

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
901 Sherman Drive, Utica, New York 13501
Phone 315.732.4662 Email stbasilutica@gmail.com
Website www.stbasilutica.org



SAINTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

THE CHURCH HAS USED MANY TERMS to describe the saints. Some of these are common to all the historic Churches, such as apostles or martyrs. The Eastern Churches also speak of some saints as “Equal to the Apostles,” believers who were responsible for bringing the Gospel to significant groups of people or nations throughout the world. The first of them were St Mary Magdalene, who announced the Resurrection to the dispirited followers of Jesus, and St Takla, the first woman martyr.

The Church has called Equal to the Apostles those who have been responsible for bringing the Gospel to previously pagan territories, such as Ss Cyril and Methodius and St Clement of Ochrid, who evangelized the Slavs of Moravia and Macedonia during the ninth century. An unlikely evangelist given this title is St Nino, the enlightener of Georgia. The Roman historian Tyrranius Rufinus (c345-410) recounts her story as told him by a Georgian prince. Nino, taken captive during the early fourth century, came to the attention of the queen when a sick child was healed by her prayers. She eventually brought the queen and then the king to Christ. Mass conversions followed.

Among the Equals to the Apostles honored in the Eastern Churches are those rulers who first established or championed the Church in their realms. Chief among them are Ss Constantine and Helena whose feast is observed on May 21. As the first Roman rulers to profess the Christian faith, they had the greatest impact on both the Church and the empire.

Early Years: Constantine was born in c. 272 to a Roman military officer, Flavius Valerius Constantius and Helena, whom some ancient sources call his wife and some do not. St Ambrose of Milan says that she was a stable-maid. Sometime before 289, as Constantius’ career prospered, he married the daughter of Emperor Maximilian. Helena and her son were sent off to the Eastern court of the emperor in Nicomedia, Asia Minor (Izmit, Turkey today). Helena never remarried and lived quietly with her son.

Constantine and the Church: Scholars now feel certain that Constantine had embraced Christianity some time before his famous victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312. He remained a catechumen throughout his life. As his death approached, he put aside his imperial regalia and was baptized, never taking them up again. Constantine reversed the fortunes of the Church in the Roman Empire in every aspect of its existence, beginning with:

- **The Legalization of Christianity:** The last great persecution of Christianity, begun by Emperor Diocletian in 303, was not enforced in the West by Constantius or Constantine. The persecution was formally ended in 311 by Galerius who declared Christianity a *religio licita* (a form of worship acceptable) in the empire. The growing number of Christians made their support a bargaining chip for the warring rivals for power. Their support turned to Constantine during his struggle against Maxentius when he marked his standards with the χ (Chi-Rho), the first letters of the name of Christ in Greek. One of Constantine’s advisors, Lactantius, wrote that he did this in response to advice received in a dream “to mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of his soldiers.” The contemporary historian Eusebius wrote that this dream was preceded by a vision: Constantine “... saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, In Hoc Signo Vinces” (with this sign, you shall be victorious.) In 313, after defeating Maxentius, Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan in which property confiscated from Christians during the persecution was ordered restored “without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception.” While these edicts expressed only a toleration of Christianity, Constantine actively promoted it.

- **Faith & Order in the Church:** To promote unity in the empire Constantine fostered unity among Christians. In 325 he called the first ecumenical council (Nicaea I) to give it a universally recognized faith and structure. (*MayLeaflets2019*)

SUNDAY 3RD AFTER EASTER
Saturday May 11, Sunday May 12, 2019

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Maggy Attalah, Nadia Casab, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, and Jean Benoit. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection May 4/5: \$ 505.79 Cheese Sale: \$ 40. 00
Memorial Offering: \$ 10.00 PayPal- Donation: 290.70
St Pauly Textile: \$ 72.21

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, MAY 11

† William Chanatry, By Gloria Shaheen
† Joann Colutier, By Carol Chanatry

THIS SUNDAY, MAY 12

† William Chanatry, By Gloria Shaheen
† Adel & Bahejeh Giangi By Their Children
† Rose Reesh, By her family

NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 18

† William Chanatry, By Gloria Shaheen
† Joann Colutier, By Carol Chanatry

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 19

† William Chanatry, By Louis & Julie Shkane
† Adel & Bahejeh Giangi, By Their Children

*** ANNOUNCEMENT ***

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon June 3, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm