

September 21

Leave-taking of the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross (1st Class)

Before Vespers, the Holy Cross is brought forth to the Holy Place, and a lamp burns before it.

GREAT VESPERS

At "O Lord, to You I call..."

Stichera of the Feast (Tone 6)

6. By its elevation, the Cross is like an appeal to the whole creation to adore the blessed Passion of Christ our God who was suspended on it, for Christ destroyed by this Cross the one who had destroyed us. In His great goodness, He brought us back to life after we had been dead, and He beatified us and made us worthy of heaven, for He is merciful. Wherefore, we exalt His name with great rejoicing and glorify His infinite condescension.
5. By its elevation... *(Repeat)*
4. O precious Cross of the Lord, Moses prefigured you when he stretched out his arms to heaven and thus defeated the haughty Amalek. You are the pride of the faithful, the strength of those who struggle. You are the beauty of the apostles, the courage of the just and salvation of all the saints. Wherefore, at the sight of your elevation, the whole creation rejoices and exults and glorifies Christ whose goodness tied all things into one.
3. O precious Cross... *(Repeat)*

2. O most venerable Cross of the Lord, the angels surround you with joy. By your elevation today, you raise those who had been cast down and delivered to death for having eaten of the forbidden tree. Wherefore we honor you in the faith of our hearts and praise you with our lips, begging for sanctification and saying, "Exalt the supreme goodness of Christ our God, O you nations, and adore His divine footstool forever!"
1. O most venerable... *(Repeat)*
- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Stavrotheotokion (Tone 2)

Come, all you nations, let us bow in worship to the blessed Cross of the Lord through which eternal justice came to us. He who deceived Adam, the first man, was conquered by a tree; and the same who fettered the royal creation by his guile has been cast down into nothingness. The serpent's venom has been washed away by the divine blood of Christ, and the curse of sin has been lifted by a rightful sentence when the just Christ was condemned unjustly. By God' plan, death that had come from a tree would be conquered by a tree, and suffering would be healed by the suffering of the Lord. Glory be to the active presence of Your providence in our lives, O Christ our king: Through it, You have brought about salvation for all, O You who are gracious and the Lover of mankind!

Entrance. "O Joyful Light..." Prokimenon of Wednesday evening.

APOSTICHA (*Tone 5*)

1. Hail, life-bearing Cross of the Lord, invincible triumph of Orthodoxy! You are the gate to Paradise, the strength of the faithful, the stronghold of the Church. Because of you, corruption no longer has any meaning nor any power: we have been lifted up by you from earth to heaven. You are an invincible weapon against evil, a glory indeed for saints and martyrs and a haven of salvation; you are a source of mercy to the world.
- v. Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool, for He is holy.
2. Hail, most honorable Cross of the Lord! Through you mankind has been relieved of the curse. You are a sign of joy, indeed, and terror to our spiritual enemies. You are the help of Christians, the glory of Kings, the strength of the just, the splendor of priests, a staff of power to your people and a source of peace. Around you the angels gather in awe. You are the glory of Christ who grants great mercy to the world.
- v. The Lord is King from of old, and He has brought about salvation in the midst of the earth.
3. Hail, precious Cross of the Lord, guide to the blind, physician to the sick and resurrection to all the dead. You lifted us out of corruption and removed the curse; through you, we have been made godly, and the power of Hades has been destroyed in full. Wherefore, seeing you today lifted up by our priests, we exalt Christ who was suspended on you, and we bow deeply before you, seeking forgiveness and great mercy.

- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Tone 8)

O Christ God, we poor sinners bow deeply today before Your precious Cross. Moses had prefigured it in himself when he defeated Amalek, and David the Psalmist, when he told us to "worship at His footstool". Wherefore, with unworthy lips we sing a hymn of praise to You who condescended to be nailed on this Cross and with the thief, we cry out to You: "O Lord, make us worthy of Your Kingdom!"

TROPARION OF THE CROSS *(Tone 1)*

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Grant victory to our country over its enemies; and preserve Your community by the power of Your Cross! *(Three times)*

(or) O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting peace to the world; and preserve Your community by the power of Your Cross! *(Three times)*