



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 — SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE HOLY CROSS

- “The Cross of the Lord is unpleasant and sorrowful to the ear, but it consists of joy and gladness. It is the originator not so much of suffering as much as of passionlessness. For Jews the Cross is temptation, for pagans it is madness, but for us believers it reminds us of our salvation. When in church one reads about the Cross and one is reminded of the sufferings on the Cross, the faithful are indignant at the Cross and let out a plaintive wail and murmur not at the Cross but at the crucifiers and unbelievers. For the Cross is the salvation of the Church, the Cross is the praise of those who hope on it. The Cross has released us from the evil that possessed us and is the beginning of the blessings received by us. The Cross is the reconciliation of His enemies with God, the promise of sinners to Christ. For by the Cross we were freed from enmity and through the Cross we have become amiable to God. The Cross delivered us from the authority of the devil, the Cross saved us from death and destruction. The Cross changed human nature to the angelic, having released it from all that is corruptible, and have found lives worthy of immortality.”

- “How great is the power of the Cross! How great is the change made by it in the human race! How from the deep darkness it has led us to the boundless light, from death it has restored us to eternal life, from corruption it has transferred us to incorruption. What good is not accomplished for us by means of the Cross? Through the Cross we learned piety and learned the properties of the Divine essence. Through the Cross we learn the truth about God, through the Cross we who were far from Him are united to Christ, and we become worthy of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through the Cross we learn the power of love and we are taught to die for others. Through the Cross we are scorned and all what we do is not temporal, we search the blessings of the future and we accept the invisible as if seen. The Cross is preached, and the faith in God is confessed, His truth is spread throughout the universe. The Cross is preached, and the faith in the resurrection, the life and the kingdom of heaven is made without a doubt. What is more precious than the Cross and what is more saving for the soul? The Cross is the triumph over demons, the armor against sin and the sword with which the Lord has struck the snake. The Cross is the will of the Father, the glory of the Only-begotten, the joy of the Holy Spirit, the ornament of angels, the

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HYMNS OF THE SMALL ENTRANCE

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION.

Mode pl. 2. Automelon.

When the angelic powers appeared at Your grave, the soldiers guarding it feared and became as dead. And standing by the sepulcher was Mary who was seeking Your immaculate body. You devastated Hades, not afflicted by it. You went to meet the virgin, and granted eternal life. You resurrected from the dead. O Lord, glory to You. (2)

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FOR THE FOREFEAST.

Mode 2.

YOU have shown the earthly beauty of the * holy tabernacle of Your glory to be even as the * splendour of the heavenly firmament, O Lord. * Strengthen it for ever and ever, and accept our * prayers which we unceasingly offer within it to * You, through the Theotokos, O You Who are * the Life and Resurrection of all.

APOLYTIKION OF OUR PATRON

Mode Pl. 1

The holy Apostle, the All-hymned Luke, * who is acknowledged by the Church of Christ * as the recorder of the Acts of the Apostles, * and the splendid author of the Gospel of Christ. * Let us praise with sacred hymns as a physician, * who heals the infirmities of man, * and the ailments of nature, * who cleanses spiritual wounds, and prays unceasingly for our souls.

KONTAKION.

Mode 4. You revealed yourself today.

Lord, Your Church appears to us * to be like heaven * full of light, and guides with light * all who believe in You, O Christ. * And we who stand in it cry to You: * Savior, establish forever this holy house.



The forgiveness of sins is a source of salvation and a prize of repentance, because repentance is a surgical procedure that excises sin; it is a heavenly gift and a marvelous power that by grace defeats the consequence of the laws . . . it does not scare away the adulterer, it does not turn away the drunkard, it does not abominate the idol worshipper, it does not banish the reviler; it chases away neither the blasphemer nor the proud; rather, it changes all of them, because repentance is a melting pot of sin. — Saint John Chrysostom



READINGS

The Epistle

Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross

Gal. 6:11–18

Brethren, see with what large letters I write to you with my own hand! Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised, only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. As for me, I shall find glory in nothing, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. In Christ Jesus, circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; only a new creation {matters}. To those who live by this rule, may there be peace and mercy upon them, and on the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me any trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

The Gospel

Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross

Jn. 3:13–17

The Lord said, “No one has ascended into heaven, except for the one who came down out of heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, likewise, the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone believing in him should not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God so loved the world that he gave his uniquely-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Certainly, God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world should be saved through him.”



