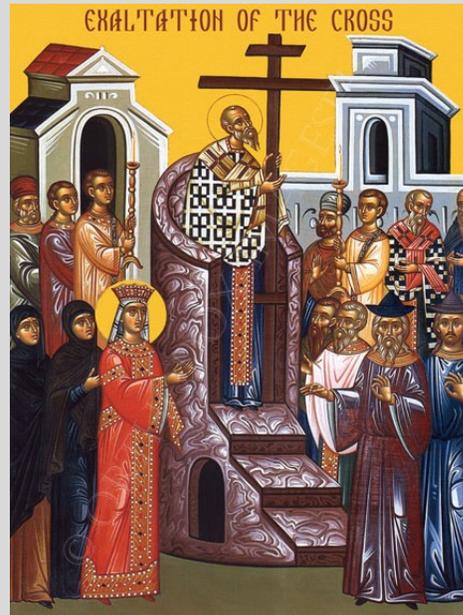
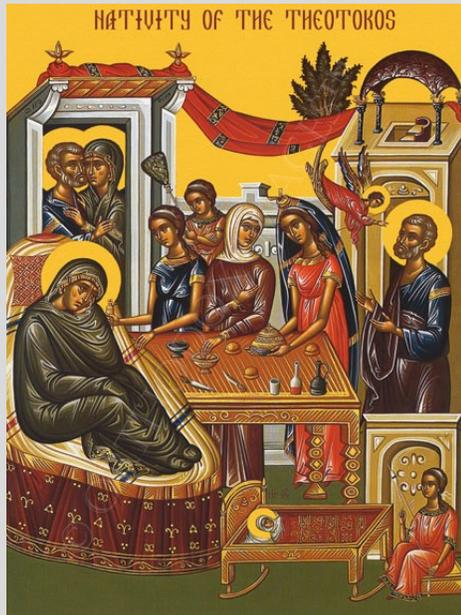


ST. NEKTARIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Orthodox Church in America

September, 2012 NEWSLETTER

A Terrible Mystery

What does the Cross mean? When we say, "Through the Cross, joy has come into all the world," what are we saying about ourselves, our joy, and the world? As Orthodox Christians, we are intimately familiar with the Cross; we sign ourselves with it; we prostrate before it, we kiss it, we wear it around our necks as the constant reminder of Christ and his death. The Cross is for us that defining element, the very essence of what it means to be imitators of Christ. And this Cross is a terrible mystery for us. When we trace the sign over ourselves, over our children, over the food we eat, over all of the stuff of this world, we are essentially bonding that thing to the Cross of Christ. We transform that thing into a witness of Christ's glorious and tragic death.

Signs and symbols are a fundamental part of being human. Every symbol is a brand; every symbol is a representation, imaging something larger. And so, for us that celebrate the sign of the Cross, we are celebrating the fact that God chose the foolish, the tragic, the ugliness of death to become a symbol for Life itself. And this is a hidden mystery not known by those outside of the faith. "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are

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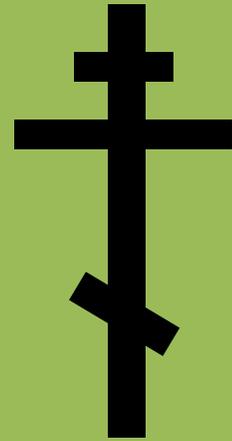
being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). To us who are being saved, it remains the only source of power. We do not celebrate a God who came in glory like Zeus or Caesar arrayed in what we perceive to be majesty. Because of the Cross, we see that true glory and power and majesty are revealed in simplicity, suffering, and humility. To be great is to be lowly. To be majestic is to be humble. To be powerful is to suffer in weakness. Christ's life amongst us turned all of the world upside-down. Through the Cross, true light came into the world, a light not made by men, but revealed by God. But to see this truth is a gift, an outpouring of the Spirit.

As a priest I have the opportunity to speak with people often about what causes them to suffer, about the tragedies they have faced, or about the fear and anxiety that they continue to live with each day. To say to these people that God wants them to take up their cross seems at times to be a hollow and unfeeling piece of advice. To "take up one's cross" is not simply to bear with something, to get through it, or to put on an act of piety. Rather, to take up one's cross is a voluntary, concerted effort to embrace whatever the suffering might be and to transform it into joy. How can this be? How can a divorce be a means of joy? How can addiction help bring about salvation? How can sickness or the death of a loved one be a witness for Christ?

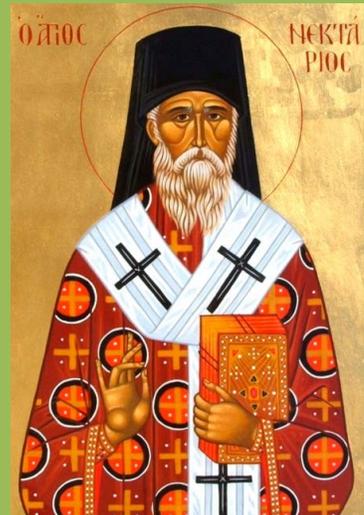
The Scriptures tell us that Christ became a curse, not that he *was* cursed by hanging on the Cross, but rather that he *became* a curse. The law of God says, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree." For Christ to be crucified, the only possible death that he could have been subjected to, was not merely an opportunity to get through it or to bear with it, but to be totally submissive and obedient. It was by this willingness to suffer for the will of God, that he transformed his curse into life, bringing joy to those of us who hear it. When you sign yourself with the Cross, embrace the reality that it is transforming your suffering into an opportunity for joy, an opportunity for being a witness to Jesus Christ.

"Through the Cross, joy has come into all the world!"

Fr. David



ST. NEKTARIOS
ORTHODOX CHURCH
Orthodox Church in America



Who We Are... St. Nektarios Orthodox Church is a mission of the Orthodox Church in America in Waxahachie, Texas. We are located at 208 West Franklin Street in downtown Waxahachie, TX near the historic square. We are in the process of purchasing property and building a new home in which to worship and to minister to the local community. For information, please contact Fr. David Bozeman at 816-509-6411 or at frdbozeman@gmail.com. You can also receive updates through our website www.stnektariosdfw.org or through social media at <http://www.facebook.com/SaintNektariosMission>. Christ is in our midst!

ST. NEKTARIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH

September 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	<u>1</u> Confession 5:30 Great Vespers 6:30 Church New Year
<u>2</u> Divine Liturgy 9:30	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> Great Vespers 6:30	<u>8</u> <i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i> DL 9:30 Great Vespers 6:30
<u>9</u> Divine Liturgy 9:30 Sunday School	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> Great Vespers 6:30	<u>14</u> <i>Exaltation of the Cross</i> DL 9:30	<u>15</u> Confession 5:30 Great Vespers 6:30
<u>16</u> Divine Liturgy 9:30	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> Vespers 6:30	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> Confession 5:30 Great Vespers 6:30
<u>23</u> Divine Liturgy 9:30	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u> Vespers 6:30	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> Confession 5:30 Great Vespers 6:30
<u>30</u> Divine Liturgy 9:30	1	2	3	4	5	6

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Your Nativity, O Virgin,
Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,
Has shone from You, O Theotokos!
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.

~ Troparion for the Nativity of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary