

## Special Hymn to the Cross

*Before your Cross we bow down in worship, O Master. And your Holy Resurrection, we glorify.* (Sung 3 times with prostrations)

## FAMILY ACTIVITIES

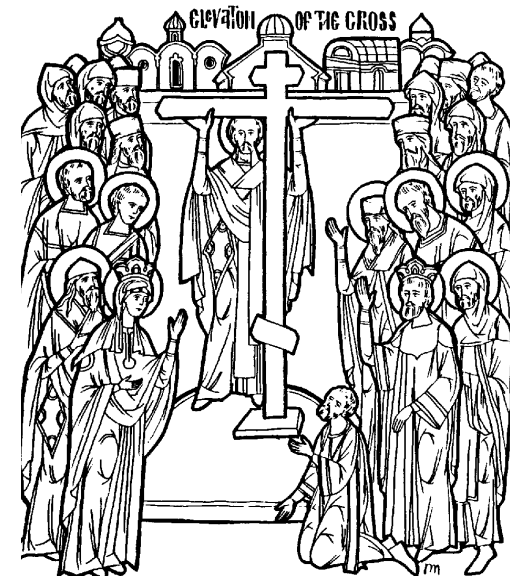
- ✧ Come to Church as a family to celebrate the Feast Day. If you cannot come on the Feast itself, come on the eve of the Feast.
- ✧ As a family, read the Scriptural references. Use the enclosed Elevation explanation to explain the significance of the Feast to your children.
- ✧ Discuss the festal icon with your children. Teach them about all the figures represented on the icon. If you have this icon in your home, display it in your family's place of prayer for veneration.
- ✧ If you have a Cross, decorate it with flowers and greens and display it in your family's place of prayer for veneration. Use the Troparion and Kontakion and the Special Hymn "Before Your Cross" as morning and evening prayers, as well as before meals during the afterfeast period of seven days.



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# COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST: THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS





## THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS CELEBRATED ON SEPTEMBER 14

The Elevation of the Cross...commemorates the finding of Christ's Cross by St. Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century; and after it was taken by the Persians, of its recovery by the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century at which time it was "elevated" in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. From this latter event the "universal elevation" of the Cross was celebrated annually in all of the churches of the Christian Empire.

The day of the feast became, as it were, the national holiday of the Eastern Christian Empire...The Cross, the official emblem of the Empire which was placed on all public buildings and uniforms, was officially elevated on this day by the bishops and priests...

The Troparion of the feast was, one might say, the "national anthem" sung on all public occasions...originally petitioned God to save the people, to grant victory in war and to preserve the Empire "by virtue of the Cross." Today the Troparion, and all the hymns of the day, are "spiritualized" as the "adversaries" become the spiritually wicked and sinful, including the devil and his armies, and the "Orthodox Christian" replace the names of ruling officials of the Empire...

The holy day, although it has an obvious "political" origin...remains with us as a day of fasting and prayer, a day when we recall that the Cross is the only sign worthy of our total allegiance...We proclaim that we belong to the Kingdom "not of this world"...our salvation comes not by "victories" of any earthly sort, but by the only victory of the crucifixion of Christ and our co-crucifixion with Him. (Fr. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith: Volume 2, Worship*).

## THE ELEVATION IN SCRIPTURE AND HYMNS

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

**Gospel:** John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35

**Old Testament:** Exodus 15:22-16:1

**Vespers, "Lord, I Call," Sticheron 1**

*The exalted Cross calls all of creation to praise the pure passion, the passion of Christ, who was exalted on it. On the Cross He killed the one who had killed us. Christ has brought us back to life. He has adorned us, making us worthy to live in the heavens. We rejoice and exalt His name and magnify His condescension.*

**Vespers, Aposticha, Sticheron 1**

*Rejoice, O Life-Bearing Cross. The invincible weapon of godliness. The gate of paradise, the protection of the faithful. The Cross is the might of the Church...The Cross raises us from earth to heaven. The Cross is the enemy of Satan...The Cross is the haven of salvation...*

**Divine Liturgy, Troparion, Tone 1**

*O Lord, save your people, and bless your inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by the virtue of your Cross, preserve your habitation.*

**Divine Liturgy, Kontakion, Tone 4**

*As you were voluntarily crucified for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by your name; make all Orthodox Christians glad by your power, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, your weapon of peace.*

