

## Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

110 EAST MAIN STREET,  
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector



Rectory: (419) 798-4591  
Father Peter's cell: (607) 206-5523  
E-mail: [info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org](mailto:info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org)  
Father Peter's email: [frpeteromas@yahoo.com](mailto:frpeteromas@yahoo.com)  
website: [www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org](http://www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org)



*Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,  
Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest*

MAY 24, 2026

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA  
*FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL*

### EPISTLE: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support



**Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**

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the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### **GOSPEL: John 17:1-13**

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

### **LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK**

<b>MON. May 25</b>	Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist ; Acts 21:8-14, Jn 14:27-15:7
<b>TUE. May 26</b>	Apostle Carpus of the Seventy; Acts 21:26-32, Jn 16:2-13
<b>WED. May 27</b>	Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Sardis; Acts 23:1-11, Jn 16:15-23
<b>THU. May 28</b>	Saint Niketas, Bishop of Chalcedon; Acts 25:13-19, Jn 16:23-33
<b>FRI. May 29</b>	Levetaking of Ascension, Holy Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Tyre; Acts 27:1-44, Jn 17:18-26
<b>SAT. May 30</b>	<b>Memorial Saturday</b> , Venerable Isaac; Acts 28:1-31, Jn 21:15-25
	<b>9:10 AM HOURS</b>
	<b>9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY</b>
	<b>4:00 PM VESPERS</b>
<b>SUN. May 31</b>	<b>PENTECOST, FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY, Tone 7</b>
	<b>9:10 AM HOURS</b>
	<b>9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY</b> Followed by Coffee Hour



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## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**Tina Rindfleisch & Tony Monastra**, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; **Greg Twarek**, 117 Lucien Drive, Marblehead, OH 43440 **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road Vermilion, OH 44089; **Irene Vangeloff**, 3580 Shaw Ave., Apt. 305, Cincinnati, OH 45208 Tel.: (513) 376-9693

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## PRAYER LIST

**Parishioners & Family:** Bryan Gibson / Tom Sitzler / Valerie Schutt / Hayden Issler / Roger Pinta Jr. / Greg Twarek / Amber Twarek / Richard Williams / Christine Twarek / Tony Monastra / Alvin Foland / Delaine Ward (Ron Royhab's sister) / Danielle and her unborn baby / Nikki and her unborn baby / Kristen Cassell / Laura DeKemper / Tom Hileman / Cliff & Kathy Ruggles / Sandra / Renee Haynal / Sharon Shaheen (Patti Owen's sister) / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / James Bargdill / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

**Other Requests:** Peggy / Becky / Ella / Tom Virostek / Bob Stephenson / Jim Rinaldo / Roy / Greg / Patty Wandover / Russ M. / Suzeann / Laura Engler / Robin (Niece of Kathy Ruggles) / Catechumen Sessely / Catechumen Daniel / Catechumen Adam / Catechumen Joshua / Catechumen Stephanie / Catechumen Max / Catechumen Michael / Catechumen Sharon / Steve Rohweder / Nicole Williams / John Couture / Ann Turinsky / Marcia / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Linkoln Paull / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Susanne / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian Hutnyan / Archpriest John Adamcio / Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

**Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military

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## MAY REPOSED

Julia Onyock (1921) No date provided; Andrew Onyock (1922) No date provided; Christos Karniotis (1992) No date provided; **1-**Donald Cholcher (2020); **4-** Norman Anthony Glovinsky (2016); **8-** Brad Bauer (2019); **14-** Stanley Lis (2019); **15-**George Glovinsky (1986); **21-** Anna Mazurik (2008); **22-** Mary Opritza (2011); **24-** Helen Greshko (1980); **25-** Anna Mazurak (1966); **25-** Philip Timko (2021); **27-** John Gresko- (2008); **30-** Anna Elchisco (1977)

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## VIGILS FOR May 17

**Susan Guzy 1** Special Intentions

**Laura Kovach 3** For health and/or healing of Jim, Bob C., Paul W., Robin L., Margi & Joe, Heidi & Wayne G., Lindsay & Janet, Jerry Z., Patti O., Deb F., Tony M., Russ M., Burt K., Bobbie & Ron R., Peggy S., Brenda T., Betty K., Margaret M., Mark M., Dana M., Bodi C.  
In loving memory of Kay Tibbels, Annamae Bell, Ben Franklin, and Rob Gevertz  
Special intentions for Amanda, Andrew, Jack, and Luke

