

BRIGHT WEEK AFTER THE RESURRECTION

The week that begins with the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ is a special time in the Church calendar. It is considered a glorious festival and is prescribed by the Church as the time of "a renewal of life." It is commonly referred to as "Bright Week."

It is during this week that a number of Churches observe a special feast called the **Life-Giving Fountain of the Holy Virgin**. Liturgical books tell us about this festival. It seems that in a suburb of Constantinople known as the Seven Towers, there was a beautiful church named in honor of the Birthgiver of God. This temple was built in the middle of the fifth century, and was located near a spring. Many miracles of healing were reported at this fountain, hence it got its name.

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the church was torn down by edict and the stones from its ruins are said to have been used for the building of a mosque. There remained on the site a small subterranean chapel covered by debris. Twenty-five steps led down to it. The spring of holy water was by this chapel and was surrounded by an iron railing. This situation remained until 1821, when the poor little church was completely destroyed, and the spring sank into the ground and disappeared.

But in time there came religious freedom, and faithful Christians sought to build a church on the beloved site. In 1833, work began on restoring the fountain and building the church. When it was completed, it was more beautiful than ever, and a solemn dedication took place shortly thereafter. It is the consecration which is observed on Friday of Bright Week by our faithful.

WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN

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SUNDAY OF ST. THOMAS



TODAY'S READINGS

GOSPEL: John 20, 19-31;

EPISTLE: Acts. 5, 12-20;

TODAY WE COMMEMORATE:

THE HOLY APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST MARK

Mark was a traveling companion and assistant to the Apostle Peter who, in his first epistle calls him his son, "The chosen one at Babylon sends you his greeting as does Mark, my son" (1 Peter 5:13), not according to the flesh but a son according to the spirit. While Mark was in Rome with Peter, the faithful begged him to write down for them the saving teaching of the Lord Jesus, His miracles and His life. Thus, Mark wrote the Holy Gospel which the Apostle Peter himself saw and attested to its truthfulness. Mark was appointed a bishop by the Apostle Peter and was sent to Egypt to preach. As so, St. Mark was the first preacher of the Good News [Gospel] in Egypt and was the first bishop in Egypt. Egypt was entirely oppressed by the thick darkness of paganism, idolatry, soothsaying and malice. With the help of God, St. Mark succeeded to sow the seed of the teaching of Christ throughout Libiya, Ammonicia and Pentopolis. From Pentopolis, St. Mark came to Alexandria where the Spirit of God led him. In Alexandria, he succeeded in establishing the Church of God and installed bishops, priests and deacons and to firmly strengthen them all in the honorable Faith. Mark confirmed his preaching through many and great miracles. When the heathens raised accusations against Mark, as a destroyer of their idolatrous faith, and when the mayor of the city began to search for Mark, he again fled to Pentopolis where he continued to strengthen his earlier work. After two years, Mark again returned to Alexandria to the great joy of all the faithful, whose number was greatly multiplied. On this occasion, the pagans seized Mark, bound him tightly and began to drag him over the cobblestone pavement crying out: "Let us drag the ox to the pen." Wounded and bloodied throughout, they cast Mark into prison where, at first, a heavenly angel appeared to him encouraging and strengthening him. After that, the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to him and said: "Peace be to you Mark, my Evangelist!" To that Mark replied: "Peace be to you also my Lord Jesus Christ!" The next day the vicious men brought Mark out of prison and again dragged him throughout the streets with the same cry: "Let us drag the ox to the pen." Completely exhausted and worn out, Mark uttered: "Into Your hands O Lord, I give up my spirit." Mark expired and his soul was translated into a better world. His holy relics were honorably buried by Christians and, through the centuries, his relics give healing to people from all of their afflictions, pains and diseases.

HOMILY

About the apostles' love for labors

"Nor did we eat food received free from everyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked so as not to burden any of you" (2 Thessalonians 3:8).

First fulfill then teach. All the apostles and all of the saints of God adhered to this rule. Thus, the Apostle Paul, even before he spoke the command: "If anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10), declares for himself and for

A PROBLEM NOT WORTH PRAYING ABOUT, ISN'T WORTH WORRYING ABOUT.

his assistants in preaching that they did not eat anyone's bread for free, rather by effort and labor earned their bread. "Night and day we worked!" Behold the true laborers! Behold the honey-bearing bees of Christ! Daily and nightly toil: where is their time for sin? Daily and nightly toil: where is their room for sin? Daily and nightly toil: where can the devil weave his nest of passions? Daily and nightly toil: where is their cause for scandal?

In certain Egyptian and Palestinian monasteries, there lived about ten thousand monks. They all lived off the labor of their hands: from weaving beehives, baskets, door mats and from other types of handiwork. Daily and nightly toil and daily and nightly prayer. When a monk sold his beehives in town for a higher price than the price which the abbot designated, for that, the monk experienced punishment. For the ascetics it was not a matter of enrichment but only for the most essential nourishment and the simplest clothing. In this, the ascetics were and are the true followers of the great apostle.

O, my brethren, let us flee from slothfulness [idleness] as from a cave of wild beasts. If by some chance we fall into a cave of wild beasts, let us quickly flee from it, before the wild beasts totally seal off the entrance. The cave is the dwelling place where the slothful man seeks rest. The wild beasts are evil spirits who, in such a dwelling place, feel more at home there than near their king in Hades. O Lord, Who are wonderful in all the works of Your creation, awaken us from slothfulness and encourage us to nightly and daily labor by Your encouraging Holy Spirit.

FOOD FESTIVAL is NEXT SATURDAY MAY 14TH AND SUNDAY MAY 15TH Baked goods will be needed for both days of the Festival as well as **THEMED GIFT BASKETS** for the raffle. The retail value should be at least \$50 or more. **SIGN UP SHEETS** are available on the table downstairs.

On Thursday, May 12th, is the Feast of St.Vasilije of Ostrog Miracleworker
DIVINE LITURGY WILL START AT 9:30AM.

SAVE THE DATES:

- SPRING FOOD FESTIVAL- May 14th and 15th
- TEA and TREASURE BASKETS fundraiser Sunday, June 26th from 1pm-3:30 pm
- St. Elijah Cornerstone Men's Club Picnic Saturday, June 11, 2016 2:00 p.m.
- FYI -Dues are to be paid by June 1st in order to be a member in good standing. As voted on at the Annual Assembly on Sunday, December 20, 2015 the Non-member fee is now \$1500.

VISITS:

May 3rd - West Hills - Joseph Mrkonja

May 4th - Friendship Ridge - Sarah Jerich, Helen Belich, Cynthia Bra-tich, Ann Belich, Robin Lapceovich, Joe & Carol Kascur

May 5th - Villa St.Joseph - Slavka Nikolic

