



THE CROSS: LIFE'S TRUE GUIDE

If we were about to embark upon a challenging journey -- one that we know will be filled with hardships and dangers -- we would be foolish to make such a trip alone. The sensible thing to do would be to have a guide lead us -- a guide with the skills and knowledge to assist us in reaching our intended destination.

There is no more difficult "journey" than our walk through life itself. As Orthodox Christians, our ultimate destination is the Kingdom of Heaven. But what a rough road we must travel to get there! It is a road filled with temptations and stumbling blocks -- a road we cannot possibly manage alone. We, too, need a "guide" and we have it in the form of the precious and lifegiving Cross. As we celebrate the solemn Feast Day of the Elevation and Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- a day that commemorates the finding of the Cross by Saint Helen -- it would be good for us to remember the many ways that the Cross guides us. It is our guide in making decisions, for all of life's great choices must be made with the light of the Cross illuminating our thoughts.

The Cross guides us in time of sickness and suffering, for the Cross reminds us of the patient way our Lord endured all that He was forced to bear. The Cross is our guide when sorrow overcomes us because of the loss of a loved one.

The empty Cross serves to remind us that death's hold over man is only temporary. We, too, will rise one day if we truly believe in the One Who conquered death. Christ's words to the thief, spoken from the Cross, provide us with the necessary encouragement as we deal with all of life's hardships:

"THIS DAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."