



The Parish Voice

St. Mary's Assyrian Chaldean Catholic Church of San Jose . 109 North First Street, Campbell, CA 95008
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The True Cross of Jesus GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CULT

The Cross to which Christ had been nailed, and on which He had died, became for Christians, quite naturally and logically, the object of a special respect and worship. St. Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 1:17: "For Christ sent me not to baptize; but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void"; in Galatians 2:19: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross"; in Ephesians 2:16: Christ . . . "might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross"; in Philippians 3:18: "For many walk . . . enemies of the cross of Christ"; in Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross"; and in Galatians 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world".

It seems clear, therefore, that for St. Paul the Cross of Christ was not only a precious remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death, but also a symbol closely associated with His sacrifice and the mystery of the Passion. It was, moreover, natural that it should be venerated and become an object of a cult with the Christians who had been saved by it. Of such a cult in the Primitive Church we have definite and sufficiently numerous evidences. Tertullian meets the objection that Christians adore the cross by answering with an *argumentum ad hominem*, not by a denial. Another apologist, Minucius Felix, replies to the same objection. Lastly we may recall the famous caricature of Alexamenos, for which see the article *Ass.* From all this it appears that the pagans, without further consideration of the matter, believed that the Christians adored the cross; and that the apologists either answered indirectly, or contented themselves with saying that they do not adore the cross, without denying that a certain form of veneration was paid to it.

It is also an accepted belief that in the decorations of the catacombs there have been found, if not the cross itself, at least more or less veiled allusions to the holy symbol. A detailed treatment of this and other historical evidence for the early prevalence of the cult will be found in *ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CROSS AND CRUCIFIX*.

This cult became more extensive than ever after the discovery of the Holy Places and of the True Cross. Since the time when Jerusalem had been laid waste and ruined in the wars of the Romans, especially since Hadrian had founded upon the ruins his colony of *Ælia Capitolina*, the places consecrated by the Passion, Death, and Burial of Christ had been profaned and, it would seem, deserted. Under Constantine, after peace had been vouchsafed to the Church, Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, caused excavations to be made (about A.D. 327, it is believed) in order to ascertain the location of these holy sites. That of Calvary was identified, as well as that of the Holy Sepulchre; it was in the course of these excavations that the wood of the Cross was recovered. It was recognized as authentic, and for it was built a chapel or oratory, which is mentioned by

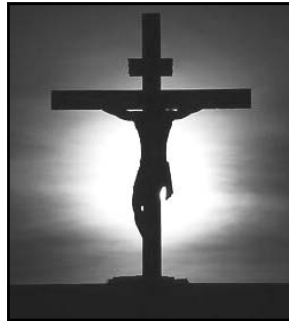
Eusebius, also by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and Silvia (Etheria). From A.D. 347, that is to say, twenty years after these excavations, the same St. Cyril, in his discourses (or catecheses) delivered in these very places (iv, 10; x, 14; xiii, 4) speaks of this sacred wood. An inscription of A.D. 359, found at Tixter, in the neighbourhood of Sétif in Mauretania, mentions in an enumeration of relics, a fragment of the True Cross (Roman Miscellanies, X, 441). For a full discussion of the legend of St. Helena, see *ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CROSS AND CRUCIFIX*; see also *ST. HELENA*. Silvia's recital (*Peregrinatio Etheriae*), which is of indisputable authenticity,

tells how the sacred wood was venerated in Jerusalem about A.D. 380. On Good Friday, at eight o'clock in the morning, the faithful and the monks assemble in the chapel of the Cross (built on a site hard by Calvary), and at this spot the ceremony of the adoration takes place. The bishop is seated on his chair; before him is a table covered with a cloth; the deacons are standing around him. The silver-gilt reliquary is brought and opened and the sacred wood of the Cross, with the Title, is placed on the table. The bishop stretches out his hand over the holy relic, and the deacons keep watch with him while the faithful and catechumens defile, one by one, before the table, bow, and kiss the Cross; they touch the Cross and the Title with forehead and eyes, but it is

forbidden to touch them with the hands. This minute watchfulness was not unnecessary, for it has been told in fact how one day one of the faithful, making as though to kiss the Cross, was so unscrupulous as to bite off a piece of it, which he carried off as a relic. It is the duty of the deacons to prevent the repetition of such a crime. St. Cyril, who also tells of this ceremony, makes his account much more brief but adds the important detail, that relics of the True Cross have been distributed all over the world. He adds some information as to the silver reliquary which contained the True Cross. (See Cabrol, *La Peregrinatio ad loca sancta*, 105.) In several other passages of the same work Silvia (also called Egeria, Echeria, Eiheria, and Etheria) speaks to us of this chapel of the Cross (built between the basilicas of the Anastasis and the Martyrion) which plays so great a part in the paschal liturgy of Jerusalem.

