

THE FEAST OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE HEAVENS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday 7/20 May 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the heavens.

On this feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that on 7 May in the year 351, the sign of the Cross appeared in dazzling light, radiating more than the sun rays, and was visible from the Horrendous Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem saw it and came out from their houses.

The Church has this piece of information from the Letter written by Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, who was also the Catechist for Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great.

Saint Cyril's Epistle reads as per below:

"Epistle of Saint Cyril Archbishop of Jerusalem to Constantius

The Most Pious King

*On the appearance of the sign of the Cross covered in light,
visible in Jerusalem*

*To the Most Beloved by God and Most Noble Constantius Augustus
Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem,*

Rejoice in the Lord

In the days of the Most Beloved by God Constantine of blessed

memory, your Father, the redeeming wood of the Cross was found in Jerusalem, as divine grace allowed the hidden holy places to be discovered by someone who truly seeks reverence. But in your days, Most Pious King, who surpasses ancestral piety with greater reverence for God, miracles do not come from the earth, but from heaven, and the trophy with which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ won death, that is, the Holy Cross, became visible in Jerusalem, shining with radiating beams of light.

Because in these holy days of the Holy Pentecost, in the first nine days of May, at about the third hour of the day, an enormous Cross, formed of light, appeared in the heaven above Holy Golgotha and extended to the holy Mount of Olives; it was not seen by one or two only, but was made manifest with perfect clarity to the whole multitude of the city; not, as one might suppose, rushing swiftly past as it were a figment of the imagination, but it was seen openly above the earth for many hours in plain sight, overcoming the beams of the sun with its dazzling rays. Because the Cross would really be overshadowed by the sun if it were not for its brightness to be stronger for those who saw.

As a result, at the same time, the crowds of the city rushed to the holy Church in multitudes, overwhelmed by the divine fear but also with joy; young and old, men and women of all ages and even the secluded maidens; locals and foreigners, both Christians and the visiting pagans in the city. And unanimously all, as if it were one mouth, praised Jesus Christ our Lord, the Only Begotten Son of God, the miracle worker, realising in practice and with personal experience that the Christian Doctrine is of the highest reverence, not because it is confirmed with words of wisdom, but in proof of Spirit and power; and it is not only confessed by men but it is also testified by God from the heavens.

In the year of our salvation three hundred and fifty-one."

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy was officiated at the Horrendous Golgotha on Thursday morning, by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia with co-celebrants the Archbishops; Meletios, Artemios, Makarios and Kallistos, the Ministering Priest of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Priest Athanasios and Hierodeacons Eulogios and Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students. The Service was attended by the Nuns and the faithful Christians of Jerusalem.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy the Episcopal Entourage went down to the Holy Deposition slate, the other Archbishops arrived and a litany three times around the Holy Edicule followed.

After the litany, the officiating Archbishop read Saint Cyril's Epistle in Greek and Arabic.

Finally, the Episcopal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters and paid their respect to His Beatitude.

From Secretariat-General