

Sunday, September 30, 2012

Honoring the Cross

Our Orthodox Church greatly honors the cross. We frequently make the sign of the cross, we wear the cross, and we honor it, Why?

1. When we make the sign of the cross, we remember God's love towards us for the cross is the greatest manifestation of God's love towards mankind.

2. When we make the sign of the cross, we declare that we are followers of the Crucified and assert that carrying the cross with Him is an essential condition of discipleship. (Luke 14: 27)

3. When we make the sign of the cross, we declare our belief in the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

4. The passion of Christ and His crucifixion is the source of our pride because it is an indication of His great love for us. (Galatians 6:14)

5. Making the sign of the cross gives us power and blessing because the cross is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1: 24).

6. The devils are afraid of the cross because it is a sign of our salvation and liberation. With it, Satan was conquered, his sting was defeated, and his dominion was ceased.

7. Early Christians, since the time of the apostles, used to make the sign of the cross and were proud of it. Many of the early fathers spoke about the cross.

+ **“Christians make the sign of the cross in everything they do. From the moment they wake up in the morning until they sleep.”** St. Justin Martyr, 2nd century.

+ **“Making the sign of the cross is an oral tradition that was carried throughout the generations of early Christians starting from the Apostles as a sign of victory over sin.”** St. Basil the Great, 4th century.

How do we make the sign of the cross and what does it mean?

+ **In the name of the Father:** we put the hand on the forehead because the Heavenly Father is above all, and He loves us and takes care of us, has adopted us, sent His Son to redeem us.

+ **And the Son:** we move our hand down to the abdomen, since the Son came down to our earth and was incarnate in the womb of St. Mary to save us.

+ **And the Holy Spirit:** we move the hand from the left shoulder to the right shoulder because the work of the Holy Spirit moves us from left to right, from sin to righteousness.

The Feasts of the Cross

The church celebrates the feast of the cross twice.

The first one is to commemorate the discovery of the cross by Queen Helen at the tenth of Baramhat (March 19), this feast is only one day.

The second is to commemorate the consecration of the Church of the cross in Jerusalem on 17th of Tout, (September 27th or 28th). This feast spans three days.

The feasts of the cross are considered to be like the Lords' feasts and their rites are according to Palm Sunday rites.

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