

# September 14.

## C. ☩ *The Universal Elevation of the Honorable and Lifecreating Cross.*



Originally this feast was established by the Church in commemoration of the finding of the cross of the Lord. According to the description of ancient Christian historians, this event represents such a view. Constantine the Great, feeling awe for the cross of the Lord because he gained many victories through it, and gratitude to God for the consent of the Church granted at the First Ecumenical Council, desired to build a temple on Golgotha. For the fulfillment of this desire the pious mother of Constantine, Helen, went to Jerusalem in 326. And she also had a fervent desire to find the cross of the Lord at the special suggestion of God. Because of the custom to bury instruments of execution near the place of their use and by the indication of one aged Jew, the cross was found but with it two other crosses. It was difficult to identify the cross of the Lord, as the plate with the inscription: *Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews* lay separately. The maximum witness to the Cross of the Lord was necessary. Rather than using human authority, the inherent wonderworking power of the Cross of the Lord demonstrated this witness. By the direction of Patriarch Macarius, the found crosses were brought to the bed of one sick pious woman, and the patriarch, in the presence of the pious Empress and a group of people, started to place the crosses on the sick woman. The touch of two crosses did not do anything, but the touch of the third cross wonderfully returned the health of the sick woman. In her returned health an even more wonderful proof was accepted, that the true cross of Christ healed the woman. Patriarch Macarius, having met a group bearing a dead body for burial, again began to place the crosses one by one on the dead person. And the dead person revived by the touch of the same cross, which has shown the wonderworking power over the sick woman. The glory of wonders by the cross of the Lord brought a great variety of people to Golgotha. As for many, as for the crowd, there wasn't any opportunity to not only come nearer and kiss the honorable cross, but even to see it. Then the patriarch, standing on a raised place and raising the honorable cross, showed it even to those standing at a distance. And all the people in joyful delight cried out "Lord, have mercy"! A feast was established in the year of finding the cross of the Lord and because the finding of the cross was near the feast of Pascha, then at first the feast was celebrated on the second day of Pascha.

From that year when the consecration of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ on September 13, 335 was accomplished, the feast of the Elevation was transferred to September 14 \_). In 335 September 13 fell on Saturday, and the Elevation fell on Sunday and consequently it was pleasing to sing twice in Jerusalem: "Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". As the council of bishops, who arrived for the consecration of the temple from all countries of the empire, established the celebration of the Elevation. Then it was spread throughout the Christian world, and the holiday became *ecumenical* in its true sense \_).

In the VIII Century other commemorations, on the return of the Cross of the Lord from the capture by the Persians, were connected to the commemoration of the finding of Cross of the Lord. In 614, Chosroes, the Persian king, during the war with the Greek Emperor Phocas, seized Jerusalem and its relics, including the Cross of the Lord, which stayed in captivity in Persia. The honorable wood of the Cross of Christ also stirred up the amazement of all Persia. Amazing signs and wonders accompanied its stay in the pagan country (see Jan. 22). In Persia everywhere they began to say: "The Christian God has come to us, and what will happen to us"? Chosroes himself paid honor and respect to the Christian relic: he did not dare to take the honorable wood out from the sealed ark in which it was kept, and during its entire stay in Persia it remained without contact. In the year 628 after making peace with Emperor Heraclius the successor of Chosroes, Shiroe (Kavadh-Shiroe) returned the life-giving wood of the cross of the Lord. The Emperor met the cross of the Lord in Jerusalem and, at the suggestion of the Patriarch Zosimus, in simple clothes and barefooted brought it to him into the temple \_) from where it was stolen. The cross was returned from captivity on September 14. Thus, in the feast of this day two commemorations, the original finding and the return of the cross of the Lord from captivity, have been incorporated.

