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**THE FIRST MONTH**  
**Meskerem 17**  
**(September 27)**

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**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,  
ONE GOD. AMEN.**

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On this day is celebrated the festival of the Honorable Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise, for this is the day on which the holy woman, the Empress Helena, beloved of God, mother of the righteous Emperor Constantine, revealed the Cross, for having cleared away the hill of Golgotha she found [there] the Honorable Cross. And why did this great hill come into being? It was because of the many signs and wonders, which were made manifest at the holy tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the dead were raised, and the paralytics were healed, and the sick were made whole. And because of these things the Jews were furiously angry, and they sent forth a decree throughout all the country of Judea and Jerusalem ordering that every man should cast the sweepings of his house, and the ashes, and offal of every kind on the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Jews did this for more than two hundred years, and the ashes and the offal formed a very great heap, and they did so until the Empress Helena came to Jerusalem. And Helena seized certain Jews and shut them up in prison until they told her where the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ was, and she forced them to remove that hill, and the Honorable Cross was discovered. And she built a beautiful church for it, and she consecrated it, and she made a great festival in honor thereof on the seventeenth day of Mesekerem, which is this day. And all the Christian people came from all their countries to Jerusalem, and they made a great festival in honor of the Honorable Cross, similar to the festival of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now as certain Christians were journeying along the road, there was with them a certain man, a Samaritan, whose name was Isaac, and there were many Samaritans with him. And that Isaac the Samaritan was jibing at the Christians and reviling them and saying unto them, "Why do ye trouble yourselves in vain? Why do ye go and bow down before a mere log of wood?" And among the Christians was a certain righteous man, a priest whose name was 'Odokis (Eudoxius), and as they were traveling along the road some of the Christians became thirsty, and they could not find water to drink. And they arrived at a certain well, and they found in it foul and bitter water, and they were suffering greatly from thirst. And Isaac the Samaritan began to laugh at them, and he said unto them, "If your faith was the True Faith this foul and bitter water would change itself and would become sweet water." And when 'Okokis (Eudoxius) the priest heard these words from him, he became moved with a divine zeal, and he debated with Isaac the Samaritan. And Isaac the Samaritan said unto him, "If I saw any power in the Name of the Cross then I myself would believe in Christ." Then the holy man 'Odokis (Eudoxius) prayed over that foul water, and it became sweet immediately, and all the people and their animals drank there from. When Isaac the Samaritan was athirst and wished to drink of the water which was in his own water-skin, he found that it was stinking and that there were worms in it. And he wept very bitterly, and he came to Saint 'Odokis (Eudoxius) the priest, and he bowed down at his feet, and he believed on the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he drank of that water which had become sweet, through the prayer of the holy man 'Odokis (Eudoxius). Now there was in that water such great power that it became sweet to those who were believers and bitter to the infidels and pagan folk. And there appeared in that water a cross of light, and they built over that water a beautiful church. When Isaac the Samaritan came to the city of Jerusalem, he went to the bishop, who baptized him with Christian baptism, him and all the men of his house, and they entered the Christian faith and became believers. Now the Honorable Cross appeared unto them on the tenth day of Megabit, but as they were unable to celebrate a festival in its honor during a fast, they celebrated its festival on the day of the consecration of the church, which was the seventeenth day of Mesekerem, the day of its appearance in the holy tomb.

And on this day also the blessed Theognosta died. The holy woman lived in the days of the righteous Emperors Honorius and Arcadius. In those days an envoy came with gifts

from the King of India to the righteous Emperors Honorius and Arcadius. And when the envoys of the King of India were returning, they found this virgin Theognosta with a book in her hand, which she was reading, and they seized her and carried her back with them to their country. And she became the head of the harim, and she had charge of the wives of the King of India, and of all the people of his house. And in those days the son of the king fell sick of a grievous sickness, and Saint Theognosta took him into her bosom and made over him the sign of the Cross, and he recovered straightway. And the report of this virgin was heard throughout the land by reason of the wonderful thing which took place through her, and from that day onward she was no longer regarded as a handmaiden but as a great lady. When the King of India went to war there came upon him clouds, and storm winds, and fog and darkness, and the king knowing of the wonder which the holy woman Theognosta had wrought by means of the Cross, made the sign of the Cross against the clouds, and the storm winds, and the fog and the darkness, and the sun appeared and there was joy and great gladness, and through the sign of the Cross the king vanquished his enemies. And as soon as the king returned from the war, he bowed down at the feet of Saint Theognosta, and asked her to give him holy Christian baptism, him, and the men of his house, and all the men of his city. And she said unto the king and unto all those who were with him, "It is not seemly for me to do this thing, but send ye to the Emperor Honorius and ask him to send you a priest, for I am unable to baptize anyone." And straightway the king sent a letter to the Emperor Honorius, and told him that they had withdrawn [from Paganism] to the Faith of Christ, and he asked him to send to them a priest to baptize them with Christian baptism. And Honorius sent unto them a priest who was a righteous anchorite, and he baptized them with Christian baptism, and consecrated for them the Offering, and gave them the Holy Body and Honorable Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the virgin Theognosta, the beloved of God, rejoiced exceedingly, and she knew that priestly anchorite, and they each blessed the other. And she built for him a house for the religious, and very many virgins gathered together there, and they loved the nun's garb of Theognosta and became like unto her. When that priestly anchorite had baptized them with Christian baptism, he returned to the Emperor Honorius, and related unto him how he had baptized the men of India, and how they had entered into the Faith of Christ. And the emperor Honorius rejoiced exceedingly, and he commanded the Archbishop of the city of Rome to consecrate that anchorite bishop of the Indians; and the archbishop consecrated him bishop, and he returned to the Indians and they rejoiced greatly. Whilst they were building a church they wanted pillars, but there were none to be found; now there was in that place a house of idols wherein were some very fine pillars. And the virgin Theognosta prayed to our Lord Jesus Christ with tears, and the pillars, which were in the house of idols removed themselves, and came to the church, and the believers glorified our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise! And those who were worshippers of idols smashed their idols, and turned and entered the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; and there was great joy in that city. And Saint Theognosta the virgin ended her days, and she was well pleasing unto God, and she died in peace in that nunnery among the virgins.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Dionysius, Archbishop of the city of Alexandria; of the number of the archbishops he is the fourteenth. The infidel Emperor Decius wished to kill this holy man, but God hid him from him. This father was a wise and learned man, and he translated many of the Books of the Church. In his days Saint Mercurius became a martyr by the hand of Decius, the Emperor of Rome, and in his days also the Seven Youths went to sleep for three hundred and seventy and two years. These Youths were among the sons of the elders of the city of Ephesus, and they fled from the Emperor Decius when he sought for them to make them worship idols. And in the days of this father lived our great and holy father Anthony the Egyptian, the head of the monks, who built monasteries. And this holy father Abba Dionysius sat as archbishop for nineteen years, and he guarded his flock and the Gentiles in right and in peace; and he was well pleasing unto God and he died.

And on this day also are commemorated Labiba (Liba), and 'Akiryanos (Cirianus), and Justin, and Tekaseltes (Tekaleltes).

Glory be to God Who is glorified in His Saints. Amen.