

WEEKLY MEDITATION

September 13: Commemoration of the Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem

St. Constantine the Great began building the magnificent temple of the Resurrection of Christ, eventually also known as the Holy Sepulcher, about AD 326 on the site believed to be Golgotha, within the Old City of Jerusalem. When it was finally completed about 335, a group of bishops sent to the Holy City for this purpose consecrated it in a solemn service of dedication. An annual commemoration of the dedication on this date was decreed and so the feast has passed on into our church calendar.

The hymns for the day portray the Church of the Resurrection as a microcosm of the universe, filled - like the heavens overarching our world - with the glory of God: "Thou hast displayed the loveliness of the holy dwelling of Thy glory below, O Lord, as Thou hast the beauty of the firmament above." (Troparion) As in the heavens, so on earth.

Secondly, the theme of institutional dedication is linked with that of personal re-dedication and renewal. Just as the temple was dedicated in honor of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, believers are called to re-dedicate themselves to Christ, to be renewed in their Christian life. We are, after all, temples of the Living God - "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Kontakion of the feast asks of the Lord that He will "Grant inner enlightenment and spiritual renewal of heart to those who with faith celebrate the sacred dedication of the temple of Thy house."

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