

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1, 2021
PROCESSION OF THE HONORABLE WOOD OF
THE LIFE-GIVING CROSS OF THE LORD
HOLY SEVEN MACCABEAN MARTYRS

The origin of this Feast is explained in the Greek *Horologion* of 1897: “Because of the illnesses which occur during the month of August, it was customary at Constantinople to carry the Precious Wood of the Cross in procession throughout the city for its sanctification, and to deliver it from sickness.”

On the eve (July 31), the Cross was removed from the imperial treasury and placed it upon the Holy Table of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia (which is dedicated to Christ, the Wisdom of God). From August 1 until the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, there was a procession throughout the entire the city, and then the Cross was placed where all the people could venerate it.

In the Russian Church this Feast is combined with the remembrance of the Baptism of Rus on August 1, 988. In the “The order of services for the holy, catholic, and apostolic Great Church of the Dormition,” which was compiled in 1627 by order of Patriarch Philaret of Moscow and All Rus, there is a similar explanation of the Feast: "On the day of the Procession of the Precious Cross there is a Cross Procession with the Sanctification of Water, for the enlightenment of the people, in all the towns and places."

Knowledge of the day of the actual Baptism of Rus is preserved in the Chronicles of the XVI century: “The Baptism of the Great Prince Vladimir of Kiev and of all Rus took place on August 1.”

In the current practice of the Russian Church, the service of the Lesser Sanctification of Water on August 1 takes place either before or after Liturgy. Because of the Blessing of Water, this first Feast of the Savior in August is sometimes called “the Savior of the Water.” Along with the Blessing of Water, there may also be a Blessing of Honey (thus it is also called “the Savior of the Honey),” because on this day, the newly-gathered honey is blessed and tasted.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: *(Four stikhera of the resurrection in tone 5, followed by three stikhera of the Cross, and three stikhera of the Martyrs)*

Resurrection, tone 5:

By Your precious Cross, O Christ,
You have put the devil to shame.

By Your Resurrection, You have blunted the sting of sin
and saved us from the gates of death.//

We glorify You, the only begotten One.

Christ was led as a sheep to the slaughter
in order to grant Resurrection to the human race.
The princes of hell were frightened by this,
for the gates of sorrow were lifted.
Christ the King of glory had entered,
saying to those in chains: “Go forth!”//
And to those in darkness: “Come to the light!”

Oh, great wonder!
The Creator of the invisible suffered in the flesh in His love for mankind
and rose again immortal.
Come, O sons of nations,
let us worship Him,
for delivered from error by His compassion,//
we have learned to sing of one God in three Persons!

We offer You our evening worship,
O never setting Light,
Who came in these last days to the world in the flesh;
Who even descended to hell to dispel its darkness.
You have revealed the light of Resurrection to the nations.//
Glory to You, O Lord and Giver of light!

Cross, tone 4:

Today the divine assembly of the faithful rejoices
For the Cross appears throughout the world!
It illuminates the heavens with ineffable light,
Brightens the air, adorning the face of the earth.
The church of Christ exults with divine singing,
Venerating and serving the holy and wondrous Cross which preserves her from above.
As we are strengthened by Its power, let us approach the Master saying://
Grant peace to the world, and enlighten our souls!

Let all creation rejoice and dance!
For today the Cross shines from heaven to the ends of the earth!
It enlightens those who are born on earth,
Bringing them to unity.
Today mankind exults with the choirs of angels,
For the Cross has destroyed the dividing walls
And gathered all into one.

Shining brighter than the sun, It enlightens all creation with grace,//
Showing salvation plainly to those who honor It in faith!

Shining brighter than the sun,
Revealing Itself to the world as the sceptre of Christ the king,
It shines to all the ends of the earth.
It has brought the human race out of hell.
And having despoiled hell and overthrown the enemy,
It vanquishes the arrogance of demons.
Now It declares the resurrection of the Savior, and saves all who cry://
Grant peace to the world, and enlighten our souls!

