

Look to the cross and you will be attracted to Christ

Introduction:

Our Church celebrates two feasts for the Cross. One is on Parmhat 10th (**March 19th**), which always falls during Great Lent. The other is on Tout 17th (**September 27th**), which falls at the end of our celebrations of the Coptic New Year (The Feast of Nairouz), and this latter Feast of the Cross is celebrated for three days.

Our celebration of the Cross is actually a celebration of Christ's victory over Satan and conquering both sin and death. Also, in celebrating the Feast of the Cross, we are reminded that we are called to carry the cross. As our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, we also must be crucified; we must have fellowship in the likeness of His death so we may enjoy the blessings of His resurrection, as Saint Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

Aim:

1. To explore the necessity of the cross for our salvation and reconciliation with the Father .(Gen. 2:17 ; Deut. 21:23 ; Gal. 3:13 ; Col.1:20)
2. To highlight the fact that the cross is the centre piece of God's love to the human race (John 3:16 ; John 15:13) .
3. To interrelate my "faith in Jesus Christ" with His acts of "crucifixion , death and resurrection" and my baptism . My new life now is a " crucified life with Him"(Gal.2:20 , 5:24
4. To explore how to carry the cross with Him and crucify the flesh . (Ro. 6:2-14; Mk. 8:34)
5. To be sure that the events of the discovery of the cross at the time of emperor Constantine and the two feasts of the cross in our Coptic church are clear to the teens Also , the daily , weekly , and yearly celebration of the day of the cross.

Verses:

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Why the Cross?

For centuries, both Christians and non-Christians frequently repeat the following questions: Why did Christ die on the Cross? Could Christ have chosen some other method of death? Why did Christ insist on carrying the Cross and His disciples doing likewise?

The fall of Humanity

When Adam and Eve disobeyed the divine commandment and sinned against the Lord, two consequences followed:

- (i) The death sentence was imposed, “For the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23).
- (ii) Their nature was corrupted by sin and death.

As a result, three options were opened to God:

- (i) Adam die forever – this is contrary to God’s immeasurable love for His children. Should Adam die then the devil defeated God’s creation. This is impossible.
- (ii) God forgives Adam – this is against God’s justice for He declared, “Once you eat of the tree you die.” (Genesis 2:17).
- (iii) God saves Adam – the best solution is to save Adam, but this requires:
 - a. To save Adam from the death penalty
 - b. Someone dies on behalf of Adam
 - c. To renew Adam’s corrupted nature

We pray in the Gregorian Liturgy:

“When he fell through the seduction of the enemy and disobedience to Your Holy Commandment, and You wished to renew him and raise him to his original honor, You entrusted neither an angel nor an archangel, a Patriarch nor a prophet with our

Salvation. But rather You took flesh without alteration and became man, and resembled us in everything but sin alone. You became our advocate to the Father, You have dissolved the intervening barrier, and destroyed the ancient animosity. You reconciled the heavenly with the earthly, and made the two as one, and completed Your purpose in the flesh”

Central to our redemption and salvation was the Blood of Christ. For it was written in Deuteronomy, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” (Deuteronomy 21:23). Hence, Christ chose the Cross to fulfill the following:

- (i) To die on behalf of all humanity who was deserving of death.
- (ii) To shed His blood on the Cross, for without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22).
- (iii) To ascend on the Cross carrying the curse of humanity and wash and purify man from his sins.

Now the great offering that the Lord Jesus Christ made was a satisfaction, that is, He in the gift of himself, satisfied God's requirements and his claims against us. His satisfaction anti-typically effected an expiation of sin. That is by what he did on the cross, sin was expiated-paid for. And God was propitiated, His holiness and righteousness satisfied, and by the death of Christ, the Father was rendered able, consistent with his perfections. That is, his perfections of mercy and holiness and justice, to reconcile us in mercy, to renew us, and to, finally, exalt us to the dignity, to the excellence, to the blessedness of the sons of God.

