

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION  
OF THE HOLY CROSS



*Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- September 14th*



**September 10, 2017**

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS  
POST-FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD  
HOLY MARTYRS MENODORA, METRODORA, NYMPHODORA

**TONE 5**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR SEPTEMBER 11 – SEPTEMBER 17**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 – PREFEAST OF EXALTATION OF THE CROSS.

6:00 PM – Great Vespers & Lytia (Satisfies Obligation)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 – THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS (OBLIGATORY FEAST)

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy      ✙ Ivanna Lahody; Req: Maria Sysyn  
For All Parishioners

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 – POSTFEAST OF EXALTATION

6:00 PM – Great Vespers (Satisfies Sunday Obligation)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 – SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS ;  
THE HOLY MARTYR SOPHIA AND HER THREE DAUGHTERS: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy      For All Parishioners

**Вічна Пам'ять – Eternal Memory**

Our beloved parishioner, Mary Kitt, fell asleep in the Lord this past Friday. Funeral arrangements are pending. Please keep Mary and her whole family in your prayers.



**Parish Picnic**

**Mark your calendars:**

Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup>

11:00 AM at Crown Point Park, Mission Bay. Hamburgers, hotdogs, drinks. Activities for all. Bring your lawn chairs.

Cost: 10 years of age and younger \$5.00  
11 and up - \$15.00

"There are several ways to avoid loving God: Deny that you are a sinner. Pretend that religion is for the ignorant and the superstitious, but not for the learned such as yourself. Insist that the sole purpose of religion is social service. Judge religion by whether or not it is accepted by the important people of the world. Avoid all contemplation, self-examination, and inquiry into the moral state of your soul."

- Venerable Fulton J. Sheen  
(God Love You)

# THE GREATEST CONQUEROR IS CONQUERED

September 14th is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.

There are two events in history to which this feast takes us, as Eugen J. Pentiuć writes in his book "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014). The first took place in the year 335, when the church built by Constantine over the traditional site of Christ's tomb was consecrated in Jerusalem. It was named the Church of the Resurrection; it is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The second event occurred in 629, fifteen years after the Persians had sacked and looted the church, taking as part of their spoils a relic of the True Cross. In 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius was able to recover the relic, and to bring it to Constantinople. There he carried it into the great church of Hagia Sophia, and elevated it as a sign of victory.

Father Pentiuć notes that one of the readings for the Great Vespers of the feast is Exodus 15: 22-16: 1. This is the account of Moses leading the people of Israel on from the Red Sea, after the exodus from Egypt, into the wilderness of Shur. They come, thirsty and tired, to the waters of Marah, only to find that the water is too bitter to drink. As so often, the people complain and "murmur against" poor Moses.

He, in turn, cries out to God. The Lord shows him a tree, which he flings into the water. At once the water becomes sweet enough to drink. Soon the people come to Elim where they encamp under seventy palm trees, surrounded by twelve springs and buoyed by God's promise that if they will keep His statutes, He will spare them the diseases He has used to chastise the arrogant, heedless Egyptians.

Reading this passage reminds us that the Old Testament often prepares us for what

happened to Jesus Christ. The tree at Marah is like the wood of the Cross, which sweetens everything bitter because it gives us eternal life. The crucified Christ rises from the dead, "upon those in the tomb bestowing life."

One of the stikhera for the festal Great Vespers speaks about another tree: "Come, all you nations, let us worship the blessed Tree through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he who by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam is himself ensnared by the Cross." Here the blessed Tree is the cross, but the tree with which Satan beguiled Adam is the tree in the Garden.

Saint John Chrysostom also makes reference to Satan, as the one who conquered Adam by tempting him to eat of the forbidden tree in Paradise. But the conqueror is conquered by the Resurrection, which robs Satan of his fatal power over humankind.

The tree in the Garden, the tree at Marah, and in fact the whole Old Testament, lead us to the Tree by which Jesus Christ will conquer death once and for all.

## **Kontakion - Tone 4**

By Your own choice, O Christ our God,\* You were lifted on the cross.\* Grant Your mercies to Your new community\* that bears Your Name.\* By Your power gladden the faithful people,\* and grant them victory against enemies.\* May they have the help of Your instrument of peace,\* the invincible sign of victory.



# Rational Sheep and the Word of God

*Fr. Stephen Freeman - July 20, 2012*

Any parent who has raised a child has witnessed the miracle of human language. Even children with handicaps find ways to communicate except in the most extreme circumstance. The genius of language is not something we learn – it is instinctual for human beings. Those who study linguistics and neurobiology recognize that we have an instinct for grammar – not the polite rules of a high school English class – but the deep structures that make language work – any language. Children born into situations of “proto-languages” such as the accidental “pidgin” of occasional ethnic mixes – take that most rudimentary speech and generate a “creole” (a new language born of such pidgins) within a single generation. They are not taught this language – they *invent* it, complete with a grammatical structure they are not taught by a previous generation.