UPCOMING SERVICES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS, ORTHROS / DIVINE LITURGY, 8:30AM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, GREAT VESPERS, 5PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME COLLEGE STUDENTS

Philoptochos is hosting a Coffee Hour today to welcome back college students. Please stay for food and fellowship. Have a blessed school year!

SEPTEMBER PHILOPTOCHOS DRIVE

During the month of September, there will be a special collection jar for Zoe for Life! This is an Orthodox Christian initiative based in Ohio that offers confidential support to women facing planned and unplanned pregnancies or struggling to provide for their young children. See flyer for more details.

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE

Philoptochos would like a group of volunteers to cook a meal at the Ronald McDonald House in October. They need 8 people to help. Dates and times are TBD. Please contact Lisa if you are interested.

COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

Philoptochos is collecting non-fasting Potluck recipes. Please submit your tried and tested recipes. Deadline for submissions is next week, Sept. 20. A Feasting Cookbook will be shared with all who participate. See Presv Jeanniw if you have any questions.

COFFEE HOUSE

Save the date: October 6. We will be asking for donations of a canned food item or \$5. Coffee

as well as cold drinks will be served with light refreshments.

COFFEE HOUR

The sign up sheet for hosting Coffee Hour has been moved to the bulletin board across from the Lending Library. Please consider hosting coffee hour in honor of a loved one's birthday, name day, or anniversary. Celebrations are not provided by the parish, but are at the discretion and delight of each family.

PROPER ATTIRE

1. Dress modestly so as not to distract others from worship. 2. WOMEN: Knee-length or longer dresses and skirts are traditional; tops should cover the shoulders and stomach. No lipstick or lip balm; makeup is strongly discouraged. 3. MEN: Dress pants and polo or button-down shirts. No T-shirts, especially with writing or images. Denim is acceptable; work jeans are discouraged. 4. CHILDREN: Dress children in their best clothing; sloppy dress and play-clothes send the wrong message. 5. EVERYONE: Wear closed-toe shoes; sandals only with socks. No brightly colored or light-up sneakers, no bare feet, no shorts (even for children), no hats indoors. Cover tattoos as much as possible. REMEMBER: We come to worship the Living God; dress simply, cleanly, and respectfully.

protection of the Church, the praise of St. Paul, the protection of the Saints, the lamp of all the world.”

- “See, however desired and deservedly amiable the Cross is made today, it was the most terrible and shameful sign of the cruelest execution in antiquity! And the Cross makes the best ornament on the imperial crown, the most precious in all the world. The image of the Cross is now found on you, both masters and servants, both wives and husbands, both maidens and married, both slaves and free. All place the sign of the Cross on the noblest part of their body, daily carrying this sign on their forehead, as on a depicted pillar. It shines on a sacred meal, on the clothes of the priest and together with the Lord’s body at the mystical supper. You see it lifted everywhere: on houses, in market-places, in the deserts, on the paths, on mountains and hills, on the sea, on ships, on islands, on boxes, on clothes, on armor, in the halls, on golden and silver vessels, in pictures, on the bodies of sick animals, on the bodies of the demon-possessed, in war, in the world, in the afternoon, at night, in festal assemblies and in the cells of the ascetics. Already no one is ashamed and does not blush at the thought that the Cross is a sign of a shameful death. To the contrary, all of us honor this as an adornment for ourselves, which has surpassed crowns and diadems and precious stones. Let us not run, let us not be frightened, but let us kiss and honor it as an invaluable treasure.”

CONCERNING THE CROSS AND FAITH (ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS)

The word ‘Cross’ “is foolishness to those that perish, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.”¹ For “he that is spiritual judges all

things, but the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit.”² For it is foolishness to those who do not receive in faith and who do not consider God’s goodness and omnipotence, but search out divine things with human and natural reasonings. For all the things that are of God are above nature and reason and conception. For should any one consider how and for what purpose God brought all things out of nothing into being, and aim at arriving at that by natural reasonings, he fails to comprehend it. For knowledge of this kind belongs to spirits and demons. But if anyone, under the guidance of faith, should consider the divine goodness and omnipotence and truth and wisdom and justice, he will find all things smooth and even, and the way straight. “But without faith it is impossible to be saved.”³ For it is by faith that all things, both human and spiritual, are sustained. For without faith neither does the farmer cut his furrow, nor does the merchant commit his life to the raging waves of the sea on a small piece of wood, nor are marriages contracted nor any other step in life taken. By faith we consider that all things are brought out of nothing into being by God’s power. And we direct all things, both divine and human, by faith. Further, faith is assent free from all meddlesome inquisitiveness.

