

The Feast of Holy Cross

Sleebo



St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Syrian Mission Parish
(Spokane, WA)

**"For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved is the power of God."
(1 Cor 1:19)**

This icon celebrates the Festival of Holy Cross ("Sleebo") on September 14th. This Feast commemorates Queen Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, finding the Cross which our Lord was crucified upon in Jerusalem in AD 325. The Syriac icon on the cover of this booklet depicts both St. Helena and Constantine.

The Feast of Holy Cross is about more, however, than the mere commemoration of an historical event. Christians "exalt" the Cross of Christ as the instrument of our salvation. Adoration of the Cross is, thus, adoration of Jesus Christ, God and Man, who suffered and died on this instrument of torture for our redemption from sin and death. The Cross reveals to us that the ultimate way in which our Lord demonstrated what it is to be God was through an act of complete love, humility, and sacrifice. In doing so, Christ also showed us what it means to be a perfect human being, the human being God desires each of us to become.

Information adapted in part from an article written by Rev. Fr. Tenny Thomas:
(www.neamericandiocese.org/feasts-memorials.15/slibo-feast-of-the-holy-cross.aspx)

This Order of the Festival of the Finding of the Cross is based on the prose translation of the *Ma'de'dono* (The Book of the Church Festivals) Published by Metropolitan Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel of blessed memory.

The special hymns for the Holy Qurbana contained in this booklet are adapted from English translations prepared by the Eastern U.S. Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (www.syrianorthodoxchurch.org), and by Bede Griffiths in *The Book of Common Prayer of the Syrian Church* (Gorgias Press, 2005).

The Order of the Festival of the Finding of the Cross
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The Cross is to be placed on a stand before the altar. At the conclusion of the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary, during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the priest carries the Cross while the other clergy and the deacons carry candles, the fans, the Gospel, the saints' relics and the censer. They now proceed in a solemn procession, starting from the northern door of the sanctuary and ending at the southern door. During the procession they shall sing the following hymn:

HYMN

Sung during the procession

(Tune: Haw Dasleebeh Al Kathfeh)

1. Heaven and the earth rejoice
On this feast day of the Cross
And sing glory and praises
To Him Who was crucified

2. Constantine, the victorious,
Beheld the sign of the Cross
And he honored this symbol
In all places and regions

3. In the morning, Constantine
Called his counselors and told them
How the wondrous Cross of light
Appeared to him in the sky

4. Queen Helen, the king's mother,
Went out from Rome with armies
And traveled to discover
The Cross at Jerusalem

5. Helen took the Cross of light
From the soil of that city
And she honored this symbol
In all places and regions
6. When Emperor Constantine
Heard that the Cross had arrived
He joyfully greeted it
And bowed himself before it
7. By Your Cross, all was made new
By it You reconciled all;
By Your Cross all was confirmed
And everything perfected
8. Glory be to You, O Son
And praise be to Your Father;
Thanksgiving to the Spirit.
May mercy be upon us

OPENING PRAYER

Priest: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

People: May His mercy and compassion be upon us, weak and sinful servants, in both worlds forever, Amin.

Priest: O Lord of heavenly peace and natural love, Who reconciled heaven and earth and all therein by His Cross, bring to an end by your crucifixion, O Lord, wrath from this nation and deliver the world and its inhabitants from all violent disturbances. O Son of God, Who suffered for our salvation, To You we offer glory and praise with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People: Amin

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, in Your loving kindness; in the abundance of Your mercy blot out my sin.

Wash me thoroughly from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my fault and my sins are before me always.

Against You only have I sinned and done evil in Your sight, that You may be justified in Your words and vindicated in Your judgment. For I was born in guilt and in sins my mother conceived me.

But You take pleasure in truth and You have made known to me the secrets of Your wisdom. Sprinkle me with Your hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Give me the comfort of Your joy and gladness, and the bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn away Your face from my sins and blot out all my faults.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew Your steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

But restore to me Your joy and Your salvation and let Your glorious spirit sustain me; that I may teach the wicked Your way and sinners may return to You.

Deliver me from blood, O God, God of my salvation, and my tongue shall praise Your justice. Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall sing Your praise.

For You do not take pleasure in sacrifices; by burnt offerings You are not appeased. The sacrifice of God is a humble spirit, a heart that is contrite God will not despise.

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion and build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be satisfied with sacrifices of truth and with whole burnt-offerings; then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

And to you belongs the praise O God. **Barekmor**

ENIYONO

(Tune: Slegebo Otho d'Shaino)

1. The Cross is the sign of peace;
The banner of victory.
We take pride in the true Cross.
By the Cross we are redeemed.
2. The brass serpent lifted up
In the camp of Israelites
Is the likeness which reveals
The precious life-giving Cross.
3. By Your Cross, our Lord Jesus,
And the prayer of Your Mother,
Make peace and tranquility
Reign throughout the creation.
4. Bless'd is He Who made His Cross,
A ladder for Adam's kin
By which prophets, apostles,
And the martyrs ascended.
5. Lord, Your Cross is a pillar
That carries earth and heaven.
Martyrs, like gems tried in fire,
Are all affixed to the Cross.
6. May the Cross of light which was
Revealed to King Constantine
Be a high wall of refuge
For churches and monasteries

7. The Cross reigned over heaven.
The Cross rigned over the earth.
May the Cross be a high wall
For churches and monasteries.
8. In Your Cross, our Lord Jesus
We take refuge all our days.
It spares us from Satan's hand
And makes us inherit life.
9. May He Who carried His Cross
From Zion on His shoulders
Sprinkle the dew of mercies
On the bones of the departed.
10. O Lord, may the departed
Who believed in *the* Trinity
Receive the promise of life
Just as the thief on the cross.

Stoumen Kalos, Kurieleison

HUSOYO

Priest: Let us all pray and beseech the Lord for mercy and compassion.

People: O merciful Lord, have mercy upon us and help us.

Priest: Glory and thanksgiving, praise and adoration, and unceasing exaltation, truly at all times and hours, may we ascribe unto Thee, O Lord.

PROMEON

Priest: Glory to the Savior Who made His Cross a stronghold for His Church and gave His reproach an object of pride to His betrothed; to Whom is due glory, honor and worship at this time of the finding of the Cross and at all festivals, times, hours, seasons and through all the days of our life forever.

People: Amin

SEDRO

Priest: Christ our Lord, when You saw that our human race had become worn out in sin, You were hung on the Cross by Your mercy in order to save us and deliver us who were sinners and in misery. On account of this, we venerate Your Holy Cross, saying: The Cross is an armor which never fails, the Cross is a wall which never falls, the Cross scattered the people, the Cross gathered the nations, the Cross put unbelievers to shame, the Cross crowned the martyrs, the Cross reconciled the heavenly hosts with the dwellers on earth. Therefore, O Lord, by Your Cross wash away our guilt. By Your Cross, forgive our shortcomings. By Your Cross, keep our churches and exalt our monasteries. Make us worthy to worship you on the day of Your revelation from heaven, and may we be protected under the arms of Your Cross. To You, we offer glory and thanksgiving with Your Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People: Amin

Priest: From God may we receive remission of debts and forgiveness of sins of both worlds forever and ever.

People: Amin

QOLO
(*Quqoyo - Tone 8*)

From Rome, the city of kings, to Jerusalem
 Helena the Queen arrived to adore the cross
 She asked the Jews - "where shall I find it?"
 They answered her - "go seek the rabbi
 If you take hold of him he will show you the place
 Where the cross which you have been seeking is buried;"
 Halleluiah – the cross of our Lord... *Barekmor*

Shub'bo... Men olam...

May the pure and holy Cross, which Constantine saw,
 By which he conquered his foes, be a stronghold for
 The Holy Church – and all her children
 And by it may – they be protected.
 May it guard them from Satan who fights against them,
 May they conquer the devil by the holy Cross
 Halleluiah – Halleluiah

Moriyo rabem alayn w'adarayn

BOU'THO OF MOR JACOB OF SARUG

Son who by your cross delivered the Church from sin
 Grant her your peace and keep her children by the cross
 May the peace, which brought peace to those in heav'n and earth
 Bring peace to the holy Church by the cross of light

The wood of the Cross went up from Jerusalem
 And was honored in all places through which it passed
 The King Constantine heard that the Cross had arrived
 He took his army with him and went to meet it

He saw the cross, bowed down and worshipped before it
 And stretched forth his hands, lifting up his voice in praise:
 “Thanks be to Christ, who has given the Cross to me
 That by it I may fight against the enemy.”

Praise to the Father who hid the cross from its foes
 Worship to the Son who revealed it to that king
 Thanksgiving to the Spirit who led Helena
 Lord, beneath the arms of your cross, keep us from harm

By the mercy you showed to the thief on the right
 Son of God, have compassion and mercy on us

ANTIPHON

Moses, the prophet, fashioned the cross by his staff
 As he firmly struck and divided the Red Sea for Israel.
 When he lifted up his hand again on Pharoah and his chariots
 He joined and gathered the waters.
 Thus, by lifting up his hands on the length and breadth of the sea,
 He typified the invincible armor of the Cross.
 On account of this we praise Christ our God for He is glorious!