In his famous book, *“The Incarnation of the Word”*, Saint Athanasius the Apostolic writes, “Christ did not die like John the Baptist who was beheaded, nor die like Isaiah who was cut by the sword. His body is preserved in order to preserve the unity of the Church, His Body. Christ stretched out His two hands on the Cross that He might draw His anointed people with one hand and the Gentiles with the other and join both together in Himself.

What is the meaning of the Cross?

Deep Love

In the Cross God confirmed his tremendous love for humanity. “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6). God, who is love, declares “greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13). St. John the Beloved, the faithful disciple who stood at the feet of the Cross states, “God’s love has been perfected in us.” (1 John 4:12).

Further, “In this, the love of God was manifested towards us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we

loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9,10). St. John concludes this chapter thus, “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19).

Love therefore became the sign of the children of the Cross. Accordingly, St. Paul says, “Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” (Ephesians 5:2).

Over fifteen hundred years ago, on Good Friday, Ambrose the Bishop of Milan ascended to his pulpit in the Cathedral of Milan and said to his congregation:

“In the cross we see totally unselfish love for the sake of healing and hope for the world. Jesus' willingness to trust God so completely that he was willing to be crucified doesn't make sense to those who place their basic trust in human abilities, human intelligence, human strength and wisdom. But to those who are able to trust that in the crucifixion of Jesus God is at work redeeming the world, the self-giving love of God revealed in the cross is the revelation of God's wisdom and strength.

The love revealed in the cross of Christ is clearly an unconditional love, and the people who orchestrated his execution were convinced such unconditional love was a threat to all they held dear. They could not see the possibility of redemption because they were so focused on getting what they wanted and protecting what they had. Those who wanted Christ crucified were so focused on the do's and don'ts of their religion and on the need for a revenge-like justice for violators of the law that they were unable to embrace mercy that made a new and better future possible. They were so certain the sinner could not change that they were unable to be instruments of God' grace in changing and transforming the lives of sinners. They were so rigorously focused on their human efforts to earn God's rewards that they were insensitive to the grace God was offering.

Salvation and Redemption

All of mankind was stained and corrupted by sin, Christ came to earth “and bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” (1Peter 2:24). In Him, says St. Paul, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

(Ephesians 1:7). In the sixth hour we say “You gave salvation to the whole world when you opened your undefiled hand on the Cross.” As it says in Revelation, “Through the blood of Christ we were redeemed.” (Revelation 5:9).

This salvation is a priceless precious gift that the Father offered to humanity through His only Son. St. Paul warns says, “Our salvation is nearer than we first believed. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.” (Romans 13:11).

These **powerful** words transformed the heart of St. Augustine and converted this great Christian Philosopher, to the delight of his mother St. Monica, who wept for him for 20 years. Subsequently, Augustine was baptized by St. Ambrose of Milan and went on to be Bishop of Hippo and a great shepherd and scholar of the Church.

St. Athanasius in the Nicene Creed clearly said, “for us and for our salvation, Christ was incarnated of Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became man. He was crucified for us at the time of Pontus Pilate.”

St. Peter teaches, “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Forgiveness of Sins

”Without the shedding of blood,” states St. Paul, “there is no forgiveness of sins.” (Hebrews 9:22). The Lord ascended on the Cross and proclaimed forgiveness to all, “Father forgive them for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34). St. John the Beloved writes “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.” (Revelation 1:5). Christ stipulated that we must forgive each other and our Heavenly Father shall forgive us. How sweet are the words of Christ to the sinful woman, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” (Luke 7:48).

In the Fraction we pray, “*He was tied with ropes to free us from the bonds of fetters for our sins. He was raised on the Cross to cover us with the garment of righteousness.*” (Fraction of the Only Son).

In the conclusion of the Theotokia of Adam we chant saying, “*There is no servant without sins and no master without forgiveness, it is only from You.*” Having experienced forgiveness, we too are required to forgive and forget all who sin against us. Joseph the Righteous forgave his brothers and said to them, “*But now, do not therefore be grieved and angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*” (Genesis 45:5,7).

