

# Major Feasts

On the:

14<sup>th</sup> of September

1<sup>st</sup> of January

6<sup>th</sup> of January

9<sup>th</sup> of March on the name's day of His Beatitude the Patriarch

1<sup>st</sup> of Sunday of Fasting

3<sup>rd</sup> of Sunday of Fasting

Palm Sunday

Great And Holy Friday

Holy Saturday

Sunday of Pascha

Sunday of Thomas

Sunday of Pentecost

7<sup>th</sup> of May on the appearance in the sky of the sign of the Holy Cross (minor feast)

## **The Raising of the Holy and Life-giving Cross**

“But God forbid”, says the Apostle Paul, “that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world” (Gal 6:14).

In other words: May I never boast about anything except that Jesus Christ took the form of a servant and was crucified for my salvation. My only boast is the death by crucifixion of my Lord and through faith, by this death the world has died and lost its power over me. But I too have died to the world.

Through these words of Paul, is expressed in the most accurate and clear way the word and the significance of the Holy Cross as much for the Holy Church of Christ and her members, as also for the world.

According to the gospel narratives, our Lord Jesus Christ “was led as sheep to slaughter” (Acts 8:33) for our salvation. From the Praetorium through the road of martyrdom He was led to “Golgotha which is called the place of the skull” (Matt 27:33) “outside the gate” (Heb 13:12) and there He was crucified, there He was buried in a new grave (Matt 27:60) and in three days He was resurrected.

This place of the passion and burial and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was filled with soil and covered by idols until 326AD. That year Saint Helen came to the Holy City being sent by her son the Great Constantine, who was informed about the condition of the shrines by the representative of the Church of Jerusalem, Archbishop Makarios, one year before the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Synod at Nicea.

Saint Helen, being guided by the Christians of Jerusalem, searched the place of Golgotha and the Tomb of the Lord, found the Holy Cross and started the construction of a magnificent Church on them. This admirable work lasted a decade 326-336AD. At its conclusion Great Constantine invited the assembled bishops from Tyre of Sidon and many others from many regions and performed the inauguration of the Church.

During the inauguration ceremony, the people that had gathered waited to see the Cross of the Lord. Due to the great multitude of people, the Archbishop of the Church of

Jerusalem, Makarios, with Saint Helen raised the Holy Cross. When the people saw the Cross, they cried "Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy..."

Once the events were performed, the Church then directed that they be performed annually. The inauguration event, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month of September while the Raising of the Cross on the 14<sup>th</sup> September of every year. According to the Typicon of the Sionitic Church, during the evening after the reading of the 9<sup>th</sup> hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, from the gates of the Central Monastery takes place a formal descent of the Hagiotaphites to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection.

Once inside the Church, the shrines of the Apocathelosis (deposition) and of the Most Holy Sepulchre are venerated, followed by the Vespers with artoklasia (blessing of the bread) at the Catholicon, attended by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, by the Archpriests and Priests who enter the holy Vema (Step) and the Synodics and venerate the Horrible Golgotha.

During the night of the feast, the service of the Matins and the ceremony of the Raising of the Cross and the Divine Liturgy take place.

At 7:00am the morning of the feast a formal descent to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, takes place again. After the sounding of the handheld bells and with the Patriarch and Hierarchs dressed in their festive vestments, an all night magnificent Divine Liturgy takes place with the Patriarch in lead and co-liturgizing with the Hierarchs of the Throne, and with many hieromonks and priests and worshippers taking part with great devotion, from different nationalities but of one faith and confession, the Orthodox, of one body, the body of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Following the completion of the Divine Liturgy, the ceremony

of the Raising begins with the procession (litany) from the steps of the catholicon, firstly by the blessing of the Holy Entrance by his Beatitude.

The procession, exiting from the navel of the earth in the centre of the Catholicon passes in front of the Edicule of the Holy Tomb, the Holy Apocathelosis (Holy Deposition), the Chapel of Adam, and the Chapel of the Crown of Thorns, arrives at the place of the discovery of the Holy Cross, where the raising of the Holy Cross towards the four points of the compass, takes place by his Beatitude, according to the Typicon.

Next the procession ascending, passes by the chapel of the "They Divided My Vestments", the Chapel of Saint Logginus the Centurion, of the "Do not touch Me" Seven Arches, circles the Edicule three times and again by the Apocathelosis ascends the steps to Golgotha, where on its Holy Altar stands the Holy Cross with branches of basil. His beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem takes and raises this Holy Cross towards the four points of the compass according to the Typicon. After these, His Beatitude and the Hierarchs venerate the base of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that is below the Holy Altar and the Holy Cross of the Lord that was raised on the Holy Altar. The faithful then come in to worship and receive the basil that decorated the Holy Cross, for the sanctification of souls and bodies, bread, properties and households.

### **Doxologies**

Performed in the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection

12/25 of March, Anniversary of the National Day of Independence

15/28 of October, Anniversary of the historic "NO"

9/22 of November, Anniversary of the Enthronement of His Beatitude the Patriarch

## **Hagiotaphitic feasts**

(Feasts of the Holy Brotherhood of the Most Holy Sepulchre)

23<sup>rd</sup> of October : Feast of the Patriarchal Throne in commemoration of Saint James the Brother of the God

21<sup>st</sup> of May : Feast at the Central Monastery in commemoration of Saints Constantine and Helen

## **Feasts of the Latin**

Vespers on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Fasting

Vespers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Fasting

On the:

Palm Sunday

Holy Friday

Sunday of Easter

24<sup>th</sup> of April/7<sup>th</sup> of May

Feast of the Gift (Corpus Christi), namely the 2nd Thursday following the Sunday of the Holy Trinity (Latin)

## **Feasts of the Armenians**

On the:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Fasting (commemoration of the Transfiguration)

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Fasting (commemoration of the parable of the Judge)

Palm Sunday

Holy Saturday

Sunday of Pascha

Sunday of the Myrrhbearers

13<sup>th</sup> January on the Circumcision of the Saviour

Sunday, 26th of September/9th of October

Sunday, 24th of October/6th of November

The litanies on the feast of Palm Sunday, Holy Saturday and Pascha are performed at the same time by the Armenians, Copts and Syrians.