

The Relics of Three Holy Martyrs

Lord our God, who are faithful in Your words and truthful in your promises, who gave your holy Martyrs the grace to fight the good fight, to finish the course of true religion and to keep the faith of the true confession, be entreated, all-holy Master, by their intercessions and give to us, your unworthy servants, the grace of a part and inheritance with them, so that, becoming imitators of them, we may be found worthy of the good things laid up for them.

— *Hierarchical Prayer from the Service of Consecration*

The Relics of the Following
Holy Martyrs
will be sealed into our altar:

St. Panteleimon
the Great Martyr and Healer (July 27)

St. Kyrikos the Martyr (July 15)

The Holy Fathers martyred in the
monastery of Pantokratoros
in Daou Pentelis (+1680)
(Tuesday of Bright Week)



As the Apostles once used the tombs of martyrs for their altars, the relics of Martyrs will be forever sealed into our altar on the day of our Church's Consecration.

ST. PANTELEIMON THE GREAT MARTYR AND HEALER (July 27)

The Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon was born in the city of Nicomedia into the family of the illustrious pagan Eustorgius, and he was named Pantoleon. His mother St Euboula (March 30) was a Christian. She wanted to raise her son in the Christian Faith, but she died when the future martyr was just a young child. His father sent Pantoleon to a pagan school, after which the young man studied medicine at Nicomedia under the renowned physician Euphrosynus. Pantoleon came to the attention of the emperor Maximian (284-305), who wished to appoint him as royal physician when he finished his schooling.

The hieromartyrs Hermolaus, Hermippus and Hermocrates, survivors of the massacre of 20,000 Christians in 303 (December 28), were living secretly in Nicomedia at that time. St Hermolaus saw Pantoleon time and again when he came to the house where they were hiding. Once, the priest invited the youth to the house and spoke about the Christian Faith. After this Pantoleon visited St Hermolaus every day.

One day the saint found a dead child on the street. He had been bitten by a great snake, which was still beside the child's body. Pantoleon began to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to revive the dead child and to destroy the venomous reptile. He firmly resolved that if his prayer were



Source: www.eikonografos.com

fulfilled, he would become a follower of Christ and receive Baptism. The child rose up alive, and the snake died before Pantoleon's eyes.

After this miracle, Pantoleon was baptized by St Hermolaus with the name Panteleimon (meaning "all-merciful"). His given name, Pantoleon, meant 'in all things like a lion' but his baptismal name transformed this to merciful in all things.

Speaking with Eustorgius, St Panteleimon prepared him to accept Christianity. When the father saw how his son healed a blind man by invoking Jesus Christ, he then believed in Christ and was baptized by St Hermolaus together with the man whose sight was restored.

After the death of his father, St Panteleimon dedicated his life to the suffering, the sick, the unfortunate and the needy. He treated all those who turned to him without charge, healing them in the name of Jesus Christ. He visited those held captive in prison. These were usually Christians, and he healed them of their wounds. In a short time, reports of the charitable physician spread throughout the city. Forsaking the other doctors, the inhabitants began to turn only to St Panteleimon.

The envious doctors told the emperor that St Panteleimon was healing Christian prisoners. Maximian urged the saint to refute the charge by offering sacrifice to idols. St Panteleimon confessed himself a Christian, and suggested that a sick person, for whom the doctors held out no hope, should be brought before the emperor. Then the doctors could invoke their gods, and Panteleimon would pray to his God to heal the man. A man paralyzed for many years was brought in, and pagan priests who knew the art of medicine invoked their gods without success. Then, before the very eyes of the emperor, the saint healed the paralytic by calling on the name of Jesus Christ. The ferocious Maximian executed the healed man, and gave St Panteleimon over to fierce torture.

The Lord appeared to the saint and strengthened him before his sufferings. They suspended the Great Martyr Panteleimon from a tree and scraped him with iron hooks, burned him with fire and then stretched him on the rack, threw him into a cauldron of boiling tar, and cast him into the sea with a stone around his neck. Throughout these tortures the martyr remained unhurt, and denounced the emperor.

