

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 ST. FRANCIS CABRINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Joseph Daratony. Michael Abda. Marie Barron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. David Fairclough, Sr. Robert Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. William Loss, jr. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Sue Solsman. Susan Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk ✱Rev. Frank Milienewicz ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charlotte Abda. ✱James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Paul Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Nicholas Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱Marg.t Dillenburg ✱Eric Jolly. ✱Jos. King ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱Frank Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L.Mooty. ✱Karen Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Wednesday :

Compline 7:30 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; following any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

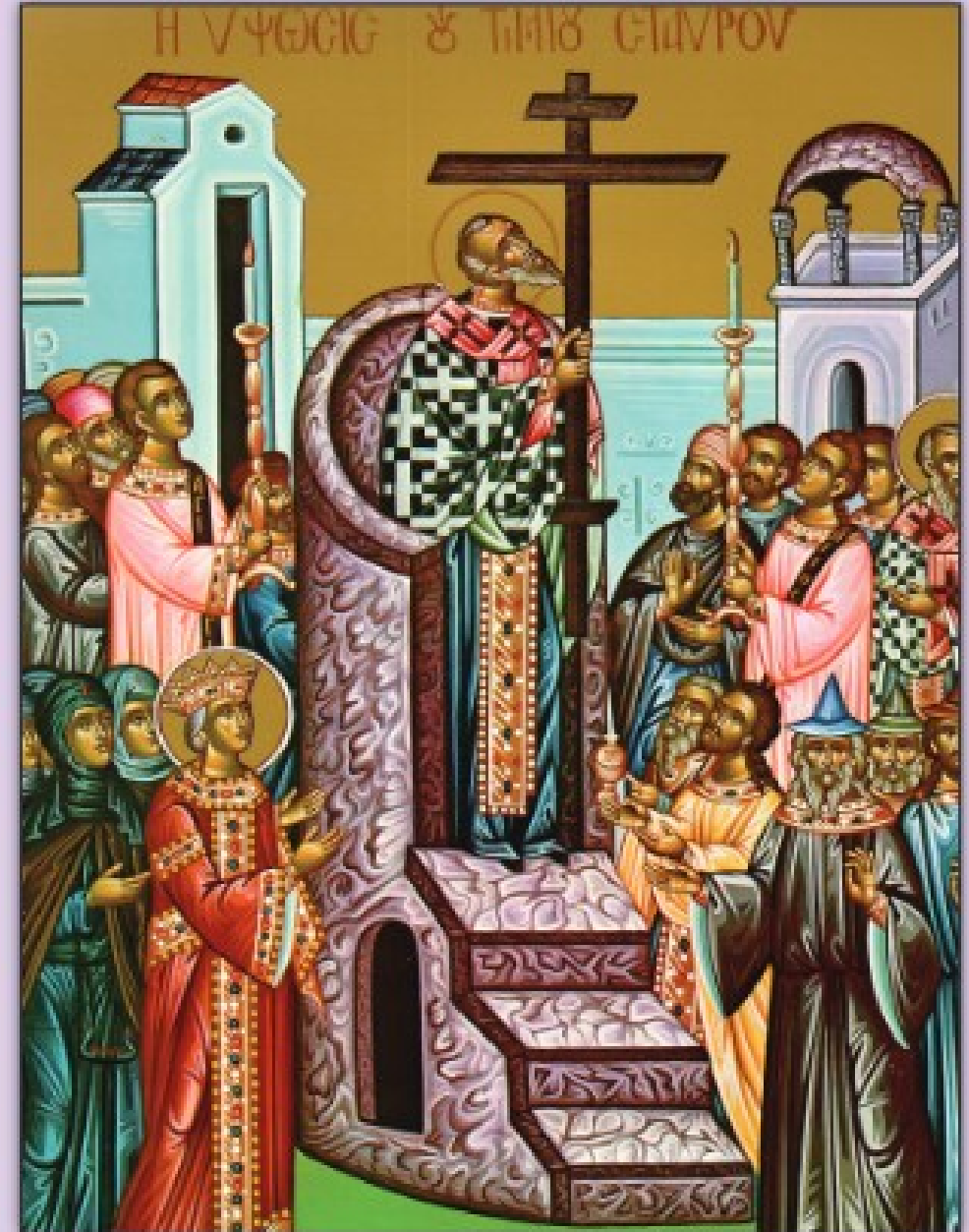
HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Meetings as scheduled.