Maze'qonootho

Lord have compassion on us.
 Regard Your inheritance.
 Exalt Christianity
 By the great sign of Your Cross.
 On account of this we say:

Kurieleison, Kurieleison, Kurieleison

THE WEST

Priest: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

People: May His mercy and compassion be upon us, weak and sinful servants, in both worlds forever, Amin.

Priest: We worship, O Lord, Your Cross and under its arms we are protected. We have taken refuge in its dominion and have driven away the devil by its power. By it we have received the sign of baptism and have inherited sonship. By it we have put off the garments of sin and put on the robes of the Spirit. By it we have fulfilled the Holy Sacraments and have depicted the image of Your clemency. By it we have gained new life that has no ending and have entered into the garden of light as you promised us. And by it, we have cast out the cloud that was in the air and have dwelt with the angels. Therefore, on the day of its discovery, we have honored it and to Your Lordship we have offered praise, beseeching the aid of Your loving-kindness, now and forever.

People: Amin

Canon

By the exaltation of the Cross,
 Which was sprinkled with the blood of the Word Who took flesh,
 The heavenly power and ranks sang praise and rejoiced
 In the festival by which the whole human race was redeemed.
 O nations, offer worship to the great Savior of the Cross
 By Him the world found new life.
 Let us praise always, forever and ever!

Maze'qonootho

The Holy Church, the Lord's bride,
 Takes pride in you and through you
 She and her children are sealed;
 By you she is delivered
 From the guiles of the devil;
 By you she gains victory.
 The Church cries out to her Lord,
 Who was crucified on you,
 "Have compassion on us, Lord.
 Regard your inheritance."

On account of this we say:

Kurieieison, Kurieieison, Kurieieison

THE NORTH

Priest: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

People: May His mercy and compassion be upon us, weak and sinful servants, in both worlds forever, Amin.

Priest: O Token of life, by which we have come to know God, O holy Cross, by which we bless the four quarters of the earth, on which was nailed the Word of God, the Son of the Father, Who was seen in the flesh and Who redeemed us from sin, death and Satan. Now the Holy Church offers glory, crying thrice holy to You, O Immortal One, Who was crucified for us. By Your seal, which we have received, we cross ourselves thrice. May Your image be a stronghold for our help against all those who despise Your truth. To You, we offer praise with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, now and always and forever.

People: Amin

Canon

O thrice blessed wood, on you the Lord of the universe was stretched out;
 By you the evil one, who deceived us on the tree, was cast out;
 By you the adversary was overcome by God stretched out upon you,
 Who granted His great tranquility and peace to our souls.

Maze'qonootho

By the symbol of the Cross,
 Moses divided the sea.
 In the likeness of the Cross,
 The bronze serpent was raised up.
 When Moses stretched out his hands,
 Amalek was defeated.
 Grant to us, therefore, Savior
 That by the holy_Cross
 We may overcome the world
 That rebels against Your Church,
 Which was redeemed through the Cross
 On account of this we say:

Kurieleison, Kurieleison, Kurieleison

THE SOUTH

Priest: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

People: May His mercy and compassion be upon us, weak and sinful servants, in both worlds forever, Amin.

Priest: O Merciful Lord, pour forth Your mercies on the sheep of your pastures, who are saved by Your Cross. O Fountain of goodness, forgive our offenses by Your compassion. O Physician of all the sick, heal our afflictions by Your loving-kindness. O Treasure of benefits, enrich our poverty from Your rich treasures. O Good Shepherd, Who gave up Himself for His sheep that He might gather them from the fall in sin, deliver, O Lord, our minds from erring and all infirmity. Gather us in Your holy habitation. O Heavenly Sacrifice, Who wrought salvation for our souls by His Person, purify our souls and bodies from the defilement of sin and make white our stains with Your pure hyssop, that we may thank Your grace, worship Your compassion and praise Your loving-kindness with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People: Amin

Canon

Because our father Adam
 Stretched out his hand and plucked the fruit in Eden,
 Our Lord stretched out His hand on top of Golgotha
 And became the fruit of life for Adam and all his children.
 On account of this, they honor His Cross and cry out:
 “You are blessed, O God of our Fathers!

Maze'qonootho

Lifting the life-giving Cross
 To the four corners of earth
 Sanctifies the creation.
 Those who take refuge in it
 Shall be guarded from Satan.
 And like the seal marked upon
 The houses of Israel,
 May the senses of our flesh
 And our souls be likewise sealed.

