



Sts. Constantine & Helen May 21st

St. Constantine was born in 272, in Naissus of Dardania, a city on the Hellespont. In 306, when his father died, he was proclaimed successor to his throne. In 312, he marched into Italy, 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. When he arose in the morning, he immediately ordered that a banner be made in the form of a cross, and he inscribed on it the Name of Jesus Christ. On the 28th Of October, he attacked and mightily conquered Maxentius. The following day, Constantine entered Rome in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of the West, while Licinius, his brother-in-law, ruled in the East. But out of malice, Licinius later persecuted the Christians. Constantine fought him once and again, and utterly destroyed him in 324, and in this manner he became monarch over the West and the East. Under him and because of him all the persecutions against the Church ceased. Christianity triumphed and idolatry was overthrown. In 325 he gathered the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which he himself personally addressed. In 324, he laid the foundations of the new

capital of his realm, naming it after himself, Constantinople. Falling ill near Nicomedia, he requested to receive divine Baptism, according to Eusebius; and when he had been deemed worthy of the Holy Mysteries, he reposed in 337, on May 21 or 22, the day of Pentecost, having lived sixty-five years, of which he ruled for thirty-one years. His remains were transferred to Constantinople and were deposited in the Church of the Holy Apostles, which had been built by him (see Homily XXVI on Second Corinthians by Saint John Chrysostom).

As for his holy mother Helen, after her son had made the Faith of Christ triumphant throughout the Roman Empire, she undertook a journey to Jerusalem and found the Holy Cross on which our Lord was crucified. After this, Saint Helen, in her zeal to glorify Christ, erected churches in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, and many others throughout the Holy Land, Cyprus, and elsewhere. She was proclaimed Augusta, her image was stamped upon golden coins, and two cities were named Helenopolis after her in Bithynia and in Palestine. Having been thus glorified for her piety, she departed to the Lord being about eighty years of age, according to some in the year 330, according to others, in 336.