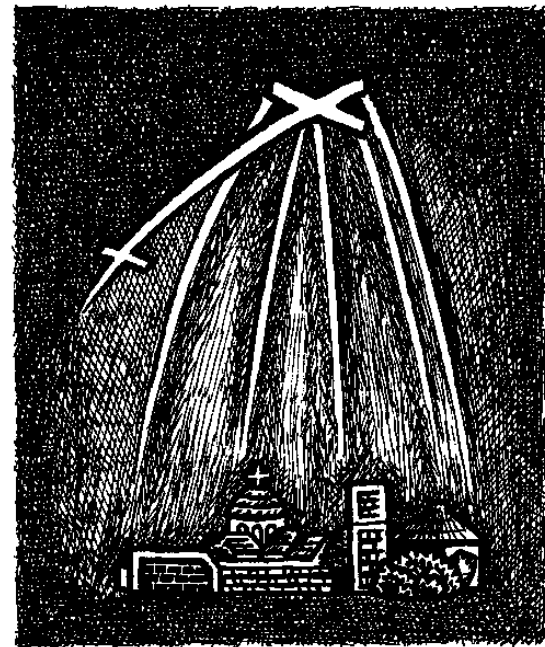


THE DIVINE APPEARANCE OF THE HONOURED CROSS



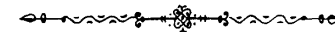
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What are the implications of the
miraculous appearance of the Honorable
Cross over Athens in 1925?
Did it occur merely because of a dispute
over a change of the calendar?
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THE DIVINE APPEARANCE OF THE HONORED CROSS

Introduction

The first appearance of the honored Cross occurred in the year 312, in October, during the time of St. Constantine the Great. It appeared in the sky at noontime and was composed of radiant stars, with the words, “By This, Conquer”. Thus, by this first manifestation, the honored Cross became the *labarum*, the standard, of the first Christian empire, which served the purpose of proclaiming and conveying our Orthodox Christian faith and piety throughout the known world.

The second majestic appearance of the Cross took place during the reign of Emperor Constantius, the son of St. Constantine the Great, in the holy city of Jerusalem on May 7th, 351, the day of Pentecost, when St. Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem. The honored Cross was comprised entirely of a certain divine light visible to everyone for a week, and in magnitude it stretched from Golgotha and the Church of the Resurrection all the way to the Mount of Olives.

In this pamphlet, we have eye-witness descriptions of the third appearance of the Cross. These descriptions are provided by individuals still living in 1975, when the first edition of this pamphlet appeared in Greek.

In the early 1900s and especially in the 1920s, there were strong anti-Church and secularist forces in power in Greece and in the Ecumenical Patriarchate. These forces introduced the Gregorian calendar. The Gregorian calendar is adequate for the functions of business, the stock exchange, and other worldly, secular activities. Liturgically, however, it is in no way possible to reconcile the Gregorian calendar with our canonical, Orthodox Christian

Paschalion. Moreover, the introduction of a Church calendar change by a local church created an unacceptable liturgical disunity within the Church Itself.

Vast numbers of the people of Greece refused to accept these anti-canonical, anti-Church changes being forced upon them by state police power. Such people suffered persecution, imprisonment, and deprivation at the hands of secular police powers. But the spiritual eyes of true Orthodox Christians saw clearly even if, at the time, they did not completely comprehend the evil of the new calendar. It was a forerunner and a sign of the greatest heresy in the history of the world—Ecumenism. Many people, however, became confused. Some began to waver. Just as the Arians were in control of the worldly power in 351 and were able to force their heresy upon the empire, so at this time, the calendar innovators controlled the worldly power of Greece. In such a troubled and dangerous time, the All-Merciful God heeded the needs of His people. Again, as in 351, God sent a wondrous apparition of the sign of the All-Honourable Cross to seal the truth and put the false teachers to shame.

The appearance of the Cross took place in this manner:

In 1925, on the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of Our Saviour, September 14 according to the Orthodox Church calendar (September 27, new style), the all-night vigil was served at the Church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By nine o'clock that evening, more than two thousand of the Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true-Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven P. M. the authorities dispatched a platoon of police to the church “to prevent any

and the *Liti* of the feast was being chanted, when the sign of the honored Cross appeared over the faithful, shining brilliantly. Overwhelmed with emotion, the entire assembly knelt weeping. The church service stopped, and everyone cried out, ‘Lord, have mercy,’ the police threw down their weapons and cried, ‘We too are Christians!’ The officer in charge submitted a deposition to the Ministry of the Interior, and the widely-read newspaper ‘Hellenic’ published an extensive account about the miracle.” (*The Calendar Schism*, Athens, 1975, by Mark Haniotes, monk, p. 214).