The Scriptures tell the story of humanity with a profound sense of language. The first action of God is speech: “Let there be light!” God does not teach man to speak – we can only assume from the Biblical story that humanity and speech exist together from the beginning. God brings the animals to Adam, “to see what he would name them.” Animals could not exist within the human world and not be named. This is not because there is something inherently “nameable” about animals – rather it is human beings who *must* name. I say that we must name, because it is an instinct:

theologically, it belongs to our nature. We do not think and then speak: thought and language are common.

Our drive to speak is more than a matter of language. The “grammar” that is instinctual to us marks all that we do. Human beings have an inherent sense of structure about everything around them. That structural sense is manifest in how we treat numbers, how we treat art, how we treat everything in the world. Our speech has a grammar and everything around us, everything that human beings perceive, has a grammar. This grammatical approach to the world is far more descriptive of human behavior than words such as reasonable or rational. People do with the world what they do with words. [For an interesting theological reflection on doctrine as the grammar of theology, see George Lindbeck’s *The Nature of Doctrine*.]

It is our behavior with words that perhaps best illustrates what it means to say that we are *logikos*. Even an abridged Greek-English dictionary will give a seemingly endless list of English words with which one might translate *logos*, the root of *logikos*. Most commonly, St. John’s prologue is rendered, “In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*].” The root meaning of *logos* is certainly “word” (*lego* “to speak”). But it is within the larger context of human beings as *speakers*, the instinctive grammarians of the universe, that *logos* finds its greater meaning. Some within the tradition

have said that human beings exist in the image of God, inasmuch as we are “rational” (“rational” being yet another way to translate *logikos*). The result is the imagining of human beings as calculators. It is more accurate to speak of rationality as the perception that things have a *grammar*, a discernible structure that is susceptible to description and understanding.

Human beings have a natural passion (perhaps *eros* would be the better word) to explain things. We read the world and speak it in turn. We speak things and want to make them. When words fail we do not abandon our passion, but pursue the instinct beyond the bounds of formal language. We have learned (and invented) the grammar of numbers and science. With number and symbol we describe the relationships and structure of the sub-atomic universe. In relationship with God we dare to speak His name and to speak of person and substance, essence and energy, Trinity and transcendence. We have found no greater or more complete statement of icons than that “they do with color what the gospels do with words.”

And so, we are rightly described as *logikos*. It is not simply that we offer words to God, for words are only one manifestation of our logicity. We have been told (!) that we are created in God’s image. He who created heaven and earth is imaged in those who reach for the very structure of that same universe. He offers the word, “Let there be,” and we respond, returning the praise (*logikos latreia*) with what that Word has made.

We cannot imagine human existence without our *logikos* way of being. We are not logical (this word is a caricature of the Greek). But we cannot resist the urge to explain, to understand, to connect and see beyond and behind those things that appear. Even when our explanations are wrong we cannot accept no explanation.

As noted above, there are limits to speech. The Church’s understanding of God asserts above all else that God transcends our ability to know or speak. At its heart, true theology is *apophatic* (without speech). But the Church does not teach that God is *aphatic* (against speech). That which is made known to us in the Incarnation of Christ is God the *Logos*. Even when we cannot speak God, we can *know* Him. And the God whom we know sounds an echo within our very being.

And so the Church hymns believers as God’s “rational sheep” (*logiki provati*). It is a title of honor. The sheep return the honor by recognizing the Logos in all He has made (“all things were made by Him and without Him not anything was made”). We hear the song of creation and the voice of its groaning. We hear rocks sing and the harmonies of sub-atomic particles. And in the sound and grammar of all these things we hear the Word of God and sing to Him, his rational sheep.

## Неділя перед Воздвиженням Чесного Хреста Господнього

Сьогодні ми чули слова ап. Павла про те, що він носить на своєму тілі рани Ісуса (див. Гал. 6, 17). Те саме можна сказати і про його Церкву, особливо на Близькому та Середньому Сході. Від самого початку наші Церкви, від Єрусалиму до Месопотамії, носять на своєму тілі животворні знаки Христа розп'ятого.

У цьому є покликання наших Церков. Розважмо про те, наближаючись до славного ювілею воплощення Господа, завдяки якому нам дароване життя. Ми святкуватимемо цю незбагненну подію по всіх Церквах нашого краю не задля того, щоб по-людськи хвалитися нею, а задля глибшого пережиття цього таїнства.

Велике свято Воздвиження Чесного і Животворного Хреста Господнього Церкви врочисто вшановують упродовж п'ятнадцяти століть. Через два дні ми святкуватимемо цю подію, а сьогодні запрошені підготуватися до неї.

