



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

(Rite of Blessing)

RITE OF EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

A table, covered with a white cloth, is prepared within the sanctuary. On it are placed a large cross (without the body on the cross), a vessel filled with water, and a hand cross.

The rite of the exaltation of the cross takes place after the homily.

Supplication

SIT

Syriac: *bo'ooto dmor afrem*

1. When the cross of light appeared, Constantine was filled with awe.
He took heart and gained new strength and he fought triumphantly.
Now the faithful Church, O Lord, looks upon your saving cross.
May it be her strong defense in her fight with Satan's power.

2. Lord, today your holy Church honors and exalts your cross.
Lift her head above all fears and the worship of false gods.
Blessèd be your flock, O Lord, for the gifts you gave to her:
She is guarded by your cross and is served by faithful priests.

3. We exalt the cross of life and the standard of our King.
From the cross God's mercy flows here and in the world to come.
All in heaven and on earth, come rejoice with us today!
Glorify our Lord and God, who has saved us by his cross!

4. Praise the Father, who has sent his only-begotten Son.
Let us thank the Son, who died; by his cross he saved the world.
To the Holy Spirit sing, for he fills our hearts with joy.
Glorify the Trinity; may his mercy shine on us.

PROCESSION

The priest holds the cross, draped with a white cloth, and carries it in procession. All process around the church three times, while the cross is incensed. The following or other appropriate hymns are sung until the end of the procession.

Hymn

STAND

Syriac: *z'oooro*

1. On this day the blessed Church
sings with joy throughout the world.
She rejoices in the cross.
Come exalt the cross of life!
2. By the cross we have been saved;
death and Satan have been crushed.
Hope is given to the world.
Come exalt the cross of life!
3. Let us praise the Son of God,
who was crucified for us.
By his death we are redeemed.
Come exalt the cross of life!
4. Children of the Church, proclaim:
“Lord, have mercy on us all!”
Praise our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Come exalt the cross of life!

SOLEMN BLESSING WITH THE GLORIOUS CROSS

Blessing of the East Side of the Altar

Cel: May your salvation, O Lord, reach your Church who believes in you and is glorified by your cross. By its sign, may Christians be protected from all enemies, seen and unseen. We now implore your mercy and cry out three times:

All: Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*

Hymn

Syriac: *lhodaow etqaba'*

1. All the earth shook,
quaked, and trembled,
when the Lord, on the cross, died.
For the people
crucified him,
Jesus Christ, King of Glory.
Death was fearful
when it saw him,
and the dead rose to praise him.
Now the Church sings
and gives honor
to the cross of her Savior.

She cries out today in faith:
"Grant your mercy, Lord, we pray!"

Blessing of the West Side of the Altar

Cel: O Lord, the Church, your bride, sings your glory, and with your living cross she signs your children. She overcomes evil, her enemy, with your strength and awaits a complete victory. We now implore the Son who was crucified on the cross: "Be gracious, O Lord, to your people and do not forget your inheritance." We cry out three times:

All: Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*

Hymn

Syriac: *lhodaow etqaba'*

2. Paul and Peter;
all Apostles,
on this day sing God's praises!
For all nations
were converted
when you taught them the Gospel.
They give honor
and raise glory
to the cross of their Savior.
As they praise it,
with the angels,
they sing hymns of rejoicing.

They cry out today in faith:
"Grant your mercy, Lord, we pray!"

Blessing of the South Side of the Altar

Cel: With the sign of the cross of light Moses divided the sea for the Israelites, he raised up the bronze serpent to heal poisonous snake bites, and he extended his hands on high and defeated Amalek and his people. O Lord, may we overcome all arrogance against your Church, for she was saved by your cross. We now implore your mercy upon us and cry out three times:

All: Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*

Hymn

Syriac: *lhodaow etqaba'*

3. On this day, Lord,
we give honor
to your cross that has saved us.
And with great joy
we exalt it
through the hands of your priests, Lord.
By your cross, Lord,
you defend us
from all harm and from evil.
Now the Church sings,
while rejoicing,
for the cross is her refuge.

She cries out today in faith:
“Grant your mercy, Lord, we pray!”

Blessing of the North Side of the Altar

Cel: By raising the life-giving cross to the east, west, south, and north, the whole universe is sanctified. All those who seek refuge under its wings are delivered from the power of evil. May our souls, minds, and bodies be marked as were the thresholds of the houses of the children of Israel. We now implore you and cry out three times:

All: Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*
Lord, have mercy. *Kyrie eleison.*

Hymn

Syriac: *lhoodaow etqaba'*

4. Signs and symbols
have prefigured,
Lord, your cross of salvation.
Moses showed us,
as did Aaron,
that your cross has true power.
For they triumphed
over evil
by the sign of your cross, Lord.
In the Church now
its great power
is proclaimed to all peoples.

We cry out today in faith:
“Grant your mercy, Lord, we pray!”

BLESSING AND SPRINKLING OF WATER

The Celebrant and the ministers assemble around the table where a vessel of water has been placed.

Cel: Lord God,
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
bless ✠ this water,
so that it may turn all that is evil away from us.
May those who use it
for drinking, washing, sprinkling,
or in any other way
receive healing for their souls and bodies.
We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

The Celebrant uses the hand cross to sprinkle the blessed water on the congregation, while the following Scripture verse is sung.

Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be pure:
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:9)

D G D

Cleanse me with hys-sop, and I shall be pure; wash me, and I shall be

7 G A Bm Em A7 D

whi - ter than snow, whi - ter than snow.

Concluding Prayer

Cel: O Lord, we pray on behalf of this holy Church and for every city and place throughout the world. With this water, spare us from the ravages of war and hunger and from every human and natural disaster. Answer our petitions, have mercy on your people, and save your inheritance, for you are gracious and the Lover of all people. O Lord our God, to you be glory, now and for ever.

Cong: Amen.

The Celebrant invites the members of the congregation to come forward and reverence the cross. However, for reasons of convenience this may take place at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Creed

Please turn to page 748 of the Book of Offering