Another photograph of the eye-witnesses of the miracle

Most of the material presented here was taken from the Greek-language periodical, Ta Patria, published in Piraeus, Greece, in 1975.



“The great Miracle of September 14th, 1925 will never be forgotten! . . . we offer a description of this miracle to our beloved readers, so that our young people may learn, and so that our adults may never forget, the mighty and marvelous deeds of our Faith” (*Orthodox Observer*, September-October, 1962).



“A fiery and brilliant Cross in Heaven shone down and encompassed the holy temple, shining with the intensity of the light of the day. This divine sign of the honored Cross filled the frenzied persecutors with terror and withheld their hands. But it also filled the multitudes of the faithful with gladness and rejoicing as they fell to their knees in tears, praising, thanking and glorifying this sublime act of the Lord. This miracle manifestly demonstrated God’s approval, for the purpose of strengthening our invincible faith” (*The Life and Works of Archbishop Matthew*, 1861-1950, Athens, 1963, p. 88).



“We mention this event as a third miracle which confirmed the truth of the Orthodoxy of our Fathers, by the appearance of the honored Cross above the small chapel of St. John the Theologian in the sky, at the foot of Mount Hymettus, during the vigil of the Exaltation of the Honored Cross, September 14th, 1925. More than two thousand people were present at this vigil, together with that singular and ever-memorable priest, Father John [Floros]. The Minister of the Interior at that time was General George Kondylis,* who on learning of the assembly of such a great multitude, sent a platoon of police led by a lieutenant to arrest the priest and disperse the throngs of the faithful. It was almost midnight

* See *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*, pp. 55-6

disorders which might arise from such a large gathering.” The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they joined the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

At 11:30 P.M., there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of northeast, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with a crossbar toward the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to rise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priest does in the ceremony of the Elevation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

Human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing prayers, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a child-like faith. The crowd of believers and the platoon of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy. The vigil continued until 4:00 A.M., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.



The miraculous appearance of the Cross, September 14, 1925.

Many of the unbelievers, sophists, and innovators, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine Cross, with a crossbar at the bottom for a foot-rest, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomena.

it”] from the great Body of Orthodoxy” (*GOADS*, Athens, 1925, Arsenios Kotteas, monk of the Holy Mountain Athos, p. 67).

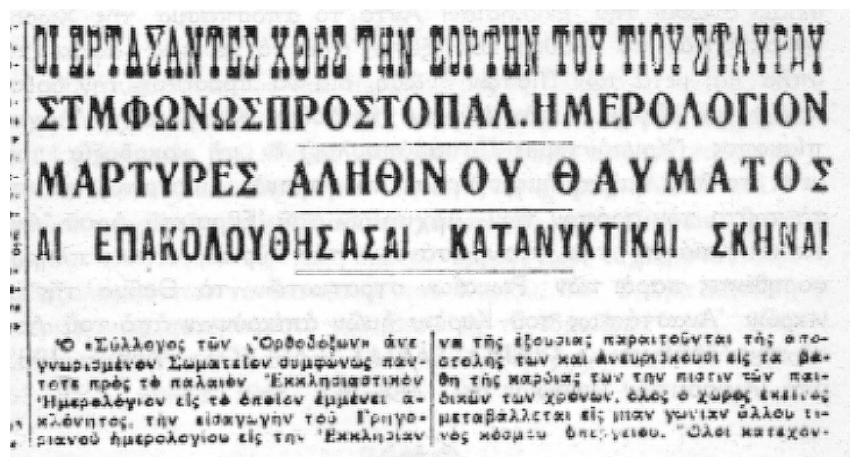


“Two thousand people on their knees and weeping, witnessed this exceptional phenomenon of the grace of God for over half an hour, because the honored Cross hovered directly over the church! The police themselves saw the miracle and were awestruck by the event; they left their weapons aside and joined the faithful to offer glory and supplications to the Lord of Glory! The Archbishop (Chrysostom Papadopoulos) alone, after a few days, in his evil convictions, expressed doubt as to what had happened, thereby imitating in this way Annas and Caiaphas, the Jewish high priests who crucified the Lord; for when they were notified by the Roman authorities of the miracle of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead, they sought to hide the truth from the people. . .” (*A Censure of Apostasy*, Athens, 1933, by Fathers of the Holy Mountain, pp. 273-4).



