

# The Gospel's Voice



## Orthodox Parish of the Holy Transfiguration

Number 22, September 2017

### **Exaltation of the precious and vivifying Cross.**

When Saint Constantine the Great was preparing to march upon Rome to oppose his rival, Maxence, who possessed forces far superior to his own, he saw at noon the sign of the vivifying Cross appearing in luminous form in the sky, surrounded by the inscription: *By this sign, you will conquer*. He immediately adorned his standards with the Sign of the Cross, and gained a brilliant victory, which enabled him to seize power over the whole Roman world and ensure the triumph of Christianity.

After the victory of Orthodoxy at the First Ecumenical Council, the Emperor had a desire to build a grand building in thanksgiving. It was then that his mother, Saint Helena, aged about eighty, undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (326) to venerate the holy Places, with the hope of finding the Holy Sepulcher and the Cross there. In fact, when the city was destroyed under Hadrian (135), the place where our Lord was crucified and buried, had been filled

under a mass of earth, and a pagan temple with a statue of Aphrodite, so that in time the true sacred character of this place had been forgotten.

When Saint Helena arrived in Jerusalem, she addressed the Bishop of St. Macarius, and the cave of the Resurrection was found by the information provided in a writing which a Jew from the eastern regions held of his fathers. On the Emperor's orders, the place was washed away, and three crosses and a sign written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin were found near it, bearing the words: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (Jn 19: 19-20), as well as the three nails that had fixed on the cross the living body of the Savior. However, the crosses were broken and their pieces scattered, so it was impossible to distinguish the Cross of Christ from the two crosses to which the two thieves had been suspended. The healing of a dying woman at the approach of Holy wood, enabled St Macarius to recognize the precious wood, for the other two crosses did not work any miracle. The Empress and her whole court bowed before the Holy Cross and kissed it with piety. But the people, gathered in large numbers on the spot, also wished to benefit from this grace or, at least, to see from afar the instrument of our Redemption, so great was their love for Christ. The holy bishop then ascended the ambo, and, taking the cross with both hands, raised it high to the sight of all, while the crowd exclaimed, *Kyrie eleison!*

The same gesture was repeated solemnly by the patriarch St. Zachariah, when, after the brilliant victories of the Emperor Heraclius, the Holy Cross, which had been stolen by the Persians during the plundering of the Holy City (614), returned to Jerusalem (631).

The Holy Fathers instituted every year in all churches the solemn exaltation of the Precious Cross not only to commemorate these two symbolic events of the victory of Christianity, but also to

demonstrate that the Cross, the instrument of shame and condemnation in the ancient world, has become our pride and the sign of the divine glory of Christ, manifested by the light of His Resurrection. Reiterating today, the gesture of the holy bishop of Jerusalem and raising the Cross in the four directions of space to the song of the *Kyrie eleison*, Christians confess that Christ, raised on the Cross, reconciled all things and united in His Body the ends of creation: length and breadth, height and depth, that we may have access by Him to the Father (Eph 3:18; Col 1:20).

The Holy Cross was said to be made of three kinds of wood: cypress, pine, and cedar, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 60: 13). Its innumerable fragments, spread throughout the Christian world, have the property of remaining unaltered, and communicate to the faithful, who faithfully venerate them, the grace of the Resurrection.

*(From Synaxarion)*



# Divine Liturgy

*Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m.*

**Sunday September the 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

**Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> : Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God**  
(Matins)

**Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup>:** after feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy  
Mother of God

**Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup>: Universal exaltation of the Holy Cross**  
(Rigorous fasting) (Matins)

**Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup>:** after feast of the Universal exaltation of the  
Holy Cross

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>:**

*Matins at 9.30 a.m. every week day.*

## The Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration

Grande-Rivière N-O

Mauritius

(behind Garage BALA)

**Divine Liturgy every  
Sunday**

**at 9.30 a.m.**

*Matins at 9.30 a.m. every  
week day.*



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