

**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, UK.**

The Stavronian

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*Ἐθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Bishop Silouan.
Our Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

Often, goes the Christ in the stranger's guise

CHRIST IS RISEN!!

Lord of the Flies is a novel by William Golding about a group of British school-boys stuck on a deserted island who try to govern themselves, with disastrous results. They begin life on the island full of excitement, but gradually the order they tried to create breaks down. The civilised schoolboys become savages. A conch shell determines the one who can speak! “Lord of the Flies” is also a translation of the words *Baal Zebub*, the prince of demons (2 Kings 1:2-3).

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell”.
(James 3:6)

E-mail, Facebook and Twitter have many useful attributes for ease of communication and social networking, but like all technological innovations we are persuaded that we need them in order for us to be more efficient and effective. In fact they have the reverse effect. Communication like money is neutral but it is how we use these systems of exchange that is important. Like flies we are drawn into a world wide web where we can be caught up spending more and more time before a screen that prevents us from real social interaction and that slowly digests our ability to focus on the true priorities of life. We are absorbed into cyber space where the atmosphere of the real world is replaced with a vacuum in which sin begins to numb our sensitivities and warp our judgements.

We should take very seriously Christ’s warnings about what we say or write about others even more so today when all and sundry have access to the record of our thoughts: *“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell”.* (Matthew 5:22)

Our Lord clearly points out that since words possess power we will be held responsible for how we speak about others.

“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken”. (Matthew 12:36)

The mouth-piece is the sounding board of our inner thoughts.

“What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean’”.
(Matthew 15:11)

“But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.’” (Matthew 15:18)

There can be no justification in speaking or writing that which comes from the passion of anger which is the child of pride, nor can there be an excuse for the word of truth which is not spoken in love. Love is the hallmark of the Christian - by this Christ said all people will know that you are my disciples. Gentleness and respect for others, humility and repentance is the way for those caught in the passions - if we fail to exercise such continence then God in his mercy will surely humble us.

Facebook may be a way of keeping in contact with others, but it should always be for the building up of relationships, not to break them down. Our information highway sometimes brings out “road rage” and can be the outlet for all kinds of frustration, hatred, bile and vituperations - such broadcasting of the devil’s machinations and promptings has no place in the Christian message of Good News.

Christ through His death on the Cross has overcome the power of death and sin and by His glorious Resurrection He has made us citizens of Heaven. The Light of the Resurrection has dawned upon us! Let us live as those who are sons and daughters of the Light!

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed!

ST. CONSTANTINE AND ST. HELEN

The Church calls St Constantine (306-337) “the Equal of the Apostles”, and historians call him “the Great”. He was the son of the Caesar Constantius Chlorus (305-306), who governed the

lands of Gaul and Britain. His mother was St Helen, a Christian of humble birth.

At this time the immense Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern halves, governed by two independent emperors and their corulers called “Caesars”. Constantius Chlorus was Caesar in the Western Roman Empire. St Constantine was born in 274, possibly at Nish in Serbia. In 294, Constantius divorced Helen in order to further his political ambition by marrying a woman of noble rank. After he became emperor, Constantine showed his mother great honour and respect, granting her the imperial title “Augusta”.

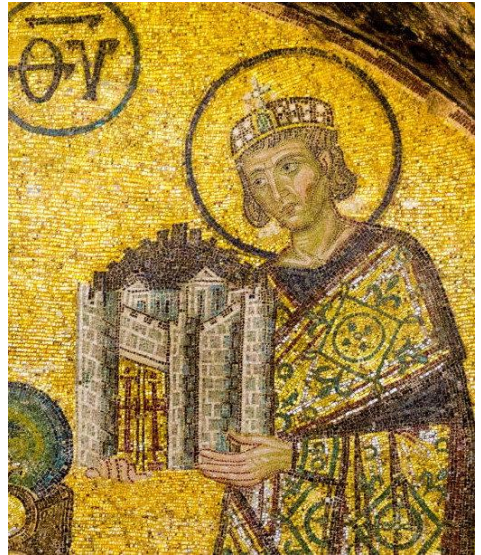
Constantine, the future ruler of all the whole Roman Empire, was raised to respect Christianity. His father did not persecute Christians in the lands he governed. This was at a time when Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire by the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and his corulers Maximian Galerius (305-311) in the East, and the emperor Maximian Hercules (284-305) in the West.



