

# RAISING SAINTS

CHILDREN + FAMILY MINISTRY // WEEKLY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS + PARENTS

## APPARITION OF THE HOLY CROSS

May 7 is the 5th Sunday of Eastertide which is the Feast of the Apparition of the Holy Cross. This feast is one of the four feasts of the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ which are observed in this succession:

Apparition of the Holy cross falls on the fifth Sunday of Eastertide.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross is on the nearest Sunday to September 14.

Holy Cross of Varak is observed two weeks after the Exaltation.

Discovery of the Holy Cross is observed seven weeks after the Exaltation.

Each one of these feasts of the Cross speak to us of the importance of the Cross in our Christian life journey, which is a pilgrimage towards reunion with our Creator God.

The apparition or appearance of the cross is a significant event which occurred on May 7, 351 A.D. in Jerusalem. Those years were challenging times for the young Church. False teachings known as the Arian heresy were circulating and dividing the unity of the Church. The heretical Arius taught that Jesus was a created being, therefore not God by nature, as a result, subordinate to God the Father. This clearly negated the orthodoxy of our faith by distorting the oneness and unity of the Holy Trinity. St. Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, wrote to Emperor Constantius

of Constantinople, who leaned towards the heretical Arian teachings. He described the miraculous vision on the skies of Jerusalem and invited the Emperor to return to the true faith. The Emperor was deeply moved by the bishop's testimony and returned to the orthodox faith affirming that Jesus is God, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit. St. Cyril's letter is read in our Churches on the Feast of the Apparition of the Holy Cross during Morning Service. Here is a segment which describes the event.

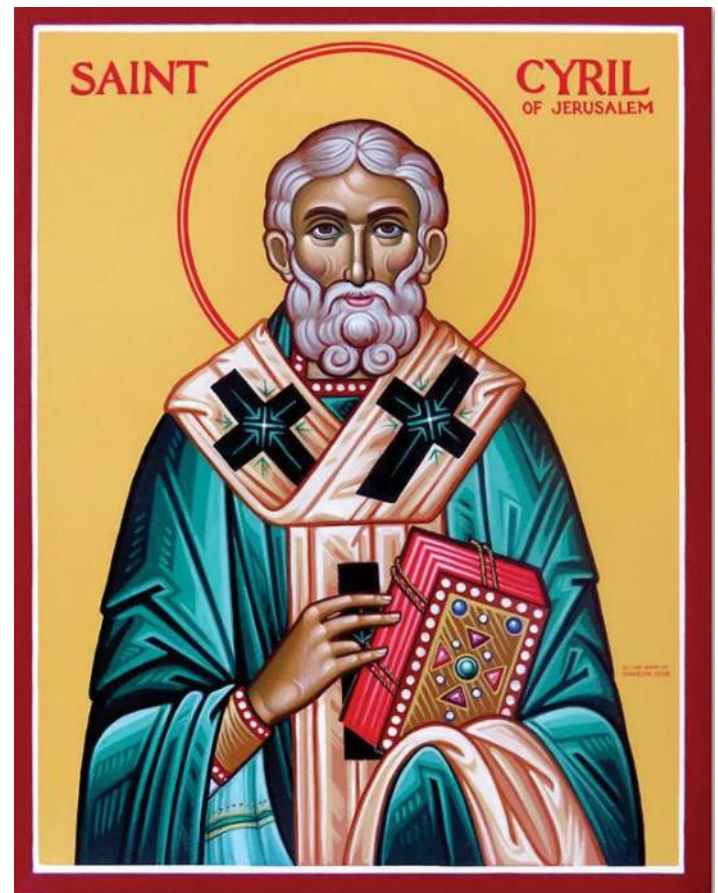
In the days of your father Constantine, favored by God and of blessed memory, by the grace of God, the salvific cross of God was discovered in Jerusalem, and this happened in his days because in his beautiful piety he caused the holy places to bring forth their treasures. But in your days, most pious king, wonderful and miraculous events happened not on earth but on the face of the sky, because the sign of the victory over death of the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I mean the blessed cross appeared over Jerusalem in brilliant and shining rays. During the days of Holy Pentecost, at the beginning of the month of Ahegan (May), on the third hour, the all-victorious sign of the cross formed of light appeared over the sky extending from Holy Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. It was seen not just by one or two people, but was clearly visible to the entire

population of the city. Nor was it like a quick and passing sight, but was visible over the sky for hours, and was sparking with shiny rays that overshadowed the rays of the sun, otherwise, if it was not brighter than the sun, the sun's rays would have covered its brightness. And its rays were so much stronger than the sun that the entire population if the city rushed to the Church [of the Holy Sepulchre], filled with awe and joy at the divine vision. (Armenian Church lectionary)

St. Cyril of Jerusalem's invitation to the Emperor to guard the correct teachings of the Church is a call to vigilance to us also. We know that there are all sorts of distorted Christian teachings which are available to young and old through a variety of means. Adults and children are easily swayed by so called televangelists, materials which appear on social media, or through the influence of their friends. We, who uphold the orthodox teachings of our Church must be vigilant. We can do this only if we continue to grow in our understanding of our Christian faith, and pass that on to our children.

As we devote ourselves to sustaining our children's faith development, let us commit ourselves to nurture our own spiritual needs through prayer, both personal and communal. Become positive influences on our

young through your presence every Sunday at the Divine Liturgy, to worship, praise and glorify our loving God who is continually calling us to come to him.



Blessed be the most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

YN. SIRARPI AIVAZIAN

Note: The material for the children will be presented in three levels in order to make it age appropriate:

Level 1: Ages 5-8 (K-3rd grades)

Level 2: Ages 9-12 (4-7th grades)

Level 3: Ages 13-17 (8-12th grades)