Martyrs, tone 1:

Persecution did not shake the roof of the law,
Firmly upheld by seven pillars.
For they bravely endured the senseless fury of their tormenter,
Giving their bodies to the executioners:
These noble young men and brothers,//
Guardians of the oracles of Moses.

Raising their minds above visible things,
Their bodily limbs cut down,
The brave and righteous youths, with their divinely-wise mother,
Were strengthened by the great hopes which have been fulfilled,//
As they now rest in the bosom of their forefather Abraham!

Most holy Eleazer,
The young men and their divinely wise mother,
Arming themselves firmly with youthful boldness of soul,
Gathering strength from zeal,
Steadfastly attacked the adversary for the sake of piety,//
To preserve the law of their fathers.

GLORY... for the Cross, tone 8:

In ancient times, Moses prefigured the Cross,
Casting down Amalek in defeat;
Your Cross is the footstool David the psalmist proclaimed worthy of veneration!
We sinners honor It today with unworthy lips, Christ our God.
We entreat You, for You were freely nailed upon it://
Lord, with the thief, make us worthy of Your kingdom!

NOW AND EVER... Dogmatic of the Resurrection in tone 5:

In the Red Sea of old,

a type of the Virgin Bride was prefigured.
There Moses divided the waters;
here Gabriel assisted in the miracle.
There Israel crossed the sea without getting wet,
here the Virgin gave birth to Christ without seed.
After Israel's passage, the sea remained impassable;
after Emmanuel's birth, the Virgin remained a Virgin.
O ever-existing God, Who appeared as Man, //
O Lord, have mercy on us!

APOSTIKHA: All Resurrection in tone 5:

We magnify You in songs of praise,
O incarnate Christ and Savior.
By accepting the Cross and death for our sake,
as the Lord and Lover of mankind,
You overthrew the gates of hell, //
and arose on the third day, saving our souls.

By being pierced in the side, O Lover of mankind,
You have poured out drops of life and salvation for all.
By accepting death in the flesh, You have granted us immortality.
You have freed us by being placed in the tomb,
and have resurrected us with Yourself in glory, as God. //
Glory to You, O Lord and Lover of mankind!

Your crucifixion and descent into hell are awesome, O Lover of mankind.
You have captured it, releasing the ancient prisoners.
You have opened Paradise and given it to us.
Grant us purification of sins,
who glorify Your Resurrection on the third day!
Make us worthy of Paradise //
and save us, O Lover of mankind!

For our sake, You accepted death in the flesh,
to rise from the dead on the third day.
Heal us from our earthly passions,
and restore us from our evil transgressions; //
and save us, O Lover of mankind!

GLORY ... for the Marytrs, tone 8:

The souls of the just are in the hands of God:
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the forefathers before the law,

And their inheritance, the Maccabees whom now we praise.
For these sons of Abraham followed him in the faith with strength of soul,
Wrestling even to death for the sake of godliness.
Raised in reverence and striving worthily,
They reprov'd the godless Antiochus.
For the sake of eternal life they scorn'd the things of this world,
Setting aside for God their lives: soul and body!
Holy mother, who brought forth for us these seven sons!
With her, Maccabees, and the wise priest Eleazar,
As you stand before Christ our God for whom you labored,
Entering into the fruits of your reward,
Ever pray to Him for mankind.//
For according to His will, He answers those who pray to Him in faith!

NOW AND EVER... for the Cross, tone 8:

The voice of Your prophet Moses cried out, O God:
Behold Your life as it hangs before Your eyes!
So today the Cross is lifted up and the world set free from error.
Today Christ's resurrection is renewed!
The ends of the earth rejoice with David in songs and cymbals:
O God, you have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth:
The crucifixion and resurrection by which we are saved!//
All-powerful, good Lord, the Lover of mankind, glory to You!

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Maccabees, tone 1:

We beseech You, O Lover of mankind,
to accept in supplication
the suffering which the Saints endured for You, O Lord,//
and heal all our infirmities!

Cross, tone 1:

O Lord, save Your people,
and bless Your inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Your Cross,//
preserve Your habitation!