Similarly, Esau forgave Jacob for deceiving him and after 20 years, they met and embraced each other, “*but Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.*”(Genesis 33:4). Then Jacob said, “*In as much as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God.*” (Genesis 33:10). St. Stephen, the first Martyr and Archdeacon echoed the same words of his Lord and Master when as he was stoned said, “*Father, do not charge them with this sin.*” (Acts 7:60).

Victory & Triumph

If man is defeated by falling he cannot then stand against the might of Satan, but the Lord Jesus incarnated to conquer death and the Devil and grant victory to us. Thus, death is swallowed up in victory (Isaiah 25:8), “*O death where is your sting, O Hades where is your victory*” (Hosea 13:14). “*But thanks be to God,*” says St. Paul, “*who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 15:16). In the doxology of the Feast of the Cross, we chant: “*Hail to the Cross, weapon of our victory.*” Christ gave the believers victory as He promised; “*Now the Ruler of this world will be cast out.*” (John 12:31).

The Power of the Cross

The Prince of Martyrs, St. George (Feast day 1st May), who endured sufferings and trials out of tremendous love for his Savior, experienced the power of the Holy Cross. He was offered a poisonous drink in a cup. Recognizing the power of the Cross, St. George did the sign of the Cross on the cup and confidently drank it and no harm befell him.

St. Christodoulos (the Jeweler) was saved by the power of the Cross. When Satan failed to overcome him, he appeared to evil men, in the form of a barbarian, and told them, "There is a great treasure in the valley, a man found it and is living beside it. Come with me, I will show it to you." They followed him to the mountain but they were not able to go down to the valley. The devil went in a monk's attire to St. Christodoulos and told him, "On the top of the mountain, there are some monks who lost their way; they are tired and will die of thirst. Go to them and give them something to eat and drink so that they may survive." The saint made the sign of the cross over his face, as was the custom of the monks and immediately the devil turned into smoke and disappeared. In this way, St. Christodoulos was always able to overcome the devil with the sign of the cross.

How do I carry the cross in my life?

Carrying the cross is bearing suffering for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Carrying the Cross is partaking in Christ's suffering. Saint Peter considered that bearing suffering for the sake of Christ is the same as partaking in Christ's sufferings; he wrote, "*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*" (1 Pet. 4:12) Those believers, who bear sufferings for the sake of Christ, partake of His sufferings. Therefore, Saint Peter called them to rejoice and added, "*If you are reproached for the Name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*" (1 Pet. 4:14) But Saint Peter also warns the believers not to consider all sufferings as a partaking in Christ's sufferings. The person, who bears suffering as a result of his own mistakes, is not considered to be suffering for the sake of Christ or partaking in His sufferings; he wrote, "*But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*" (1 Pet. 4:15-16)

Crucifying the Lusts of the Flesh

The children of God are inwardly powerful and strong. The weight of sin, lusts of the flesh, various temptations or the strikes of the devil do not defeat them. "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24). "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Suffering and Hardships

Carry the Cross by quietly enduring sufferings and hardships. On the night before His death on the Cross, Christ warned His disciples, if the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18). Christ added, “Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.” (John 16:20).

However, joy and victory in the Cross of Christ will follow as promised by the Lord: “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33).

From the Apostolic era it was established that carrying the Cross is integral to the Christian life. “We must”, says St. Paul, “through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22). St. Stephen, the first martyr and archdeacon was stoned to death (Acts 7:59). St. John and St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost were imprisoned (Acts 4:1-4). St. James, the brother of St. John was beheaded by Herod (Acts 12: 1-2). St. Peter was imprisoned (Acts 12:5-19). St. Paul, together with Silas, was imprisoned at Phillipia (Acts 16:25-34). In Jerusalem, St. Paul was imprisoned and the Lord appeared to him and strengthened him (Acts 23:10-22).

Loving Your Enemies

No religion in the world except for Christianity calls for loving your enemies. On the Sermon on the Mountain, Christ taught us to love our enemies, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*” (Matthew 5:43-47).

