15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday, September 17 Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross.

On Thursday we celebrated The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross. As all are aware, this feast was established in connection with the fact that, after the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord was uncovered at Golgotha on the orders of the Empress Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, the Cross was elevated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in all likelihood, above a great crowd of people, thus bearing witness that the Cross had been found and returned to the people; however, not as a tool of torture and execution, but as a symbol of their salvation. It is for this reason that the divine services on the feast of the Exaltation are dedicated foremost to the Cross itself, signifying that the Cross exists for the life of the people, for preaching Christ, for the work of salvation.

The Cross is our pride, by which we accept the death of the Master as the way to Resurrection for deliverance from all sin. The baptism which we undertook was described by Paul as the participation with the Lord in His burial and in the Resurrection: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Rom 6:6) This is the center of our faith. This is our vitality.

When we Cross ourselves, we ask the Lord to send down upon us the power of Salvation as pictured in this symbol.

The Cross accompanies Christians throughout their lives. “We wear crosses—we absolutely must wear it—on our chests and make the Sign of the Cross. Thus the Sign of the Cross blesses us, blesses all that is inside us and around us

Likewise, if we wear a Cross around our neck since baptism, we confirm our Christian faith and that we are attached to Jesus

When we Cross ourselves over the face, chest and shoulders, let us feel the connection with the Crucified. We do this every time the name of the Trinity is mentioned or glorified in prayers because the Trinity decided to allow the death of the Son in our days from all eternity. We need to make the Sign of the Cross correctly—not in a slipshod way, but prayerfully – in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Correctly and prayerfully making the Sign of the Cross brings great power. “We even cannot imagine what great power we receive by making the Sign of the Cross of the Lord “If it were not for the Ccross, if it were not for the grace of God, the demons would destroy the whole of mankind in one moment; but it is by the power of the Lord’s Cross that the universe is upheld.”

The faithful believe that, by making the sign of the Cross, in all their actions and on all the paths of their lives, at every contact with nature and people, they have the Holy Spirit as support

The cross, once a tool of death, has become a means to life, an instrument of our salvation; it gives strength to resist temptation, to refrain from gossip or harsh words

May God’s cross, the TRUE CROSS, leads us to joy and salvation. Amen.