In the church hymns for this holy day "the all honorable and life-bearing" cross is hymned, as "the glory of angels", "the adornment of apostles", "the fortress of the righteous", "the praise of the faithful", "the elegance of priests", "the invincible victory of piety", "the door of paradise", "the haven of salvation", "the hope of Christians, guide of those who have gone astray, haven of the storm-tossed", "guide of the blind, physician of the sick, the resurrection of the dead", "the scourge of demons", "the guardian of the whole world", "the weapon of peace", "victory in warfare", "strength of kings", "the beauty of the church", "the weapon invincible", "through it corruption is abolished, and through it the power of death is crushed, and we are raised from earth to the heavens". Hymning the power of the cross of the Lord and salvation, and being committed to it, the Holy Church calls us to kiss the holy cross "with joy and fear: with fear, for we are unworthy

because of sin; with joy, for upon it Christ God was crucified in His great mercy". The very ceremony of raising the cross of the Lord has deep spiritual value. As the cross of Christ is the instrument and together with it the symbol of our salvation, it is the sacred banner of our faith, a sign of the Christian and of Christianity. That also in the fulfillment of this day of the elevation of the Holy Cross we should see the depiction of the image of our salvation, the whole essence of our holy faith, all our past and present destiny and our part in all the future. The cross is lowered and again raised high: it is the image of our bitter fall in Adam and our raising again in Christ from the depths of Hades to the Kingdom of God and from death to the eternal, blessed life in God.

For those who understand and believe in the sacred action of the elevation of the cross of Christ, it is the perennial source of spiritual consolation, the strong cue to tender prayer, the reverential outpouring of our heart before God, the maximum encouragement to acts of piety and Christian love, the subject of divinely ideal reflections and gratitude to God for all eternity 4).

*Troparion, tone 1*

**O Lord, save Thy people  
And bless Thine inheritance.  
Grant victories to our true believing Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich  
Over his adversaries,  
And by virtue of Thy cross, //  
Preserve Thy habitation.**

For the **Kontakion**, see August 1.

*Magnification*

**We magnify Thee,  
O Christ, the Giver of life,  
And we honor Thy holy cross,  
By which Thou saved us  
From the work of the enemy.**

After Vespers the cross of the Lord is carried out from the protective vessel and placed on the altar (See August 1).

It follows that the Polyeleos for the feast of the Elevation is directed before the table on which there is the cross, instead of before the usual festal icon because it is best to sing the glorification before the cross which lays on the table, decorated and prepared for the Elevation, and then already according to the rubrics to read

the Gospel, etc. (Manual for Village Pastors, (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskikh Pastirej.) 1886, 6).

The refrain for the Canon in Matins (and for the Molieben): "Glory, O Lord, to Thy honorable cross".

In Matins, after the Great Doxology, the bells (perezvon) are rung and the cross will be taken out, during the singing of the Trisagion and the Troparion: "Save, O Lord, Thy people", to the middle of the temple for veneration which is done three times during the singing each time of the verse: "Before Thy cross we bow down and worship, O Master, (see the order for August 1). During the carrying out of the cross the rector is fully vested (as on August 1). In the Typicon there are no instructions concerning the color of the vestments, in which the priests should vest themselves during the completion of the divine service in general and during the carrying out of the cross particularly at Matins of the feast of the Elevation of the Cross of the Lord. The church calls this feast a most bright and festive day and distinguishes it from other feasts (like the Nativity of Christ and the Theophany of the Lord) with Sundays of introduction. Of course during the performance of the divine services in general and during the carrying out of the cross in particular in Matins on the feast of the Elevation, as on "a most bright day" (Ustav (Rubrics) for September 14, see 1), it is more expedient to vest the clergy in bright rather than in mourning vestments (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskikh Pastirej (Manual for Village Pastors, 1889, 11). In cathedral temples and monasteries the veneration of the cross precedes its elevation. It is accompanied by intoning the five preceding Ektenias: "Have mercy on us, O God" and while the singers at each petition sing: "Lord, have mercy" for 100 times, the rector signs with the cross first the East, then opposite the West, the South, the North and again the East, after blessing all bowing their heads until it reaches the ground on one span, and then rises to the heights. By these actions the Church commemorates both the occasion of the finding and the return of the cross from captivity; about Patriarch Macarius elevating the cross at the finding for an indication to his people, and especially about the elevation of the cross on the place of its initial finding after its return from captivity. In this and other cases the people, feeling great joy and humility, exclaimed: "Lord, have mercy".

