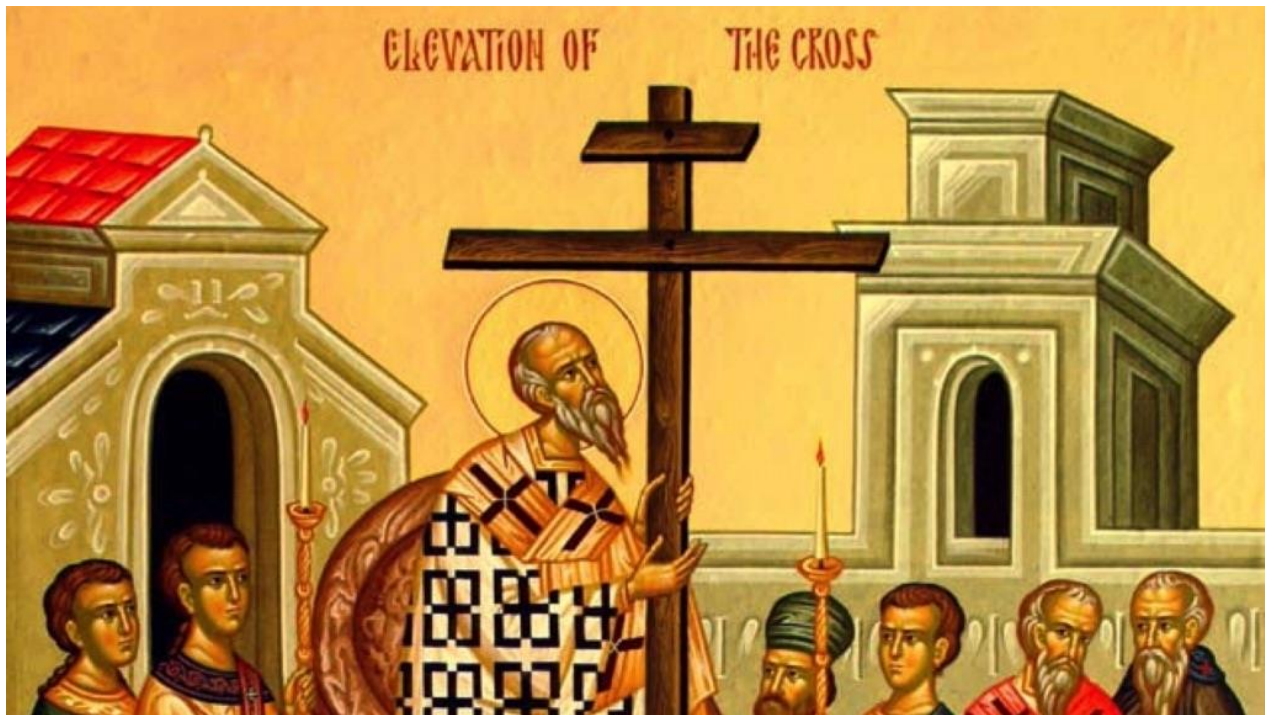


**St Ignatios of Antioch  
Melkite Greek Catholic Church  
1003 Merry Street  
Augusta, Georgia 30904  
706 364-6219**



**Sunday Before the Holy Cross  
10 September 2023**

## Sunday Before the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross



### Holy Ground

THE FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS is the occasion for us to begin the reading of St. Luke's Gospel. As we have seen, Pascha begins the reading of John and with Pentecost we start to read Matthew. At the same time we continue the cycle of Epistle readings begun at Pentecost without interruption.

Luke, whom St Paul describes as "*the beloved physician*" (Colossians 4:14) is thought to have been a Greek-speaking native of Antioch, probably a Gentile, possibly a Jewish proselyte. Luke may have been one of the multitudes who came to Jerusalem that Passover, was attracted by the teaching of Jesus and then encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:12-35).

Luke may have returned to Antioch as one of the first members of the Church there, as he recalls with pride that "*the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*" (Acts 11:26). He later became the companion of St Paul, who was himself a missionary sent out by the Church of Antioch to preach Christ. In Acts Luke describes how he traveled with St. Paul on his journeys to Macedonia (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15), how he returned with him to Syria and went from there to Jerusalem to report to the Eleven.

Luke composed both the Gospel which bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles as a kind of diptych. While the Gospel sets forth God's call to mankind in Christ, Acts shows the response of the first disciples, both Jews and Gentiles, to the message of salvation.

### The Good News on the Move

Luke's Gospel is based largely on Mark, which commentators think was the first Gospel written in the form we know it. Luke made a significant change, however, to illustrate his theology. Luke rearranges several of the passages in Mark to depict Jesus' ministry as a purposeful journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, to the confrontation with the Jewish leaders, the cross and the tomb. He does this to say that Jesus' knowingly and freely embraced the passion. He "*steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*" (Luke 9:51) i.e. to the offering of Himself for the sake of the human race.