**Dennis Lapso 3** For blessed repose of Annette Lapso, For Emily who is with child, For MAH health and well being

**Sandy Martin 1** Special Intentions

**David & Roddie Mazurik 4** Special Intentions

**Natalie Twarek 10** Anniversary blessings to Tina & Tony, In loving memory of Annamae Bell, Safe travel for Jean & family, For the health of Nikki and unborn baby, For the health of Fr Peter & Matushka Michelle, For the health of Fr John & Matushka Melania, Health and recovery of Greg, Amber, Dina, Claire & Laura Arnold, For the health and recovery of Tom. Mary, Rodney & Carol, Ken, Bob, Richard, Patty, Patti, Laura, Kathy & Cliff, Irene, Ron & Bobbie, Betty, Kayla, Heidi, Wayne, Peggy & Becky, Marcia, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara & Walter, For the health of Nick & family, Mimi, Elaine, Christine, Jen, Father David, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Sonya, Margi & Joe, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat



### READERS LIST

Sunday May 24 – Joe  
Sunday May 31 – Tim



### MAY CANDLE SPONSORS

**Altar Candles:** Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš **(\$50)**; **Chandelier:** Valerie Schutt, Birthday Blessings for Joe **(\$50)**; **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available **(\$25)**; **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Michael **(\$20)**; **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** Available **(\$20)**



### ATTENDANCE

**05/16** Vespers, **12** attending (4 guests); **05/17** Divine Liturgy, **49** attending (13 guests)



### MAY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**26** – Quincy Kowal\*



### SUNDAY OFFERING

#### Sunday, May 17, 2026

Tithe	\$1,592.00
Donations	\$ 99.00
Candles	\$ 96.00
Vigils	\$ 140.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 150.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,077.00</b>

*May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!*



### CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“Joyful Connections” is the charity we donate to for the month of May.

### UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**May 30<sup>th</sup>** Memorial Saturday, Div. Liturgy 9:30 (*Saturday*)

**May 31<sup>st</sup>** HOLY PENTECOST (*Sunday*)

**June 1<sup>st</sup>** Baking Day – 8:00 AM (*Monday*)



- June 2<sup>nd</sup>** Baking Day – 8:00 AM (*Tuesday*)
- June 4<sup>th</sup>** Annual Pigrimage and Lake Erie cruise to the Middle Bass Island 10:45 AM (*Thursday*)
- June 8<sup>th</sup>** Apostles' Fast begins (*Monday*)
- June 13<sup>th</sup>** Market Day 8:00 AM (*Saturday*)
- June 29<sup>th</sup>** Ss. Peter & Paul – the leaders of the Holy Apostles, Div. Liturgy 9:30 (*Monday*)



### MARKET DAY!

Our sincere thanks are extended to all who helped with our Market Day yesterday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The gross income from the sale was **\$3,632.58** May Our Lord reward you all for your time and energy with His Special Blessings!

Our next Market Day will take place on Saturday, **June 13<sup>th</sup>** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, halupki, kielbasa and kraut, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is needed and greatly appreciated!



### COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| May 24 -  | Mat. Michelle |
| May 31 -  | Sandy         |
| June 7 -  | Natalia       |
| June 14 - | Valerie       |

*Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall*



### CLEANING SCHEDULE

- May 25, Greg
- June 1, Roddie & David
- June 8, Tina
- June 15, Natalie



### ANNUAL VISIT TO MIDDLE BASS ISLAND

Our Annual Pigrimage and Annual Lake Erie cruise to the Middle Bass Island will take place on Thursday, **June 4<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm**. This fare and the feast are FREE of charge to any participant and the Ferry sails from Catawba at **10:45 AM**. Roger will meet us there. Please text or call Debby **(216) 676-9531** or Roger **(419) 285-5200** if you plan to attend, so they can make sure they have enough ferry tickets and enough food for everyone.



### BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

You are invited to participate in the Annual Baby Bottle Campaign sponsored by Ottawa County Pregnancy Services. Please take a Baby bottle which you will find in the vestibule and fill it with loose change, cash or check made out to Ottawa County Pregnancy. Please return the bottle on or before Father's Day (June 21<sup>st</sup>).



### Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Commemorated on May 24

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior's words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor's sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In the year 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), Saint Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius [who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18)]. He is called "the Great," for he was a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today's Feast, he is referred to as "the thirteenth Apostle."

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, "God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous."

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan's knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. Saint Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word "consubstantial," which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ's divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

The First Ecumenical Council is also commemorated on May 29.



## The Story of Saint Constantine the Great by Fr. Bill Olnhausen

Let's take another break from our travels and hear the story of events and people of the fourth century, mostly in Greek-speaking lands, which determined the future of Christianity and the world. All these are commemorations on the Orthodox calendar at this time of year, and all relate directly to the **First Ecumenical Council**.

