

# Tell Me, Show Me, Involve Me

Everyone has trouble remembering things from time to time, especially as we get older. This is natural, there is even research on the things which we all forget most. 83% forget names most, 60% forget where something is, 53% forget words, 49% forget what was said and 42% forget faces. Our problem with forgetting isn't just about small things like people's names and where we put the remote, these are just smaller lapses of memory which reflect a much deeper, longer lasting forgetfulness which seems to be a part of human nature.

Human life, according to our Biblical tradition began with Adam and Eve forgetting the word of God, in one ear and out the other! Throughout the Old Testament you will find story after story of God's people forgetting their God and his wonderful deeds for them. You can find the same pattern in Armenian history. Just as soon as a great work of God transforms our people, in our Gold and Silver ages, we Armenians forget where we came from and for whom we were made, with terrible consequences for our people. Well it is human nature to forget who we are and where we came from. But it is God's nature, like a good father, to bring us constant reminders of who we really are and for what grand purposes we are made.

Today on the exaltation of the Cross, through mid November, we bring out the oldest and most powerful reminder of who we are in the Season of the cross. This reminder is in words, in ritual and in deed. As Confucius said "Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me, I understand." His wisdom is very relevant to how God wishes to remind us of the power of the cross in our lives on today's Feast of the Exaltation and throughout this Season of the Cross.

We have no shortage of words about the cross today and throughout the season of the cross. We recalled Jesus' powerful words to Nicodemus in today's reading on the profound meaning of the cross for our lives that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (Jn 3:16) We even have prayers and special songs about the cross to keep its life saving message in our heads, but alas words alone are too easy for us to forget.

That's why the Armenian Church abides by the principal, show me don't tell me. Don't just talk about the self-giving love of Christ, show me, because 'tell me I forget, but show me I remember.' We show the love of Christ today by taking the tangible reminder of his love, the cross, raising it up, and using it to bless the 4 corners of the world and of our lives. The cross is like a holy keepsake from God that we treasure and reflect on each year to remember who gave it to us and for what reasons.

We all have precious keepsakes that we treasure and keep in our homes that remind us of important people in our past and of who we are. In our closet we have Yn. Anna's grandfather Ishkhan's medals from WWII, where he served in the Russian army repelling the dark forces of Nazi Germany. In our family room is a wooden chest from the 1890s stenciled with white letters, 'J.S.' Hagop/Jack Sarkisian, my great grandfather's luggage from when he fled the start of Genocide in Kharpert for America. We all have such treasured keepsakes that tangible connection us to loved ones passed, and remind us from where we came. The cross is our most treasured tangible connection to our God of love, reminding us from where we came and to whom we belong.

The cross is a visible reminder of God's promise that death will yield to life, the lost will be found, and that what is forgotten and forsaken is remembered in Him. The cross reminds us that for whatever we have suffered in our history--wars, deportations and genocide—by Christ's cross this death has been redeemed unto life. This reminder is not just in our past and for our ancestors, but for all of God's people today. So that even today as we recall the 21st anniversary of the innocent lives lost on Sept 11 2001, we seek redemption and renewal in the promise of the cross.

And finally, the cross is not only something we've been told, or only something we've been shown, it must be something that involves us so we truly understand. Put another way, the cross is not only something outside of us that belongs to our past. The cross is a reality and promise that we live, move and have our being in today. So that when we cross ourselves in church or at home- this is nothing less than an invitation that Christ abide within us. When we hang a cross in our car or over our hearts- let this be a reminder that the cross is a lived reality evoking acts of patience, kindness and forgiveness. And when the children join me in raising the cross around the church, blessing the 4 corners of the world today- let us remember that our very building is itself a cross. In this way let all who are members of this church be a witness to to the entire Gulfcoast of Florida that Armenian Christians and their families love to tell about the cross, to show its glory, and to be actively involved in its mission of redemption; now and always and unto the ages of ages amen.