

MAY 21st

Saint HELEN

Memorial

The empress Helen was the mother of Constantine the Great. She made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326 and, according to the testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea, she gave proof of a regal generosity towards all. In her love for the Lord, she contributed to the building of splendid basilicas: that of the Holy Cross in Rome, the Basilica of the Apostles in Constantinople, and, in the Holy Land, the Basilicas of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

It is possible that the discovery of the Holy Cross took place during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Saint Helen died, probably in Constantinople, around 328-330; her body was later brought back to Rome. The witness of Saint Helen is one of faith and love: she wished to see with her own eyes all the places marked by the passage of the Son of God and to relive as intensely as possible the mystery of his Passion and Resurrection. May her intercession obtain that same grace for us.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Gal 6: 14

But may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

O COLLECT

Lord, you who granted Saint Helen such great devotion to the mystery of the cross, grant that, following her example and through her intercession, we may always cherish in our hearts your crucified Son
Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Proverbs 31: 10-13. 19-20. 30-31

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 84: 2. 3. 4-5a. 10. 11. (R. Rev 21: 3b)

R. "Behold, He will dwell with his people".

1. How lovely is your dwelling place,
O LORD of hosts.
My soul is longing and yearning
for the courts of the LORD.
My heart and my flesh cry out
to the living God.

2. Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself
in which she sets her young, at your altars,
O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.

3. Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
forever singing your praise.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield;
look on the face of your anointed.

4. One day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.
The threshold of the house of God
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Ps 69: 9

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.
Zeal for your house consumes me, and taunts against you fall on me.
R. Alleluia.

or else: Matt 21: 13

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.
And he said to them, "It is written: 'My house shall be a house of prayer', but you are making it a den of thieves."
R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to saint Mark 8: 31-32a. 34

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then he summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Almighty God, receive these gifts that we offer in memory of St. Helen and grant that we who celebrate the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord may imitate them in our lives.
Through Christ our Lord...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON 1 Cor 2: 2

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, may the sacraments we have received imbue us with that spirit of piety which led Saint Helen to embellish the Holy Places with splendid monuments in memory of your Only Begotten Son.
Who lives and reigns...