

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Christ Himself offered us the answer: **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"** ([Luke 9:23](#)). The point of taking up our own cross is not simply self-sacrifice; in doing so, we unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ on His Cross.

When we participate in Divine Liturgy/Badarak, the Cross is there, too. The "unbloody sacrifice" offered on the altar is the re-presentation of Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. When we receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we do not simply unite ourselves to Christ; we nail ourselves to the Cross, dying with Christ so that we might rise with Him.

"For the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness . . ." (1 [Corinthians 1:22-23](#)). Today, more than ever, non-Christians see the Cross as foolishness. What kind of Savior triumphs through death? For Christians, however, the Cross is the crossroads of history and the Tree of Life. Christianity without the Cross is meaningless: Only by uniting ourselves to Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross can we enter into eternal life.

Why do Christians of the Universal Church (Catholic & Orthodox) make the Sign of the Cross when they say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"?

Making the Sign of the Cross may be the most common of all actions that the people of the Universal Church. We make it when we begin and end our prayers; we make it when we enter and leave a church; we start each Divine Liturgy/Badarak with it; I grew up Catholic and our tradition was that we may even make it when we hear the Holy Name taken in vain and when we pass a church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

But do you know why we make the Sign of the Cross? The answer is both simple and profound.

In the Sign of the Cross, we profess the deepest mysteries of the Christian Faith: the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and the saving work of Christ on the Cross. The combination of the words and the action are a [creed](#)- Havadamk -a statement of belief. We mark ourselves as Christians through the Sign of the Cross.

And yet, because we make the Sign of the Cross so often, we may be tempted to rush through it, to say the words without listening to them, to ignore the symbolism of tracing the shape of the Cross on our own bodies. A creed is not simply a statement of belief—it is a vow to defend that belief, even if it means following Our Lord and Savior to our own cross.

The Armenian Orthodox are not the only Christians to make the Sign of the Cross. All Eastern Catholics Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic do as well, along with many high-church Anglicans and Lutherans (and a smattering of other Mainline Protestants).

Read the article regarding a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher on the Eastern Diocese Web-page:

<http://www.armenianchurch-ed.net/wpblog/tag/holy-sepulcher/>