.  
Blessed the man who has found wisdom,  
every mortal who knows prudence.  
For it is better to trade for her  
than for treasures of gold and silver.  
She is more precious than jewels,  
nothing evil will withstand her;  
she is well known to all who draw near her,  
nothing precious is worthy of her,  
for length of life and years of life are in her right hand,  
while in her left are wealth and glory.  
Justice comes from her mouth;  
she carries law and mercy on her tongue.  
Her ways are good ways  
and all her paths are in peace.  
She is a tree of life to all who lay hold of her,  
and to those who lean hard upon her as upon the Lord she is safe.

**The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.***Isaiah 60: 11 - 16*

Thus says the Lord:  
Thy gates, O Jerusalem, shall always be open;  
day and night they shall not be shut,  
so that the wealth of the nations shall be brought to thee,  
with their kings led in procession.  
For the nation and kingdom  
that will not serve thee shall perish;  
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.  
The glory of Lebanon shall come to thee,  
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,  
to glorify my holy place;  
and I will make the place of my feet glorious.  
The sons of those who oppressed thee and troubled thee

shall come to thee in fear;  
 you shall be called "City of the Lord,  
 Zion of the Holy One of Israel".  
 Because thou hast been forsaken and hated,  
 with no one to help,  
 I will make thee a joy forever,  
 gladness from age to age.  
 Thou shalt suck the milk of nations,  
 thou shalt eat the wealth of kings;  
 and Thou shalt know that I am the Lord who saves thee,  
 the God of Israel, who redeems thee.

*Verse on "Glory ... now & ever ... " at Litiya:*

**Tone 4** *by Anatolius*

Moses prefigured the power of the precious Cross, O Christ, / when he put to flight Amalek, his adversary, in the wilderness of Sinai: / for when he stretched out his arms in the form of a cross, / the people became strong again.<sup>1</sup> / And now the fulfilment of these images has come to pass for us. / Today is the Cross exalted and devils are put to flight; / today the whole creation is set free from corruption: / for through the Cross every gift of grace has shone upon us. / Therefore all of us rejoicing fall before Thee, saying: // O Lord, how manifold are Thy works\*: glory to Thee!

**The Apostikha**

*From the Menaion, for the Exaltation*

**Tone 5** Samopodoben

Rejoice! life-giving Cross, \* unconquerable trophy of godliness, \* door to Paradise, \* succour of the faithful, \* rampart set about the Church. \* Through thee corruption is utterly destroyed, \* the power of death is swallowed up, \* and we are raised from earth to heaven: \* invincible weapon, \* adversary of devils, \* glory of martyrs, \* true ornament of saints, \* haven of salvation \* bestowing on the world great mercy.

*verse: Extol the Lord our God: worship at His footstool for it is holy! (Ps 98 [99]: 5)*

Rejoice! Cross of the Lord: \* through thee mankind has been delivered from the curse. \* Shattering the enemy by thine Exaltation, \* O Cross all-venerable, \* thou art a sign of true joy. \* Thou art our help, thou art the strength of kings, \* the power of righteous men, \* the majesty of priests. \* All who sign themselves with thee are freed from peril. \* Thou rod of strength under which we like sheep are tended, \* thou art a

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 17: 10 - 14.

\* Psalm 103 [104]: 24a; translation made to correspond to OCA standards.

weapon of peace round which the angels stand in fear. \* Thou art the divine glory of Christ, \* who grants the world great mercy.

*verse: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth. (Ps 73 [74]: 12)*

Rejoice! guide of the blind, \* physician of the sick and resurrection of all the dead. \* O precious Cross, \* thou hast lifted us up when we were fallen into mortality. \* Through thee corruption has been destroyed, \* and incorruption has flowered forth; \* we mortal men are made divine \* and the devil is utterly cast down. \* Seeing thee exalted by the hands of bishops on this day, \* we exalt Him who was lifted high upon thee, \* and we venerate thee, \* plenteously drawing from thee great mercy.