Спрямовуймо свій погляд до Ісуса, піднесеного на хресті. Ми є Тілом Христа в нашому краю, і ми покликані бути поглядом на Ісуса всіх тих людей, з якими живемо, бути їхнім поглядом, зверненим до Господа, Який прославився на хресті, воскрес, вознісся на небо і кличе за собою всіх людей. Це один з аспектів покликання всіх нас, що творимо Церкву. Переживаймо це покликання у правді – у правді нашого серця.

Розп'ятий Господь воскрес і вознісся до Отця. Але вознісся Син Чоловічий лише після того, як зійшов на землю, аби взяти зі собою, тобто взяти на себе те, чим ми є, а найперше – наш гріх.

Насправді лише деякі рани на своєму тілі Христос отримує ззовні, найбільше ж їх завдаємо ми, коли не визнаємо того, хто полюбив нас. Ісус, улюблений Син Отця, зійшов до нас, розділивши нашу неміч і страждання. Він зійшов у прірву нашої слабкості, на саме дно. Ми звикли скаржитися, коли щось не так – це притаманне всім людям – але чому ми, будучи чутливими до страждань, які торкаються нас, водночас не визнаємо, що вони є також стражданнями Ісуса? Нова людина, а нею ми є, повинна зводити свій погляд на Агнця, принесеного в жертву, піднесеного, воскреслого. Таким є погляд надії. Надією Церкви є Христос, Який на своєму хресті подолав смерть. Просімо Його наповнити наші серця духом співстраждання, адже Він страждає з нами і заради нас.

Воздвиження хреста ми можемо переживати щохвилини, коли страждаємо самі чи коли виявляємо увагу до страждань інших. Бути переміненими у Христі, бути носіями надії, – означає жити християнським реалізмом, адже реальність – це наш Бог, Який є любов'ю. Хоча ми схильні засуджувати самих себе – можливо, через неприйняття себе – та засуджувати інших, однак Отець нас не засуджує. Він страждає стражданням своїх дітей. Він хоче дати їм своє життя.

Протягом цієї Божественної літургії – нашої подячної офіри – піднесімо свої серця, затримаймо свій погляд на Ісусі. Адже через Нього любов нашого Отця може стати джерелом надії для багатьох.

Жан Корбон, *Це називається світанком*, Львів, Свічадо 2007

## WHAT IS A FIRST-PORTION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

“Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another...”

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6



RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

“Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you...”

1 Corinthians 16:2

Відповідно до фізіології наші очі розташовані так, щоб бачити інших людей і всю перспективу. Тому побачити себе складніше, а без дзеркала практично неможливо. Подібно й з нашими «духовними очима»: ними дуже добре бачимо інших, як вони живуть, де помиляються, чим ображають нас, але значно менше бачимо себе, що більше – часто замість подивитися на себе в істині, ми здебільшого ідеалізуємо себе.

Ми дуже вимогливі до ближніх, засуджуємо їх, немовби прокурори, але водночас дуже поблажливі до себе, виправдовуємо себе, як адвокати. Але перед Богом всі ми однакові й рівні, незалежно від становища, в якому перебуваємо. І чия правда, а хто помиляється, Бог бачить незалежно від того, як бачимо це ми.

Важливо, щоб кожен із нас пам’ятав, що ми всі подібні у своїй боротьбі з недоліками, вадами, проблемами й труднощами. Коли я падаю, то шукаю розуміння в очах інших, – так само й інші, зазнавши упадку, очікують від нас поблажливості. Стараймося ставитися до інших так, як ми хочемо, щоб вони ставилися до нас, і в такому смиренні Бог, як у дзеркалі, покаже нам те, чого ми не можемо побачити самі.

+ ВЕНЕДИКТ (Алексійчук)





**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
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Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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***The Holy Cross***

For it was not a mere man who died for us, as I said before, but the Son of God, God made man. Further; if the lamb under Moses drove the destroyer far away, did not much rather the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, deliver us from our sins? If any disbelieve the power of the Crucified, let him ask the devils; if any believe not words, let him believe what he sees. Many have been crucified throughout the world, but by none of these are the devils scared; but when they see even the Sign of the Cross of Christ, who was crucified for us, they shudder. For those men died for their own sins, but Christ for the sins of others; for He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Take for a witness Pilate himself, who gave sentence upon Him, saying, I find no fault in this Man: and when he gave Him up, and had washed his hands, he said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.

Jesus then really suffered for all men; for the Cross was no illusion, otherwise our redemption is an illusion also. His death was not a mere show, for then is our salvation also a fable. If His death was but a show, they were true who said, We remember what that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I rise again. His Passion then was real: for He was really crucified, and we are not ashamed of it. He was crucified, and we deny it not, nay, I rather glory to speak of it. I confess the Cross, because I know of the Resurrection. For if, after being crucified, He had remained as He was, I had not perchance confessed it, but now that the Resurrection has followed the Cross, I am not ashamed to declare it. Amen.

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

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