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- September 14th

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

12 SEPTEMBER 2021 ♦ TONE 07 EOTHINON 05 † SIXTEENTH SUNDAY PENTECOST/SUNDAY BEFORE CROSS

<u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 1</i>
<u>ANTIPHONS:</u> <i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i>	
FIRST:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 11</i>
SECOND:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 11</i>
THIRD:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 19</i>
<u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 14</i>
<u>APOLYTIKIA:</u>	
<i>Resurrection (Tone 7)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 19</i>
<i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 106</i>
<i>St. Joseph the Betrothed</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 20</i>
<u>KONDAKION:</u> <i>Nativity of Theotokos</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 107</i>
<u>TRISAGION:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 23</i>
<u>PROKIMENON:</u> <i>Psalms 11:8, 2</i>	<i>(Tone 7)</i>
The Lord will give strength to His People; the Lord will bless His people in peace.	
<i>Stichon:</i> Give to the Lord, You sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise.	
<u>EPISTLE:</u>	<i>Galatians 6:11-18</i>
<i>Brethren</i> , see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand! All those who want to please in a human way are forcing you to be circumcised merely to avoid persecution because of the cross of Christ. For not even the circumcised observe the Law: but they want you to be circumcised that they may boast of your subjection to external rites. But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creation is of any account. And whoever follow this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and on God’s Israel. From now on, let no man give me trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.	
<u>PROKIMENON:</u>	<i>(Tone 7)</i>
<i>Your favor</i> , O Lord, I will sing forever; from generation to generation, my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness. <i>For you have said</i> , “My kindness is established forever.” In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.	
<u>GOSPEL:</u>	<i>St. John 3: 13-17</i>
<i>The Lord said</i> , “No one has gone up into heaven except the One Who has come down from heaven: the Son of Man Who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.	
<u>HRIMOS:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 108</i>
<u>KINONIKON:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 109</i>
<u>POST-COMMUNION HYMN:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 52</i>

ethical practices of the majority. The choice believers had in such cases has always been either to confront the majority by upholding their faith in Christ, to adopt the religion of the majority or to attempt a compromise: to keep their faith privately while seemingly observing non-Christian practices.

For the first three centuries of Christianity (the Roman era) Christians were suspected of superstitious practices corroding the fabric of the empire. They refused to take part in the state ceremonies honoring the gods and held secret rites behind closed doors. Their neglect of the ancient gods, many believed, would bring disaster on the empire.

When confronted, some Christians resisted and upheld their faith. They are revered today as martyrs or confessors. Others renounced their faith, offering sacrifices to the Roman gods or burning incense before their statues. Still others found ways of seeming to fit in. Some signed certificates stating that they honored the gods. In one such document which survived the author says, “I have always continued to sacrifice and show reverence to the gods; and now in your presence I have poured a libation and sacrificed, eating some of the sacrificial meat. I request you to certify this for me...” Often no sacrifices were actually offered; such documents were simply bought by bribing the officials. Other Christians went into hiding until the danger passed.

When the first empire-wide persecution of Christians came to an end in 260, many of those who had sacrificed or bought certificates returned to the Church. Christians did not agree on whether or how they should be received. Most Churches received these people back but with varying penalties. In some places those who had actually offered sacrifices were received as penitents who would only receive absolution and Communion on their deathbeds. Those who had obtained certificates without actually offering sacrifices were to remain as penitents for two years. Those who had betrayed other believers or who had handed over the Church’s Scriptures or holy vessels to be destroyed received additional penances before being readmitted to Communion.