The veneration should begin with the singing 100 times: "Lord, have mercy", and end at the termination of singing of half the hundred, i.e. 50 times. The elevation occurs during the singing of the second half of the 100 times, during the singing of the 50 times "Lord, have mercy". When they sing "Lord, have mercy" up to the 97th time; then the priest with the cross stands directly; the singers raise their voices, sing more loudly: "Lord, have mercy, 3 times; and the priest, during its singing, standing directly, waits for the end of the 100 times, and then makes the sign of the cross, 3 times. After the fifth elevation the choir sings:

"Glory, both now and ever", and the Kontakion: "As Thou was voluntarily raised on the cross". During the singing of this Kontakion the priest places the cross on the analogion. Then we sing: "Before Thy Cross", with prostrations, and the stichera to the cross, as on August 1 and on the Veneration of the Cross Sunday. In Matins after the elevation of the cross is finished (but it is not the only veneration of the cross, about which see below) during which is intoned the litany "Have mercy on us, O God", and after singing the sticheron to the cross, the deacon intones the "Morning Litany", but he does not intone the litany: "Have mercy on us, O God ", but only: "Let us complete our morning prayer". But if the elevation of the cross was not done at Matins; then after the veneration of the cross and the stichera of the cross both litanies are intoned: "Have mercy on us, O God" and "Let us complete our morning prayer". The elevation of the holy cross before the people, as this is appointed in the Rubrics (Ustav), in very many temples is dropped because of its difficulty and when it is dropped the Litya, which is placed at this time in the Rubrics (Ustav), is also dropped. Some priests wrap the cross with a long covering of tape so that during the elevation, even during the little bowing of the head, the tape touches the floor of the temple, so that the requirement of the Typicon would be fulfilled that they bow down to the touch the floor with the cross. Concerning these rules observe the following. In the rubrics (Ustav) for September 14 there is a very important remark, namely: "If the elevation of the cross is not done in cathedral temples, then the veneration of the cross is done as specified for the third Sunday of Great Lent". Obviously, the Typicon, assuming the straight performance of this rite in cathedral temples, presupposes its omission in parish churches in which the veneration of the cross without the Elevation and the Litya is done as specified on the Veneration of the Cross Sunday in Great Lent. Hence, the omission of the elevation of the Cross, as having a basis in the spirit and the letter of the Ustav, cannot be regarded as an error. The Litya and the Elevation are an undivided part of a single whole; that and the other specify that known event from the history of the cross: the raising of the cross at its finding and the exclamation of people. By the established choirs the very chant "Lord, have mercy" itself with periodic crescendos and decrescendos of the voices is adapted to action of the cross: during the descent of the cross the voices become quieter, during the ascent the voices become louder. It follows then if the Elevation of the Cross is dropped, then at the same time the Litya is also dropped. Our Typicon specifies this directly, when it says that when the Elevation is dropped there is only one veneration of the cross, as done on the third Sunday of Great Lent without the Litya. As to custom of attaching tape to the cross for its specified purpose is, if it is permissible to say, a falsification of the rite. In the Typicon it speaks clearly about the heads of the priests bowing low: "then he bows his head, as far down as possible (i.e. on three points) to lift up his head from the

ground" (Litovskii Eparkhial'nye Vedomosti (Lithuanian Diocesan News), 1888, 40). It is necessary to transfer the anointing with oil to the end of Matins, after the placing of the cross in the middle of the church, instead of anointing with oil during the Canon; as the Ustav says it should be connected with the kissing of the cross, and this kissing of the cross can only now be done after the cross is placed. Besides, after the placing of the cross in the middle of the church, according to the Ustav it is necessary to sing the long verses (stichera), "Come faithful, let us fall down in worship before the life-creating tree". Here these stichera with the veneration also should be connected with the Anointing with oil, as in effect these stichera quite correspond with the stichera, which the Ustav specifies after the All Night Vigil on the veneration of the festal icon, to which in antiquity also incorporated the anointing with oil (see below, Notes for Matins). Notice that it is done this way in the established monasteries and temples of our nation (Rukovodstvo dlia Seljskikh Pastirej (Manual for Village Pastors), 1886, 6).

At the Liturgy we sing: "Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master", instead of the Trisagion.

In reference to the church, the feast continues from September 13 through September 21 and the Saturday and the Sunday before and after the feast is called the Saturday and Sunday before and after the Elevation and have Gospel and Epistle readings relating to the cross (see September 9 and 15).

Note: If this feast falls on a Sunday, the service for the Resurrection is dropped, except for "Having Beheld the Resurrection of Christ". But we sing the whole service for the feast.

On the day of Elevation we do not partake of cheese, eggs or fish (Ustav (Rubrics) for September 14) as honoring the cross stands for killing the flesh.