A law of Theodosius and of Valentinian III (*Cod. Justin.*, I, tit. vii) forbade under the gravest penalties any painting, carving, or engraving of the cross on pavements, so that this august sign of our salvation might not be trodden under foot. This law was revised by the Trullan Council, A.D. 691 (canon lxxii). Julian the Apostate, on the other hand, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Contra Julian.*, vi, in *Opp.*, VI), made it a crime for Christians to adore the wood of the Cross, to trace its form upon their foreheads, and to engrave it over the entrances of their homes. St. John Chrysostom more than once in his writings makes allusion to the adoration of the cross; one citation will suffice: "Kings removing their diadems take up the cross, the symbol of their Saviour's death; on the purple, the cross; in their prayers, the cross; on their armour, the cross; on the holy

Continued on page 2



Continued from Page 1

table, the cross; throughout the universe, the cross. The cross shines brighter than the sun." These quotations from St. Chrysostom may be found in the authorities to be named at the end of this article. At the same time, pilgrimages to the holy places became more frequent, and especially for the purpose of following the example set by St. Helena in venerating the True Cross. Saint Jerome, describing the pilgrimage of St. Paula to the Holy Places, tells us that "prostrate before the Cross, she adored it as though she had seen the Saviour hanging upon it" (Ep. cviii). It is a remarkable fact that even the Iconoclasts, who fought with such zeal against images and representations in relief, made an exception in the case of the cross. Thus we find the image of the cross on the coins of the Iconoclastic emperors, Leo the Isaurian, Constantine Copronymus, Leo IV, Nicephorus, Michael II, and Theophilus (cf. Banduri, Numism. Imperat. Rom., II). Sometimes this cult involved abuses. Thus we are told of the Staurologues, or those who adore the cross; the Chazungarii (from chazus, cross), a sect of Armenians who adore the cross. The Second Council of Nicæa (A.D. 787), held for the purpose of reforming abuses and putting an end to the disputes of Iconoclasm, fixed, once for all, the Catholic doctrine and discipline on this point. It defined that

the veneration of the faithful was due to the form "of the precious and vivifying cross", as well as to images or representations of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the saints. But the council points out that we must not render to these objects the cult of latria, which, according to the teaching of the faith, "belongs to the Divine nature alone . . ." . The honour paid to the image passes to the prototype; and he who adores the image, adores the person whom it represents. Thus the doctrine of our holy fathers obtains in all its force: the tradition of the Holy Catholic Church which from one end of the earth to the other has received the gospel." This decree was renewed at the Eighth oecumenical Council at Constantinople, in 869 (can. iii). The council clearly distinguishes between the "salutation" (aspasmus) and "veneration" (proskynesis) due to the cross, and the "true adoration" (alethine latreia), which should not be paid to it. Theodore the Studite, the great adversary of the Iconoclasts, also makes a very exact distinction between the adoratio relativa (proskynesis schetike) and adoration properly so called.

From the Catholic Encyclopedia

Baptisms in Our Church

On Saturday May 5, 2007 Sheridan Hope Jarmen Cabi was baptized in our church. She was born in San Jose on 10/26/2006. She is the second child of Nicolas Cabi and Karen Eliasi Cabi.



On Sunday, July 22, 2007 Gianni Rofa was baptized in our church. He was born in Santa Clara on 3/20/2007. He is the child of Wisam and Domarina Rofa.



On Sunday August 19, 2007 Ashton Derazizyan was baptized in our church. He was born in Los Gatos on 8/18/2006. He is the second child of Radne Derazizya and Donna Mirzayo Derazizyan.



May God bless them all!

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Parish News And Events

Friday Classes

On Friday, September 22, 2007 we will start with Classes of Assyrian language and Bible Study for children of six years and older. We ask all the parents to bring their children to these classes where they can learn about their faith and language. The classes are from 5:30-7:30 p.m. every Friday.

Special Thanks

We would like to thank all the Auxiliary Ladies and all the people who helped them for Dukhrana of Mar-Maryam on August 19, 2007. About 400 people attended the Mass and Celebration in the hall and backyard. They made \$7000.00 net profit for the church.

May God bless them all.




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