

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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THE HOLY CROSS FEAST

**SUNDAY OF THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS**  
**Saturday, September 14 & Sunday, September 15, 2019**

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**WEEKLY SERVICES**

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday at 8:30AM      **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM      **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM  
**Matins/Orthos:** Every Sunday at 9:00AM      **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

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**SPEEDY RECOVERY**

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yanni, Jordan Barahmeh, Michael Klockowski, Eugene Hutchinson, Maggy Attalah, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, Jean Benoit and Fouad Marji. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!**

**Weekly Collection September 7/8: \$ 429.25**      **Cheese Sale: \$ 490.00**  
**Sacraments Offreing: \$ 100.00**      **Memorial Offering: \$ 130.00**

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

**THIS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14**

† **Salwa Atallah- Hamati**, By Nellie & Maggy Atallah  
† **Nicola Atallah**, By Maggy Atallah & John and Nellie Rayan  
† **John Atallah**, By Maggy Atallah & John and Nellie Rayan  
† **Rose Marie Khoury**, By Shirley Casab  
† **Gloria Betro**, By Shirley Casab  
† **Alfred Chanatry, 4<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By his Wife & Children

**THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**

**NEXT SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**

† **Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Mardenly**, By their family

**NEXT SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22**

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**\* ANNOUNCEMENT \***

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon October 7, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm

THE GREAT FEASTS OF THE CHURCH are each celebrations of an aspect of the mystery of Christ: The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is at the center of our Church life, the mystery of Christ's crucifixion His death and burial.

**The unearthing of the Cross:** The immediate historical events celebrated on this feast are, the unearthing of the Cross in the fourth century during the expedition led by St Helena to adorn the Holy Land with fitting shrines to Christ. The second event remembered is the recovery of the cross in the seventh century by Byzantine forces fourteen years after it had been captured by Persian invaders.

Two traditions common among Eastern Christians celebrate the discovery of the Cross. It is said that St. Helena's workmen were led to the site of the Cross by the fragrant aroma of basil growing there. It is customary to adorn the Cross and, in some places, the entire church with sprigs of basil. Some basil would be given to people when they venerate the Cross to take home and adorn their icons. In some parts of Greece basil would be ground and added to the dough used to make prosphora. A second festive act observed throughout the Middle East in both Byzantine and Oriental Churches is the lighting of bonfires, usually after the vespers or vigil of the feast. When the Cross was unearthed by St. Helena's expedition, the news of this discovery was spread from Jerusalem to Constantinople by a series of bonfires set on the mountains along the coast through Asia Minor. Today's bonfires are a popular re-enactment of that event.

**The recovery of the Cross is remembered by another festive act** – the one which gives this feast its name. When the victorious Byzantine army returned the Cross to Jerusalem, Patriarch Zachariah "exalted" the Cross, lifting it high for the veneration of the people who continually cried out *Kyrie eleison* as they gazed on the Cross. In our ceremony of the exaltation, the Cross is raised high in each direction – north, south, east and west – to bless the entire world as the people repeatedly chant *Kyrie eleison*.

Our most basic reason for feasting on this day, however, is what took place on the Cross. As St. John Chrysostom described it, "The Cross has taken away sin. It was an expiation for the world, a reconciliation of the ancient enmity. It opened the gates of heaven, changed those who hated into friends; it took our human nature, led it up to heaven, and seated it at the right hand of God's throne. And it brought to us ten thousand other blessings" (*Homily 3 against the Judaizers*).

The first sticheron sung at vespers on this feast echoes this festive sentiment: "By its elevation, the Cross is like an appeal to the whole creation to adore the blessed Passion of Christ our God who was suspended on it, for Christ destroyed by this Cross the one who had destroyed us. In His great goodness, He brought us back to life after we had been dead, and He beatified us and made us worthy of Heaven, for He is merciful. Wherefore, we exalt His name with great rejoicing and glorify His infinite condescension."

**Celebrating the feast of the Holy Cross by Fasting:** We also observe the feast of the Cross by fasting – not in anticipation of the feast but on the feast itself. Church directives say that September 14 is a strict fast day, on whatever day of the week it falls. So we may be called upon to fast on Saturday or even on Sunday. The fast is mitigated on weekends (wine and oil are permitted) but not completely abolished. Since Sunday is always a Eucharistic day, today's fast means that we do not eat until we receive Holy Communion. After that, we do not eat meat, fish or dairy products. The Church's reason for fasting on this day is not to lament the death of Christ, which as we have seen is a source of blessings. Rather we fast because of our sins, committed despite the fact that we know what Christ has done for us on the Cross and still prefer to follow our own egos rather than following His way. We do well to be distressed when we look on the Cross – not for the Lord's sake (He is risen!) – but because our salvation, brought about on the Cross, means so little to us. (*SeptLeaflets2019*)