

## The Feast of the Holy Great Sovereigns St. Constantine and Helen of Constantinople in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

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Today is the commemoration day of St. Helena (of Constantinople) and St. Emperor Constantine (I - the 1st.). St. Helena was a mother of St. Constantine who used to be an Emperor in the Roman Empire. When her son Constantine became Emperor, in the year 306.

Although she had previously been abandoned by her husband, her son raised her to a position of great honour.

As Helena was a Christian she gave her support to their cause and, in the year 326, she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There she provided the wherewithal to found the building of a basilica on the Mount of Olives and another at Bethlehem.

She is traditionally credited with finding the relics of the True Cross on which Christ was crucified.

We celebrate and commemorate the two saints at one date today.

Here in Bulgaria, the feast is a highly venerated one in our Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

It's an interesting fact that it's considered that St. Helena has found the Golgotha place (the place of Skulls / the place of the crucifix), described in the Gospels.

She is also credited for building for a first time the famous church Holy Sepulchre located in Jerusalem where the Holy Fire is descending each and every year on Easter.

It's also really interesting story part of the documented life of St. Constantine, who once conquered with

a tiny army against a huge army, by carrying a flag with a Cross on it. The saint wasn't christian but he saw a vision some time before the battle took place, where he saw the Sign of the Cross in the Sky along with a coming voice from heaven which told him: "With this you will conquer". He then ordered all his army soldiers to draw a cross on their shields and he entered the battle. And he conquered just like he heard from the voice from heaven.

As a symbol of gratitude when he became an emperor he has put an end to the persecution against the Christians and the Church.

He also gave a lot of money to his mother st. Helena who build many christian temples in Jerusalem and Constantinople.

Outside the boundary of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the two saints has many followers membering sects and cults.

The two saints are venerated in a cult sense highly be the so called Fire-dancers. The Fire-Dancers, took some icons of the two saints from the Church they "dress up the icons" in a special dress, so that almost the whole icon of St. Constantine and Helena is covered up.

Then they pick up the icon and walk or dance over a fire place ... This cult practice is mostly widespread in [Strandzha](#)

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church has led an active fight against the cults dedicated to St. Constantine and St. Helena. However after the 9th of September as the communist govern took place, the church has to discontinue the fight against the spread of the cults and struggle to preserve itself from the communist attempts to destroy it.

Let the merciful God has mercy on us after the prayers of St. Constantine & St. Helen.