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Exaltation of the Cross, Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Alhambra, California



Exaltation of the Cross, Sunday, September 27, 2020

This year, for the first time since 2015, the Exaltation of the Cross fell on a Sunday. His Grace, Bishop Maxim, celebrated the feast at his see, St. Steven Cathedral in Alhambra. As Matins concluded with the Great Doxology, Protopresbyter Stavrophor Nikola Ceko placed the Cross in the center of the outdoor chapel and the Liturgy began. Following the Gospel reading for the feast, which recounted Pilate's questioning then sentencing of Christ, and Christ's final words as He "gave up His Spirit" on the Cross, Bishop Maxim reminded us that not only has the Cross gone from a symbol of shame to a symbol of God's glory, but it's even addressed as a living person in the Church hymnography! His Grace explained that the theological paradox when a thing becomes very personal is a result of the Lord making it His own: in this case, Christ took on our human brokenness and the Cross

is linked to Him. It is no longer a symbol of scandal but rather “the power of God and the wisdom of God” as Saint Paul explained in the Epistle reading for the feast. Bishop Maxim encouraged us to embrace our cross no matter how difficult, to see Christ in all moments of life, and concluded by welcoming everyone to this feast, where we come to find the meaning of our own cross in Christ.

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