

# ***Seventh Sunday of the Holy Cross – Following God’s Will***

## ***(Feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross)***

*Delivered by Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian  
St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Carrollton, TX  
October 23, 2016  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 24:27-36*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Nobody enjoys cleaning or organizing a messy room or desk, but there are those that can clean and organize very quickly; grouping papers and books together and separating them from those which are destined for the trash. Then there are others who take hours and days to clean and organize. I am of the latter. When I clean or organize my office, for example, it takes me many hours and days because I am constantly discovering papers and books that I did not know I had or which I had lost.

St. Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, was of the former cleaning type I described. She set out to find the Holy Cross upon which Christ was crucified and did not allow other objects that were discovered to distract her from her ultimate goal back in the fourth century. Today we celebrate her discovery, but we are also reminded that we too are called to discover our own crosses in our lives if we want to be disciples of Christ. Jesus says, “Whoever wants to be my disciple. Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24). But what does this mean?

The simplest meaning of this passage is to serve God. We see and recognize this in the baptismal service of the Armenian Church. Right before a child or adult is about to be baptized, the priest asks the godfather, “What does this child request?” and the godfather usually responds, “Faith, hope, love and baptism”. Generally, the priest says something after that, but in reality, the priest is saying what the godfather is supposed to say. The priest continues the godfather’s response with saying, “...to be baptized and justified; to be cleansed of sins; to be freed from demons and to serve God”. From the moment of baptism, we realize and testify that taking up our cross means serving God.

There are many ways to serve God, but the greatest and most fundamental way is to follow His will. Hopefully, each of us pray the Lord’s Prayer at least once a day and we say, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” – that is to say, “May Your will be done here on earth as it is done in heaven.” When we follow God’s will, we are removing from our hands, and placing into God’s hands, our trust, hope and future. We are declaring, “You God know

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better than we do!” But still we worry about following God’s will completely, thinking that our will is better and safer, when in reality, God’s will is what keeps us safe.

There was once a hiker who appeared before God Almighty in the next life. Taking advantage of the moment, he asked God, “Why didn’t you save me when I was on the cliff and it collapsed beneath me, causing me to fall into the canyon?”

God answered, “When you passed through the thick forest, I sent an angel to protect you from the bear that was about to attack you. When the bear saw the angel, he lowered his head and walked away. When you swam through the river, I sent my angel to protect you from the poisonous snakes. When they saw him, they left you alone. When you were at the edge of the cliff, I sent my angel to stop you from walking any closer, but you, full of your own desires, pushed the angel off to the side and walked forward. Today, I wanted to save you three times, but on the third time, you chose to follow your own will and ignore My will.”

Our calling in life is to follow God’s will because His will is only for our safety and salvation. When we go against His will and follow our own, it is then that we put our bodies and souls in danger. We must strive to look for God’s will and make His, ours. Let us follow Christ’s humble and perfect example, when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion, “Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from me, not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

So on the Feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross, let us discover, once more, our cross that we must take up in order to follow and become a disciple of Christ. Let us remember that we are called to serve God every day and to follow His will, for His will is good, right and only for our salvation.

Amen.