

**THE BAPTISM OF ST. CORNELIUS**

**A SOLDIER BELIEVES IN CHRIST**

**The ancient Roman Empire, within which political framework the Christian Church emerged, had plenty of soldiers. Since the empire itself was pagan, in religious belief, the bulk of the military was heathen. However, that was not always the case. One example was Longinus, the centurion who cried out at the crucifixion of our Lord:**

**“Truly this was the Son of God!”**

**In the years that followed, more soldiers came to faith in Christ and membership in His Church.**

**Among these was the centurion CORNELIUS, featured today. He was a “devout man who feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to people, and who prayed always.” The Book of Acts further tells that Cornelius had a vision one day, an angel appeared to him, instructing him to send people to Joppa with a message for Simon-Peter the Apostle.**

**Peter then came to Cornelius in the city of Caesarea. He preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the centurion and his people and the Holy Spirit came upon them all. They were baptized into the Christian Faith. And so it came that the doors of the Christian Church were opened to the Gentiles of the world having been restricted till then to the Jewish converts. No wonder a day has been set aside in the Christian Calendar to commemorate St Cornelius.**