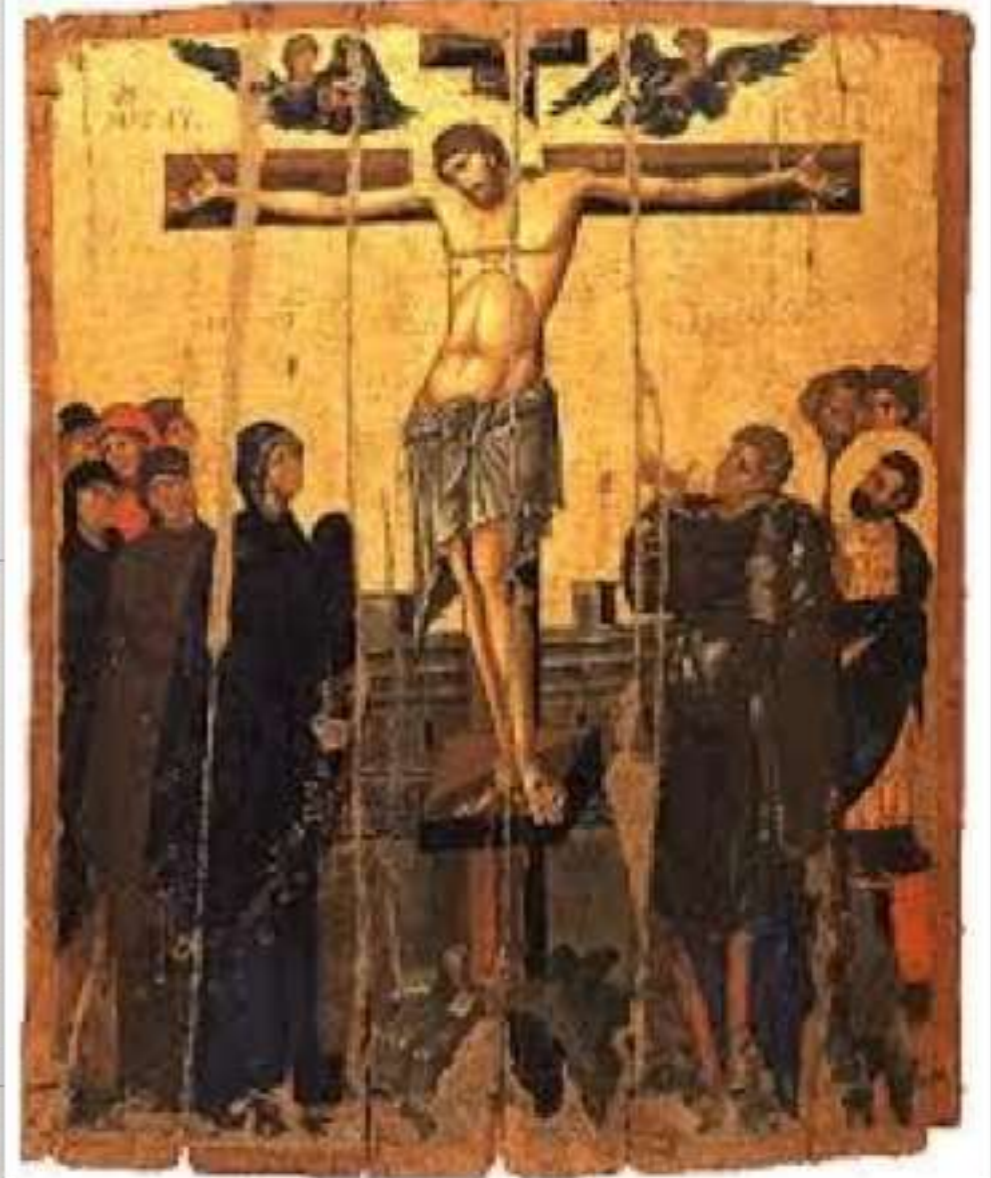


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# THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

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What does the Cross tell us  
about how to live our life?



# The centrality of the Cross

- ❖ What is our Christian faith all about?
  - ❖ not a philosophy of life
  - ❖ not an ideology
- ❖ Christianity is not about a teaching but a person.
- ❖ Christian life totally defined by the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and him crucified!