How can we fulfill this challenging commandment? As we are weak and limited we require the power of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul puts it: “*For the love of God has been poured into our hearts through His Holy Spirit.*” (Romans 5:5). Also, by living under the feet of the Cross, like St. Mary and St. John the Beloved. The latter wrote in his first epistle: “*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifested: “Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”* (1 John 3:10-11). Love is the golden sign and St. John says, “*If someone says, ‘I love God’, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*” (1 John 4:20). In so doing we fulfill the Scripture which says, “*let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*” (1 John 3:18).

Life of Submission

A blessed form of carrying the Cross of Christ is submitting your entire life and surrendering your will at the feet of the Cross. The Holy Mother of God, St. Mary, is the great example who said to the Archangel Gabriel: *“I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your words.”* (Luke 1:38). Consequently, she was exalted by her cousin Elizabeth: *“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”* (Luke 1:42,45).

Abraham the father of fathers, lived a life of submission, leaving his own country and kindred and fathers house at the old age of 75 (Genesis 12). In tremendous submission Abraham sacrificed Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22) and subsequently the Lord blessed him saying, *“By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”* (Genesis 22:16-18).

The Ego

Our number one enemy is the ego. Pride is the cause of all our sins. It is the cause of the fall of Satan (previously a rank of Angels). Even the righteous and the Saints fell in this sin. The disciples grumbled who was the greatest. The Lord taught us, *“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself, will be abased and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* (Matthew 23:11-12).

In crucifying our egos we seek to be meek and humble knowing that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5).

Elijah the prophet felt he was the only one faithful to God and his covenants and he complained saying, *“I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”* (1 Kings 19:14). Then the Lords said to Elijah to return to the wilderness of Damascus, *“Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”* (1 Kings 19:18).

Full of confidence in his mind and heart, St. Peter disputed the Lord’s words and said, *“Even if all are made to stumble yet I will not be.”* (Mark 14:29). When Christ confronted Peter and said, *“Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.”* (Mark 14:30). St. Peter replied more vehemently, *“If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”* (Mark 14:31).

Even these who excel spiritually are tempted by pride. St. Anthony the father of Monks thought that he alone had risen to such a high spiritual level, then the Lord directed him to the inner desert to visit St. Paula who had dwelt in the desert for 80 years without

seeing a human person. St. Macarius the Great was struck by pride and the angel of the Lord appeared to him and directed him to Alexandria to visit two simple women living with each other caring for each other's babies. St. Macarius was bewildered with their simple love and meekness. For this reason Christ, the King of Glory washed the feet of his disciples and ascended to the Cross to crucify our egos and arrogance and thereby liberate us from the bondage of the self. In short, unless we accept to crucify our ego, we become enemies of the Cross, we begin to pursue self righteousness instead of looking to the Cross for justification, self indulgence instead of taking up the Cross to follow Christ, self advertisement instead of preaching Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), self glorification instead of glory in the Cross (Galatians 6:14).

The Narrow Gate

We carry the Cross by choosing the narrow and not the wide gate. "*Enter by the narrow gate*", says Christ, "*for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" (Matthew 7:13-14). St. Peter for example could not comprehend that Christ must suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed (Matthew 16:21). Thus St. Peter took Christ aside and began to rebuke him saying, "*far be it from You Lord, this shall not happen to You!*" (Matthew 6:22). Immediately thereafter Christ began to enlighten his disciples about the significant role of carrying the Cross, "*if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matthew 16: 24-26).

At the expense of their health and comfort, their status and positions, their opinions and views, the children of God prefer the narrow gate of the Cross for it leads to heavenly joys. In so doing they "*are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

When asked what is the narrow gate, Anba Amonius replied: "*To control your thoughts and to strip yourself of your own free will for the sake of God.*"

St Paul

The life of Saint Paul presents to us a unique example of carrying the Cross in all its forms.