Crypto-Christians

In the Middle East and throughout the Ottoman Empire communities of “Crypto” or “Hidden” Christians arose. These people seemingly converted to Islam while adhering to Christian practices in secret. Many of these communities survived until the dawn of the modern era. There are reportedly still Crypto-Armenian Christians in Turkey and Crypto-Christian groups of Greeks, Latins, and Maronites in Turkish-dominated parts of Cyprus.

Perhaps the most famous Crypto-Christians are the Kakure Kirishitan of Japan who found ways of adapting and concealing their faith during persecutions in the seventeenth century. Images of Christ and the saints were transformed to look like Buddhist figures and prayers were adapted to sound like Buddhist chants. Some 30,000 of these secret Christians emerged in the nineteenth century when religious freedom was restored. Most renounced any syncretistic practices and rejoined the Catholic Church.

Fitting-In in a Secular Age

In our society conflicts with other recognized religions such as Buddhism are nowhere near as common as conflicts with the value-free lifestyles promoted by many in our secular society. Most people recognize that the historic Churches oppose abortion and have done so since the first century. Other sanctity of life issues such as euthanasia and the profit-driven restrictions on treatment of some managed care systems demand similar choices. Nurses, technicians and other medical personnel may be faced with choices comparable to those described above. Do they refuse to participate in immoral activities and risk losing their jobs or do they commit the sin their employers demand?

Observers see a number of areas in modern life in addition to health care presenting similar conflicts, among them: **Education** – Activists pressure schools to endorse homosexuality, same-sex marriage or sexual permissiveness in their curricula and student activities. Must Christian teachers choose between going along or losing their jobs? Must Christian parents sacrifice to send their children to private schools or to homeschool them rather than leave them where such views are considered “normal?”

Politics – Catholics and Orthodox in politics must daily choose between accepting the agendas of their donors and constituents or following the Gospel. As a rule such demands are not made publicly in this country but this is not true elsewhere. In May, 2014 Canada’s Liberal Party leader, Justin Trudeau stated, “I have made it clear that future candidates need to be completely understanding [sic] that they will be expected to vote pro-choice on any bills.”

CIRCUMCISION & BAPTISM: COVENANT SIGNS

MANY PARISHES ARE PLAGUED by a mechanical celebration of the Liturgy and an equally mechanical reception of the Eucharist. Such abuses are nothing new. St Paul found that Christians in Corinth seemed unaware of the connection of the Eucharist to the saving passion and resurrection of Christ. He described how the Lord instituted the Eucharist (1 Cor 15: 23ff.), then warned against an unworthy reception of it.

St Paul prescribed that the Corinthians should prepare themselves for the Eucharist: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat..." (v.28). Otherwise he would be guilty of "not discerning the Lord's body" (v. 29). The Corinthians' "rite of preparation" was to share the agape meal in a spirit of mutual love as a sign that the community was one in fact as well as in name. This was in the spirit of Christ's admonition, "If you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt 5:23-24).

The Corinthians misunderstood what this practice was supposed to mean. Instead of sharing the fruits of the earth to prepare for sharing the Heavenly Bread, the meal became a sign of exclusion – "This is my steak – you eat your jerky" – rather than of mutual love.

In our Byzantine Liturgy mutual love is also a precondition for the celebration of the Eucharist. In the rite of peace before the anaphora the deacon proclaims "Let us love one another so that with one mind we may confess..." Also like the Corinthians we often miss the point of this rite. We say the words but do not act on them.

Over the centuries other practices have come to be associated with a worthy reception of the Eucharist in the apostolic Churches:

- **Repentance and Confession:** dealing with our sinfulness prepares us to experience the saving presence of Christ in the Divine Liturgy.