The Gospel ends in Jerusalem and the Acts of the Apostles picks up there with the early activities of the disciples after the Lord's ascension. But Acts does not remain in Jerusalem – it leads us through Asia Minor to Rome, the capital of the empire, the heart of the Mediterranean world. The Christian community, Luke tells us, was not simply a local Jewish sect – it was the Body of Christ spread throughout the world.

## Christ's Ministry in Luke

The reading of Luke's Gospel began during the past week with chapters 3 and 4: the narrative of the Lord's baptism (Monday), His genealogy (Tuesday), His temptation in the wilderness (Wednesday), the beginning of His ministry in Nazareth (Thursday and Friday) and in Capernaum (Saturday). On the first Sunday in the Cycle of St Luke we read the story of the miraculous catch of fish.

Jesus is already known in Capernaum. He has taught in the synagogue on the Sabbaths and healed a man there. He had already attracted the attention of Simon and visited his house where he healed his mother-in-law of a raging fever. The next day everyone was back to work and Jesus appears at the lakeside where Simon and others are ending a fruitless night on the water.

### “Depart from me, Lord!”

Simon Peter could be described as a faithful observant Jew. He attended the synagogue, heard Jesus teaching there and invited him to his home. Yet, when he witnessed the miraculous catch of fish he says, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Luke 5:8).

At first hearing Peter's protest might sound like that of the Gergasenes who saw their swine plunge into the sea: “Leave us alone – don't make trouble for us.” In fact, his response puts Peter in a long procession of biblical figures overwhelmed by the presence of God in their midst. When Isaiah experienced his vision of God in the temple, for example, he responded: “*‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty’*” (Isaiah 6:5).

Peter and Isaiah were overcome by what they had seen. Each recognized that somehow he had been touched by the divine. Their response was to see themselves as unclean, as sinful. They may have been conscious of a particular sin from their past, but there is no evidence for that. Rather their reaction mirrored that of many godly people who unexpectedly came upon the presence of God. Even for those who are striving to live righteously, an experience of the power of the Lord entering into our world makes us confront the great gap between us and Him. We see instantaneously how attached we are to the things of the earth and, correspondingly, how far we are from the Holy One.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush He told him, “*‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’ ... And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God*” (Exodus 3:4,6). The only appropriate response of mortals to the holy is the recognition that we have wandered onto Mount Sinai, into a realm beyond our worth.

This reaction became something of a pattern for the ascetic Elders of the Christian East. As St. Clement of Rome counseled, “Even if an angel should indeed appear to you, do not receive him but humiliate yourself, saying, ‘I am not worthy to see an angel, for I am a sinner.’” To look upon the holy without repentance, they felt, was like putting oneself on the same plane as God or His saints.

## We Are on Holy Ground

In the Syriac Churches of India it is customary for everyone to remove their shoes before stepping inside the church. Every historic tradition has some act of reverence prescribed for setting foot on consecrated ground. In Byzantine Churches it is prescribed that the worshipper make metanies or prostrations and kiss the icons put forth for veneration. Repeating this action by force of habit we forget what they represent: that the church, the Eucharist, the cross we approach to kiss – all these are manifestations of God's holiness and His love reaching out to us. We see, but we do not perceive.

In the same way we do not comprehend that we are always in the presence of God. The people we meet, the grass and trees, the animals and other creatures among whom we live – all these exist as God's handiwork, as indications of His presence among us. May God grant us to see that every moment of our lives we are standing unworthily on holy ground and that our eyes see the signs of the presence of the Lord.

## **Upcoming Calendar**

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Sept. 14

Vespers – Wednesday, Sept 13, 7pm

Divine Liturgy – Thursday, Sept. 14, 7pm

## Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
34	16 July 2023	1,365.00
44	23 July 2023	540.00
22	30 July 2023	0.00
55	6 August 2023	1,550.51
32	13 August 2023	133.81
37	20 August 2023	146.22
39	27 August 2023	21.00
29	3 September 2023	511.50

## Divine Liturgy Intentions:

### For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Richie Damici, Alfonso de la Vega, Medical Personnel and First Responders

### For the Dead:

## Announcements

We are live-streaming on our Facebook page at the following days & times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00AM, The Third Hour

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00AM Orthros & 10:00AM Divine Liturgy

**WE'VE BEGUN PRAYING** the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It lasts less than 20 minutes or so. Come join us!

