

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL:

- 1- bones of Elisha
- 2- St John Chrysostom's
- 3- St Polycarp

1- BONES OF ELISHA

In 2 Kings 13:20,21 There is a group of men who want to bury a dead man. They enter a cave, lay the body down, and when the body touched the bones of Elisha the man came back to life. They did not pray or even know the bones were there.

2 Kings 13:20,21 "And Elisha died, and they buried him. and the bands of Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. 21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet."

2- TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Here is a neat story that the kids, especially late elementary and middle school would like concerning a very interesting story regarding the relics and the Saints' living relationship with us through them. We celebrate St. John Chrysostom's relics being returned to Constantinople today....but only after....

January 27

Removal of the Relics of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (437)

In the year after the Saint's repose both the Emperor Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia, who had been most responsible for St John's exile, died. Their son Theodosius II succeeded to the throne. Soon most of the exiled supporters of St John were restored to their sees. In 434 St Proclus, a disciple of St John Chrysostom, was made Archbishop of Constantinople, and persuaded the Emperor to have St John's relics solemnly translated from Comana to Constantinople. But all efforts to disinter his remains failed, as if his coffin were sealed in the earth. Learning of this, the Emperor wrote a letter to St John asking forgiveness for his father's persecution, and pleading with him to agree to return to the Imperial City for the benefit of the faithful. As soon as this letter was placed over the Saint's tomb, his coffin was removed with no difficulty and conveyed solemnly to Constantinople.

When the cortege reached Constantinople, the Emperor met it and prostrated himself before it, once again begging the Saint's forgiveness for the sins of the State against him. At last, the relics were deposited beneath the altar of the Church of the Holy Apostles, where they worked many miracles during the celebration of the Liturgy. Since then, the relics have been scattered throughout the world, where they never fail to reveal the Saint's loving presence.

3- ST POLYCARP

Hieromartyr Polycarp the Bishop of Smyrna
Commemorated on February 23

Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was “fruitful in every good work” (Col. 1:10), was born in the first century, and lived in Smyrna in Asia Minor. He was orphaned at an early age, but at the direction of an angel, he was raised by the pious widow Kallista. After the death of his adoptive mother, Polycarp gave away his possessions and began to lead a chaste life, caring for the sick and the infirm. He was very fond of and close to St Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna (February 6). He ordained Polycarp as deacon, entrusting to him to preach the Word of God in church. He also ordained him to the holy priesthood.

The holy Apostle John the Theologian was still alive at this time. St Polycarp was especially close to St John, and sometimes accompanied him on his apostolic journeys.

Shortly before his death, St Bucolus expressed his wish that Polycarp be made Bishop of Smyrna. When St Polycarp was consecrated as a bishop, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him. St Polycarp guided his flock with apostolic zeal, and he was also greatly loved by the clergy. St Ignatius the God-Bearer of Antioch (December 20) also had a high regard for him. Setting out for Rome where execution awaited him, he wrote to St Polycarp, “This age is in need of you if it is to reach God, just as pilots need winds, and as a storm-tossed sailor needs a port.”

The emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180) came to the Roman throne and started up a most fierce persecution against Christians. The pagans demanded that the judge search for St Polycarp, “the father of all the Christians” and “the seducer of all Asia.”

During this time St Polycarp, at the persistent urging of his flock, stayed in a small village not far from Smyrna. When the soldiers came for him, he went out to them and invited them in to eat. He asked for time to pray, in order to prepare himself for martyrdom. His suffering and death are recorded in the “Epistle of the Christians of the Church of Smyrna to the Other Churches,” one of the most ancient memorials of Christian literature.

Having been brought to trial, St Polycarp firmly confessed his faith in Christ, and was condemned to be burned alive. The executioners wanted to nail him to a post, but he declared that God would give him the strength to endure the flames, so they could merely tie him with ropes. The flames encircled the saint but did not touch him, coming together over his head in the shape of a vault. Seeing that the fire did him no harm, the pagans stabbed him with a dagger. So much blood flowed from this wound that it extinguished the flames. The body of the hieromartyr Polycarp was then cremated. The Christians of Smyrna reverently gathered up what remained of his holy relics, and each year they celebrated the day of his martyrdom.

A story has been preserved about St Polycarp by his disciple, St Irenaeus of Lyons, which Eusebius cites in his ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY (V, 20):

“I was still very young when I saw you in Asia Minor at Polycarp’s,” writes St Irenaeus to his friend Florinus, “but I would still be able to point out the place where Blessed Polycarp sat and conversed, and be able to depict his walk, his mannerisms in life, his outward appearance, his speaking to people, his companionable wandering with John, and how he himself related, together with other eyewitnesses of the Lord, those things that he remembered from the words of others. He also told what he heard from them about the Lord, His teachings and miracles....

Through the mercy of God to me, I then already listened attentively to Polycarp and wrote down his words, not on tablets, but in the depths of my heart. Therefore, I am able to bear witness before God, that if this blessed and apostolic Elder heard something similar to your fallacy, he would immediately stop up his ears and express his indignation with his usual phrase: ‘Good God! That Thou hast permitted me to be alive at such a time!’”