



What Does the Holy Cross Teach us?

The Liturgical Calendar of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church during the months of September and October are full of church celebrations commemorating the revealed mysteries of the greatest love of God that was expressed to humankind: 'The Cross.'

In this liturgical season, our Church celebrates the following feasts relating to the Cross:

- 1st -Exaltation of the Holy Cross**
- 2nd -Barekendan of the Fast of Holy Cross of Varak**
- 3rd -Discovery of the Holy Cross**

All these feasts commemorate special events when the power of the Holy Cross was made manifest. The first deals with the recovery of the Holy Cross from the pagan Persians by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius I in 629, after the Persians sacked Jerusalem and took the Holy Cross captive. En route back to Jerusalem, the Holy Cross passed through the territory of Armenia amid national jubilation and spiritual renewal.

The second is of purely Armenian Origin and belongs only to the Armenian Liturgical Calendar, recounts the miraculous discovery of a relic from the Holy Cross at mount Varak by the Armenian hermits Hovel and Totik in 660. In order to avoid it falling into the hands of impious people, the relic was hidden in the mount by St. Hripsimeh when she was persecuted from Rome for her Christian faith by the Roman Emperor and came to seek refuge in Armenia.

The third recounts the miraculous discovery of the Holy Cross at the site of Golgotha by Queen Helene, the Queen mother of Constantine the Great in 326. In order to verify the true cross of Christ, amongst the other two belonging to the two thieves crucified with Him, the corpse of a child was laid successively on the three crosses and was vivified when placed on the Cross of Christ, thus revealing the true Cross.

All these feasts about the cross can teach us two most important aspects of Christian life: God's infinite love towards us and our requirement to follow him uncompromisingly.

It was on the Cross that the final stage of God's emptying himself and assuming a human form (Phil. 2:7) consummated. It is on the cross that God made it possible that our sins and human frailty be nailed and with the great sacrifice of Christ we became reconciled to God and to ourselves.



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