

The Special Plant: Basil

from Sacred Symbols that Speak Volume I by Fr. Anthony Coniaris



But of all the flowers and plants used in Orthodox worship, there is one that has a very special place. It is the plant called basil behind which lies a legend, St. Helen, the mother of Constantine, traveled to Palestine in search of the cross. She looked for it in every corner of the land, and her search turned up not one cross, but three. St. Helen was unsure. “God,” she prayed, “reveal to me which of these crosses is the one on which the Christ King died.” St. Helen stood the three crosses side by side. One day she noticed a sprig of basil growing from the center cross. Immediately she knew this cross was the real one...for basil comes from the Greek word for king. St. Helen fell on her knees before the cross with the sweet green basil, in adoration of the King Who had died upon its beams. Ever since then basil replaced another plant that was used extensively in the worship services of the Old Testament: hyssop. “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean” (Psalm 51:7).

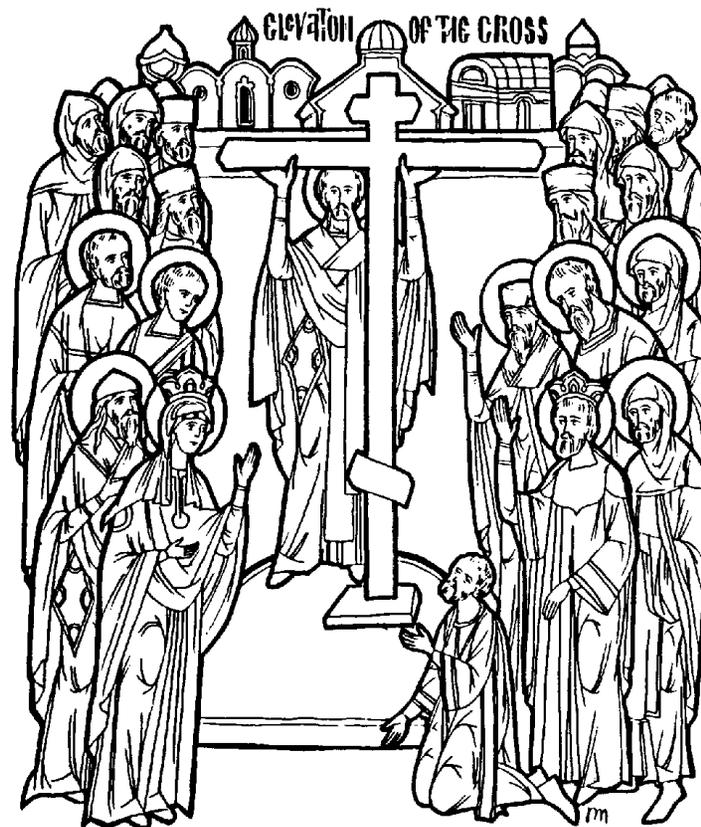
This event of the finding of the Cross by St. Helen is celebrated each year on September 14 on the Orthodox Church calendar.

St. Ephraim the Syrian (+373)

- ✠ *“The Cross is—the resurrection of the dead.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the hope of Christians.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the staff of the lame.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the consolation of the poor.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—dethronement of the proud.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the hope of the hopeless.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the helm of those who sail.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the harbor of the storm-tossed.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the father of orphans.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the comfort of the afflicted.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the protector of youth.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the glory of men.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the crown of the aged.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the purity of virgins.*
 - ✠ *The Cross is—the bread of the hungry and the fountain of the thirsty.*
- ...Therefore, let us make the sign of this Life-Giving Cross on our forehead, lips and breast...Let us not leave the Cross even for one hour, even for one moment, and let us not do anything without it, but whether we are going to sleep, or getting up; whether we are eating or drinking, whether we are travelling on land, sailing the sea, or crossing rivers, we should adorn all the members of our body with the sign of the Life-Giving Cross.”*

Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific



September 14, 2014

Elevation of the Holy Cross

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September 14, 2014

Elevation of the Holy Cross

Commemoration of: Nikitas the Great Martyr; Philotheos the Righteous;
Bessarion of Larissa; John the New Martyr of Crete

Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

Soson Kirie (Hymn of the Day) Tone 1
Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over the enemy, and by Your Cross protecting Your commonwealth.

Kontakion Tone 4
O ipsothis en to Stavro
*You who were lifted on the cross voluntarily, * O Christ our God, bestow Your tender compassions * upon Your new community to which You gave Your name. * Cause our faithful emperors to be glad in Your power, * granting them the victories against their adversaries. * And for an ally, Lord, may they have You, * peace as their armor, the trophy invincible.*

Epistle Reading 1Corinthian 1:18-24
BRETHREN, the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Gospel Reading John 19:6-11, 13-30, 25-28, 30
At that time, when the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the

Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King!" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. Then when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Today

✠ SUN, 9/14– *Elevation of the Holy Cross ***strict fast day***; No Sunday School; Philoptochos Meeting in the Conference Room*

This Week

✠ SUN, 9/21– *Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross;*

Pearls of Wisdom from the Holy Fathers

"When you close the doors to your dwelling and are alone you should know that there is present with you the angel whom God has appointed for each man...This angel, who is sleepless and cannot be deceived, is always present with you; he sees all things and is not hindered by darkness. You should know, too, that with him is God, who is in every place; for there is no place and nothing material in which God is not, since He is greater than all things and holds all men in His hand."

~ St. Anthony the Great

To Our Visitors:

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Just a reminder, however: the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a manifestation of the *unity of the Body of Christ*. As such, only those who are members in spiritual good standing of the Orthodox Church – and who have prepared themselves for the Sacrament – may partake of the Holy Chalice. However, *everyone* is welcome to come up with our people at the end of the service to receive blessed bread.

Please be sure to join us at Coffee Hour following Services.