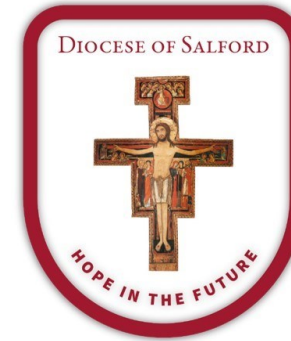


Story of the true Cross

After the death and resurrection of Christ, both the Jewish and Roman authorities in Jerusalem made efforts to obscure the Holy Sepulchre, Christ's tomb in the garden near the site of His crucifixion. The earth had been mounded up over the site, and pagan temples had been built on top of it. The Cross on which Christ had died had been hidden by the Jewish authorities somewhere in the vicinity. According to tradition, first mentioned by Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in 348, Saint Helena, nearing the end of her life, decided under divine inspiration to travel to Jerusalem in 326 to excavate the Holy Sepulchre and attempt to locate the True Cross. A Jew by the name of Judas, aware of the tradition concerning the hiding of the Cross, led those excavating the Holy Sepulchre to the spot in which it was hidden. Three crosses were found on the spot. According to one tradition, the inscription *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* ("Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews") remained attached to the True Cross. According to a more common tradition, however, the inscription was missing, and Saint Helena and Saint Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem, assuming that one was the True Cross and the other two belonged to the thieves crucified alongside Christ, devised an experiment to determine which was the True Cross. In one version of the latter tradition, the three crosses were taken to a woman who was near death; when she touched the True Cross, she was healed. In another, the body of a dead man was brought to the place where the three crosses were found, and laid upon each cross. The True Cross restored the dead man to life.

In celebration of the discovery of the Holy Cross, Constantine ordered the construction of churches at the site of the Holy Sepulchre and on Mount Calvary. Those churches were dedicated on September 13 and 14, 335, and shortly thereafter the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross began to be celebrated on the latter date. In the early seventh century, the Persians conquered Jerusalem, and the Persian king Khosrau II captured the True Cross and took it back to Persia. After Khosrau's defeat by Emperor Heraclius II, Khosrau's own son had him assassinated in 628 and returned the True Cross to Heraclius. In 629, Heraclius, having initially taken the True Cross to Constantinople, decided to restore it to Jerusalem. Tradition says that he carried the Cross on his own back, but when he attempted to enter the church on Mount Calvary, a strange force stopped him. Patriarch Zacharias of Jerusalem, seeing the emperor struggling, advised him to take off his royal robes and crown and to dress in a penitential robe instead. As soon as Heraclius took Zacharias' advice, he was able to carry the True Cross into the church. We celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross on Monday, 14th September.



DEVELOPING & SUPPORTING
SCHOOL &
PARISH LINKS

Staff Liturgy The Exaltation of the Cross



I asked Jesus, 'How much do you love me?' And Jesus said, 'This much.' Then He stretched out His arms and died.

Opening Prayer

O God, who willed that your Only Begotten Son should undergo the Cross to save the human race, grant, we pray, that we, who have known his mystery on earth, may merit the grace of his redemption in heaven.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
Amen.

Reflection

Christ's cross, the crucifix, is the definitive revelation of the fact that we are loved totally by the one person, who knows us through and through, God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." But if we don't contemplate Jesus, how will we learn to really believe in him, to believe in his love for us? It is not enough to hang crucifixes on the walls of our classrooms or homes, to wear crucifixes around our necks, to dangle them from our rear-view mirrors. Those are all good and necessary things, but to unleash God's transforming power in our lives and our world, we must go deeper, planting the crucifix firmly in the soil of our hearts. We can only do that through prayer, through devolving a real, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In the words of Pope Benedict, "There is no greater richness than to enjoy friendship with Christ and to walk beside him." Let's pray that gazing on Christ on the Cross we will deepen our faith so that the triumph of his cross will become the triumph of his love in us.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 2:6-11

His state was divine,
yet Christ Jesus did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Carry your Cross

- Carry this Cross in your phone case, wallet, hand-bag or pocket as a reminder of how much Jesus loves you.
- On the back write the name of someone you know who is carrying crosses at the moment.
- In this way we carry them with us physically and spiritually, showing our solidarity with them and asking God to help them.

**FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE WORLD
THAT HE
GAVE HIS
ONE AND ONLY SON
THAT
WHOEVER
BELIEVES
IN HIM
SHALL NOT
PERISH
BUT HAVE
ETERNAL
LIFE
JOHN 3:16**