The next day he [John the Forerunner) saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn 1:29)





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# Jesus Christ

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- ❖ Jesus Christ is the living presence of God amongst us
- ❖ “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15)
- ❖ He does not simply show a the way to God, but He is “the way the truth and the life”

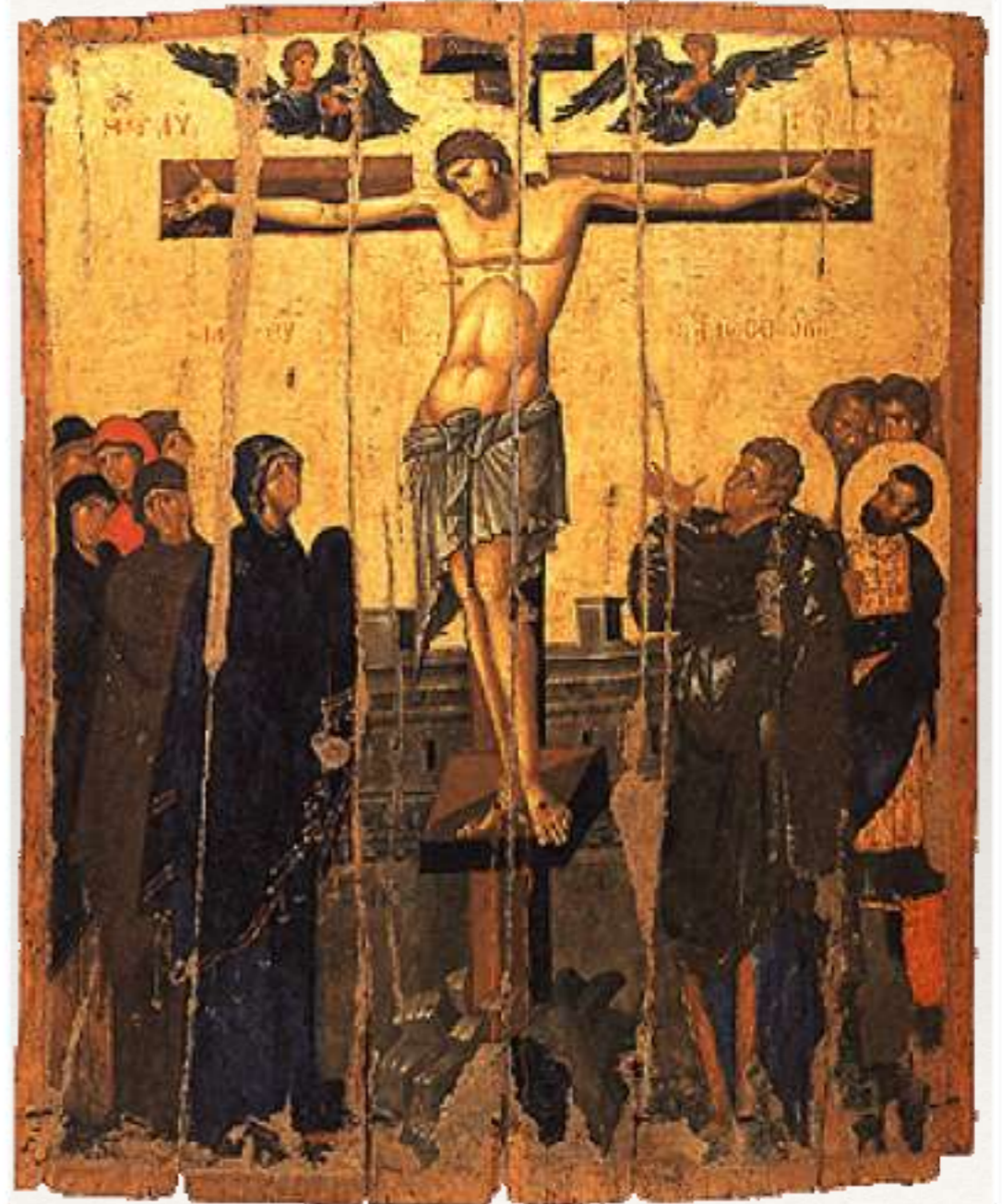


# Christ Crucified

“For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον) to Jews and foolishness (μωρίαν) to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1Cor 1:18-24)

St Paul said that his message was not a set of teachings, but the Person of Christ.

