

# Christian Heritage Class

*Our 34<sup>th</sup> Year Learning about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church through an in-depth study of Church history, theology, art, music—and pilgrimage travel*

## Topics for March through May 2024

*The Class will meet periodically for about 45 minutes following Worship Service on Sundays and all are welcome to join us regularly—or whenever the subject is of interest; format is usually remarks and audio visuals (powerpoint and/or film). Church historian David Stedman is the leader*

### **10. February 25. Congregational Meeting & Luncheon no class**

**11. March 3. COMMUNION SUNDAY: The First Sainly African: St. Simon of Cyrene.** When Jesus could go no further the soldiers looked around and pressed into service a man from the Greek-speaking North African city of Cyrene. Simon (or Symeon) of Cyrene's act of carrying the Cross of Jesus is mentioned in all the synoptic gospels; the incident is the Fifth Station of the Cross. And it is possible that Simon's sons (Mentioned in Romans 16:13) became leaders in the Church.

**12. March 10. The Via Dolorosa.** The **Via Dolorosa** (Latin, "Way of Grief", "Way of Suffering" or simply "Painful Way") is a street, in two parts, within the Old City of Jerusalem, held to be the path that Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion. The winding route from the Antonia Fortress west to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a celebrated place of Christian pilgrimage. The current route has been established since the 18th century, replacing various earlier versions. It is today marked by nine Stations of the Cross; there have been fourteen stations since the late 15th century, with the remaining five stations being *inside* the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There is no historical basis for this route which has changed over the centuries—but tradition is so strong that pilgrims today walk the route, identifying with Christ's suffering, and many pray at each of the Stations of the Cross.

**13. March 17. St Patrick's Day.** St. Patrick of Ireland is one of the world's most popular saints. He was born in Roman Britain and when he was 14 or so, he was captured by Irish pirates during a raiding party and taken to Ireland as a slave to tend sheep. At the time, Ireland was a land of Druids and pagans but Patrick turned to God in prayer and received strength. His captivity lasted until he was 20, when he escaped after having a dream from God. A few years after returning home, Patrick saw a vision of Irishmen saying 'We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us.' The vision prompted his studies for the priesthood. He was later ordained a bishop and sent to take the Gospel to Ireland. Patrick arrived in Slane, Ireland on March 25, 433 and there the legends continue...

**14. March 24. Palm Sunday: "When O'er the Hill from Olivet the LORD to Salem Came." PALM SUNDAY IN THE GOSPELS** Palm Sunday is the Christian festival that falls one week before Easter. This is to Roman Catholics also **Passion Sunday**, the last Sunday in Lent... And **RE-DEDICATION IN THE JORDAN RIVER.** We will screen and discuss the FILM of the group from FPCH being reconsecrated/dedicated in the River in 2014.

**15. March 31. EASTER: no class**

**16. April 7. COMMUNION SUNDAY: Christian Vexilology: Symbols of the Church.** The flags and heraldry of the various Protestant denominations are filled with symbolism and declarations of their theology. We will compare the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Lutheran flags and symbols and theologies with those of the Roman Catholics. St. Andrew, St. George, St. David, St. Peter and Martin Luther are all in this mix.

**17. April 14. The Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.** Ten years ago, in a more tranquil time, during the season of Pentecost, members of the Presbyterian Church in Haddonfield, had the chance to visit the Holy Land with our pastor Bill and our friend and guide, Hela. In this illustrated presentation, we will travel again through the Galilee to Nazareth and Cana, up to Caesarea Philippi, back to the Sea of Galilee, then down the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. Members who traveled with us are particularly invited to come and reminisce and share!

**18. April 21. ST. GEORGE'S DAY (April 23): "THE REDCROSS KNIGHT" and Patron Saint of England.** The crusaders met the cult of St. George in Palestine, and SS George and Demetrius appeared in a vision during the siege of Antioch in 1098 to tell the crusaders that they could take the city. There was a further apparition of St. George before the taking of Jerusalem. The body of St. George was then thought to be in a church in Ramleh, near Bethlehem. While his cult had been in England since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, it had been eclipsed by St. Edward the Confessor. Returning English crusaders made him popular again, and in 1192 during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusade Richard the Lion-Hearted placed the English army under the protection of St. George. When knights were dubbed, they were made knights "in the name of St. Michael and St. George" and he was regarded as the perfect warrior.

**19. April 28. The Holy City and the Dream of Zion: The Earthly Jerusalem and its Heavenly Counterpart** *"The Mountain of the House of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills."* Isaiah 2:2 The greatest world significance of Jerusalem "consists in the conviction that the fulfillment of history depends on the fateful transformation of the earthly Jerusalem into a screen onto which over-powering millennial fantasies can be projected. The *end of history* is conceived variously by the monotheistic religions: For Jews it is the *arrival* of the Messiah (at the Golden Gate). For Christians it is the *return* of the Messiah—and the subsequent battle of Armageddon when angelic forces vanquish those of Satan Jerusalem as it sits on its hill takes on a transcendent place in the imagination as the "earthly reflection of heaven"—but it is a "heaven" that casts a notable shadow on the earth.

**20. May 5. Communion Sunday. Eschatological Expectations: The Church and the Last Judgment** When asked by a student what he would do were he to learn the world was going to end the next day, the great Reformer and Bible scholar Martin Luther is said to have replied with a smile: "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree." The early Christians, finding Christ's Second Coming delayed as the first century A.D. transitioned to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, understood that Christ's "imminent" return did not necessarily imply its "immediacy." Throughout the centuries people have tried to predict the actual day of the Second Advent, from various motives. Often the results are good: more Christians pay attention and go to church. Passages in the New Testament steer attention to the dawn of a new era—fulfilled with Jesus' Second Coming (and the Judgment). These are some key passages in Jesus' teaching.

