

Wednesday, September 15th

For our God's Work, Our Hands project this year our crew of volunteers worked at Sleep in Heavenly Peace making 18 beds for children in need. With 10,000 children in Erie County needing beds plus new Afghanistan refugees arriving to this area, they are receiving about 80 requests a month and continue to need twin sized bedding which can be dropped off at their Eastern Hills Mall location or brought into church to be delivered there. Thanks to all who provided bedding earlier this summer and/or helped with bed building!



From *St. Laika's*

Holy Cross Day: The beautiful, terrible Cross

by Pastor Tim Madsen

On September 14th Saint Laika's celebrates Holy Cross Day, sometimes known as the Triumph of the Cross.

The story that has come down to us from history and legend is that Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to profess Jesus Christ as Lord, sent his mother, Helena, to Israel in the first decades of the fourth century, to discover the places that would have been sacred to the Christian people. It was there that she was supposed to have found preserved the true cross of Jesus, on the site which today houses the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Church was dedicated and opened for service on the fourteenth of September, 335 AD.

Over time, today's feast came to be seen as a counterpoint to Good Friday. It gave Christians a time to celebrate the triumph of the Cross as a sign of God's victory.

Malcolm Boyd wrote the following as a reflection on the cross. It comes from his book, *Are You Running With Me, Jesus:*

They've made the cross you hung on so pretty, Jesus.

I know the real cross wasn't pretty at all.

But I guess I understand why they want to make copies of it

Out of fine woods and even semiprecious stones,
because you hung on it.

Yet doesn't this romanticize your death, Lord, and give it a kind of gloss it didn't have?

Your death was bloody and dirty and very real.

Can't we face it that way, Jesus?

And can't we face the fact that you were a real man,

Living a human life, as well as God?

Scripture In the sixth chapter of "Galatians," at the fourteenth verse, we read:

"May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Prayer O God, who by the passion of your blessed son made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life and peace, grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your son our savior, Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

The wood of the Cross and the wood of children's beds: this week we are thankful for both. We are thankful first and foremost for the saving work our Lord accomplished on his Cross for our sake, according to the Father's will. As Malcolm Boyd observes, we prefer a cleaned up, even decorative cross. It doesn't demand as much of us. But Jesus gave all and asks us to pick up our own cross and follow him. For most of us that will not mean a cruel, tortured martyrdom. But we are all called to draw nearer to Jesus through each step of accepting God's sometimes confusing, confounding and painful will in our lives. He doesn't allow these circumstances for any other reason than that: to draw us ever closer, to follow and imitate Jesus and become his hands and feet in the world. The cross can be compassionating someone in their suffering, or a hard day's labor building an unknown child's bed. It can be enduring the constraints of a sick bed, or the rudeness of a wounded soul we encounter. It takes an unlimited amount of shapes and sizes, custom fit to our shoulders by a God who knows us better than we know ourselves. In accepting the small and large crosses in our lives we spread Jesus' love and mercy in a world so much in need of it, always pointing to his Cross that saves.