He didn't come with worldly wisdom, but he came to preach the Gospel and the Gospel his Christ crucified!





# The Cross - the Centre of our Life

- ❖ The entire liturgical year is centred around, the Passion of Christ in Holy Week

ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ!



- ❖ O Cross, you are the guardian of the whole world. O Cross, you are the height of the Church's beauty. O Cross, you are what strengthened the Emperors. O Cross, the believers' firm support. O Cross, the glory of Angels and the defeat of the demons

The Cross is the ultimate, definitive, absolute, total, perfect, unsurpassable act, revelation, manifestation of God



# The Cross - the Centre of our Life



## The Centre of Worship

“This is my Body, broken; this is my Blood, shed for the life of the world.”

ultimate, definitive, absolute, total, perfect, unsurpassable act, revelation, m



# Power of the Cross

What the Cross says about God



- sign of God's super abundant love
- sign of Christ's victory over death and over the devil
- universal symbol of victory and glory (the Bridegroom)
- symbol of God's presence amongst us
- universal symbol of salvation pathway to salvation
- sign of our reconciliation back to God



# Salvific Power of the Cross



“Having stretched out his holy body to  
the ends of the world,  
He drew together all the dead from all the  
ends

He united them in one man  
And laid the one Godhead in their hearts  
Purifying all impurity with the blood of the  
Lamb,

Purifying the way from earth to heaven  
that was barred by death.”

Moral Poem 37.



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# Salvific Power of the Cross

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“and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.”  
(Col 1: 20)

“[Jesus] reconcile[s] [us] to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it (Eph 2:16)



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# Salvific Power of the Cross

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Τὸν Σταυρόν Σου Κύριε, ζωὴν καὶ ἀνάστασις ὑπάρχει τῷ λαῷ Σου....

Your Cross, o Christ, is the life and resurrection to your people; and trusting in it we extol You, our God, who has risen. Have mercy on us

Κύριε, ὄπλον κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου, τὸν Σταυρόν ἡμῖν δέδωκας, φρίττει γὰρ και τρέμει, μὴ φέρων καθορᾶν αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν...

Lord, as a weapon against the Devil, You have given us Your holy Cross. Grippled with fear he trembles unable to endure to look upon its might, because it raises the dead, and death itself is neutralised. For this reason we adore Your three-day burial and rising again.



# What does the Cross tell us about us?



The need to stand *in silence* before the cross of Christ contemplating its significance and allowing Christ to speak to us today



# What does the Cross tell us about us?



- The Cross is the ultimate act of God, it should also be the ultimate word about us since we are created in his image
- We too must be co-crucified
- We too must be willing to take up our cross
- Cf. Christ's temptation in the wilderness
  - He was hungry - He was tempted to turn the stones into great
  - He was taken to the pinnacle of the temple - tempted to throw himself down
  - He was taken to a high mountain - shown all the kingdoms of the earth and was promised that these could be his if he worshipped the devil (namely, rejected his cross)



# The message of the Cross



God is Love!

“A new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12)

How do we understand ‘love’? (everyone is for love)

God’s love for us was manifested through his crucifixion



# The message of the Cross



To love God means to have a total and absolute fidelity in God in all circumstances without exception!

Trusting in God, wanting to do it his way and not our way!



# The message of the Cross



**Christ's way is:**

constant mercy  
constant forgiveness  
no condemnation  
'Father, forgive them'  
not fighting evil with evil  
enduring

We do not become pious by  
condemning the impiety of others



# The message of the Cross



## Christ's way is:

**Confrontation:** of evil  
**Conversion:** to Christ  
**Confession:** / proclamation of faith  
**Commitment:** to Christ

“You gotta die before you die, so that when you die, you don't die”