At this time the priests Hermolaus, Hermippus and Hermocrates were brought before the court of the pagans. All three confessed their faith in the Savior and were beheaded (July 26).

By order of the emperor they brought the Great Martyr Panteleimon to the circus to be devoured by wild beasts. The animals, however, came up to him and licked his feet. The spectators began to shout, "Great is the God of the Christians!" The enraged Maximian ordered the soldiers to stab with the sword anyone who glorified Christ, and to cut off the head of the Great Martyr Panteleimon.

They led the saint to the place of execution and tied him to an olive tree. While the martyr prayed, one of the soldiers struck him with a sword, but the sword became soft like wax and inflicted no wound. The saint completed his prayer, and a Voice was heard from Heaven, calling the passion-bearer by his new name and summoning him to the heavenly Kingdom.

Hearing the Voice, the soldiers fell down on their knees before the holy martyr and begged forgiveness. They refused to continue with the execution, but St Panteleimon told them to fulfill the emperor's command, because otherwise they would have no share with him in the future life. The soldiers tearfully took their leave of the saint with a kiss.

When the saint was beheaded, the olive tree to which the saint was tied became covered with fruit. Many who were present at the execution believed in Christ. The saint's body was thrown into a fire, but remained unharmed, and was buried by Christians . St Panteleimon's servants Laurence, Bassos and Probus witnessed his execution and heard the Voice from Heaven. They recorded the life, the sufferings and death of the saint.

(From the Lives of the Saints available at oca.org)

ST. KYRIKOS (July 15)

St. Julitta flourished during the terrible times of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305), that fearful persecutor of Christians. She came from Iconium in Lycaonia, Asia Minor, and was one of the most pious and faithful of Christians. After the death of her husband at a very young age, she dedicated herself to bringing up her infant son, whom she Baptized with the name Kyrikos.

She taught him up to the age of three, with exceeding care and diligence, but particularly by her example of faith in, and love for, our Lord Jesus Christ.

When the victims of the persecution against Christians multiplied, St. Julitta took her little Kyrikos and sought refuge in Seleucia, Cilicia and then in Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul.

There, the governor of the city, Alexander by name, a ferocious and bestial man, learned of the Saint and summoned her to defend herself. Seeing the love which she nurtured for her little, Grace-filled Angel, Kyrikos, he attempted to conquer her Faith by threatening her and her child with death. But the Saint remained steadfast and undaunted, and was ready to offer herself as a living and blameless sacrifice, together with her young son, rather than deny the true Faith.

So, the governor angrily snatched little Kyrikos from his mother's arms and began to wheedle, caress, and kiss him, in order to sway his mother and to attract the boy to his side. However, our



Lord, Who grants wisdom and enlightenment to infants, bestowed, through the Holy Spirit, “a mouth and wisdom” (St. Luke 21:15) upon Kyrikos, who was small in age but great in confession.

The Divinely-illuminated child began to invoke the Name of Christ with a stammering voice and to cry: “I am a Christian! ...Let me go to my mother!” Indeed, in order to escape from the tyrant, he began to strike him and kick him in the stomach, saying clearly and persistently: “I love Christ!”



Alexander the Governor, unable to endure the blows of young Kyrikos and, in particular, the defeat and the disgrace occasioned by the child’s confession, blew up in rage and threw the infant down the steps of the tribunal, kicking him with all his might. The blessed infant received a mortal blow to his head and surrendered his holy and innocent little soul to Christ the Master. In this way, he was counted worthy to receive with glory the crown of confession and suffering.

At this sight, the mother of the Child-Martyr, overcoming nature by her faith in Christ and giving thanks to God, said to the tyrant: “Even as you crushed the head of my child, so will your false religion be crushed, you harsh and pitiless ruler.”

After experiencing fearsome tortures, and yet not denying Jesus, St. Julitta, the mother and Martyr, was beheaded in the year 304, receiving the crown of martyrdom, that she might rejoice with her three- year-old lamb, St. Kyrikos, and be glorified together with him in Heaven by the Angels and on earth by men.

