



Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen Colchester

SERIES 2 NO 5 | MAY 2023



The Time of Pascha: The Ascension of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Christ is Risen! The period of time which the Orthodox Church calls 'the time of Pascha' begins on Holy Saturday and ends after fifty days on the Feast of Pentecost. In much the same way as the Sundays during Lent have spiritual and liturgical themes; so also do the Sundays which fall between the Sunday of Holy Pascha, and that of Pentecost. We encounter on these Sundays: St Thomas, the myrrh-bearing women, the paralyzed man, The Samaritan woman, the blind man and the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. In each case we are given a rich treasury of spiritual gifts, lovingly guarded through the millennia at great cost by the Orthodox Church, to deepen and develop our faith in Christ and to help open our minds and hearts to His saving and live-giving Gospel. Ten days before Pentecost, on a Thursday (this year on May 25th) we arrive at The Feast of the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; on which day we commemorate Christ's glorious taking up into Heaven and His return to sit at the right hand of His Father. Perhaps the most celebrated account of this awesome event is found in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:9-12). In it we read that forty days after His resurrection, Jesus tells His disciples of the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit and the power it will impart to them and gives them instructions to preach the Gospel to the whole world. Then he is taken up in a great cloud and the disciples return to Jerusalem to stay in the temple praying and worshipping God, changed forever. Just as the disciples did, we too, perhaps with a little sadness, finally take leave of Holy Pascha at this time, as our resurrected Lord is gathered up into heaven to sit in Glory with His Father.

But we must not give in to nostalgia or melancholy; the Holy Spirit is promised to us and there is much work to do! In the account of the Ascension in St Mark's Gospel, Jesus commands the disciples: *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature* (Mark 16:15). This too is our great and solemn task, dear brothers and sisters.

Father Mark

*O Christ God, You have ascended in Glory
Granting joy to Your disciples
by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing they were assured
That You are the Son of God
The Redeemer of the world!*

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 4)

Regular Service Times

Sundays: Matins & Holy Liturgy from 9:45 am at St Martins Church

Saturdays: Great Vespers 4:30pm at St Martin's Church

Services for May/Early June 2023

Wednesday 10 May Holy Liturgy: Mid Feast of Pentecost & The Holy Apostle Simon Zelotes 9:30am, St Helen's Chapel

Friday 19 May Holy Liturgy: St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury 9:30am, St Helen's Chapel

+Sunday 21 May Hours and Holy Liturgy: 6th Sunday of Pascha and Patronal Feast - Holy Equals to the Apostles Emperor Constantine & his mother Helena. +

Thursday 25 May Holy Liturgy: The Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 9:30am, St Martin's Church

Thursday 1 June Holy Liturgy: Martyr Justin the Philosopher 9:30am, St Helen's Chapel

Confessions

Father Alexander: from 5pm after Vespers or by arrangement |
Father Mark by arrangement

*Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, funerals, memorials etc by
arrangement*

News and updates of the month:

On Thomas Sunday (also the Feast of St George), His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan of the British Isles and Ireland visited St Martins and ordained Father Mark as a Confessor (Pneumatikos). Sayedna preached about the importance of taking decisive steps towards God through our active participation in the life and sacraments of the Church and reminded all of us of the grave responsibility placed upon the priesthood, for the spiritual care of the faithful. We were also blessed to welcome Father Matei Vulcanescu, his dear Presbytera and several of his people who travelled a long way from the Antiochian parish in Liverpool to be with us. All enjoyed a delicious and plentiful shared lunch which had been very well organised by Khouria Paula, with several stalwart helpers. Thanks to all who served, sang and did good works. A happy day indeed for the parish!



(picture taken after the Father Mark's ordination as a Confessor)

Help Needed!

Knouria Paula is creating a contact list of people who are willing to be contacted when we need help in the parish. If you would like to add your name to the list please contact Khouria Paula by email, paularothero@gmail.com, and include your name and contact phone number. We know that not everyone can help with everything but it will be good to have a group of people to call upon when we need it. Offering our practical support, time and energy is a wonderful way to serve God's Holy Church!

Also in May: Saint Bede (27 May), the greatest Anglo-Saxon scholar and scientist. He became a monk at 7 years old and left the monastery only 3 times. He wrote more than 40 books and for many centuries many monks used his work as a basis for their education. His greatest legacy, 'The Ecclesiastical History of the British People' is the principal source for our understanding of British history from the Roman period until his own time. St Bede died in 735 and his relics are currently in the Cathedral of Durham.

St Constantine and his mother St Helena

Born in 272, this great and renowned sovereign of the Christians was the son of Constantius Chlorus (the ruler of the westernmost parts of the Roman empire), and of the blessed St Helen. In 306, when his father died, he was proclaimed successor to his throne and in 312 he marched into Italy against Maximinus, where, while at the head of his troops, he saw in the sky after midday, beneath the sun, a radiant pillar in the form of a cross with the words: "By this shalt thou conquer.". The following night, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream and declared to him the power of the Cross and its significance. After conquering Maxentius, Constantine entered Rome in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of the West by the Senate, while Licinius, his brother-in-law, ruled in the East. He, later on, defeated his brother-in-law as well - because he was persecuting Christians - and in 324 he became monarch over the West and the East. Under him and because of him all the persecutions against the Church ceased. In 325 he gathered the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which he himself personally addressed. In 330, he laid the foundations of the new capital of his realm and named it after himself, Constantinople. Falling ill near Nicomedia, he requested to receive the divine Baptism, and he later reposed in 337, having lived sixty-five years.



His mother, Saint Helen, after her son had made the Faith of Christ triumphant throughout the Roman Empire, undertook a journey to Jerusalem and found the Holy Cross on which our Lord was crucified. She erected various churches at the sites of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, in Bethlehem at the cave, on Mount of Olives, and many others throughout the Holy Land, Cyprus and elsewhere. She departed into Lord being about eighty years of age.

A word from the Fathers: My Life in Christ, Holy Thrinity Monastery (St John of Kroonstadt):

"When we call upon the Saints in prayer, if we pronounce their names from the heart, it already means that we bring them near our heart itself. Therefore ask for their prayers and intercession undoubtingly for yourself. They will hear you, and will speedily lay your prayers before the Lord, in the twinkling of an eye, for He is omnipresent and omniscient."

St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street, CO1 1HN
St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB

Both temples are off the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. Nearest car park NCP Nunn's Road, CO1 1EJ.

Confessions: Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement.
Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement.

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We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts: God bless you.

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