On account of this we say:

Kurieleison, Kurieleison, Kurieleison

QOLO

(d'Kbeeroi Mbarakhto)

On top of the cross
 The Jews made a wine press and they pressed the grape of blessing
 They did not taste it
 The holy Church received it and takes her pleasure in it
 Halleluiah
 Her children drink of it and rejoice in it forever

May the holy cross
 Which Constanine saw in the sky and saved him in battle
 Be a strong fortress
 For the churches and monasteries 'til the end of time
 Halleluiah
 Give peace, Lord, by your cross to the four quarters of the world

Daniel, the prophet¹
Prophesied in the land of Babylon that Christ the King
Shall be put to death
And Jerusalem shall be destroyed because of His death
Halleluiah
Praise to Him and to the Father Who sent Him to save us

“How blessed am I,”
Cried the thief on the cross on the right hand of the Most High
“How blessed am I”
Grant me, Lord to open the door which was closed on Adam
Halleluiah
That I may enter with face unveiled and cry, ‘praise to you’

*The priest holds the cross again in his hands
and completes the Service of the Veneration of the Cross.*

¹ Daniel 9:26

THE BLESSING OF THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD
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Turning to the East, the priest shall say:

Priest: He Whom the angels minister

Response: Holy art Thou O God

Priest: He Whom the cherubim bless

Response: Holy art Thou Almighty

Priest: He Whom the seraphim sanctify

Response: Holy art Thou Immortal

Priest: Sinners, with repentance entreat saying:

Response: O Christ, Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.

(Turning to the West)

Priest: He Whom the fiery hosts praise

Response: Holy art Thou O God

Priest: He Whom the spiritual beings Magnify

Response: Holy art Thou Almighty

Priest: He Whom the mortals worship

Response: Holy art Thou Immortal

Priest: The children of the faithful Church entreat saying:

Response: O Christ, Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.

(Turning to the North)

Priest: He Whom the heavenly beings glorify

Response: Holy art Thou O God

Priest: He Whom those between exalt

Response: Holy art Thou Almighty

Priest: He Whom the earthly beings below glorify

Response: Holy art Thou Immortal

Priest: Sinners with repentance, entreat saying:

Response: O Christ, Who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.

(Turning to the South)

Priest: Lord, have mercy upon us

Response: Lord, be kind and have mercy

Priest: Lord, accept thou our office, and our entreaties and have
mercy on us

Response: Glory be to thee, O God

Priest: Glory be to thee, O Creator

Response: Glory be to thee, O Christ the King who pities His
sinful servants, *Barekmor*.

Our Father, Who art in heaven...

*Quqlion – Tone 8***SERVICE TO THE CROSS**

Through you we shall strike down our enemies, Halleluiah
 In your name we shall trample - on our foes

You have saved us from our foes, Halleluiah
 And have put to shame all our - enemies ...*Barek'mor*

Shub'bo...Men'olam...

EQBO*(Mor Ephrem)*

The cross is our victory
 which destroyed the enemy
 May the cross be a fortress
 for all those who confess it
Stoumenkalos, Kurielaison

QOLO*(d'Traiypoan Olme)*

We fear not the evil one
 because the Lord is with us
 We are clothed in His armor
 And in it we all glory...*Barek'mor*

Shub'bo...

May He, who carried the Cross
 On his shoulder from Zion,
 Sprinkle His dew of mercy
 upon the bones of the dead

Moriyo...

BO'UTHO

(Mor Ephrem)

May the Cross which reigns in heav'n
The same cross which reigns on earth
Be a stronghold for all the
Churches and monasteries

(The Service for the Feast of Holy Cross is Concluded)

Special Hymns for the Holy Qurbana

After the Gospel

(Quqoyo - Tone 8)

From Rome, the city of kings, to Jerusalem
 Helena the Queen arrived to adore the cross
 She asked the Jews - "where shall I find it?"
 They answered her - "go seek the rabbi
 If you take hold of him he will show you the place
 Where the cross which you have been seeking is buried;"
 Halleluiah – the cross of our Lord

Qatholiqi

(During the Fraction)

(Mor Ephrem – Tone 8)

1. O Cross, the tree of Goodness,
 Whose branches are fixed in heav'n
 Your fruits are blessing and life;
 Your drink, the blood of the Lamb.

2. O symbol of the kingdom,
 You shelter the anointed.
 Be their veil when that day comes,
 When all will venerate you.

3. On this Feast of the True Cross
 The Church and her children praise.
 We sing praises to our Lord,
 Who redeemed us by the Cross.

Hoothomo

(Lokb Moriyō Qorenan - Tone 8)

King Constantine saw the Cross and bowed his head
And worshipped it and then said “I acknowledge you,
My Lord and My God, who has given the cross
That by it I may fight against the Evil One”

By your cross – the Church was redeemed

By your cross – her children have life

May your cross be our protection by day and night



*This Booklet has been formatted and adapted for use for St. Gregorios
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Mission Parish (Spokane WA) and is not for
distribution.*