

## The Appearance of the Sign of the Cross Near Athens in 1925

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In 1925, on the eve, of the feast of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, 14 September according to the Orthodox Church calendar, the all-night vigil was served at the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than 2,000 of the true-Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true-Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven P.M. the authorities dispatched a battalion of police to the church "to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering." The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they joined the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

At 11:30 P.M., there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar toward the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to raise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priest does in the ceremony of the Elevation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

The human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing prayers, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and the battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

The vigil continued until four A.M., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.

Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine (sometimes called the Russian Cross) Cross, with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomenon.

The fact that such an apparition of the Cross had also occurred during the height of the first great heresy must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the importance of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this issue lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation.

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### Eyewitness Accounts

Eyewitness Accounts of the Appearance of the Cross over the Church of St. John the Theologian at Mt. Hymettus, September 14, 1925.

I was one of the men from the Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country Church of St. John the Theologian.

The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the

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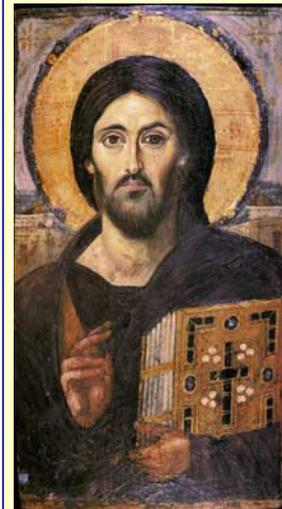
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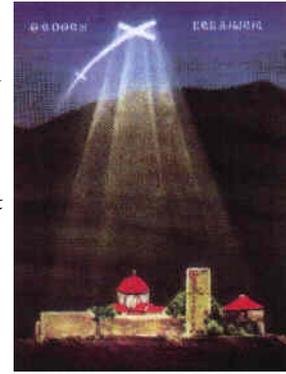


St. John of San Francisco

Exaltation of the Precious Cross (according to the Church Calendar, not the papist! —ed.)

Since many people had gathered - more than two thousand individuals - we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish.

At about 11:30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening - and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out "Lord, have mercy," were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church was illumining the whole area. At first, we were seized with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves and, forgetting the purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children.



Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end - no longer as persecutors, but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel which we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky.

John D. Glymis  
Retired Police Officer, 78 years of age  
73 Aristotle Street  
Peristeri ( a suburb of Athens)

On that night in 1925 when the Precious Cross appeared, I was making the last run with the tram which I was operating. I had reached Omonoia and was going around the square when I saw everyone looking up toward heaven and crying, "Look! - the Cross! - the Cross!" Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the vehicle. I stuck my head out the tram's door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of Our Lord - may His Name be glorified; it was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don't remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing - the Precious Cross which I saw the night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians.

Athanasios Primals  
Retired Tram Conductor, 80 years of age  
17 Kavales Street  
Nicea (a suburb of Athens)