

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



***Please note that attendance is currently limited by restrictions dictated by local response to the COVID-19 pandemic; if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group, please contact outreach@apostlethomas.org for information on when you may attend.**

September 13, 2020 | 14th Sunday After Pentecost Sunday Before and Forefeast of the Elevation of the Cross Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem

The Consecration of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ at Jerusalem celebrates the consecration of the Church of the Resurrection, built by Saint Constantine the Great and his mother, the empress Helen.

After the voluntary Passion and Death on the Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the holy place of His suffering was long trampled on by pagans. When the Roman emperor Titus conquered Jerusalem in the year 70, he razed the city and destroyed the Temple of Solomon on Mount Moriah, leaving there not a stone upon a stone, as even the Savior foretold (Mt. 13:1-2).

Later on the zealous pagan emperor Hadrian (117-138) built on the site of the Jerusalem destroyed by Titus a new city named Aelia Capitolina for him (Hadrian Aelius). It was forbidden to call the city by its former name.

He gave orders to cover the Holy Tomb of the Lord with earth and stones, and on that spot to set up an idol. On Golgotha, where the Savior was crucified, he constructed a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Venus in 119. Before the statues they offered sacrifice to demons and performed pagan rites, accompanied by wanton acts.

In Bethlehem, at the place the Savior was born of the All-Pure Virgin, the impious emperor set up an idol of Adonis. He did all this intentionally, so that people would forget completely about Christ the Savior and that they would no longer remember the places where He lived, taught, suffered and arose in glory.

At the beginning of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (306-337), the first of the Roman emperors to recognize the Christian religion, he and his pious mother the empress Helen decided to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. They also planned to build a church on the site of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, in order to reconsecrate and purify the places connected with the memory of the Savior from the taint of foul pagan cults.

The empress Helen journeyed to Jerusalem with a large quantity of gold, and Constantine wrote a letter to Patriarch Makarios I (313-323), requesting him to assist her in every possible way with her task of the renewing the Christian holy places. After her arrival in Jerusalem, the holy empress Helen destroyed all the pagan temples and reconsecrated the places desecrated by the pagans. She was zealous to find the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and she ordered the excavation of the place where the temple of Venus stood. There they discovered the Sepulchre of the Lord and Golgotha, and they also found three crosses and some nails.

In order to determine upon which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius gave orders to place a dead person, who was being carried to a place of burial, upon each cross in turn. When the dead person was placed on the Cross of Christ, he immediately came alive. With the greatest of joy the empress Helen and Patriarch Makarios raised up the Life-Creating Cross and displayed it to all the people standing about.

The holy empress quickly began the construction of a large church which enclosed within its walls Golgotha, the place of the Crucifixion of the Savior, and the Sepulchre of the Lord, located near each other. The holy Apostle and Evangelist John wrote about this: "Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day, for the tomb was nearby" (John 19:41-42). The Church of the Resurrection was ten years in building, and the holy empress Helen did not survive to see its completion. She returned to Constantinople, and reposed in the year 327. After her arrival in

Jerusalem, the holy empress built churches in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane and in many other places connected with the life of the Savior and events in the New Testament.

The construction of the Church of the Resurrection, called "Martyrion" in memory of the suffer-ings of the Savior, was completed in the same year as the Synod of Tyre, and in the thirtieth year of the reign of Constantine the Great. Therefore, at the assembly of September 13, 335, the consecra-tion of the temple was particularly solemn. Hierarchs of Christian churches in many lands: Bithynia, Thrace, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, participated in the consecration of the church. The bishops who participated in the Synod of Tyre, and many others, went to the consecration in Jerusalem. On this day all the city of Jerusalem was consecrated. The Fathers of the Church established September 13 as the commemoration of this remarkable event, the day before the the Exaltation of the Honorable Cross. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircum-cision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Christ our true God says, "I came to set fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Lk. 12:49) This Divine fire, cast on the earth of their hearts, the holy Apostles and disciples of the Lord received from Him, and being kindled with a flame of love for Him, they left the world and all that is in the world and, coming to Him as to their Lord and Teacher and true Instructor on the path of salvation, gave themselves over soul and body into true obedience and cutting off of their own will and understanding to their last breath, and with great and unutterable joy said to Him, "Behold, he have left all and followed You (Mat. 19:27). Having ever this Divine fire in their hearts, and in everything following the Divine will of their Lord and Teacher, they preserved this obedience as the apple of their eye (cf. Prov. 7:2) to the end of their lives, sealing it with the bearing of numberless temptations and various deaths and the spilling of their blood to the last drip, which they shed for their faith and love toward Christ God so that they might preserve their obedience to Him, as a pure and immaculate sacrifice, unto death.

The holy Martyrs received this Divine fire of God's love and endured with unutterable joy various torments and the cruelest deaths for Christ God, receiving from Him the crown of His Divine glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. All our holy and God-beari9ng Fathers received this Divine fire and fled the world and all that is in the world; some of them remained in the common life in perfect obedience and cutting off of their own will to their last breath, and received a martyr's crown from the Lord's right hand; and some of them struggled in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth (Heb. 11:38), going on the strait and narrow way, ever bearing in their bodies the death of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10). Being co-crucified with Christ, remaining in hunger and thirst and in every suffering of evil, in unceasing prayer and entreaties and tears, and passing their lives in the utter poverty of Christ and the Holy Apostles, and keep9ing the commandments of the Gospel purely and immaculately as the apple of their eye – they were vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven.

– St. Paisius Velichkovsky

Also Commemorated Today: Hieromartyr Cornelius

"First fruit of the nations", the "first" of the pagans who received "holy baptism and the grace of the Spirit", Cornelius was the centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort. In paganism he adorned his soul "with alms and prayers" and with all his family he lived honorably and piously. And here is "Christ, seeing" "the good deeds and prayers" of the centurion, sends him an angel, wishing to make Cornelius the inheritor of His Kingdom. The angel told the centurion: "your

prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God". "Call Simon who is called Peter". "He speaks to you these words, you with all your household is saved by them" (Acts 10:4-6). Cornelius precisely executed the order of the angel. The Apostle Peter, who received in a wonderful vision the instruction to tell Cornelius the teaching by the words of the Gospel, came to Cornelius, and preached to him of the crucified Christ, that the Holy Spirit came down upon all who heard the Word of God, and they began to speak in different languages, and then Cornelius with his family was baptized. The house of St. Cornelius was turned into a church. St. Cornelius worked much for the spread of the Christian faith,"scattering the darkness of idolatry" "and drowning the weeds of polytheism". There is a tradition that Cornelius sometimes shared the work of the Apostle Peter, and was also installed as the Bishop of Caesarea, Palestine by him. St. Cornelius finished his preaching efforts in Skepseis where he performed many wonders and after much suffering from the pagans died peacefully, at a very old age. (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbytera Katie Baker & family, Santiago Alzugaray, Patty Blaydoe, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Howl family, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl & family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, Luke & Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore & Christina Ristas, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Joe & Darlene Waters, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Dcn. Nectarios & Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)