(Abridged, from John Sanidopoulos’ Mystagogy blog, at johnsanidopoulos.com)

THE 179 HOLY MARTYRS OF DAOU PENTELIS (Bright Tuesday)

Algerian pirates docked their ship at the port of Rafina during Holy Week of 1680, but failed when they attempted to raid the fortified Daou Pentelis Monastery and to steal its treasures. Under mysterious circumstances, a servant of the monastery decided to betray the fathers and told the pirates about secret entry.

On Pascha, during the midnight service, just after the final "Christ is Risen!" was joyfully chanted by the fathers following the Divine Liturgy, the pirates stormed into the katholikon and began the gruesome slaughter. 179 monks and hieromonks, including the abbot, were massacred by the pirates. They took their treasure and escaped back to Rafina, and set fire to the monastery.

Two escaped martyrdom. A hieromonk and a novice were not at the monastery that tragic evening, as they travelled to serve the Paschal Divine Liturgy at a neighboring outpost of Pantokratoros Monastery. They returned to Daou Pentelis on Pascha Sunday evening only to find two dead monks at the entrance and their monastery burned down, except for the katholikon (which survives till today). When they entered the katholikon, they saw dozens of the fathers in a pool of blood. Some had been severely beaten, while others were cut in pieces.



On Bright Monday morning the hieromonk and the novice set out to seek help in burying the martyred monks from the neighboring fathers of Penteli Monastery, otherwise known as Dormition of the Theotokos Monastery. On the way they had a view of the port of Rafina and saw the pirates leaving. When the fathers of Penteli Monastery heard of the massacre, they went to Pantokratoros Monastery in Daou Pentelis and helped bury all the bodies after a Bright Week funeral service was performed.

The names of the holy martyrs and the location of their burial were lost to history until 1963.

The Pantokratoros Monastery in Daou Pentelis was deserted for centuries, except for one monk to take care of the grounds. In 1963, eleven nuns came to revive it. The nuns tried looking for the burial spot, but could not find them, so the nuns prayed for forty days that a discovery of the relics would be made. In the afternoon of the fortieth day, the relics were found.

The first 65 bodies were discovered by the abbess (Styliani) and nuns inside the katholikon when workers who were working to replace the floor tiles noticed a beautiful fragrance. The abbess, understanding this to be a miracle of the martyrs, requested that an excavation be done in front of the Royal Doors, where they discovered an entire body incorrupt. They determined that this must have been the abbot at the time of the slaughter. Excavating the rest of the floor, they discovered the other 64 bodies. To this day the relics of the martyred fathers continue to give off a beautiful fragrance and they flow with myrrh.

114 bodies remained missing. St. Porphyrios told the abbess at the time, that the nuns "walk on top of the graves of other saints". With this advice an excavation was done in 1990 around the perimeters of the katholikon, and many more relics were found. Because of the many miracles performed by the grace-exuding Holy Relics, the Ecumenical Patriarchate canonized them in 1992 and established Bright Tuesday as their feast day, the day they were buried by the fathers of Penteli Monastery.

(Abridged, from John Sanidopoulos' Mystagogy blog, at johnsanidopoulos.com, and amended with information from the book, Sacred Monastery Pantocrator Tao, as quoted on the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver website.)



The Metropolitan will cense the holy relics of the martyrs, and then raise them with the Paten. The exodus from and procession around the Church is led by the Acolytes, the Choir, the Chanters, the Icon of the Church, the Priests from junior to senior with the senior holding the Holy Gospel, the Metropolitan with the Holy Relics, followed by the entire congregation, leaving the Church empty. The Metropolitan prays (in Grave Tone),

Holy Martyrs, who fought the good fight and received your crowns, intercede with the Lord to have mercy on our souls. Glory to you, Christ God, the boast of Apostles, the joy of Martyrs, whose preaching was the consubstantial Trinity.

from the Service of the Consecration