

April

The name of April is directly linked with nature from the fact that during this month, flowers bloom. It has received its name from the latin Aprilis, that stems from the verb aperire, which means to open, because from this month, the spring “opens”. The Romans had dedicated the month, to the goddess Aphrodite. April in ancient Rome was dedicated to the god Apollo, whose popular name was Aperta. Therefore, it is thought that the root of the name stems from the name of Apollo. April 21st, was the day which the Romans celebrated the building of their city. This celebration was deemed as pagan, by the 7th Ecumenical Council of 787 A.D., and abolished.

April in Folklore

Agricultural society also referred to April as, Lambriatis or Agiorgitis because, during this month we usually celebrate Easter and the Feast Day of St. George. People considered April rains as beneficial, which gave rise to the saying: “If it rains in March twice and once more in April, happy is the harvester that has many crops”. In Thrace, rains on the 1st of April, were considered to be therapeutic for fever.

April fool jokes, are common throughout almost all countries in Europe. It is believed that this custom came to Greece by way of the Crusades. According to another version, this custom came from the French New Year, which for a long time was celebrated on April 1st. Eventually however, this changes in order that the New Year be celebrated in conformity with the other countries. This change, gave rise to teasing and lying.

Another version, yet older, suggests that the “poisson d’ Avril” (the fish of April) of the French, has its roots in the ancient Celts, who went out fishing on April 1st and returning empty-handed, told various fictitious tales about fish catches with many and large fish.

- This month is the second of the Roman calendar, the eighth of the Byzantine and ecclesiastical calendar and the fourth of the current calendar. It corresponds to have of the month of Elaphibolion and Mounihion of the Athenians.



APRIL 1
(Holy Thursday)
(From April 1 to May 5)
The Last Supper

*Vasileides and Gerontius, martyrs; Euthymius, martyr, the wonderworker, the Russian,
Makarios, abbot of Pelekite Monastery, the confessor, Sta Mary the Egyptian**

Holy Thursday: “*Today he is hung from wood*”. With what experience and in what language can we people of the modern age, talk about the mystery of Christ’s Cross?

The offering of love is completed on **Holy Thursday**. The Cross of Christ, the self-emptying act of God to man, is also a simultaneous acceptance of the failure of man and its transformation to trust and the full self-abandonment in the hands of God. From then on, the slightest act of self-offering, every cry of anguish that is transformed to faith, is the beginning of the Resurrectional life. The Extreme Humility. The Extreme Love. The glory of Freedom. The scandal of believing in a bloodied and crucified God. In the Church behind the Holy Altar, during every day and every hour of time, God invites our freedom in an act of love beyond logic and not by extortion or coercion. By the Cross, Adam becomes a “colonist of Paradise” and the thief “a resident” of Paradise. “*We declare what the grateful thief stated to Him. Remember me Oh Saviour, in your Kingdom.*” The words “It is Accomplished” become the defining point of our salvation.

- The worshippers bring flowers for the Crucified One, which are later used for decorating the Funerary Cubicle of Christ.
- In Zakynthos, from Holy Thursday to the morning of Holy Saturday, (1st Resurrection) the bells on the island do not ring.

Saint Makarios, was born in Constantinople and was called Christophoros. He was raised, by his uncle (having become an orphan at an early age). Having a natural aptitude for the monastic life he left the Queen of Cities and went to the Holy Monastery of Pelekiti, where he became a monk with the name Makarios. Because of his virtuous life, he acquired the gift of healing through prayer. Patriarch Tarasios, hearing this, invited him to Constantinople and after a supplication cured a patrician, Paul. Respecting the personality and purity of Makarios, Tarasius ordained him priest and the monks appointed him abbot of their monastery. During the Iconoclastic controversy in the reigns of Leo the Armenian and Michael Troulou, he was exiled. Finally, he died in prison on the island of Ahousia, in the Sea of Marmara, because of the many hardships.

* **St. Mary of Egypt** is celebrated on the 5th Sunday of Lent (from March 21 to April 24).

Pursuant to popular tradition, on April 1st, which was considered to be the “New Year”, lies were told to fool evil and to turn its attention elsewhere. It is believed that he who succeeds in fooling someone will be lucky for the entire year, whilst the “fooled” will have bad luck for the entire year. This is why the elders council the young to “Beware of being fooled”.