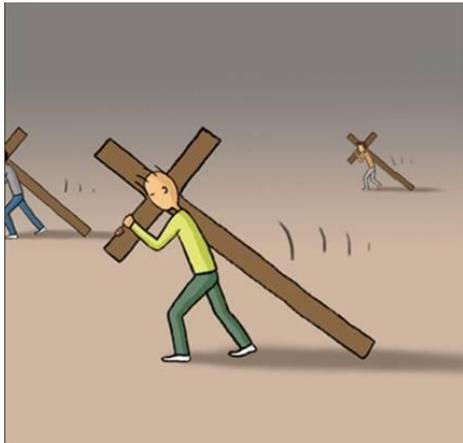
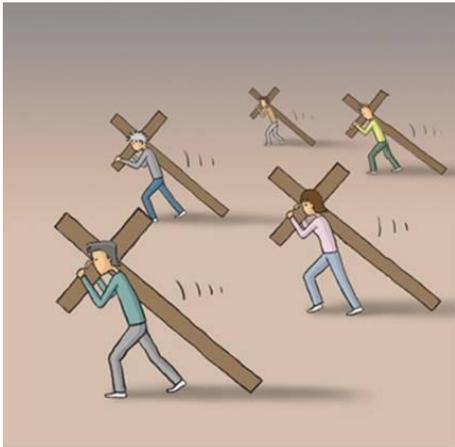
1. Saint Paul suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. When our Lord called him, He said about him, *“For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”* (Acts 9:16) Saint Paul also talked about some of his sufferings when he wrote, *“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in cold and nakedness.”* (2 Cor. 11:24-27) In the end, Saint Paul received the crown of martyrdom when he was beheaded during the reign of Nero.

2. Saint Paul carried the cross in his spiritual struggles; he wrote, *“But I discipline my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached others, I myself should become disqualified.”* (1 Cor. 9:27) Towards the end of his life, he wrote, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.”* (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

3. Saint Paul also carried the cross of service. He was the great evangelist, who travelled land and sea, preaching the name of Christ in many countries. The Book of Acts mentions many of his journeys, and how he suffered in his missionary work. He said about his own preaching ministry the following, *“so that from Jerusalem and round about Illyrium I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”* (Rom. 15:19) Saint Paul also carried the cross of pastoral care, when he cared for all the churches he established. His epistles to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, and Thessalonica witness to this fact. He also said that in addition to bearing sufferings and tribulations for the sake of Christ, *“besides the other things, what comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?”* (2 Cor. 11:28-29)

4. Saint Paul carried the cross of illness. He described this cross as *“a thorn in the flesh”*. He wrote, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”* (2 Cor. 12:7) Saint Paul pleaded with the Lord to lift this cross from him, but the Lord told him, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”* (2 Cor. 12:9), and he accepted this cross joyfully.