- **Fasting:** affirming that we are called to live "not by bread alone" (Mt 4:4) heightens our awareness that Christ is our true spiritual food. Traditionally we fast from midnight before a morning Liturgy and several hours before an evening celebration.

- **The Service of Preparation:** a canon of preparation is often read the night before receiving Communion. The service of preparation in the morning helps us focus on what will be the highpoint of our day.

All these practices aim at reminding us of what the Eucharist really means: union with Christ in His Body, the Church.

Taking a Stand (Gal 6:11-18)

"As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal 6:12).

WE KNOW FROM SEVERAL of his epistles how adamant St. Paul was against obliging Christians to keep the prescriptions of the Torah – circumcision, the dietary rules and the like. In the Epistle to the Galatians we see one reason why some new Christians proposed keeping them: they wanted to fit in with the Jewish community in order to avoid persecution.

First persecutors of this new community, the followers of Jesus, were Jews. Paul himself had been one of the most dedicated. The Acts of the Apostles describes his zeal in combating them. *"Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem"* (Acts 9:1). By being circumcised, keeping the Torah rules and not mingling with Gentiles, some Jewish followers of Jesus felt that the opposition of the more fervent Jews would be muted.

St Paul approached the issue from the other side. The message of the Gospel was that neither the Torah nor the Temple saved; only faith in the Lord Jesus. If believers in Jesus continued to observe these Jewish practices, he argued, it is the Gospel message which would be muffled. People would no longer see Christ as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6), the only way to the Father. The unique saving role of Christ in God's plan would be forgotten.

The Practice of Fitting In

Christians throughout the history of the Church have found themselves in situations where they were eyed with distaste. Christians were considered outsiders at best or traitors at worst if they did not conform to the religious or

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 11

Confessions: 3:00

Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 12

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Monday, September 13

Divine Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 14

ONE OF TWELVE GREAT FEASTS

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

*Gregory the Great Academy
Elmhurst Township, PA 18444*

Saturday, September 18

Confessions: 3:00

Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 19

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 20

Pasta Dinner Fundraiser

2021 Clergy Conference

*The Pastor will be away
Wednesday, September 15 -
Friday, September 17.*

Sacramental Emergencies

St. Mary's Church: Fr. Leonard Martin

570. 342. 8429

St. Ann Maronite Church: Fr. Tony

570. 344. 3129

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

2021 WEEKLY COLLECTION

September 05

Weekly Offering: \$ 2,205.00

Holydays: \$ 45.00

Candles: \$ 25.00

Total: \$ 2,275.00

Thank you for your support!

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

11 September: Nathan Cheffers ✕

12 September: Nathan Cheffers ✕

18 September: Joseph Viola Family ✕

19 September: Joseph Viola Family ✕

St. Mary's Chicken Bar-b-Que \$ 12.00
Sunday, September 26, 2021 Noon to 5 p.m.
Take out or Dine In
Best to Pre-order 570.343.5151 or 362.2007

Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

When people think of snakes and the Bible, the first thing they may recall is the serpent in the Book of Genesis. There this creature is described as “*more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made*” (Gen 3:1). It personifies the Tempter who causes Eve and then her husband to fall.

In response to the temptation of Eve, God punishes the serpent: “*Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life*” (Gen 3:13). The snake or serpent then becomes the image of all that is evil.

Throughout the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms we find many negative references to snakes. Thus the prophet Micah compares the enemies of Judea to snakes who conceal themselves and then emerge when it is time to strike: “*They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth*” (Mi 7:17). Not a very flattering image for anyone who likes snakes.

Why, then, do we find the Lord Jesus comparing Himself to a snake: “*...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*”? What is so different about this snake that makes it a fitting image for the Son of Man?