Today, we'll hear about the **Emperor Constantine**, commemorated on May 21 along with his mother Helen. Then in succeeding weeks, we'll tell the story of the **Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council** called together by the Emperor Constantine, commemorated on the Sunday after the Ascension (May 28 this year). Finally we'll hear the account of the leading light of that Council, the wonderful **Saint Athanasios the Great**, whom the Church honors on May 2.

I am no historian and no scholar, so if there are errors or questionable assertions in what follows, I ask those who know more than I do please to correct me. Today's world already has enough "alternate facts" being passed around. In what follows I have made considerable use of *The Holy Fire: the Story of the Fathers of the Eastern Church* by Robert Payne. I found this book exciting easy reading, though if you read it don't skip the preface by Father Thomas Hopko who points out a few errors.

Was Constantine an ascetic? No. Was he a brilliant theologian? No. Was his moral life exemplary? Not always, by any means. Was he a miracle worker? No. Was he even a Christian? Not formally, until he was finally baptized almost on his deathbed. So why does the Church call him a saint? Read on.

By the late third century AD the great Roman Empire had four emperors. (This questionable move was made for administrative purposes.) Constantine was son of the Emperor Constantius who ruled the far west: Britain, Gaul and Spain. Constantine's mother was Helen (Helena, Eleni) an innkeeper's daughter, whom Constantius had married, then divorced for political reasons – though some say they were never married. He then married a daughter of his senior western emperor Maximian, who was based in Trier in Gaul, a persecutor of Christians. Constantine and his mother remained close. She raised him as a boy in her home town of Drepanum in northwest Asia Minor, in the region where later he would build his new imperial city. Helen, who was either a Christian or sympathetic to Christianity, had a profound influence on her son.

As a young man Constantine was trained in the court of Diocletian, one of the co-emperors of the east



\*, who was brutally attempting to eliminate Christianity, and then he went to join his father in Britain. When Constantius died the troops acclaimed Constantine king; this was in the year 306 in York in England. \*Yes, I know, all these emperors get confusing, and we're just getting started. I hope I've kept them straight.

Constantine was ambitious. His goal was to reunite the Roman empire under himself. Maxentius was then emperor in Italy. Constantine and his army marched south, prepared to meet his far superior forces. While crossing the Alps Constantine had a strange and transformative experience. This was the story he told ever after: In the morning sky he saw (some accounts say others saw it with him) a shining cross with the words "In this sign conquer". Some say it was in Greek "En touto nika", others that it was Latin "In hoc signum vincit". *This rather fanciful portrayal is by Rafael.*

At the time Constantine was still a pagan who seems to have worshipped the sun as the high god. But he must also have had Christian sympathies, perhaps because of his mother, for he had Christian priests accompanying his army, and they explained the vision to him. So he had the Chi-Rho painted on his army's banners. One of the banners was kept in Constantinople for many centuries. (Probably it was destroyed by the Crusaders, along with many other things including the future of the Byzantine Empire.) The armies met at the Milvian Bridge on the River Tiber outside Rome, and Maxentius was defeated. It was October in the year 312.

Constantine was now Augustus, sole emperor of the west, but he was not like other emperors. When he marched into Rome, he did not make the customary reprisals against the vanquished. More significantly, he boldly refused to make the customary sacrifices to the Roman gods. This was dangerously "politically incorrect", for the Roman elite were chiefly pagan. Even though Christians were highly suspect, one of his first acts was to forbid the persecution of Christians. His famous Edict of Milan, made in the year 313 jointly with Licinius, the new emperor of the east, declared tolerance for all religions. And from the beginning Constantine gave special privileges to the Church. He ruled that the Church could again own property and directed the return of seized property. He ordered the return of Christian exiles. He decreed that the Christian Lord's Day ("Kyriake" in Greek), the day of Christ's resurrection, be the imperial weekly holiday. ("Sunday" is a pagan name for the first day of the week.) Do you want to know about Constantine's family life? It was not exactly "saintly". He set aside his first wife Minervina to marry Fausta, daughter of yet another emperor Maximianus. He thought highly of her, had her proclaimed Augusta, Empress. But some years later without explanation he had his oldest son Crispus executed and Fausta smothered in her bath. (Gossip said it involved adultery or worse. We will never know.) Constantine never married again. Quickly he had his mother Helen *shown here* declared Augusta. In the eyes of Christians she came to play a role similar to that of Christ's Mother.