“During one such gathering of the Christians at the sacred temple of Saint John the Theologian near Mount Hymettus, a vigil for the feast of the Exaltation of the Honored Cross was being celebrated with the ever-memorable priest John Floros, a clergyman fervent and zealous for the things of Holy Tradition; at that feast celebrated according to the traditional Church calendar, the sign of the honored Cross appeared in the sky, as it had once appeared to St. Constantine the Great, the Equal to the Apostles” (*The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Athens, 1961, by Stavros Karametsos-Gabroulia, p. 63).





A photograph of the first page of the Athens daily "Script" for September 28th, 1925 n.s. (Note: by the Gregorian calendar, the feast day of the Cross falls on September 27). The text of the headlines reads as follows:

THEY WHO CELEBRATED THE FEAST
OF THE HONORED CROSS
ACCORDING TO THE OLD CALENDAR
[BECAME] WITNESSES OF A TRUE MIRACLE
— THE SUBSEQUENT COMPUNCTIONATE SCENES —

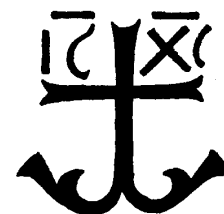


"Aside from this, however, we think that the appearance of the Heavenly Cross on the day on which the traditional Church calendar celebrates the Exaltation of the Honored Cross constitutes yet another notable divine confirmation of the correctness of the convictions of those who follow this calendar. Furthermore, it offers the leaders of the Church today [i.e. the new calendar bishops] a helping hand from Heaven, so that they may review their uncanonical decision to introduce unilaterally the new calendar into our Church, [thereby] tearing it away [literally, "schisming

The fact that such an apparition of the Cross had also occurred during the height of the first great heresy must impress the Orthodox with the importance of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this issue lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Innovators, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation.

By this third appearance, our Lord and Saviour has confirmed from on high that we are to remain faithful to the heritage we have received from our Holy Fathers, and which was codified by the First Ecumenical Council and sealed by almost two thousand years of usage by the subsequent Ecumenical, Local and Pan-Orthodox Councils of our Church.

We pray from the depths of our hearts that the honored Cross may enlighten the souls of all mankind and lead them from error to the fulness of the faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, so that not only all Orthodox Christians, but all peoples in every land may, "with one mouth and with one heart," glorify the all-venerable and majestic name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

— *Synaxarion* —

On the 14th of this month, we observe the feast of the honored and Life-giving Cross, whose Universal Exaltation we celebrate, and whose Appearance over Athens in the year 1925 we commemorate.

Verses:

A new appearance of the Cross of light, O Saviour,
Putteth to shame them who would mingle light with darkness.

On the evening of September 13th, 1925, a large gathering of traditional Orthodox Christians were celebrating a vigil service in honor of the feast of the universal Exaltation of the honored and life-giving Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This vigil was held at the small country chapel of St. John the Theologian at the foot of Mount Hymettus near Holargos, a suburb of Athens.

It was about 11:30 in the evening when, above the holy temple and in a direction pointing from the East to the West, a luminous white Cross appeared in the sky. Its brilliance outshone that of the stars on that cloudless night and its light shone only on the church building, the court surrounding the Church and the multitude that had gathered there. The horizontal line of this heavenly Cross inclined toward the right, and there was a smaller second horizontal line lower down on the Cross. Some two thousand people saw this marvelous phenomenon for over half an hour, after which it began to fade little by little. Overwhelmed with sacred emotion, all those present fell to their knees and wept, chanting praises and glorifying God “with one heart and one mind”.

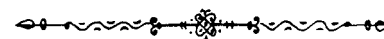
The vigil continued in an atmosphere of unspeakable contrition and finished at about 4:00 in the morning, at which time the entire throng of the faithful returned to the city, speaking of noth-

so strong, the entire area was illumined. We all knelt in prayer and could not be satiated in looking upon that divine Gift. What made an equally great impression on me was a blind man who was kneeling beside me and had his closed eyes turned toward heaven; in a voice broken with sobs he was crying out: “Lord, have mercy.”

ELIAS ANGELOPOULOS

78 Adrianopolis St.

Analepsis, Pancrati (Athens)



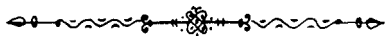
Others still living when this pamphlet was first published: Euthymia nun, abbess of the Sacred Convent of the Dormition of the Theotokos on Mount Parnitha; George Tzimopoulos, 7 Makriyianni St., Athens; Stamatina Zavalis, Stratigos Liossi St., Ano Liossia, Athens; George Kottis, 35 Photios Konytsas St., Piraeus; John Davaris, Paiania.