### Magnification of the Exaltation

**We magnify thee, O Christ the Giver of life, and we honor thy precious Cross, whereby we have been saved from bondage to the enemy.**

### The Eclogarion

*The Eclogaria or "Selected Psalms" are verses selected by Kyr Nicephorus Blemmydes (†1272) to be sung after the Polyelos at Vigil, for the principal feasts. In our contemporary practice, Slavs & Romanians sing the Magnifications on the eclogaria and often sing only 2 - 4 verses. Here is the whole Eclogarion for the Exaltation.*

Judge, O Lord, with those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me! Ps 34 [35]: 1

Take hold of shield and buckler, and arise for my help! Ps 34 [35]: 2

The light of Thy countenance has shone on us, O Lord. Ps 4: 6b

Thou coverest us with good will as with a shield. Ps 5: 12b

Thou hast given a sign unto them that fear Thee, that they may flee from before the face of the bow. Ps 59 [60]: 4

That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all nations! Ps 66 [67] 1b

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God! Ps 97 [98]: 3b

Let us worship at his footstool! 131 [132]: 7b

Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice. Ps 95 [96]: 12b

But God is our King before the ages, He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth. Ps 73 [74]: 12

Extol the Lord our God: worship at His footstool for it is holy! Ps 98 [99]: 5

God, our God, has blessed us. God has blessed us. Ps 66 [67]: 6b-7a

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Ps 27 [28]: 9a

And be their shepherd, and lift them up for ever. Ps 27 [28]: 9b

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

### Matins Gospel

§ 42-ctr; John 12: 28-36

**The reading from the holy Gospel according to John.**

THE LORD SAID, Father, glorify Thy name.

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying,  
I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

<sup>29</sup> The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered:  
others said, An angel spake to Him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me,  
but for your sakes.

<sup>31</sup> Now is the judgement of this world:  
now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

<sup>32</sup> And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.

<sup>33</sup> This He said, signifying what death He should die.

<sup>34</sup> The people answered Him,  
We have heard out of the law that Christ abides for ever:  
and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?  
who is this Son of man?

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you.  
Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you:  
for he that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes.

<sup>36</sup> While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

### Sessional Hymn, after the third Ode - Tone 8

In Paradise of old, the wood stripped me bare, / for by giving its fruit to eat, the  
enemy brought in death. / But now the wood of the Cross that clothes men with the  
garment of life / has been set up in the midst of the earth, / and the whole world is  
filled with boundless joy. / Beholding it exalted, O ye people, / let us with one accord  
raise in faith our cry to God: // Thy house is full of glory.<sup>2</sup>

### Exapostilaria

Podoben: *"With Thy Disciples Watching ..."*

The Cross is the guardian of the whole earth;  
the Cross is the beauty of the Church.

<sup>2</sup> 3 Kings (I Kings) 8: 11 ; Isaiah 6: 1.

The Cross is the strength of kings; the Cross is the support of the faithful.  
The Cross is the glory of angels and the wounder of demons.

*verse:* **Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

Podoben: "Hearken, O Women ..."

Today the Cross is exalted and the world is sanctified.  
For Thou who art enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit  
hast spread Thine arms upon it,  
and drawn the world to knowledge of Thee, O Christ.  
Make worthy of divine glory those that have put their trust in Thee.

*On the Praises:*

*From the Menaion, for the Dormition*

**Tone 8** Samopodoben

O most glorious wonder! / The most holy Cross, the life-giving Tree, / is lifted up on  
high today and shown to the world. / All the ends of the earth give glory, / all the  
devils are affrighted. / How great a gift is here bestowed on mortal men! / Through  
Thy Cross save our souls, O Christ, // Thou who alone art full of compassion.

## **The Exaltation of the Cross - Divine Liturgy**

**Troparion, of the Cross - Tone 1**

O Lord, save Thy people,  
and bless Thine inheritance.  
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians  
over their adversaries;  
and by virtue of Thy Cross, //  
preserve Thy habitation.

**Kontakion, of the Cross - Tone 4**

As Thou wast voluntarily lifted upon the Cross for our sake,  
grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name, O Christ God;  
make all Orthodox Christians glad by thy power,  
granting them victories over their adversaries //  
by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace!

**First Antiphon - Tone 2**

God, my God, attend to me! Why hast thou forsaken me? *(Ps 21 [22]: 1a)*

Through the Prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? *(Ps 21 [22]: 1b)*

Through the Prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest. *(Ps 21 [22]: 2)*  
Through the Prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Thou dwellest in the sanctuary, the praise of Israel. *(Ps 21 [22]: 3)*  
Through the Prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Through the Prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

### **Second Antiphon - Tone 2**

O God, why dost Thou cast us off forever? *(Ps 73 [74]: 1)*

O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast gotten of old. *(Ps 73 [74]: 2a)*

O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
Remember Mount Zion, where Thou hast dwelt! *(Ps 73 [74]: 2b)*

O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
God is our King before the ages;  
He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth. *(Ps 73 [74]: 12)*

O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Only-begotten Son and Immortal Word of God, ...

### **Third Antiphon - Tone 1**

The Lord reigns; let the people tremble! *(Ps 98 [99]: 1a)*

### **Troparion, of the Cross - Tone 1**

O Lord, save Thy people,  
and bless Thine inheritance!  
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians  
over their adversaries;  
and by the virtue of Thy Cross, //  
preserve Thy habitation.

The Lord reigns; let the people tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the Cherubim; let the earth quake! *(Ps 98 [99]: 1)*  
*Troparion of the Feast*

The Lord is great in Zion; He is exalted over all the people. *(Ps 98 [99]: 2)*

*Troparion of the Feast*

Bow down in worship to the Lord in His holy court! (Ps 98 [99]: 9)

*Troparion of the Feast***Entrance Verse**

Extol the Lord our God: worship at His footstool for it is holy! (Ps 98 [99]: 5)

*Troparion of the Feast***Instead of the Trisagion - Tone 6**

Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master,  
and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify. (3x)  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.  
and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.  
Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master,  
and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.

**The Prokeimenon**

The Prokeimenon in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tone: Extol the Lord our God: worship at His footstool  
for it is holy! (*Elevation*) (Ps 98 [99]: 5)  
*verse*: The Lord reigns, let the people tremble! (Ps 98 [99]: 1)

**The Epistle****§ 125: 1 Corinthians 1: 18 - 24 (Exaltation)**

*And the reader reads the title of the lesson:*

**The reading from the [first] Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.**

BRETHREN: the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,  
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.”

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe?

Where is the debater of this age?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

For since, in the wisdom of God,

the world did not know God through wisdom,  
it pleased God through the folly of what we preach  
to save those who believe.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,  
but we preach Christ crucified,

a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,  
but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

### The Alleluia

Alleluia in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tone.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast gotten of old. (*Exaltation*)  
(Ps 73 [74]: 2)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*verse:* God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth. (Ps 73 [74]: 12)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

### The Gospel

§ 60: John 19: 6 - 11a, 13 - 20, 25 - 28a, 30b - 35a (*Exaltation*)

**The reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.**

AT THAT TIME, THE HIGH PRIESTS AND ELDERS TOOK COUNCIL  
AGAINST JESUS TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.

AND THEY DELIVERED HIM TO PILATE SAYING,  
AWAY WITH HIM, AWAY WITH HIM, CRUCIFY HIM.

Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.  
The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die,  
because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;  
And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus,  
Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not  
that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?  
Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me,  
except it were given thee from above:

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth,  
and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement,  
but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour:  
and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him.  
Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?

The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.  
Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.

And they took Jesus, and led him away.

And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull,  
which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one,  
and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross.

And the writing was Jesus of Nazareth the King of The Jews.

This title then read many of the Jews:

for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city:  
and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister,  
Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved,  
he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!

And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished,

bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation,

that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day,  
(for that sabbath day was an high day,)

besought Pilate that their legs might be broken,  
and that they might be taken away.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first,  
and of the other which was crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already,  
they brake not his legs:

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side,  
and forthwith came there out blood and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.

### **Hymn to the Theotokos - Tone 8**

*Instead of "It is truly meet ...", we sing:*

Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord!

Thou art a mystical Paradise, O Theotokos,  
who, though untilled, have brought forth Christ;  
through Him the life-bearing wood of the Cross was planted on earth.  
Now at its Exaltation,  
as we bow in worship before it, we magnify thee.

### **Communion Hymns**

The light of Thy countenance has shone on us, O Lord. (*Exaltation*) (Ps 4: 6)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

### About the The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross Commemorated on September 14

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross of the Lord: The pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind. The Emperor

Hadrian (117-138) gave orders to cover over the ground of Golgotha and the Sepulchre of the Lord, and to build a temple of the pagan goddess Venus and a statue of Jupiter.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols there. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains, the Sepulchre of the Lord and the Life-Creating Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory in the year 312 over Maxentius, ruler of the Western part of the Roman empire, and over Licinius, ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 he had issued the Edict of Milan, by



which the Christian religion was legalized and the persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the empire were stopped. The ruler Licinius, although he had signed the Edict of Milan to oblige Constantine, still fanatically continued the persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the 313 Edict of Milan extend also to the Eastern part of the empire. The Holy Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, having gained victory over his enemies in three wars with God's assistance, had seen in the heavens the Sign of the Cross, and written beneath: "By this you shall conquer."