*Fr Thomas Hopko (of blessed memory)*



# The message of the Cross

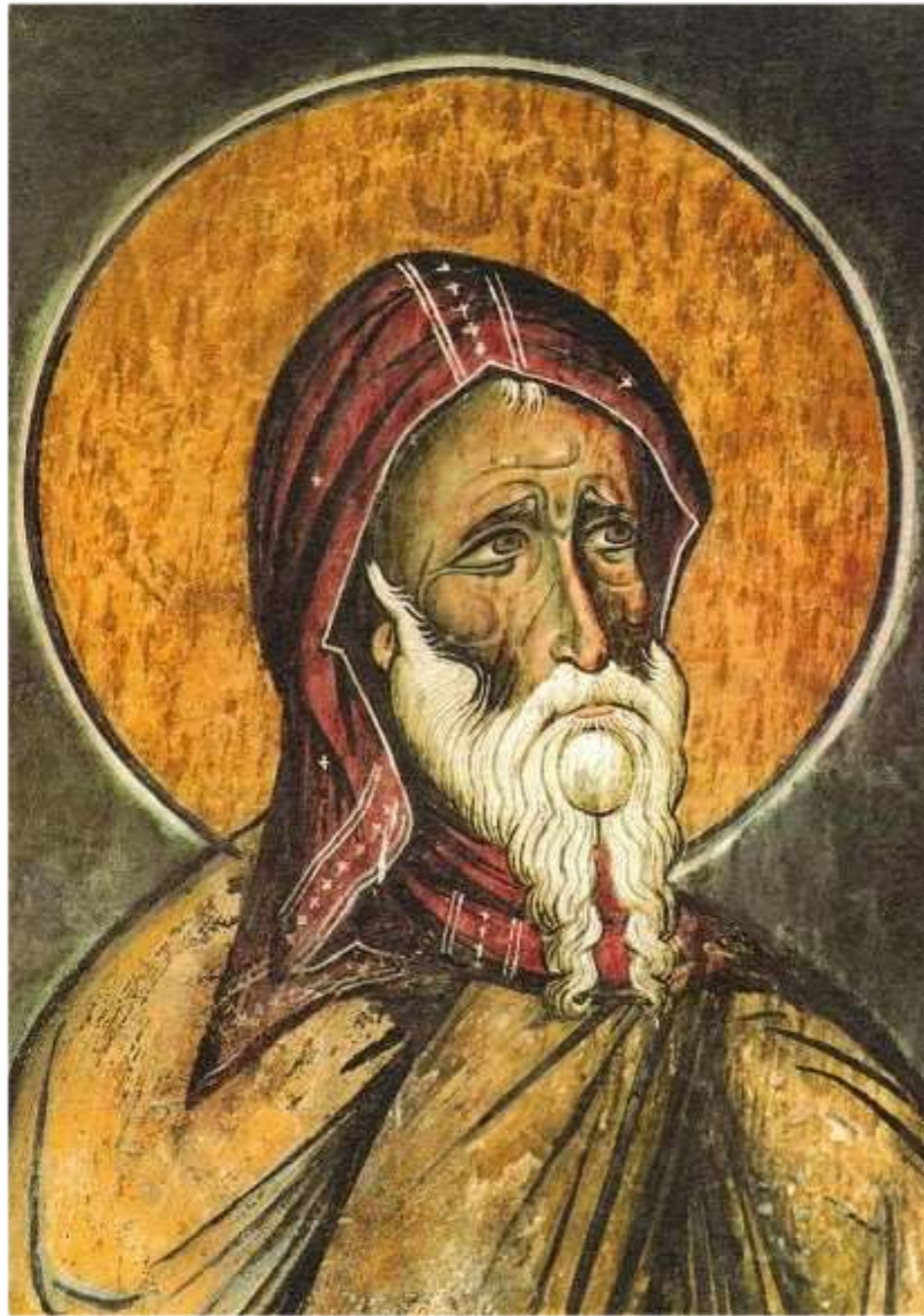
“Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself”  
(Rom 2:1)



In his letter to the Romans, St Paul tells us that not only will the unrighteous experience God's judgement, but also the self-righteous



