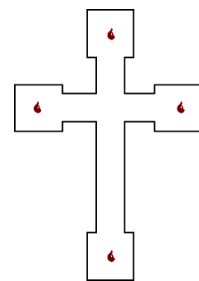


LITURGY BYTES

Triumph of the Cross



September 14th is the feast day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, also known as the Triumph of the Cross or the Elevation of the Cross. This is the day that the Church celebrates both the discovery and the recovery of the true Cross of Jesus Christ. It is also our parish's feast day. Even though this year the feast occurred last Tuesday, this weekend we celebrate it as a parish enriched by the Cross!

There is an interesting history surrounding this ancient feast day beginning with the Roman emperor, Constantine's mother, St. Helena. She was a convert to Christianity and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to locate where the important events in the life of Christ occurred, and to preserve the relics of the Christian faith that remained there. It is written that one of her goals was to find the place of Jesus' crucifixion and the very Cross on which he was hung. She interviewed many local people, and with the assistance of the Bishop of Jerusalem, she discovered the spot and found the true Cross which had been hidden by the Jews. According to the historian, Rufinus, the identity of the true Cross was confirmed by a miraculous healing. According to my research, the date of the discovery and the miracle occurred on May 3rd, 326 A.D. St. Helena had a church built on the original site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Her son, Constantine, dedicated this church on September 13/14 in the year 335 A.D. Even today, the Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem end at this very spot.

The true Cross was considered a most valuable treasure of the Church and became a highly venerated object, and the feast honoring the exaltation of the Holy Cross has continually been celebrated. On the old Roman calendar, it was celebrated on May 3rd (the date of its discovery) and on September 14th in Jerusalem and eventually by everyone. The date of September 14th became the official day to acknowledge this special feast day. Interestingly, in its history, the true Cross was stolen by the Persians in 614 A.D. but was recovered by 629 A.D. and brought back to Jerusalem on September 14th.

One long tradition that the Church has regarding the Cross is veneration which is most popular on Good Friday. This is common for both Catholic Christians and Eastern Orthodox Christians who have large crosses in prominent places within their churches. Many people of these traditions keep crosses and crucifixes in their homes on the wall. In fact, a cross or a crucifix put in a place of honor is a sure mark of a Christian home. In addition, both women and men wear crosses around their necks as another sign of their beliefs.

Why not consider giving a cross as a gift to family or friends this year for Christmas?



Have a safe, healthy, and blessed week! ~~*Michele Hahn*

Happy Feast Day Parish of the Holy Cross!