

Holy Women, Holy Men

Celebrating the Saints

Additional Commemorations

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James Solomon Russell

- I O God the font of resurrected life, we bless thee for the courageous witness of thy deacon, James Solomon Russell, whose mosaic ministry overcame all adversities: Draw us into the wilderness and speak tenderly to us there so that we might love and worship thee as he did, assured in our legacy of saving grace through Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. *Amen.*
- II God, font of resurrected life, we bless you for the courageous witness of your deacon, James Solomon Russell, whose mosaic ministry vaulted over adversity; allure us into the wilderness and speak tenderly to us there so that we might love and worship you as he did, sure of our legacy of saving grace through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, always and ever. *Amen.*

1 Chronicles 29:10-13
Psalm 126
1 Timothy 6:11-16
John 14:8-14

Preface of Dedication of a Church

James Solomon Russell was born into slavery on December 20, 1857, near Palmer Springs, Virginia. He became known as the father of St. Paul's College (one of the three historically Black Episcopal Colleges) and was the founder of numerous congregations, a missionary, and a writer.

He was the first student of St. Stephen's Normal and Theological Institute (which later became the Bishop Payne Divinity School) in Petersburg, Virginia. In 1888, one year after his ordination as a priest in the Episcopal Church, Russell and his wife Virginia opened St. Paul's Normal School in Lawrenceville, Virginia. Russell's vision for the school was to provide both a literary and an industrial education. Religion was a mandatory subject, and students attended chapel twice daily. Russell served as the school's principal and chaplain until his retirement in 1929.

For 52 years of ordained ministry in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, he worked tirelessly to encourage black candidates to enter Holy Orders so that they could care for the growing numbers of black Episcopalians. In 1893, Russell was named the first Archdeacon for Colored Work. Southern Virginia had the largest population of African American Episcopalians in the United States thanks in large measure to Russell's evangelistic efforts.

In 1927, Russell was the first African American elected bishop in the Episcopal Church. However, he declined election as Suffragan Bishop for Colored Work in the Dioceses of Arkansas and North Carolina, and he was glad that his action helped defeat the idea of subordinate racial bishops.

Russell's ministry continued until his death on March 28, 1935. His autobiography, *Adventure in Faith*, was published the following year.

Emily Cooper

- I God of the holy innocents, we thank thee for the motherly witness of thy deaconess Emily Cooper, who, in naming and baptizing, did not forget the children: Draw our hearts and minds to the plight of little ones, remembering always the teaching of thy Son that, in receiving a little child in his name, we receive Christ himself, who liveth and reigneth as one with thee and the Spirit, as one, caring for ever and ever. *Amen.*
- II God of the holy innocents, we thank you for the motherly witness of your deaconess Emily Cooper, who, in naming and baptizing, did not forget the children: Draw our hearts and minds also to the plight of little ones, always remembering your Son's teaching that in receiving a little child in his name, we receive Christ himself, who lives and reigns as one with you and the Spirit, as one, caring forever and ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 40: 3-11
Psalm 27:10-14
Romans 8:35-39
Matthew 18:10-14

Preface of Commemoration of the Dead

Emily Cooper was admitted to the office of deaconess in June 1873, in a service at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, New York. A widow at age 44, she had gone to Brooklyn from her home in Louisville, Kentucky, for two years of training.

Soon after her commissioning, the Bishop of Kentucky, Benjamin Bosworth Smith, called Cooper to serve in her home diocese. In 1880, she was named director of the new Home of the Innocents, a Louisville home for neglected, unwanted, sick, and abused children. Founded by the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky, the home initially served as many as fifty children at a time.

Cooper found that many children brought to the home were abandoned there, unnamed. She gave each of these children Christian names and over the years assisted at the baptisms of 244 children. Many of the children arrived at the home already too sick to be saved, and their parents, if known, were too destitute to provide for their burials. Over 200 of the children who died during Cooper's decades of service were buried in unmarked graves in two large plots in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery.

In 2005, the Home rediscovered the graves, and over the next four years, they identified the deceased children. Statues placed at the grave sites now bear the names of the children and commemorate Cooper's ministry.

Junia and Andronicus

- I Almighty God, whose Son, the risen Christ, sent forth thine apostles Andronicus and Junia to proclaim the Gospel and extend thy reign: Send us forth in thy Holy Spirit, that women and men may minister as one in faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit in perfect unity, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*
- II Almighty God, whose Son, the risen Christ, sent forth your apostles Andronicus and Junia to proclaim the Gospel and extend your reign: send us forth in your Holy Spirit, that women and men may minister as one in faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit in perfect unity, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 61:1-4
Psalm 68:7-11
Romans 16: 7, 25-27
John 17:6-23

Preface of Apostles and Ordinations

At the end of his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul identifies Junia and Andronicus as “prominent among the apostles.” They had been in prison with him and had come to know Christ before he did.

