

Liturgical Living: Exaltation of the Cross

On September 14, we celebrate The Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This feast traces its beginning to the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, built on the site of Mount Calvary in 335, and the traditional story of the finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena.

Believers have always looked to the cross in times of suffering. The cross does not explain pain and misery. It does not give us any easy answers. But it does help us to see our lives united with Christ's. By Christ's love shown in the Paschal Mystery, the Cross has become the sign of triumph and victory, the sign of God, who is love Himself.

The Sign of the Cross is a visible prayer that we make frequently. We make it before other prayers to help fix our minds and hearts on God. We make it after prayers, hoping to stay close to God. In trials and temptations, it is also a sign of strength and protection.

At Baptism, too, the Sign of the Cross is used; the priest, parents, and godparents make the sign on the forehead of the child. By the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, Jesus takes us as His own in a unique way.

Today, let us reverently and intentionally make the Sign of the Cross, and realize that we bring our whole selves to God—everything we are and will become.

What are some ways to honor the cross today?

- Attend Mass and venerate the Cross.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross.
- Pray this prayer from St. Francis: *"We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You. Because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world."* [Here is an interesting article](#) about the history of this prayer.
- Make [this popsicle stick Jerusalem Cross](#).
- Read [the story of St Helena and the Cross](#).
- Learn about different styles of crosses - Celtic, Tao, San Damiano, St Brigid, etc.
- Choose a style of the Cross to draw, paint, or make an art project out of using various mediums. Children might like [this easy step-by-step guided drawing video](#).
- Color [one of these free coloring pages](#).
- Bake [Hot Cross Buns](#).

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