



**On behalf of Fr. Gary George**

**My sincere gratitude for the pouring love and support of Our Lady of Lebanon Community in the passing of my nephew, John Paul, to the care of our Lord this morning. Rosary and Prayer of Incense will be on Wednesday September 13th at 7:00pm at Our Lady of Lebanon Church. May the soul of John Paul and all the souls of the faithful departed through the Mercy of God, rest in peace!**

**Please Note: The Feast of the Holy Cross will be celebrated also on Wednesday September 13th at 7:00pm**

## **Feast of the Holy Cross**

In the Christian liturgical calendar, there are several different feasts known as Feast of the Cross, all of which commemorate the cross used in the crucifixion of Jesus. While Good Friday is dedicated to the Passion of Christ and the Crucifixion, these days celebrate the cross itself, as the instrument of salvation.

The feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross in 326 by Saint Helena, the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine during a pilgrimage she made to Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was then built at the site of the discovery, by order of Helena and Constantine. The church was dedicated nine years later, with a portion of the cross placed inside it. In 614, that portion of the cross was carried away from the church by the Persians, and remained missing until the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius recaptured it in 628. The cross was returned to the church the following year after initially having been taken to Constantinople by Heraclius.

The date used for the feast marks the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 335. This was a two-day festival: although the actual Consecration of the church was on September 13, the cross itself was brought outside the church on September 14 so that the clergy and faithful could pray before the True Cross, and all could come forward to venerate it.

Spiritually, Christians honor in a special way the cross, which God himself made and which he chose to be the altar of his redeeming sacrifice. Jesus speaks to us about his elevation on the Cross of Calvary, first directs our thoughts to Heaven: he associates his elevation on the cross with his elevation into Heaven. Thus, he unites, in his discourse, the day of his death and that of his Ascension into Heaven. He does not want us to separate the entry of his soul into eternal bliss from the entry of his body into endless glory. He also does not want his voluntary humbling of himself on the cross, to be dissociated from his elevation to glory at the time of his victorious entry into Heaven. Jesus was lifted up on the Cross in order that we might obtain eternal life. Now, we who believe in Christ and who follow him are the members of his Body, as St. Paul wrote: "That is, through faith, and to the extent that we believe in Christ, we are united with Him: we are one body, of which he is the Head. So if the Head, he who walks ahead of the others and who leads them, underwent the trial of the Cross, how could those who are the members, and who follows

the Head, avoid undergoing the Cross themselves? It is impossible. We too much undergo the way of the Cross!

The question we must ask ourselves is “Am I willing to do that?” Is that what we desire? Do we fully understand what Jesus, who freely offered himself, to undergo this infamous death, did? Does this not seem folly to us, the folly of the Cross of which St. Paul speaks? Certainly, all of this surpasses us, for it is a Mystery! The Lord asks us to believe that this is the way that saves, that this is the door to Heaven. This is no small task, it is a belief and a faith that we work on and develop over a lifetime. The cross for us Christians is not only a symbol of humiliation, torture, suffering, and death, but it is the symbol of life. It is through the cross that we enter to paradise, it is the path we must tread in order to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This day we commemorate the sacrifice of the One for all, so that we may sacrifice all for the One.

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