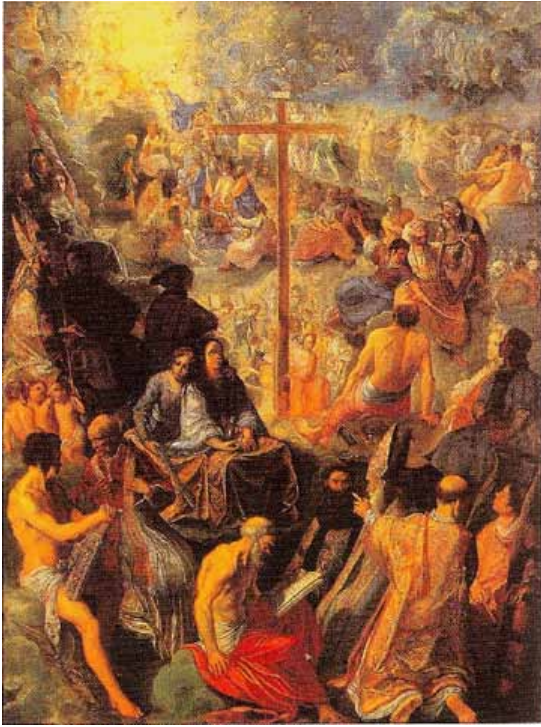


## Weekly Musing + September 12, 2011

The red letter Holy Day this week is Holy Cross Day on Wednesday, September 14. This goes back to the fourth century when St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, took a famous pilgrimage to the Holy Land (traveling from the then new capital Constantinople). She recovered the true cross and it was enshrined in an enormous new church. Later on in the 7th century, it was captured by the Persians and recaptured by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius. I have some of his gold coins and he is portrayed on them thus: As he ages, his bust has an increasingly long beard. Heraclius brought the true cross from Jerusalem to Constantinople but waited for months across the Sea of Mamara before his triumphant parade into the capital city replete with elephants and the Cross itself.



It was received into the great church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom, the second person of the Trinity) in a ceremony the likes of which had never been seen, the cross reaching full elevation little by little as the service progressed. The cross was taken back to Jerusalem where it is said to have been pried from the dead hands of the Bishop of Acre in the great battle against Saladin known as the Horns of Hattin. It was never seen again.

Of course there is a point to this beyond its history. Christianity of an historical variety is replete with correctives such as the creeds (Nicene and Apostle's) Scripture, various institutions such as the episcopate and even symbols such as the cross. The symbol of the cross makes it unlikely that we forget what happened on the cross, that is, Christ died for the sins of the world. Many people like to fast forward to the resurrection, but the atonement of Christ on the Cross is the central act of Christianity. On churches such as ours and St. Patrick's, it is always the tallest thing on the building. When the symbol of the cross becomes scarce (and it is scarce in many modern churches) I wonder if that reflects a paucity of the understanding of the cross. The cross may not be bypassed. To bypass the cross is finally to leave the realm of Christianity entirely.

*Adam Elsheimer, The Veneration of the Cross, c. 1607.*

## News from St. Luke's



If you haven't already seen it, you need to watch the music video from Senior High Camp. It is the youth singing "Come Thou Font of Every blessing": <http://youtu.be/soaaQxmr3zg?hd=1>

Camp remains the central tool of evangelism for the youth of the diocese. How do you present the gospel to the young? Send them to camp.

Our youth group which meets with St. Stephen's youth group will meet this Wednesday at 6:00 P.M. The vestry will look once more at service times this coming meeting on September 21. Godly Play begins September 18th. The Tuesday Bible Study will resume in October.

*The Rev. Canon Gary Waddingham  
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