Every action, therefore, and performance of miracles by Christ are most great and divine and marvelous, but the most marvelous of all is His honorable Cross. For no other thing has subdued death, expiated the sin of the first parent, despoiled Hades, bestowed the resurrection, granted the power to us of contemning the present and even death itself, prepared the return to our former blessedness, opened the

gates of Paradise, given our nature a seat at the right hand of God, and made us the children and heirs of God, save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For by the Cross all things have been made right. "So many of us," the apostle says, "as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into His death,"⁴ and "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Further, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."⁶ Lo! The death of Christ, that is, the Cross, clothed us with the enhypostatic wisdom and power of God. And the power of God is the Word of the Cross, either because God's might, that is, the victory over death, has been revealed to us by it, or because just as the four extremities of the Cross are held fast and bound together by the bolt in the middle, so also by God's power the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, that is, every creature visible and invisible, is maintained.

This was given to us as a sign on our forehead, just as the circumcision was given to Israel: for by it we believers are separated and distinguished from unbelievers. This is the shield and weapon against, and trophy over, the devil. "This is the seal that the destroyer may not touch you,"⁷ as saith the Scripture. This is the resurrection of those lying in death, the support of the standing, the staff of the weak, the rod of the flock, the safe conduct of the earnest, the perfection of those that press forwards, the salvation of soul and body, the aversion of all things evil, the patron of all things good, the taking away of sin, the plant of resurrection, the tree of eternal life.

So, then, this same truly honorable and august tree, on which Christ hath offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sakes, is to be worshipped

as sanctified by contact with His holy body and blood; likewise the nails, the spear, the clothes, His sacred tabernacles which are the manger, the cave, Golgotha, which bringeth salvation, the tomb which giveth life, Sion, the chief stronghold of the churches and the like, are to be worshipped. In the words of David, the father of God, "Let us enter into His tabernacles, let us do reverence to the place where His feet stood." And that is the Cross that is made clear by what follows, "Arise, O Lord, into Your rest." For the resurrection comes after the Cross. For if of those things which we love, house and couch and garment, are to be longed after, how much the rather should we long after that which belonged to God, our Saviour, by means of which we are in truth saved.

Moreover we worship even the image of the honorable and life-giving Cross, although made of another tree, not honouring the tree (God forbid) but the image as a symbol of Christ. For He said to His disciples, admonishing them, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven," meaning the Cross. And so also the angel of the resurrection said to the woman, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified." And the Apostle said, "We preach Christ crucified." For there are many Christs and many Jesuses, but One crucified. He does not say speared but crucified. It behooves us, then, to adore the sign of Christ. For wherever the sign may be, there also will He be. But it does not behoove us to adore the material of which the image of the Cross is composed even though it be gold or precious stones, after it is destroyed, if that should happen. Everything, therefore, that is dedicated to God we adore, conferring the adoration on Him.

The tree of life which was planted by God in Paradise pre-figured this honorable Cross. For since death was by a tree, it was fitting that life and resurrection should be bestowed by a tree. Jacob, when He worshipped the top of Joseph's staff, was the first to image the Cross, and when he blessed his sons with crossed hands, he made most clearly the sign of the cross. Likewise also did Moses' rod, when he smote the sea in the figure of the cross and saved Israel, while it overwhelmed Pharaoh in the depths; likewise also the hands stretched out crosswise and routing Amalek; and the bitter water made sweet by a tree, and the rock rent and pouring forth streams of water, and the rod that meant for Aaron the dignity of the high priesthood¹⁶, and the serpent lifted in triumph on a tree as though it were dead, the tree bringing salvation to those who in faith saw their enemy dead, just as Christ was nailed to the tree in the flesh of sin which yet knew no sin. The mighty Moses cried, "You will see your life hanging on a tree before your eyes, and Isaiah likewise, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a faithless and rebellious people." But may we who worship this obtain a part in Christ the crucified. Amen.