Ardently desiring to find the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, Saint Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to Saint Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Although the holy empress Helen was already in her declining years, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. The empress gave orders to destroy the pagan temple and the statues in Jerusalem. Searching for the Life-Creating Cross, she made inquiry of Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful.

Finally, they directed her to a certain elderly Hebrew by the name of Jude who stated that the Cross was buried where the temple of Venus stood. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Tomb of the Lord was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body (March 6).

In order to discern on which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead one, he came to life. Having beheld the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found.

Christians came in a huge throng to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching Saint Macarius to elevate the Cross, so that even those far off might reverently contemplate it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders raised up the Holy Cross, and the people, saying "Lord have mercy," reverently prostrated before the Venerable Wood. This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross another miracle took place: a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. The elder Jude and other Jews there believed in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Jude received the name Cyriacus and afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem. During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) he accepted a martyr's death for Christ (see October 28).

The holy empress Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches, at Bethlehem the birthplace of Christ,

and on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings and where the Mother of God was buried after her death.

Saint Helen took part of the Life-Creating Wood and nails with her to Constantinople. The holy emperor Constantine gave orders to build at Jerusalem a majestic and spacious church in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-Giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The temple was constructed in about ten years. Saint Helen did not survive until the dedication of the temple, she died in the year 327. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335. On the following day, September 14, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross was established.



Another event connected to the Cross of the Lord is remembered also on this day: its return to Jerusalem from Persia after a fourteen year captivity. During the reign of the Byzantine emperor Phocas (602-610) the Persian emperor Khozroes II in a war against the Greeks defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem and captured both the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years and only under the emperor Heraclius (610-641), who with the help of God defeated Khozroes and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Cross of the Lord returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-creating Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Heraclius in imperial crown and royal purple carried the Cross of Christ into the temple of the Resurrection. With the emperor went Patriarch Zacharios. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the emperor suddenly stopped and was not able to proceed farther. The holy Patriarch explained to the emperor that an angel of the Lord was blocking his way. The emperor was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world from sin had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Heraclius donned plain garb, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, Saint Andrew of Crete (July 4) says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true gathers together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast".

## Saturday After the Exaltation of the Cross

*Troparion, Kontakion, Prokeimenon, Alleluia, Hymn to the Theotokos, and Communion verse, as on the Feast.*

### Epistle

§ 125 from the center: I Corinthians 1: 26 - 29 (Saturday After the Exaltation)

*And the reader reads the title of the lesson:*

**Reader: The reading from the [first] Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.**

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

*Reader:*

BRETHREN, YE SEE YOUR CALLING, THAT not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and the base things of the world and the things which are despised, God hath chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

§ 30; John 8: 21-30 (Saturday After the Exaltation)

**The reading from the holy Gospel according to John.**

THE LORD SAID TO THE JEWS THAT CAME TO HIM, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

<sup>22</sup> Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

<sup>23</sup> And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

<sup>24</sup> I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

<sup>25</sup> Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

<sup>26</sup> I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

<sup>27</sup> They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

<sup>28</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

<sup>29</sup> And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone;  
for I do always those things that please him.

<sup>30</sup> As he spake these words, many believed on him.

## Sunday After the Exaltation of the Cross

*Troparion, Kontakion, Prokeimenon, Alleluia, Hymn to the Theotokos, and Communion verse, as on the Feast.*

### Epistle

§ 203: Galatians 2: 16 - 20 (*Sunday after the Exaltation  
and of the Sunday*)

**The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians.**

BRETHREN, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law  
but by faith in Jesus Christ,

even we have believed in Christ Jesus,

that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law;

for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners,  
is Christ therefore a minister of sin? God forbid!

For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God,  
who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.

### Gospel

§ 37: Mark 8: 34 - 9: 1 (*Sunday after the Exaltation, also 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*)

**The reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.**

THE LORD SAID, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself,  
and take up his cross, and follow me.

<sup>35</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life  
for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

<sup>36</sup> For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world,  
and lose his own soul?

<sup>37</sup> Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

<sup>38</sup> Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words  
in this adulterous and sinful generation;  
of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed,  
when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

<sup>9:1</sup> And he said unto them, Amen I say unto you,  
That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death,  
till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.