Bronze statue of Constantine I in York, England, near the spot where he was proclaimed Augustus in 306.

After the death of Constantius Chlorus in 306, Constantine was acclaimed by the army at York as emperor of Gaul and Britain. The first act of the new emperor was to grant the freedom to practice Christianity in the lands subject to him. The pagan Maximian Galerius in the East and the fierce tyrant Maxentius in the West hated Constantine and they plotted to overthrow and kill him, but Constantine bested them in a series of battles, defeating his opponents with the help of God. He prayed to God to give him a sign which would inspire his army to fight valiantly, and the

Lord showed him a radiant Sign of the Cross in the heavens with the inscription “In this Sign, conquer”.



A mosaic image of Constantine the Great from the church of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople.

After Constantine became the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which guaranteed religious tolerance for Christians. St Helen, who was a Christian, may have influenced him in this decision. In 323, when he became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire, he extended the provisions of the Edict of Milan to the Eastern half of the Empire. After three hundred years of persecution, Christians could finally practice their faith without fear.

Renouncing paganism, the Emperor did not let his capital remain in ancient Rome, the former centre of the pagan realm. He transferred his capital to the East, to the city of Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople, the city of Constantine (May 11). Constantine was deeply convinced that only Christianity could unify the immense Roman Empire with its diverse peoples. He supported the Church in every way. He recalled Christian confessors from banishment, he built churches, and he showed concern for the clergy.

The emperor deeply revered the victory-bearing Sign of the Cross of the Lord, and also wanted to find the actual Cross upon which our

Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. For this purpose he sent his own mother, the holy Empress Helen, to Jerusalem, granting her both power and money. Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem and St Helen began the search, and through the will of God, the Life-Creating Cross was miraculously discovered in 326. (The account of the finding of the Cross of the Lord is found under the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14). The Orthodox Church commemorates the Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by the Holy Empress Helen on March 6.

While in Palestine, the holy empress did much of benefit for the Church. She ordered that all places connected with the earthly life of the Lord and His All Pure Mother, should be freed of all traces of paganism, and she commanded that churches should be built at these places.

The emperor Constantine ordered a magnificent church in honour of Christ's Resurrection to be built over His tomb. St Helen gave the Life-Creating Cross to the Patriarch for safe-keeping, and took part of the Cross with her for the emperor. After distributing generous alms at Jerusalem and feeding the needy (at times she even served them herself), the holy Empress Helen returned to Constantinople, where she died in the year 327.

Because of her great services to the Church and her efforts in finding the Life-Giving Cross, the empress Helen is called "the Equal of the Apostles".

The peaceful state of the Christian Church was disturbed by quarrels, dissensions and heresies which had appeared within the Church. Already at the beginning of St Constantine's reign the heresies of the Donatists and the Novatians had arisen in the West. They demanded a second baptism for those who lapsed during the persecutions against Christians. These heresies, repudiated by two local Church councils, were finally condemned at the Council of Milan in 316.

Particularly ruinous for the Church was the rise of the Arian heresy in the East, which denied the Divine Nature of the Son of God, and taught that Jesus Christ was a mere creature. By order of the emperor, the First Ecumenical Council was convened in the city of Nicea in 325.

318 bishops attended this Council. Among its participants were confessor bishops from the period of the persecutions and many other luminaries of the Church, among whom was St



St. Helen's sarcophagus in the Museo Pio-Clementino, Rome.

Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. (The account about the Council is found under May 29). The emperor was present at the sessions of the Council. The heresy of Arius was condemned and a Symbol of Faith (Creed) composed, in which was included the term "homoousios (one in essence) with the Father", confirming the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ, Who assumed human nature for the redemption of the entire human race.

One might possibly be surprised by St Constantine's grasp of theological issues during the discussions at the Council. The term "homoousios" was included in the Symbol of Faith at his insistence.

After the Council of Nicea, St Constantine continued with his active role in the welfare of the Church. He accepted holy Baptism on his deathbed, having prepared for it all his whole life. St Constantine died on the day of Pentecost in the year 337 and was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, in a crypt he had prepared for himself.

Source:

<http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsLife.asp?FSID=101452>

Pictures and captions taken from Wikipedia.



*St. Constantine and St. Helen
(image from oca.org)*

JOY

So many times, I travelled through holy and great week and arrived to the liturgy of the Resurrection exhausted and hungry, dazzled and barely moving. And yet upon arrival in church I became joyous, my feet became light and by the end of the liturgy, having received the light, I was overwhelmed by joy and having received the Lord I felt like I never needed to sleep or eat again. And this joy stayed with me for days and nothing could diminish it!

Joy is the gift and grace of God. It overwhelms us when we behold Him, when, like the two Marys we embrace his feet and worship Him. The encounter with the risen Lord fills us with awe and fear as it did the apostles and the women, but the Lord tells us “Rejoice!”

“So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.” (Matthew 28:8)

Joy is a feeling or rather a state of being which surpasses mere happiness and its wonder resides in the fact that it comes upon one despite everything that might be happening around. As Christians we are called to be joyous because Christ is risen from the dead and also to rejoice when we suffer because that brings us closer to

Him. How blessed we are! The other amazing thing about joy is that it spills out, it cannot be contained in one’s soul. It encompasses people around, creation and the entire world. Joy can only originate in the Lord and is pure grace and gift. In this joy we are bound together with bonds of love which gushes out despite ourselves.

Joy! A spark of fire from Heaven,
Daughter from Elysium,
Drunk with fire we dare to enter,
Holy One, inside your shrine.
Your magic power binds together,
What we by custom wrench apart,
All men will emerge as brothers.
Where you rest your gentle wings.”

Schiller’s Ode to Joy (translation by Michael Kay)

But first we have to mourn in order to experience the joy of Resurrection. We have to be with Christ in the suffering and obedience in order to experience the freedom of joy. As David beautifully says:

“Thou has turned for me my mourning into joy; Thou hast sent off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.”

“For wrath is in His anger, but in His favour is life: weeping may endure for the evening, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 29)

“Thou hast shown me the paths of life, with Thy presence shalt Thou fill me with joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 15)

Alexandra McCafferty

VIGIL PRAYERS

During the pandemic, we continue the stand-ard prayer practice at home, including the reading of the Lord’s prayer at 12:00 every day. In addition, many parishioners have already signed for the Vigil Prayer online, so that the non-stopping prayer is maintained by the faithful all over the world continuously for 24 hours, until the pandemic surrenders.

ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

To attend the in-Church services during May you have to sing-up using this [form](#). We want to ensure that as many people as possible can attend at least one service over the weekend. So please rank them based on which of the available dates you prefer more. Allocation of the places depends on the volume of requests, and we cannot guarantee that you will be able to attend all services. The places are allocated on the “first come, first served” basis. At present, only 20 people are allowed to attend the worship, including the priest, the server, the chanter and the COVID officer.

Please note that if you are planning on attending the service as a family, you need to register each family member separately using the form. This is because each person, even from a single family, counts towards the maximum allowed number. You will be notified about attendance in due time, and the full protocols concerning attendance will be issued. Please check your email regularly to get the confirmation emails, as well as to be aware of any changes and updates regarding the online and in-Church services.

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

May 26: *Paraskeui*

MEMORY ETERNAL!