SAINT CORNELIUS THE CENTURION

Soon after the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and His Ascension into Heaven, a centurion by the name of Cornelius settled at Caesarea in Palestine. He had lived previously in Thracian Italy. Although he was a gentile, he distinguished himself by deep piety and good deeds, as the holy Evangelist Luke says (Acts 10:1). According to St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, he was not a pagan, but a gentile who practiced the religion of the Jews, like those Greeks mention in John 12:20-26. In fact,

St. Nikodemos says that Cornelius was one of those Greeks praised by the Lord. The Lord did not disdain his virtuous life, and so led him to the knowledge of truth and to faith in Christ.

Once, Cornelius was praying in his home. An angel of God appeared to him and said that his prayer had been heard and accepted by God. The angel commanded him to send people to Joppa to find Simon, also called Peter. Cornelius immediately fulfilled the command.

While those people were on their way to Joppa, the Apostle Peter was at prayer, and he had a vision: three times a great sheet was lowered down to him, filled with all kinds of beasts and fowl. He heard a voice from Heaven commanding him to eat everything. When the apostle refused to eat food which Jewish Law regarded as unclean, the voice said: "What God has cleansed, you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).

Through this vision the Lord commanded the Apostle Peter to preach the word of God to the pagans. He understood that "God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:34-35). When the Apostle Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius in the company of those sent to meet him, he was received with great joy and respect by the host together with his kinsmen and comrades.

Cornelius fell down at the feet of the apostle and requested to be taught the way of salvation. Peter talked about the earthly life of Jesus Christ, and spoke of the miracles and signs worked by the Savior, and of His teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven. Then Peter told him of the Lord's death on the Cross, His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. By the

grace of the Holy Spirit, Cornelius believed in Christ and was baptized with all his family.

He retired from the world and went preaching the Gospel together with the Apostle Peter, who made him a bishop. When the Apostle Peter, together with his helpers Timothy and Cornelius, was in the city of Ephesus, he learned of a particularly vigorous idol-worship in the city of Skepsis, in the region of Troas. Lots were drawn to see who would go there, and Cornelius was chosen.

In the city lived a ruler by the name of Demetrios, learned in the ancient Greek philosophy, hating Christianity and venerating the pagan gods, in particular Apollo and Zeus. Learning about the arrival of Cornelius in the city, he immediately summoned him and asked him the reason for his coming. Cornelius answered that he came to free him from the darkness of ignorance and lead him to knowledge of the True Light.

Demetrios, not comprehending the meaning of what was said, became angry and demanded that he answer each of his questions. When Cornelius explained that he served the Lord and that the reason for his coming was to announce the Truth, the prince became enraged and demanded that Cornelius offer sacrifice to the idols.

The Saint asked to be shown the gods. When he entered the pagan temple, Cornelius turned towards the east and uttered a prayer to the Lord. There was an earthquake, and the temple of Zeus and the idols situated in it were destroyed. All the populace, seeing what had happened, were terrified.

Demetrios was even more vexed and began to take counsel together with those approach-

ing him, about how to destroy Cornelius. They bound the Saint and took him to prison for the night. At this point, one of his servants informed Demetrios that his wife Evanthia and child Demetrian had perished beneath the rubble of the destroyed temple.

After a certain while, one of the pagan priests, by the name of Barbates, reported that he heard the voice of the wife and son somewhere in the ruins and that they were praising the God of the Christians. The pagan priest asked that the imprisoned one be released, in gratitude for the miracle worked by Cornelius, and the wife and son of the Demetrios remained alive.

The joyful Demetrios hastened to the prison in the company of those about him, declaring that he believed in Christ and asked them to bring his wife and son out of the ruins of the temple. Cornelius went to the destroyed temple, and through prayer the suffering were freed.

After this the ruler Demetrios, and all his relatives and comrades accepted holy Baptism. Cornelius lived for a long time in this city, converted all the pagan inhabitants to Christ, and made Eunomios a presbyter in service to the Lord. Cornelius died in old age and was buried not far from the pagan temple he destroyed.

Close by his tomb a plant sprang up that healed every sickness. When his relics were translated to the church built nearby in his honor, it moved of its own accord to a position near the altar.