

us, the failures in our life, such as fear, sadness, when we bring to mind what the sinless Christ underwent and suffered on the Cross for our sake. Joy and fear in the heart denote that spiritual condition which our Fathers call joy-sadness. It is that characteristic disposition of mind and heart and by extension of all those who are struggling correctly in Christ.

The sign of the Cross

Correctly doing the sign of the Cross, in other words, correctly making its sign on our body, expresses precisely this joy-sadness. As Saint Silouan also stresses, we don't remain disappointed by the negative conditions in us and around us, because the Cross grants us strength and hope. Forming it on our body is simultaneously Its divine intervention in our life, recovering and restoration. This is the meaning furthermore which the Saint's phrase "keep your mind in Hades and do not despair" also has: Spiritually for man to have tasted the utter depths of Hades and of hell through the Cross and the resurrected Lord, His grace, which cannot be understood separately from the Cross, to have it "brought out" for refreshment, comforting and consolation. Thus one understands what a depth of spiritual meaning the phrase of the familiar exaposteilarion "the Cross the support of the faithful" includes.

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2014 The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross Commemoration of the 6th Ecumenical Council

TONE OF THE WEEK: - **Eothinon** Festal

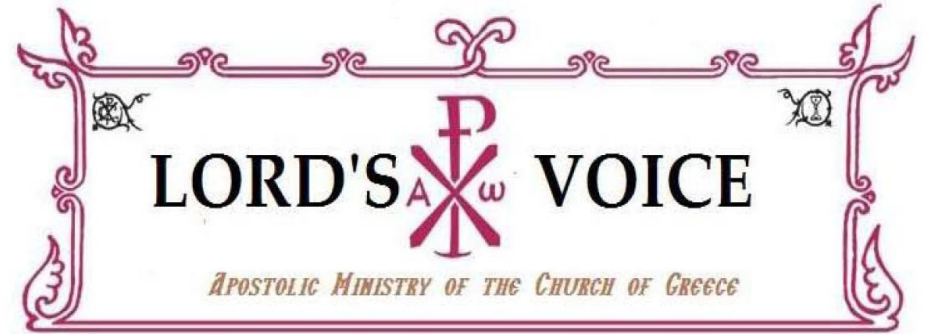
EPISTLE St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:18-24

GOSPEL John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2014 Apodosis of the Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross, St. Quadratus the Apostle, Jonah the Prophet, Isaakios & Meletios, Bishops of Cyprus

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

GOSPEL Mark 8:34-38; 9:1



62nd Year

SEPTEMBER 14, 2014

Pamphlet # 37 (3198)

THE CROSS THE GUARDIAN OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE

Saint Helen, beloved brethren, the mother of the also holy Emperor Constantine the Great, went to Jerusalem in order to find the Precious Cross. The notice of the finding of the all-venerable Wood (May of 325) ran through the whole territory and from everywhere that believers were arriving in order to venerate and to receive Its blessing. At the spot of the dreadful Golgotha by command of Constantine the Great, the all-beautiful church of the Resurrection was built afterwards, where Patriarch Makarios elevated the Precious Cross on September 14 of 325, the day of the consecration of the church. Our Church celebrates This elevation today.

In 614 again, the Persians invaded Jerusalem and carried out great destructions. They took the reliquary, in which Saint Helen had placed the Precious Cross, and dragged Patriarch Zachariah and many believers as prisoners. 14 years later the Emperor Heraclius campaigned against the Persians, defeated them, took back the precious Cross and liberated Patriarch Zachariah and however many believers existed then, and he returned to Constantinople. He went down afterwards to Jerusalem, and there Patriarch Zachariah elevated the precious Cross again on September 14 of 628

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

The Gospel of John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30

At that time, when the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King!" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. Then when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

"A dreadful symbol"

The Cross is the center of our life. It is the center also of our liturgical life. There are innumerable times when we make its sign during the Divine Liturgy. Our journey and our worship are resurrectional and for this reason also crucifictional.

Nick Pentzikis considers the Cross the "geography of its horizons", as he says in a characteristic manner. At the four ends of the horizon, he clarifies, man is attached and is suffering, seeking the capability to overcome death. Pentziki's words concerning horizons remind many of us of the manner in which our older good teachers, in the class "Knowledge of the Homeland" of the third grade of Elementary School would raise us to the board in front of the map of our homeland and would urge us to correctly form our Cross, mentioning in order, forehead – North, belly – South, right shoulder – East, left shoulder – West. Immediately afterward we would announce that we got our bearings. An inconceivable pedagogical method, which in a very correct manner connected us through the Cross to the world!

Really, the Cross is shown to be a Lifegiving and Lifemaking symbol for Orthodox Christians, the medicine which abolishes death and sin and furthermore is a safe gate for the Resurrection and Life. The Cross of Christ is anything other than an idol for us: it allows us to pass to the life of heaven, or rather with the grace of Christ which it has, it brings the life of heaven to our own life, adorning it, brightening it, beautifying it, making us also beautiful people, which means "ready", mature spiritually, conversant with the Saints of our faith, similar to them in the crucifactory train of thought.

Today, furthermore, is an opportunity, which reminds us of Holy Friday with the fasting and the gospel reading, for us to pray to the crucified God to give us the spiritual taste of this crucifactory train of thought.

With joy and with fear

The hymnology of the day urges us to embrace and venerate the Cross of Christ with joy and with fear. Joy, because the Cross means salvation for us, no matter how simple we are. And fear, because of the multitude of our iniquities and of the unnamable passions which trouble