In Eastern Orthodox tradition, these apostles are remembered for the converts they won in their extensive travels to preach the gospel, and they are honored as martyrs for Christ. Their feast day has been celebrated in Eastern churches since the early seventh century.

In the late fourth century, John Chrysostom wrote about them, praising Junia as a woman and an apostle. St. Joseph the Hymnographer, writing in the ninth century, lauded them in a liturgical hymn:

With piety we will honor the bright stars and holy
Apostles Junia and the God-inspired Andronicus.
The blessed Paul proclaims you both as truly distinguished
Among the apostles, and blessed in the church.

Pauli Murray

- I Liberating God, we thank thee most heartily for the steadfast courage of thy servant Pauli Murray, who didst fight long and well: Unshackle us from the bonds of prejudice and fear so that we may show forth thy reconciling love and true freedom, which thou didst reveal through thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*
- II Liberating God, we thank you most heartily for the steadfast courage of your servant Pauli Murray, who fought long and well: Unshackle us from bonds of prejudice and fear so that we show forth your reconciling love and true freedom, which you revealed through your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 49:1-6
Psalm 119:17-24
Galatians 3:26-29
Mark 12:1-12

Preface of All Saints

Pauli Murray was an early and committed civil rights activist and the first African American woman priest ordained in the Episcopal Church.

Born in Baltimore in 1910, Murray was raised in Durham, North Carolina, and graduated from Hunter College in 1933. After seeking admission to graduate school at the University of North Carolina in 1938, she was denied entry due to her race. She went onto graduate from Howard University Law School in 1944. While a student at Howard, she participated in sit-in demonstrations that challenged racial segregation in drugstores and cafeterias in Washington, DC. Denied admission to Harvard University for an advanced law degree because of her gender, Murray received her Masters of Law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1945.

In 1948 the Women's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church hired Murray to compile information about segregation laws in the South. Her research led to a 1951 book, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, that became a foundational document for Thurgood Marshall in his work on the decisive *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954.

Committed to dismantling barriers of race, Murray saw the civil rights and women's movements as intertwined and believed that black women had a vested interest in the women's movement.

Perceiving a call to ordained ministry, Murray began her studies at General Theological Seminary in 1973. She was ordained deacon in June 1976 and on January 8, 1977, she was ordained priest at Washington National Cathedral. She served at Church of the Atonement in Washington D.C. from 1979 to 1981 and at Holy Nativity Church in Baltimore until her death in 1985.

Murray's books include the family memoir *Proud Shoes: Story of an American Family* (1956) and the personal memoir *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (1987).

First Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in The Episcopal Church

- I O God, who didst pour thy Spirit from on high to bless and summon these women, who heard the strength of thy call: We beseech thee to equip, guide, and inspire us with wisdom, boldness, and faith to put our trust in thee always, hear thee preach new life to thy church and stretch out our hands to serve thee, as thou didst create and redeem us in the name of Jesus Christ, who liveth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God everlasting. *Amen.*
- II O God, you poured your Spirit from on high to bless and summon these women, who heard the strength of your call: Equip, guide, and inspire us with wisdom, boldness, and faith to trust you in all circumstances, hear you preach new life to your church, and stretch out our hands to serve you, as you created us and redeemed us in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God everlasting. *Amen.*

Psalm 33:1-5, 20-21
Esther 12:10-16
Romans 12:9-13
Luke 10:38-42

Preface for Apostles and Ordinations

On July 29, 1974, the feast of Martha and Mary of Bethany, eleven women deacons were ordained to the priesthood at the Church of the Advocate, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “We are certain that the church needs women in priesthood to be true to the gospel understanding of human unity in Christ,” explained the eleven ordinands in a public statement.

One year earlier, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church had defeated a resolution to amend the canons on ordination to state that they “shall be equally applicable to men and women.” A similar resolution in 1970 had also been narrowly defeated. After the 1973 convention, a group began exploring the possibility of ordaining women without General Convention action.

After months of planning, Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Allison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeannette Piccard, Betty Bone Schiess, Katrina Welles Swanson, and Nancy Hatch Wittig were ordained by three retired or resigned bishops—Daniel Corrigan, Robert DeWitt, and Edward Welles—in the presence of one active bishop, Antonio Ramos of Costa Rica, and a congregation of about 2000.

