

FINDING THE TRUE CROSS

The one thing that all Christians know is that Jesus Christ died on a CROSS. He was crucified on a Cross, died, was interred, and then rose from the dead after 3 days.

All this proved beyond any doubt that he was the Son of God, and all his Apostles accepted terrible deaths rather than deny this, except John, who was marooned on the Island of Patmos.

One of the results of Christ's passion, death and resurrection was the way Christians used the symbol of the Cross on which he was killed. Over the years, it has become the symbol of Christianity.

Its significance started and spread throughout Christianity after two very important happenings. These were:

The Discovery of the Cross.

The Recovery of the Cross.

THE DISCOVERY

It all started when the true cross was discovered in 326 A.D. by Saint Helena, a convert to Christianity and the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine. She went to Jerusalem to find and preserve relics of early Christianity, one of them being the Cross on which Christ was crucified. With the help of locals and some prominent people, she discovered where the Jews had hidden it by burying it.

It is said that three crosses were found, some nails, and a sign on which was written JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS.

To determine which of the three crosses was the true one, a woman at death's door was brought to the site and asked to touch all three. This she did and was cured upon touching one of them. St. Helena now knew which was the True Cross. In simple terms, all this is known as the **Discovery of the Cross.**

Saint Helena built a church on the site of the crucifixion, known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Emperor Constantine dedicated it in 335 A.D.

THE RECOVERY

Following the invasion of Syria and Palestine by Persia, the True Cross was taken by Chosroas, King of the Persians in 614 A.D. Fifteen years later, the Cross was recovered and brought back to Jerusalem by Emperor Heraclius of Constantinople. The relic of the True Cross was then restored to its place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the one built by St. Helena. This was the **Recovery of the Cross**

It is said that Emperor Heraclius wanted to carry the Cross on his back to its rightful place, as an act of homage, but when he did so, he found he couldn't move. It wasn't until after he'd removed his royal garments and put on the humble garments of repentance that he found he could.

The True Cross was brought back to Jerusalem in 629 A.D. The anniversary of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre's dedication is the date on which Jerusalem celebrated the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross.

EVENTS

326 A.D.: St. Helena discovers the True Cross in Jerusalem on May 3.

335 A.D.: Constantine dedicates the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Sept. 14.

614 A.D.: Persians invade Jerusalem and take the True Cross.

629 A.D.: The True Cross is recovered and returned to Jerusalem on Sept. 14.

VENERATING THE CROSS

Venerating the Cross in the Catholic Church is a liturgical tradition during Holy Week. Catholics and most Christians have crucifixes in their home.

Always have a Cross or Crucifix in your home. If you do not have one, get one, have it blessed and then placed in a position in your home, where it will be venerated.

FEAST DAY

Sept. 14th is the feast day of the EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

It's the day the Church celebrates both the **DISCOVERY** and the **RECOVERY** of the True Cross.