**Paramoegas:** 1) Exodus 15:22-27, 16:1; 2) Prov. 3:11-18; 3) Isaiah 60:11-16.  
**Matins Gospel:** John 12:28-36; sel. 42. **Epistle and Gospel:** see August 1.

*Repose of our father among the saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople.* He died on September 14, 407. See November 13.

We do not sing the order of service for St. Chrysostom on this day: it is to be performed on November 13.

*Martyr Papas.* See March 16.

*St. Flacilla*, Empress, the wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Great. She distinguished herself with humility, love for the poor and all her life carried out ascetical efforts of piety. She died about 400.

*Venerable Martyr Macarius of Thessalonica* was the student of the Venerable Nephon, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Turks beheaded him for teaching false doctrine in 1522 after public accusation by the Moslems of the city of Thessalonica.

*The Lorenz Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God*. This holy icon was revealed in Italy in 1291. Now it is in the Lorenz monastery.

\_) Having in view the end of storing bread, the people say: "the Raising has come means that the grain from the fields has been put away", and besides the name "Raising" names this holiday "Elevation" (raising up). This is explained either by the simple desire to apply this feast to the circumstance of life, or, more truly, by direct ignorance of the history of the feast which is why disclosing it from the church cathedra should be recognized as essentially important. The people date the flight of birds by this same feast and, say that they fly to some unknown countries called Hiram and Biram, which in connection with these names is a ridiculous representation of the warm countries, and is also something the pastors of Church should pay attention.

\_) The Holy Queen Helen left the largest part of the life-creating wood of the cross of the Lord in Jerusalem (where this part subsequently, after the construction of the temple, was put in a silver ark for the veneration of the faithful), and another part, together with the nails found in the sacred tomb, was sent to her son Constantine in Constantinople. Part of the wood of the cross, is found in the Jerusalem Temple of the Resurrection, which annually, on the feast of Pascha, in memory of the initial finding, was solemnly elevated and offered for the veneration of the people, most of whom gather for this holy feast from the different countries. For many particles of the life-creating wood, adorned with gold and silver, worn on the breast, served as the individual and highest reward for the work of the way in remote countries, so that St. Cyril of Jerusalem witnesses, that during his time, although "the sacred wood of the cross was probably also" in the temple, but "distributed from here to parts of the whole universe, already filling almost all the universe with itself".

\_) At first the Emperor carried the cross, vested in porphyry and in all the regal insignia. But at the gates of the temple he was stopped by an invisible power.

Already on another day, he, at the suggestion of the Patriarch who received a revelation of God through an Angel, that magnificence was not in accordance with the humility in which the Lord went on His way of the Cross. Then he removed from himself the insignia of imperial greatness, and freely carried the holy cross into the temple.

4) "Lord, have mercy"! The holy church exclaims repeatedly, seeing the elevation of the cross of the Lord. So it is good to pray and for each of us to see the descent to the depths and ascent to the heights of the cross of Christ. And from each of us in the paradise of innocence, came out of the holy Baptism font justified and purged from the original sin. There each of us was even in spiritual paradise when with a broken heart we confessed our sins before God and with awe partook of the divine body and blood of Christ for the remission of sins. But as we lose the first gift of renewal and rebirth in the new life by trespassing the commandments of the Lord, and we often sell the second gift of justification and communion in eternal life for every sweet sin. This humiliation of heavenly honor and glory of the children of God because of our sins, this sinful disgrace, this fall from the god-pleasing heights to the thoughtless similarity to cattle should be seen in our mind in view of the descent to the depths of the cross of Christ, and we should be distressed in our hearts and sing with all our being: "Lord, have mercy"! And as to each of us the Lord prepared that glory which He had from His Father before the addition of the world, if, according to our sins, we shall not deprive ourselves this glory; and for each of us He prepared a place in the house of the heavenly Father if, willingly and without any reservation, we shall not expel ourselves from the house of the Father, similarly to the prodigal son. Our mind should think that and about this highest glory, seeing the raising of the cross of the Lord to the heights. And we should kindle and implant in ourselves the decision to aspire with all our soul to become worthy of the high mansions in the house of the heavenly Father and from the depths of our heart sing to the Lord and the Master of our life: "Lord, have mercy"!

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0331-5  
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