Please send us the names of your departed loved ones and date of their departure in order for them to be remembered.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st May: Holy Saturday

2nd May: Great and Holy Pascha

8th May: Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, and St. Arsenius the Great

9th May: Thomas Sunday

11th May: Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Equal-to-the Apostles

15th May: St. Pachomius the Great Martyr

16th May: Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

21st May: Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles

23rd May: Sunday of the Paralytic. The retrieval of the relics of St. Joachim of Ithaca

25th May: Third Finding of the Precious Head of St. John the Baptist

30th May: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

31st May: Fathers of the 1st Council

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org



*Resurrection of Christ
(image from oca.org)*

Services at St Martin's in May (*online**)

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Sat. 1st | 09:30 | Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil - Commemorating Christ's Victory over Death** |
| | 20:00 | The Midnight Office, Giving of Light, The Resurrection Service (Rush), Orthros of Great and Holy Pascha** |
| Sun. 2nd | 08:00 | Divine Liturgy of Great and Holy Pascha** |
| | 15:00 | The Agape Vespers** |
| Thu. 6th | 18:30 | Vespers for the Life-Giving Spring |
| Sat. 8th | 18:30 | Great Vespers |
| Sun. 9th | 09:45 | Divine Liturgy** |
| Fri. 14th | 18:30 | Vespers for St Pachomios |
| Sat. 15th | 18:30 | Great Vespers |
| Sun. 16th | 09:45 | Divine Liturgy** |
| Thu. 20th | 18:30 | Vespers for St Constantine and St Helen |
| Sat. 22nd | 18:30 | Great Vespers |
| Sun. 23rd | 09:45 | Divine Liturgy** |
| Mon. 24th | 18:30 | Vespers for The Finding of the Head of John the Baptist |
| Sat. 29th | 18:30 | Great Vespers |
| Sun. 30th | 09:45 | Divine Liturgy** |

* Please, join a Skype group <https://join.skype.com/KZt20cnwQw5f> to obtain the link to a current service. The live services are also available on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/126074338184/>. All services are subject to change or non-transmission because of internet connection or availability.

** Services in the Church.

The Paschal Greeting in various languages*

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| English | Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! |
| Arabic | المسيح قام ! حقا قام (El-Mesiyah qhama! Haqqan qaam!) |
| German | Christ <u>u</u> s ist <u>a</u> uferstanden! Er ist <u>w</u> ahrhaft <u>a</u> uferstanden! |
| Greek | Χρισ <u>τ</u> ὸς <u>ἀ</u> νέστη! Ἀλη <u>θ</u> ῶς <u>ἀ</u> νέστη! (Christ <u>o</u> s <u>a</u> ngesti! Alith <u>o</u> s <u>a</u> ngesti!) |
| Romanian | Hrist <u>o</u> s a <u>î</u> nviat! Adevăra <u>t</u> a <u>î</u> nviat! |
| Bulgarian | Христ <u>о</u> s възкресе! Наистина възкресе! (Khrist <u>o</u> s vzkrese! Naistina vzkrese!) |
| Russian | Христ <u>о</u> s воскресе! Воистину воскресе! (Khrist <u>o</u> s voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!) |
| Polish | Chrystus zm <u>o</u> rtwychwsta! Prawdziwie zm <u>o</u> rtwychwsta! (Kri <u>st</u> us zm <u>o</u> rtvykh-vstau! Pradzivie zm <u>o</u> rtvikh-vstau!) |
| Latvian | Kristus (ir) aug <u>s</u> amcēlies! Patiesi viņš ir aug <u>s</u> amcēlies! (Kristus (ir) aughsham-elias! Patiesi vin ir aughsham-elias!) |
| Chinese | 基督復活了！他確實復活了！ |
| (Mandarin) | (Titu f <u>u</u> huola! Ha-tieshi f <u>u</u> huola!) |

*Underlined letters indicate the emphasis in pronunciation

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
- St. George Karslides –



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The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, Constiinta Ortodoxa, in English, Orthodox city hermit, and in Greek, Orthodoxy rainbow.

