



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 273/2024

**Archepiscopal Encyclical for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross**

September 14, 2024

To the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

The Cross is exalted today, and the cosmos is sanctified... (Exapostilarion)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today, we celebrate the Discovery of the True Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. For centuries, it had lain hidden beneath the rubble and devastation that the Roman armies had inflicted upon Jerusalem and Her surroundings. Until the mission to the Holy Land of Saint Helen, mother to the holy Emperor Constantine, who ended persecution against Christians and called the First Ecumenical Council.

The finding of this sacred relic is the cause for our Feast today, the Universal Exaltation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross. Throughout the Sacred Archdiocese of America and around the world, the Cross of the Lord will be lifted up with fragrant basil, and faithful Orthodox Christians will fall down before it, just as they did at its first Elevation, when Saint Makarios, Archbishop of Jerusalem, raised on high the Cross that granted the miracle of resurrection. But as in the days of Saint Helen, before the Cross can be exalted, it must first be discovered.

So, where is the Cross to be found today? Is it only present in the precious fragments that are ensconced in reliquaries around the globe? In truth, the discovery of the Cross is available to every Christian who seeks to follow the example of our Lord's self-sacrificial love. The Cross is buried in our hearts through Baptism, and lies deep within us, waiting to be revealed by our thoughts and intentions, by our words, and by



our actions. Its discovery transforms a human being into a self-aware child of God, who then raises up the Cross in their own lives and shares in the divine plan of sanctifying the cosmos.

This is the daily work and calling of the devout men and women studying at our beloved Hellenic College & Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and today is their special Feastday. Let us all make every effort to support them and all those who labor at our precious Theological School, so that the Holy and Lifegiving Cross may manifest more and more in our own lives, and throughout the world.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America