**PRAYER OPPORTUNITES AROUND TOWN** –Most Holy Trinity parish will be hosting a Men's Holy Hour every Friday morning from 6-7am. There will also be a coffee hour and reflection time afterwards – Men from all parishes are invited to attend for whatever portion of the time they are available. For the Ladies – St. Joseph's will be hosting a Women's Holy Hour on the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

# Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 6)



The an - ge - lic Pow - ers were a-round Your tomb,



and the guards be - came as dead; and Ma - ry



stood at the tomb seek - ing Your spot-less bo - dy;



then You des - poi - led Ha-des with - out be-ing



tried by it, and You met the Vir - gin, O Be-stow-er of



Life. O Lord who rose from the dead, glo - ry to You.

# Kondakion of the Nativity of Mary

(Tone 4)



Through your ho-ly birth, O Im - ma - cu - late One, Jo-a-



- chim and Ann were de - li - vered from the shame of



child - less - ness, and A - dam and Eve from the cor - rup - tion



of death. Your peo - ple re - deemed from the debt of



their sins ce - le - brate your birth cry - ing out



to you: the bar - ren one gives birth to the Mo - ther of



God, the Sus - tai - ner of our life.

## Prokimenon

**Reader:** O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance!

**All:** O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance!

**Reader:** To you, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

**All:** O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance!

**Reader:** O Lord, save your people

**All:** And bless your inheritance!

### Readings for the Week:

Monday:	Gal 4:28-5:11	Luke 3:19-22
Tuesday:	Gal 5:11-21	Luke 3:23-38
Wednesday:	Gal 6:2-10	Luke 4:1-15
Thursday:	Eph 1:1-9	Luke 4:16-22
Friday:	Eph 1:7-17	Luke 4:22-30
Saturday:	1 <sup>st</sup> Cor 10:23-28	Luke 4:31-37

### Saints of the Week:

<b>Sept. 10:</b> 3rd Day of the Nativity of the Mother of God; the martyrs Menodora, Metrodora & Nymphodora
<b>Sept. 11:</b> 4th Day of the Nativity of the Mother of God; Holy Mother Theodora of Alexandria
<b>Sept. 12:</b> Leave-taking of the Nativity; the martyr Autonomos
<b>Sept. 13:</b> Preparation for the Exaltation of the Cross; Hieromartyr Cornelius the Centurion
<b>Sept. 14: Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross</b>
<b>Sept. 15:</b> 2nd day of the Exaltation of the Cross; Holy martyr Nicetas
<b>Sept. 16:</b> 3rd day of the Exaltation of the Cross; Holy Great-Martyr Euphemia
<b>Sept. 17:</b> 4th Day of the Cross; Holy martyr Sophie and her daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity



## Word Search

D	A	H	S	I	W	E	L	X	M	T	M	L	G
G	S	E	V	E	I	L	E	B	N	U	X	R	Y
J	O	Q	M	U	J	T	M	E	J	F	E	G	E
L	N	N	H	O	M	J	P	T	A	K	C	H	G
U	O	N	D	A	R	R	O	W	L	B	A	M	Z
Z	F	E	I	E	E	G	B	F	E	N	F	O	A
L	M	F	E	S	S	J	B	L	G	E	H	S	M
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S	F	E	O	E	J	W	N	V	U	H	A	T	I
C	G	N	I	T	S	A	L	R	E	V	E	S	S
Y	D	E	T	F	I	L	F	Z	E	Q	Q	S	H
Z	Q	L	N	O	S	H	M	S	A	V	E	D	U

Believe  
Believe  
Desert  
Everlasting  
Heaven  
Judge  
Life  
Lifted

Lord  
Moses  
No One  
Perish  
Saved  
Serpent  
Son  
Son of Man

# **Parish Information:**

**Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD**  
**Pastor**

**[abounamike@aol.com](mailto:abounamike@aol.com)**

**Knights of Columbus**  
**JFK Council**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
Most Holy Trinity

**4<sup>th</sup> Degree Assembly**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
St. Ignatios

**Publicans Prayer Group**  
Postponed until Further Notice

**New Parishioners:**  
Please register with Fr. Michael.

**Mystery of Holy Confession**  
Please contact Fr. Michael to set up a convenient time.

**Mystery of Christian Initiation**  
Expectant parents should notify Fr. Michael prior to the birth of the child. Adult converts should contact Fr. Michael so arrangements may be made for any necessary instruction and sacraments.

**Mystery of Holy Crowning**  
Those planning to marry should notify the Fr. Michael  
at least six months prior to the desired Wedding date.

**Mystery of Holy Anointing**  
Please notify Fr. Michael when you or a family member is in need of anointing.

To report sexual abuse by clergy, parish personnel or volunteers of the Eparchy of Newton, please call the **Victim Assistance Coordinator** at 1-800-479-5910.