Emperor Licinius in the east had signed the edict of Milan but had now taken to persecuting Christians again. Constantine soon decided to reunite the empire under himself and under the Christian God. He and his army moved east. In May 324 the combined armies numbering over 300,000 men met outside the Greek city of Adrianopolis. (In those days wars were usually fought outside cities and did not normally involve civilians. May we please go back to the old days?) Licinius was defeated and fled and finally surrendered that September. Constantine was now sole emperor, east and west.

Now the empire was united under the Christian God. However, to Constantine's great frustration, Christians were not united. Far from it, there was bitter division between the Orthodox and the Arians, who denied the divinity of Christ – or it may be they just misunderstood the meaning of divinity. So, one of Constantine's first acts, the next spring, was to call a Council of Christian bishops in Nicaea, a city on the west coast of Asia Minor, to try to unite the Church.

It is said 318 bishops attended. This became known as the First Ecumenical Council. Constantine himself presided and gave great honor to those who had been injured during the persecutions. It is not clear whether Constantine understood the theological issue. Above all he wanted unity. Among the bishops at the Council, at least, he got it. After some early contention, the final vote was 316 (probably) to 2 against Arius and for the Orthodox.

Constantine's next great act was to move the imperial capitol from Rome to a new city he built at the little town of Byzantium, a strategic position on the Bosphorus, which came to be called Constantinople, Constantine's city. (Today the Turks call it by almost the same name, Istanbul, which is colloquial for "to Constantinople". Say "isin Constantinople" fast a few times.) The new capitol was dedicated on May 11, 330, and put under the protection of the Theotokos. Why the move? To escape the pagan traditions of Rome? Because the east was the cultural and economic center of the empire? For sentimental reasons – because he had been raised near there by his mother? Perhaps all of the above. In any event it was a providential move, for only a century later the old Rome would fall to barbarians from the north. And so began the history of what has come to be called the Byzantine Empire, the longest-lasting, most influential empire in human history.

Constantine's mother the empress Helen now enters the story again. She made a pilgrimage to Palestine, the Holy Land. (I told you in Blog Post 3, March 13, how she commissioned at least one church along the way, Ekatonpaliani on Paros.) Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans in the year 70, and the site was now a pagan town, Aelia Capitolina. Helen sought out the holy sites connected with our Lord Jesus Christ. She commissioned churches to be built at Bethlehem in honor of Christ's Nativity, and in Jerusalem the church of the Resurrection, the Anastasis, at the site of Christ's tomb.

After her death her son Constantine went to Jerusalem for the dedication of the Anastasis, the Church of the Resurrection, on September 13, 336. The joy and exultation of Christians was almost beyond belief. Less than 25 years before, the empire was trying to exterminate the Church. Now the emperor, The Emperor!, had come to honor Jesus Christ! It felt like the whole world was being renewed. We still commemorate this every September 13. Listen to one of the hymns from the day: "Take off the old man and be clothed in the new. Celebrate the renewal of your soul... Let your whole life be renewed, for the old things have passed away, and behold, all is made new. Let the fruit of this feast be for you a change for the good, for mankind is renewed, and the feast of the Renewal is now being celebrated." (*First Doxasticon from the Praises of Festival Orthros*) It seemed like "the Kingdoms of this world [had] become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ." For a while.

All this time Constantine had never been baptized. Historians wonder why. Some people at the time (mistakenly) delayed Baptism till late in life, lest they fall into major sin after the Washing. Even the great Saint Basil, raised in a profoundly Christian family, was not baptized till he was an adult. Or maybe Constantine delayed for political reasons, not wanting to entirely abandon the pagans, so he could be emperor "to all the people". He never explained. But early in the year 337 he fell ill and quickly was baptized. It is said he abandoned his imperial garments and wore only his white baptismal robe for the rest of his life, which was not long. He died on Pentecost, May 21, 337, and ever since on this day the Church has honored him and his mother.

As I said at the beginning, Constantine was not a saint in the usual sense. He was a politician, with all the compromises that entails. But no saints begin as saints; they are ordinary people who become extraordinary. There is every evidence that Constantine became a devout Christian before he was done. But we honor him chiefly for what he did for the Church and the world. Constantine ended the Great Persecution of the Church, and through him the Roman empire became Christian. It was because of Constantine that Christendom as we knew it till recently existed, and that hundreds of millions of people through the centuries up to our own day have had the opportunity to be Christians, to know Christ, to be part of the Church, to attain eternal life. In that sense Constantine was a miracle-worker. And the one who set him on that course and helped him establish it was his mother Helen. It is right that the Church titles them both as "Equals to the Apostles".