A beautiful storey in pictures



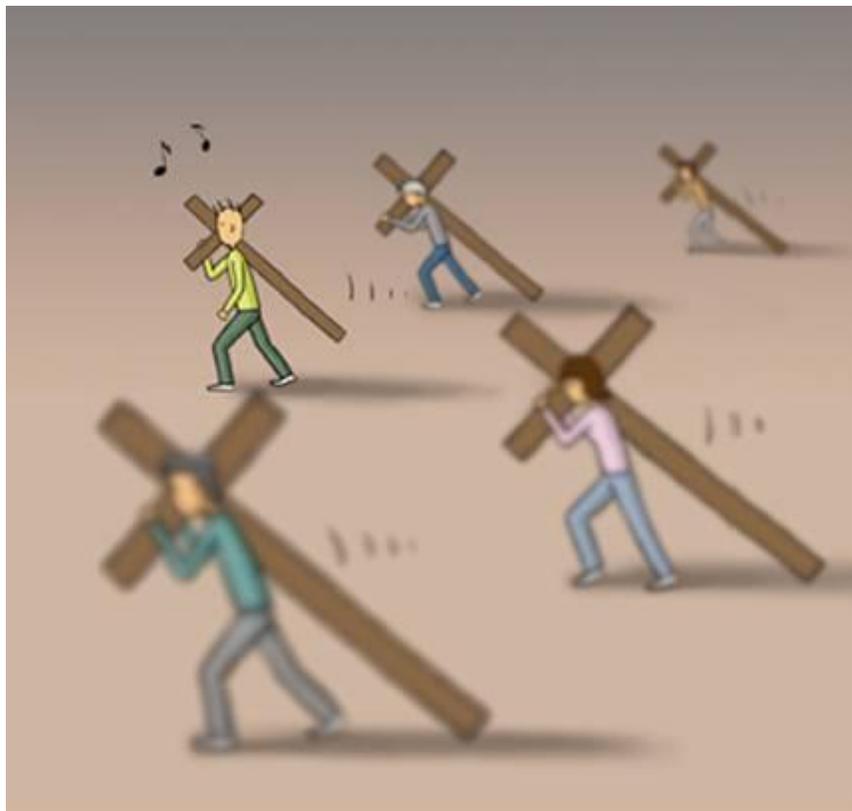


Lord, please cut it down a little more...
I'll be able to carry it better...





Lord, thank you so much...





Let's use this as a bridge and cross over...



Ahh! it's too short I can't cross...



The discovery of the Cross

The cross was found by Queen Helena. Queen Helena had a son and called him Constantine, she raised him up very piously, taught him every kind of learning, sowed in his heart mercy and compassion for the Christians. After his father's death he received the kingdom. Constantine reigned with justice and integrity, and stopped all unfair practices. All the people loved him. He was the first Christian Emperor.

The nobles of Rome sent asking him to come and save them from the injustice of Maximianus. Constantine marched with his army toward Rome to save them. During the war, he saw in the heaven, in the middle of the day, a cross made of stars, and on it was written in Greek words which being interpreted as "with this you shall conquer." The light of the cross was more shining than the sun, and he showed it to his ministers and the nobles of his kingdom. That night, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and told him: "Make a sign for yourself like that sign which you had seen, and with it you shall conquer your enemies." The next morning, he prepared a large flag with the sign of the cross on it, and made the sign of the cross on all the armaments.

Constantine overcame Maximianus, who withdrew with his army, and while crossing the bridge over Tiber river, the bridge broke. He and most of his men perished.

Constantine entered Rome, and its people welcomed him with joy and gladness. Its learned men praised the Honourable cross and called it the Savoir of their city.

Then they celebrated for the cross seven days, and Constantine became Emperor of the East and the West. Then Emperor Constantine and most of his soldiers were baptised.

When Constantine accepted the faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ his mother Queen Helena vowed to go to Jerusalem to find the cross. Her righteous son prepared everything needed and sent many soldiers with her.

When St. Helena came to Jerusalem, and asked the Jews about the whereabouts of the cross, they did not inform her. Finally, some of them told her about an old Jew called Judas who knew the place. She called him, and he denied at first but when she urged him, he told her about the pile.

As to the reason for how this great pile of dirt came into being, it was thus: the Jewish leaders, when they saw all the signs and wonders which were made manifest from the sepulchre of Our Savoir, such as raising the dead and healing the sick, became angry, and they sent forth throughout Judea and Jerusalem ordering all the people to cast the sweepings of their houses and the dirt over the sepulchre of Jesus of Nazareth. And they continued to do so for more than two hundred years, until it became a very great heap.

She ordered the removal of all this and found the three crosses. When passing by people carrying their dead. She stopped them and placed the first cross, and second, and when she placed the third cross, the dead person arose, she knew that was the cross that belonged to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A certain Samaritan called Isaac, as he was travelling with his family among the people going to Jerusalem, reproved the people for taking such trouble in going to Jerusalem to worship a piece of wood. Among the people was a priest whose name was

Okhidus. While travelling along the road, they became thirsty. They found no water and they came to a well where the water was foul and bitter. The people became dismayed. Isaac the Samaritan started mocking them saying, "if I witness a power by the name of the cross, I will become a believer of Christ." The priest Okhidus was moved with divine Zeal and prayed over that foul water and made the sign of the cross on it, and it became sweet. All the people and their animals drank, but when Isaac drank, the water was bitter and wormy. He regretted and cried and came to the saint father Okhidus, and he bowed

down at his feet and believed in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he drank from the water, and he found it sweet

That water had the power of becoming sweet for the believers and bitter for others. A cross of light appeared in the well and a church was built there. When Isaac the Samaritan arrived in Jerusalem, he and his family were baptised.

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