



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 14—20 September 2025

<b>SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <b>John 19: 6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
<b>MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER</b> <i>Martyrs Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Galatians 2: 16-20</b>

**14th September is a day of strict fast because we remember our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross for all humanity.**

### Great-Martyr St Euphemia commemorated on September 16

#### Kontakion

In your struggle you contested well, Euphēmia; / even after death you make us holy by gushing forth miracles, O All-praised one. / Therefore, we honour your holy repose, standing by your august relics with faith, / in order to be delivered from spiritual afflictions, / and that we may draw forth the grace of your miracles.

### Martyrs Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope and Love commemorated on September 17

The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her Daughters Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Sophia was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. At the time of their martyrdom, Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. St. Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they did not hide their faith, openly confessing it before everyone.

An official named Antiochus denounced them to Emperor Hadrian who ordered that they be brought to Rome. The holy virgins prayed fervently to the Lord asking that He give them the strength not to fear torture and death. When they appeared before the emperor, all those present were amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis, but the girls remained unyielding.

The emperor then ordered them to be tortured. They were burned over an iron grating, thrown into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them. The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and beat with rods until her body was covered with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith.

St. Sophia was subjected to another type of grievous torture: she was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage, and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword.

In order to intensify St. Sophia's suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters for burial. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city and reverently buried them on a high hill. Sitting by their graves for three days, she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters. Their relics have rested at El'zasa, in the Church of Esho, since the year 777.

Source: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America <https://www.orthodoxpath.org>

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Fr Athanasios and  
Fr Ephraim are available  
at the Church every  
Monday to Friday  
between 4.00 and 6.00pm  
for Holy Confession and  
any spiritual need.

## CROSS – A MEASURE OF TWO THINGS -

### First measure:

If we want to see how much God loves us the Cross shows how much. He loved us to death. Not only did He die for us but was humiliated, humbled (exefthelistike), and suffered (epesti) all, showing His love for us.

### Second measure:

The Cross is also the measure of human's wickedness (κακία). Shows where man's perversion reaches – even to crucify God, his creator.

This is what should concern (terrify) us because sometimes it is not enough to bring the Cross to our chest but the morality (ηθος) in our life. (Can with the same Cross crucify others) and the Cross becomes a measure of our personal condition (katastasi).

The Church come to remind us of this love of God to be drawn to Him by the fact that the Lord suffered for us – to the end- to death and for us to persist and strive (agonisti) to the end. Christ endured all from all to the end (to death). We too have to put to death our passions (anger, selfishness, self-centredness, pride, etc.) so we can live the love of Christ and love of others.



## Sermon on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross

### Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios

On September 14, the whole of the Orthodox world rejoices as we celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: **“Behold, through the cross joy has come to the world!”** (Paschal prayer)

Three historical events contributed to the establishment of this holiday:

**1<sup>st</sup>.** The discovery of the wood of the Holy Cross, in the year 326, by Saint Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great. When the Cross of the Lord was discovered near Golgotha and was miraculously identified as the true Cross of Christ, St. Helen worshiped it with tears and handed it over to Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem.

**2<sup>nd</sup>.** Saint Helen had laid the foundations of the Church of the Resurrection of the Lord over the site of the Holy Sepulchre, which was completed in the year 335, followed by its Inauguration. The next day, September 14 of the same year, the Elevation of the Holy Cross was held in the middle of the Church, with every ecclesiastical order, and everyone rushed to worship the Holy Cross with deep emotion and reverence.

**3<sup>rd</sup>.** After three centuries, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was repeated once again. This is because, when the Persians invaded and conquered Jerusalem in 614, they snatched the Holy Cross from the Church of the Resurrection and held it for 14 years. In 628, the pious Emperor of Byzantium, Heraclius, defeated the Persians and returned the Holy Cross to Jerusalem. On September 14, 628, Emperor Heraclius, barefooted and in plain clothes, ascended to the Church of the Resurrection, in a procession, carrying the Holy Cross on his shoulders and handed it over to the Patriarch of Jerusalem Zacharias. The Patriarch received the Cross with deep emotion and raised it in the middle of the Church triumphantly, while all the faithful started singing together the hymn: **“Save the Lord Your people and bless Your inheritance ...”**.

Since then, it has been established to officially celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross throughout the Church, in both East and West.

The Holy Fathers of the Church, from the 4th century onwards, in their wonderful Sermons on the Holy Cross, highlight with many images and expressions the meaning of the Cross as well as the importance it bears in the life of the Church and of every believer.

Yet, we must clarify from the very beginning that the Cross does not carry any magical properties by itself. It derives all its value from the God-man Jesus Christ, who voluntarily was nailed to the Cross, upon which He shed His Holy Blood and sanctified it, thus making it a bearer of His Grace. That is why the God-inspired Fathers of the Church say: **“When I honour the Cross, I admittedly honour Him, who was crucified on it. Moreover, when I honour the crucified Lord, I undeniably venerate the Cross. Let us, therefore, give due veneration to the Cross of Christ. Let us bend before Him our knees· (and even) much before that, ( let us) bend the unbending heart”**. (1)

We, therefore, celebrate the great feast of the Holy Cross, and the whole congregation of the Church is enlightened and filled with rays of divine joy. The Cross is elevated, and together it elevates the whole of humanity, which had fallen down due to its sins. We are no more afraid of the fiery arrows of the devil, because the Holy Cross protects us. The Cross is a source of millions of blessings for us. The Cross is the hope of Christians, the savior of the desperate, a haven for those in difficult circumstances, a doctor for the sick; it removes sinful passions and sustains the Faith. (2)

The Cross is a ladder that ascends to Heaven. The Cross protects us from temptations, saves us from dangers, comforts us in sorrows, helps us in every need. The Cross protects widows and orphans. He who gazes at the Cross, is filled with courage and drives away cowardice. (3)

My beloved Brothers and Sisters, since the blood-stained Cross of the Lord provides us with all these and so many other blessings, let us be closely connected with it and let us often invoke its grace and power, in every need of ours.

Let us make the sign of the cross when we get up in the morning, thanking the Lord who blessed us to see the light of a new day. Let us begin and end our work with the sign of the cross. For every mercy we receive from God, let us thank Him by making our cross. Moreover, in every need of ours let us invoke the help and protection of our Almighty and Most Merciful Lord by making the sign of the cross; and let us rest assured that we, like many others, will see miracles in our lives.

(1) Nicetas the Paphlagonian, PG 105, 28-29.

(2) John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Cross*, and *Homily B'*. Migne P.G. 49 p.p. 407-418.

(3) St. Andrew of Crete, *Homily A' On the Elevation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross*, PG 97, 1017-36.