

Consecration Relics

As we continue to discuss and prepare for the great celebration that our parish is blessed to host, the Holy Consecration, in this issue we will return to a previous discussion, the reception of the relics of the Martyrs. As we discussed in a previous issue, one of the central events of the consecration is the sealing of the relics of a number of martyrs into the Holy Altar.

It is with great joy that we announce here for the first time, the Saints whose relics we will receive for the Holy Consecration on October 3rd & 4th of this year. We hope that you will join us in praying for their intercession before our Lord Jesus Christ.

The 179 Holy Fathers of Pantokrator Daou Pantelis Monastery (Feast Day Bright Tuesday)

The Holy one hundred and seventy-nine Martyrs of Daou Penteli were martyred at the end of the 17th century AD (probably in 1680 AD), during the time that Algerian pirates frequently plundered the coastal areas. One of the servants of the monastery, who hated the monks, reached an agreement with a group of pirates and secretly allowed them the monastery while the Fathers were celebrating the Resurrection. The Fathers, having often suffered from raids and looting, had built as a last resort an underground tunnel which ran from the right side of the sanctuary and ended outside the Monastery. The traitor led the barbarians through this tunnel into to the monastery during the vigil for the Great feast of Pascha!

The pirates surprised the monks who were all together in the Church, with lit candles, singing the last “Christ is Risen” the Easter Liturgy. What followed was a total massacre of the monks and complete looting of the monastery. Of the monks, only one, a priest of the monastery, who had gone to a dependency of the monastery, Gerotsakouli, to perform service of the Resurrection there, survived. When he returned, he found the abbey ruins and all the Fathers slaughtered. The priest, after having collected the relics of the Fathers, buried them with reverence and honor. For centuries the tomb of 179 fathers remained unknown until September 1965 AD, when renovating the floor within the church, graves with the relics of whole monks were identified. Then, in other parts of the floor which were being worked on, other graves and relics, were found releasing an ineffable fragrance. The effort of finding the remaining bodies of the Holy Fathers continued when after a number of years more were identified in an adjacent area to the Catholicon.

Eventually, the integration of 179 Martyr Fathers of the Holy Monastery of Pantocrator in the Synaxarion of the Church took place on August 14, 1992 by a synodal decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Today, the relics are kept in a shrine in the vestibule of the Catholicon, in a special area, which has been built and developed for this purpose near the church.

St. Kyrikos the Child-Martyr (Feast Day July 15th)

The Holy Martyrs Kyrikos and Julitta lived in Asia Minor in the city of Iconium in the Likaoneia region. Saint Julitta was of an illustrious family and was a Christian. Widowed early in life, she raised her three year old son Kyrikos by herself. During the time of the persecution made against Christians by the emperor Diocletian (284-305), Saint Julitta with her son and two trustworthy servants departed the city, leaving behind her home and property and servants.

Under the guise of being impoverished she hid out first at Seleucia, and then at Tarsis. And it was there in about the year 305 that she was recognized, arrested and brought to trial before the governor named Alexander. Strengthened by the Lord, she fearlessly gave answer to the questions of the judge and she firmly confessed her faith in Christ. The governor gave orders to beat the saint with canes. During the time of torment Saint Julitta kept

repeating: "I am a Christian and will not offer sacrifice to demons".

Her three year old son, Kyrikos, cried seeing his mother being tortured and wanted to go to her. The governor Alexander tried to hug him and win his favor, but the boy broke free and shouted: "Let me go to my mother, I am a Christian". The governor, enraged flung the boy from the high platform on which he was standing onto stone steps, and the boy tumbled downwards striking his head on the sharp edges, and died. Julitta, seeing her lacerated son, gave thanks to God that He had vouchsafed the boy a martyr's end. After many cruel tortures they beheaded Saint Julitta with the sword.

The relics of Saints Kyrikos and Julitta were discovered during the reign of Sts. Constantine and Helen. In honor of these holy martyrs there was built near Constantinople a monastery, and not far off from Jerusalem was built a church. In popular custom, Saints Kyrikos and Julitta are prayed to for family happiness, and the restoring to health of sick children.

St. Panteleimon the Holy Unmercenary
(Feast Day July 27)

This Saint, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him.

Being proficient in the physician's vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon ("in all things a lion"), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily renamed Panteleimon, meaning "all-merciful."

On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name of Christ, he enlightened also the eyes of this man's soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian. Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenarys, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.