The Serpent in the Wilderness

The reference to Moses lifting up a serpent takes us back to the story of the Israelites’ exodus from captivity in Egypt. In the Book of Numbers we read that the Israelites made their way through the wilderness of Sinai into the Promised Land but were not welcomed by the local inhabitants. They were under God’s protection and were given the manna for their daily food but they were not satisfied. Many felt that they had been better off as slaves in Egypt.

“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.’ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.”

The “fiery serpents” refers to a species of poisonous snakes whose bite inflames the affected area. The Israelites seem to have stumbled upon a place where such snakes were common. The Israelites interpreted the serpent or snake as a sign of evil: of fatal punishment to God’s People who doubted His care for them.

“Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people.

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a brazen serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (Num 21:4-9).

The Israelites appear to have taken the bronze serpent with them and enshrined it as a memorial to their deliverance in the wilderness, much as they preserved a jar of manna in the Tabernacle. According to Jewish tradition, the bronze serpent was too much like an idol; hundreds of years later it seems that some of the Israelites were venerating it as their deliverer rather than God. King Hezekiah of Judah, who reigned from 715 to 686 bc, destroyed the bronze serpent for just that reason: “*He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image [to Asherah, a Canaanite goddess] and*

broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan” (2 Kgs 18:4).

The Bronze Serpent as a “Type”

The Lord is quoted in John’s Gospel as describing the bronze serpent incident as a type of Himself. A *type* is a person or event from an earlier era which pre-figures Christ, His Church, the holy mysteries or any aspect of the New Covenant. The sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22, Heb 11:17-19), the deliverance of Jonah (Book of Jonah, Mt 12:39-40), the Israelites’ departure from Egypt (Hosea 11:1, Mt 2:15), the water from the rock (Ex 17:1-7, 1 Cor 10:1-4) are all types cited in the New Testament itself as fulfilled in Christ. In our worship Passover, the celebration of the Exodus, is a type of the New Passover, the resurrection. The Feast of Weeks, 50 days after Passover, is a type of Pentecost, 50 days after the New Passover.

In John the words “lifted up” are used twice to describe the type and its fulfillment. The type in this case is not the bronze serpent, which had no power in itself, but the act of displaying it in the sight of the Israelites. This type is fulfilled when Christ is “lifted up,” put on display at His crucifixion.

In John’s Gospel the account of Christ’s passion repeatedly shows Christ “lifted up” before the gaze of those around Him. After he had Jesus beaten and crowned with thorns, “*Pilate then went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.’ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, ‘Behold the Man!’ When the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’”*” (Jn 19:4-6).

After Jesus dies, the soldiers come to hasten the death of those crucified that day. They broke the legs of the criminals crucified with Him. Seeing that He was already dead, they merely pierced His side. John notes that “*All these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced’”*” (Jn 19:36-37). The type is fulfilled as Jesus is lifted up, beheld and looked upon.

In the Old Testament the Israelites who looked on it with faith in God’s purposes for them received healing of the venom caused by their sin. In the same way those who fix their attention on Christ receive healing for the sickness caused by the sin of the world.

Two Further “Liftings”

On September 14 the Church remembers two other occasions when Christ was “lifted up”: the Exaltations of the Holy Cross. The feast recalls the finding of the cross in the fourth century by St Helena and the recapture of the cross from Persian invaders by Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century. A highlight of the feast is the lifting up of the cross in blessing over the world while “Lord, have mercy” is repeatedly sung. We are invited to fix our attention on Christ who was lifted upon the cross for us.

The cross, like the Eucharist, is an *antitype* of Christ. While a type is something in the past that is fulfilled in the future, an antitype is something in the present that connects us to the climactic events of our salvation. As we look upon the cross lifted up on this feast we see, as the Israelites did before us, both our sin which brought about Christ’s suffering and His victory which brings about our healing.

Prefiguring you, the most precious Cross, Moses lifted a brazen serpent up high on a pole to oppose the fiery serpents, as it is written. By you we are delivered from the deception of the spiritual serpents.

Canon of the Forefeast