# The message of the Cross



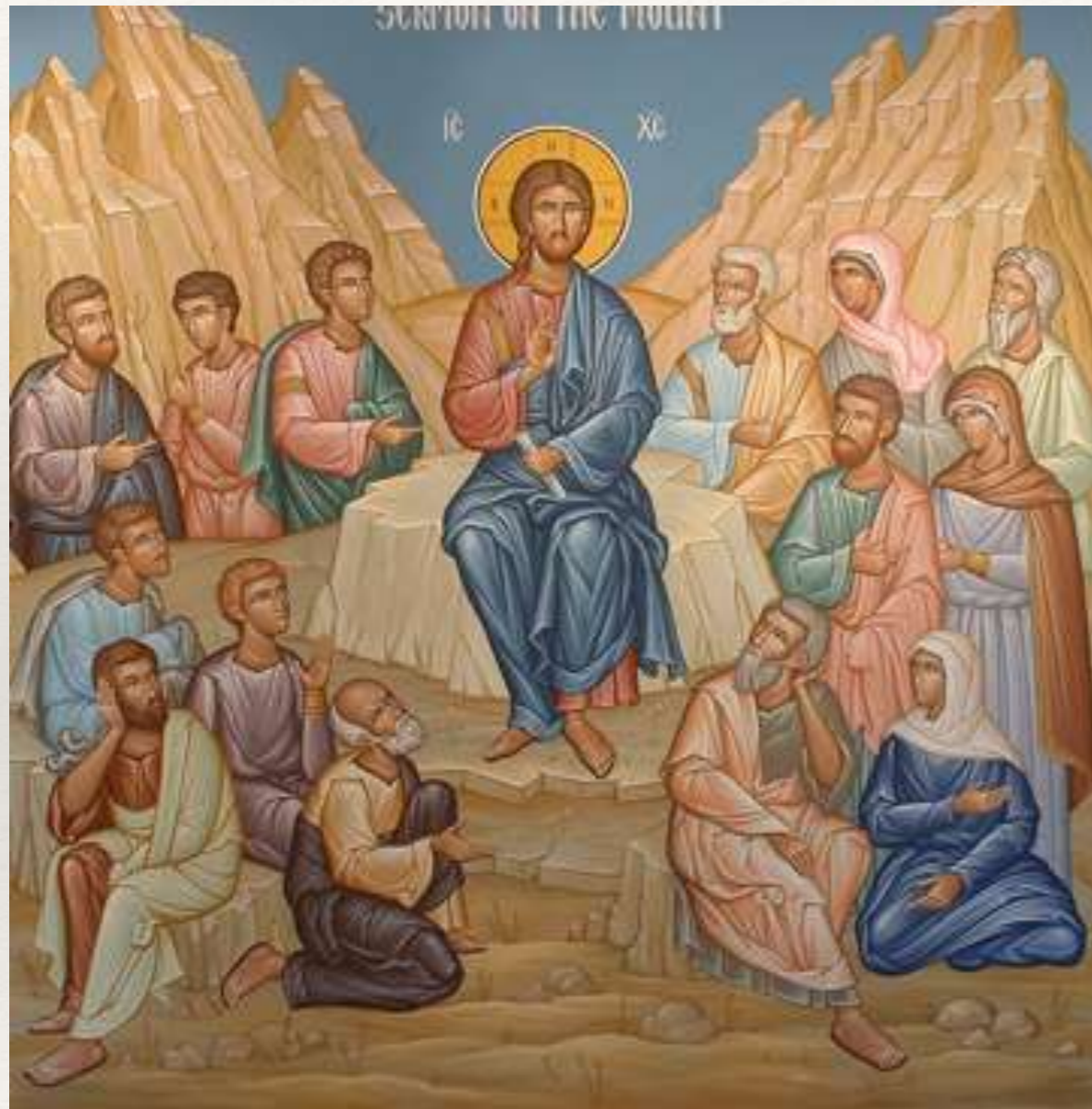
There is a saying in the *Saying of the Desert Fathers* that there was a group of monks who wanted to ‘help’ a fellow monk who was falsely accused of *porneia*. And they began to condemn him. In response, they were told the following parable:

“I saw a man at the river bank up to his knees in mud. Then some people came to give him a hand and immersed him up to the neck”

In judging others we do not help them; rather we make it worse for them and for ourselves.



# The message of the Cross



We must always remember that we do not really know what is going on in people's lives.

Our task is simply to love them, to forgive them, to show them the truth, to embrace them, to identify with them, to be one with them.

We simply have to do this and trust in God that He will find ways to bring good out of difficult situations

Remember: the best way to destroy a person is to tell them the truth without love





