

The feast of the Sign of the Precious Cross manifested in the heavens



On Tuesday, May 7th/20th, 2025, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Sign of the Cross that appeared in the heavens.

On this feast, the whole Church—especially that of Jerusalem—commemorates that on the 7th of May in the year 351, a luminous and radiant Cross, brighter than the rays of the sun, appeared stretching from the dread Golgotha unto the Mount of Olives. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, marvelling, beheld it as they came forth from their dwellings.

This account the Church has from a letter of Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem and Catechist, addressed to Constantius, the Emperor and son of Saint Constantine the Great, which is quoted in full as follows:

EPISTLE OF SAINT CYRIL, ARCHBISHOP OF JERUSALEM, TO THE MOST PIOUS
EMPEROR CONSTANTIUS

Concerning the Sign of the Cross Appearing in the Heavens, seen as Light in
Jerusalem

To the Most God-beloved and Pious Sovereign,
Constantius Augustus,

Cyril, Bishop in Jerusalem,
Rejoiceth in the Lord:

During the reign of your God-beloved and blessed memory Father, Constantine, the
redeeming wood of the Cross was found in Jerusalem, divine grace granting its
discovery to him who earnestly sought after piety among the hidden Holy Places.

But now, under thee, O Master, Most Pious Emperor, who surpassest thy father's
piety with greater reverence toward God, the miracles of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, are no longer shown forth from the
earth, but from the heavens. The blessed Cross—I speak of that trophy of victory
over death—did shine forth in Jerusalem with the brightness of light.

For in these holy days of the Holy Pentecost, on the Nonas of May (the 7th), about
the third hour of the day, there appeared in the heavens a Cross of great
magnitude, formed of light, stretching from the holy Golgotha even unto the holy
Mount of Olives. And this was not seen by one or two only, but was clearly shown to
the entire multitude of the City. Nor did it pass by swiftly, as if it were a passing
illusion, but was visible to sight above the earth for several hours; and its radiant
brilliance surpassed the rays of the sun—for otherwise it would have been hidden
by them, had it not shown forth rays mightier than those of the sun to those who
beheld it.

So the whole multitude of the city, seized with awe and gladness at this divine vision, ran together as one to the holy Church: young and old, men and women, people of every age—even maidens secluded in their chambers; locals and strangers, Christians and visitors from among the nations alike. And all, with one voice and heart, glorified Jesus Christ our Lord, the Only-Begotten Son of God, the Wonderworker—confessing by deed and experience that the all-holy doctrine of the Christians is not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power—not proclaimed only by men, but testified also from heaven by God Himself.

In the Year of Salvation Three Hundred and Fifty-One.”

For the celebration of this feast, in the morning, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Horrendous Golgotha, presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avila, with the concelebration of Hieromonks of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre: Archimandrites Philoumenos, Claudios, Amphilochios, the newly ordained Hieromonk Simeon, the ministering Priest of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Archimandrite Thaddeos, and the Priest of the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of the Lord, Fr Charalambos - Farah Bandour, together with Fr Nektarios, Archdeacon Mark, and the Hierodeacon Dositheos.

The chanting was led by the lead cantor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Deacon Eustathios, together with the Patriarchal School of Zion students, in the participation of monks, nuns, and the faithful residents of Jerusalem.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the Episcopal Entourage proceeded to the Holy Deposition, where the Hierarchs of the Patriarchate gathered, and a litany was held three times around the Holy Tomb. Following the litany, before the Sacred Edicule, the letter of Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem was read aloud in both Greek and Arabic.

After these events, the Episcopal Entourage paid their respects to His Beatitude at the Patriarchate.

From the Chief Secretariat

























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