Some of the eyewitnesses of the miracle

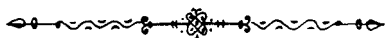
THE PRESS — BOOKS

In conclusion, we include excerpts from the daily press of that time, as well as from books published over the years regarding this awesome miracle of the appearance of the honored Cross.



On that night in 1925 when the Precious Cross appeared, I was making the last run with the tram which I was operating. I had reached Omonoia Square [in downtown Athens], and was going around the square when I saw everyone looking up toward heaven and crying, “Look!—the Cross!—the Cross!” Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the vehicle. I stuck my head out the tram’s door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of Our Lord—may His Name be glorified; it was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don’t remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing—the Precious Cross which I saw that night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians.

ATHANASIOS PRIMALIS
Retired Tram Conductor
17 Kavales Street
Nicaea [a suburb of Athens]



I was 18 years old then. Together with my mother of blessed memory, I went that night to keep vigil at the chapel of St. John the Theologian near Hymettus. We had prepared to receive Holy Communion. Around 11:30, when, if I remember correctly, the service of Great Vespers for the Exaltation of the Cross was being chanted, a divine appearance of the honored Cross occurred in the sky. Its light was



ing else except that nocturnal manifestation of God’s grace.

This marvel, confirmed and proclaimed by the very police force that had been sent to the site by the new calendar authorities to arrest the priest and disperse the faithful, was a divine confirmation of the noble, lawful and sacred struggle of the traditional Orthodox Christians for the sake of the beliefs and the Holy Traditions of our Orthodox Catholic Faith.

“I TOO WAS THERE”

*Eyewitness Accounts of the Appearance of the Cross
Over the Church of St. John the Theologian
at Mount Hymettus, September 14th, 1925*

Since the country chapel of St. John the Theologian was at that time very distant from Athens, our “Association of the Orthodox”* used it as our “Metropolitan See”. There, we would gather every Sunday and on the Great Feasts according to the traditional Church calendar and hold our vigils. The first priests who refused to follow the innovators and to serve our pastoral needs were the ever-memorable Father Parthenios of Iveron monastery [on the Holy Mountain, Athos] and Father John Floros.



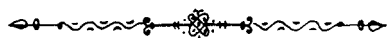
On that night when the Honored Cross appeared, I was at the Holy Mountain for a certain matter pertaining to our sacred struggle, and, to be specific, I was attending the vigil for the Exaltation of the Honored Cross at the Sacred Monastery of Xeropotamou, which itself celebrates that particular feast day. During the time of the *Liti*, when a portion of the precious Wood of the Cross is brought forth so that all may venerate It, I knelt

* See *The Struggle Against Ecumenism*, The Holy Orthodox Church in North America, Boston, 1998, pp. 42-44.

and with many tears prayed with these words: “O Cross of Christ, protect our brethren from the persecutions of the innovators, especially tonight when our faithful are keeping vigil at the chapel of Saint John the Theologian.” After a few days, when I was at the Sacred Skete of Saint Anne, I learned of the great miracle of the appearance of the honored Cross.

ANDREW VAPORIDES

Member of the Administrative
Committee of the Association of the Orthodox



I was one of the men from the Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country church of St. John the Theologian.

The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross.

Since many people had gathered—more than two thousand individuals—we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish.

At about 11:30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening—and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out “Lord, have mercy,” were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church, was illumining the whole area. At first, we were seized



with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves, and forgetting the purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children.

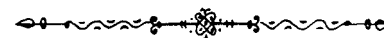
Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end—no longer as persecutors, but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel which we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky.

JOHN D. GLYMIS

Retired Police Officer

78 Aristotle Street

Peristeri [a suburb of Athens]



We went to celebrate the vigil for the feast of the honored Cross in 1925. Because of the persecutions, we used to have our vigils in remote country chapels. At night, the police arrived, led by a lieutenant, in order to arrest the priest. At 11:30 p.m. I was outside with most of the people. Then the Cross appeared with a great deal of light! Everyone knelt and prayed. The police saw the miracle and, from enemies they turned into friends and they joined the congregation! The appearance of the honored Cross lasted well over a quarter of an hour.



ALEXANDER CONTOS

64 Macedonia St.

Tsakós St. Paraskeve