

## **The Feast of the Apodosis of Pascha and of the sign of the Cross which appeared in heaven**



On Wednesday, 20 April / 7 May 2026, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Apodosis of Pascha and of the sign of the Cross which appeared in heaven.

For the Feast of the Apodosis of Pascha, as prescribed by the Pentecostarion, the entire service of the day of the Resurrection was chanted, apart from the readings, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated. This service was held in the Patriarchal and Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, in the presence of His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, and thereafter, according to custom, through the steps of the Church of Saint James, His Beatitude and the Hierarchs went to venerate the All-Holy Tomb and at Horrendous Golgotha.

In commemoration of the sign of the Cross which appeared in heaven, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Katholikon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by His

Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenopolis, along with the Archimandrites Claudius, Thaddaeus, Dositheos, and Anastasios, the Priest Nektarios, Archdeacon Mark, and Hierodeacon Prodromos, while the chanting was offered by the chief cantor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Deacon Efstathios, together with the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy and following a brief supplication upon Golgotha, the Hierarchs and the remaining Fathers gathered together before the Chapel of the Deposition, and started the procession, circling the Holy Tomb three times, while the Paschal hymns were being chanted.

At the conclusion of the procession, before the Holy Edicule, the celebrating Hierarch and His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia read in Greek and Arabic the epistle of Archbishop Cyril the Catechist to Constantius the Emperor, son of Saint Constantine the Great, wherein the wondrous miracle of the manifestation of the sign of the Precious Cross by luminous stars brighter than the sun is described, appearing from Golgotha unto the Mount of Olives for many hours and visible to the inhabitants of Jerusalem of every age. The epistle reads as follows:

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

Concerning the sign of the Cross, formed of light, which appeared in the heavens over Jerusalem

To the most God-loving and most pious Emperor Constantius Augustus,

Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, greeting in the Lord.

In the days of the most God-loving Constantine, thy father of blessed memory, the saving Wood of the Cross was discovered in Jerusalem, divine grace granting the finding of the hidden Holy Places unto him who sought piety aright. But in thy days, O Master, most pious Emperor, surpassing the piety of thy forefathers by greater reverence toward God, the wonders are manifested no longer from the earth but from heaven itself; and the blessed Cross, the trophy of victory over death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, was seen in Jerusalem shining forth with flashes of light.

For in these holy days of Pentecost, on the Nones of May, about the third hour, there appeared in the heavens a mighty Cross formed of light, stretching from above holy Golgotha unto the holy Mount of Olives. It was shown not to one or two alone, but most clearly to the whole multitude of the city. Nor, as one might

suppose, did it swiftly vanish like a passing imagination, but for many hours it remained visibly seen above the earth, overcoming the rays of the sun by the brilliance of its flashing beams; for otherwise it would have been concealed by them, had it not displayed unto the beholders a radiance more powerful than the sun itself.

Thus, all the people of the city ran together in haste unto the holy church, seized with fear and joy at the divine vision: young and old alike, men and women, persons of every age, even maidens secluded within their chambers; natives and foreigners together, Christians and pagans visiting from elsewhere. And with one accord, as from a single mouth, all glorified Christ Jesus our Lord, the Only-begotten Son of God, the Worker of wonders, receiving by deed and experience the proof that the all-holy doctrine of the Christians standeth not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit and of power; proclaimed not by men only, but borne witness unto from heaven by God Himself.

In the year of salvation 351.”

This miracle took place on 7 May in the year 351, as confirmation of the Cross and the Resurrection of the Lord.

Finally, the Episcopal retinue paid its respects to His Beatitude at the Patriarchate.

From the Chief Secretariat

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