Following the ordination, a special session of the House of Bishops, convened on August 14, 1974, determined that the ordinations were not only canonically irregular but also invalid. At their regularly scheduled meeting in October 1974, the bishops affirmed the principle of ordaining women but condemned the bishops who had acted without the church’s authorization.

A year later, on September 7, 1975, E. Lee McGee, Alison Palmer, Elizabeth Rosenberg, and Diane Tickell were ordained to the priesthood by retired Bishop George Barrett at the Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington, DC. Two weeks later, the House of Bishops decried this action as well.

On September 16, 1976, the General Convention voted to amend the canons to stipulate that both women and men are eligible for ordination. The House of Bishops determined that each woman ordained before 1977 could function as a priest after a “completion of the ritual acts” performed in Philadelphia or Washington.

Manteo, and Virginia Dare

- I O God, thou hast created every human being in thine own image and each one is precious in thy sight: Grant that in remembering the baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare, we may grow in honoring thy gift of diversity in human life; become stronger in living out our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being; and bring into the fellowship of the risen Christ those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*
- II O God, you have created every human being in your image and each one is precious in your sight: Grant that in remembering the baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare, we may grow in honoring your gift of diversity in human life; become stronger in living out our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being; and bring into the fellowship of the risen Christ those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Isaiah 60:1-4

Psalm 33: 13-15, 18-22

Ephesians 2:13-22

John 10:14-16

Preface of Baptism

In the late sixteenth century, Sir Walter Raleigh established three colonies along the northeastern coast of what is now the state of North Carolina. In July 1587, the third and final settlement, consisting of 120 men, women, and children under the leadership of John White, landed on Roanoke Island, near the present-day community of Nags Head.

With the colonists was Manteo, a Native American of the Algonquian nation and resident of Croatoan who had traveled to London in an earlier expedition to become a liaison between the English and the Native Americans. On August 13, 1587, Manteo was baptized, the first recorded baptism of the Church of England in the American colonies and the first recorded baptism of a Native American person in the Church of England. On August 18, Governor White's daughter Eleanor and her husband Ananias Dare celebrated the birth of their first child, Virginia. The first child born to English settlers on the North American continent, Virginia's baptism on August 20 was the second recorded baptism in the Church of England in North America.

Governor White returned England in late August 1587 to obtain badly needed supplies. It was understood that if the colonists were forced to abandon the settlement in White's absence, they would carve the name of their destination on a tree. If their departure were due to attack, a Maltese cross would be carved beneath. Delayed by events beyond his control, White was unable to return to the colony for three years. It was not until August 18, 1590 that White finally arrived at the site of the village. White found the word "Croatoan," with no carved cross or other signs of distress, carved into a post of the fort. Little certainty surrounds the fate of the English settlers, who remain known to history as the "Lost Colony."

Thecla

- I O God of liberating power, who didst raise up thine apostle Thecla, permitting no obstacle or peril to inhibit her from bearing witness to new life in Jesus Christ: Empower courageous evangelists among us, that men and women everywhere may know the freedom which thou dost offer; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*
- II God of liberating power, you raised up your apostle Thecla, who allowed no obstacle or peril to inhibit her from bearing witness to new life in Jesus Christ: Empower courageous evangelists among us, that men and women everywhere may experience the freedom you offer; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Exodus 1:15-21

Psalm 91:9-15

2 Timothy 3:10-12

John 4:23-30, 39-42

Preface of Apostles and Ordinations

Thecla, widely known as a disciple of the apostle Paul, was one of the most popular female saints in the early church.

Her story is told in the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. According to this narrative, upon hearing Paul preach the gospel, Thecla abandoned her plans for marriage and followed Paul. Condemned to burn at the stake, her life was saved by a miraculous thunderstorm. As her adventures continued, she was thrown to the beasts in the local arena. There she was protected by a fierce lioness. Finally, she threw herself into a pool with ravenous seals, who were struck dead by lightning. Thereupon, Thecla baptized herself in the water. The governor then released her, and she went on to travel and preach the gospel.

According to Tertullian (writing in about the year 200), early Christian women appealed to Thecla's example to defend women's freedom to teach and to baptize. A shrine to Thecla in Seleucia (Asia Minor) became a popular pilgrimage site in the fourth and fifth centuries. Devotion to Thecla from Gaul to Palestine is also evident in literature, art, and the practice of naming children after her. Her image appeared on wall paintings, clay flasks, oil lamps, stone reliefs, textile curtains, and other media.