

The feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross at the Patriarchate

On Saturday, the 14th/27th of September 2025, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious Cross.

On this feast, the whole Church, and especially that of Jerusalem, commemorates the event of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross after its finding behind the Horrendous Golgotha by the Archbishop of Jerusalem Makarios and Saint Helen, during the feast of the Consecration of the Church of the Resurrection in 336 AD.

For this feast, the following were held:

On the eve, Great Vespers, presided over by His Beatitude, with reception and censuring at the Deposition from the Cross, veneration at the Holy Sepulchre, veneration at Golgotha, censuring at the Holy Shrines, Praises, Great Entrance and the blessing of bread.

After the Dismissal of Vespers, the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood premises.

2. On the day of the feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, presided over by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, concelebrated by the Hierarchs of the Patriarchate: their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias, and the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerash, Dorotheos of Avila, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Philoumenos of Pella, and Aristovoulos of Qatar. Along with them were many Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, among whom the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, together with the representatives of the Patriarchates of the sister Churches, Archimandrite Vassianos from Russia and Archimandrite Ioannis from Romania, many Priests from Russia, Romania and Serbia, Holy Sepulchre Hierodeacons and Archdeacon Mark, while a Byzantine choir chanted in Greek, led by the chief cantor of the Church, Deacon Eustathios. A large crowd of pilgrims also participated in joy and contrition.

After the Divine Liturgy, the procession set forth from the Catholicon, turning left and passing through the Deposition from the Cross, and went down to the Chapel of Saint Helen, which is in use by the Armenians. There, His Beatitude, bearing upon His head the Precious Cross, stood before the altar doors of the chapel, while the deacons censed the Holy Altar and the Throne of Saint Helen. Then His

Beatitude held the Service of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross in the Cave of its Finding, turning toward the four points of the horizon, while the chanters sang: “, O Lord, Save Thy people,” “Thou Who wast lifted up on the Cross of Thine own will,” and “We venerate Thy Cross, O Master.”

Then the procession went up the stairs and turned right, marched through the shrines on the way and circled three times around the Sacred Edicule, continued at the Holy Deposition and went up to Golgotha, where once more the Exaltation of the Precious Cross took place from the Holy Altar of Golgotha toward the four points of the horizon.

Finally, from Golgotha, the Patriarch with His concelebrants went down into the Holy Altar of the Catholicon as the service ended. Afterwards, all clergy and the people went to the Patriarchate’s great Hall. There, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Rejoice, O life-bearing Cross, invincible trophy of piety, gate of Paradise, support of the faithful, rampart of the Church; by thee corruption is utterly destroyed, death hath been swallowed up and abolished, and we are lifted from earth unto the heavens. Thou art a weapon invincible, adversary of demons, glory of Martyrs and of the Righteous, true adornment, haven of salvation, bestowing upon the world the great mercy.”

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Pious Christians and Pilgrims,

Today, the Holy Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem, celebrates the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. Therefore We, together with our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, celebrated a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the very place of the crucifixion, the three-day burial and the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull” (Matt. 27:33), there took place the crucifixion of Christ, which is a natural testimony and infallible landmark in the history of the world. For through the blessed wood of the Cross came eternal righteousness, as the hymnographer most clearly declares: “The curse is annulled, the just condemnation hath been loosed, by the unjust judgement of the Righteous One; for it was meet that wood should

heal the wood, and by the passion of the Impassible, to loose the passions of him that was condemned in wood.”

According to the divine Paul, the Precious Cross is the power, the strength, and the unconquerable trophy of our salvation, wherefore he proclaims: “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18).

In other words, beloved brethren, the Word of the Cross, that is, the preaching concerning the Cross, is both the summit and the revelation of the ultimate purpose of the incomprehensible mystery of the Divine Providence in Christ, namely the Evangelical saying: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

The Apostle of the nations, the wondrous Paul, revealing the wretched state of man, who on the one hand denies his fall and corruption caused by sin, and on the other hand his mortal enemy and adversary, the devil, invokes the “Word of the Cross” by which the crucified Christ stripped the devil of his power and destroyed his dominion, that he might cry out, saying: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

The Precious Cross, which was revealed to be the instrument of sacrifice for the supreme good of righteousness, the righteousness of God, which remaineth forever (cf. 2 Cor. 9:9), calleth us to flee, according to the Apostle Peter, “the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 2:20).

And we, who honour and venerate the redeeming wood of the Cross, by which we were lifted from earth unto the heavens, let us say with the divine Paul: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

Many blessed and peaceful returns. Amen.”

Afterwards, His Beatitude received the reverence of the clergy and the pilgrims and distributed Patriarchal blessings.

From the Chief Secretariat

















































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