

Holy Crosstide, 2011

Holy Cross Day, is our Feast of Title for our church, and this refers not simply to the events on Good Friday, but to the legend of the Holy Cross. Below we reprint the story as recorded in a Guide Book to the Church produced in the 1960s.

“After the burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ, owing to the speedy approach of the Jewish Passover, there was not time to burn the cross and other instruments of execution, as was usually done on account of their uncleanness. Instead they were thrown into a hollow beneath the ledge where the execution had taken place, and hastily covered over.

Every effort was made by the authorities to extirpate Christianity, and to further this end, the Emperor Hadrian in 136 AD ordered the hill of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre to be covered with earth and a heathen temple erected on the site, hoping thereby to remove all landmarks associated with the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

It was in 326 AD that the dowager Empress Helena, the Christian mother of Constantine, went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and after due enquiry caused the site to be unearthed. There she found the three crosses, the superscription and the nails. The finding (*Invention* is the Latin word) was proclaimed throughout the Empire by the Emperor and is vouched for also by St. Cyril who was living in Jerusalem at the time. There was great jubilation throughout Christendom and fragments of the Cross were conveyed by the Emperor's orders to almost every country for honour and veneration. The largest part, the upright, was preserved at Jerusalem in the Church of St. Helena (335 AD). In the year 614, however, Chosroes II, King of Persia, sacked Jerusalem, killing 90,000 Christians, and took the Holy Relic to Persia.

It was recovered by the Christians and set up (*Exaltation*) once more, amid world-wide rejoicings, in Jerusalem in 629 AD. Our Church, built to the honour of the Holy Cross, may observe both festivals, the Invention on May 3rd and more especially the Exaltation, on September 14th.”

Well, this year The Exaltation of the Holy Cross falls on Wednesday 14th September and on that day, there will be a said mass at 9.15am in the Old Church. Our main observance of our Feast of Title will be on the following Sunday which we will observe as Holy Cross Sunday. On that day we are pleased to announce that the Chaplain of King's College, Cambridge, the Revd. Richard Lloyd Morgan, will come to preach a sermon at 8am and 9.30am.



St. Helena

CIMA da Conegliano

Italian painter, Venetian school (b. ca. 1459, Conegliano, d. 1517/18)
In art, St Helena is dressed in imperial regalia and holds a large cross.