



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray this message finds you all well and healthy.

On June 26th we celebrate the feast day of St. David the Righteous of Thessalonika. St. David was born in the 5th century A.D. in Mesopotamia. From his early youth he lived the monastic, ascetic life. Later, he decided to go to Thessalonika to continue his life as an ascetic at the Monastery of Sts. Theodore and Mercurius. For his own spiritual development, he decided to climb up a tree and pray and live there for 3 years in order to ask God to reveal to him what would be beneficial for his spiritual life, and his prayers were answered by an angel of God that instructed him to continue his ascetic life in his monastic cell, as St. David was dedicated towards unceasing prayers, labors in asceticism, observance of strict fasting and living as a hesychast. Because of his desire to willingly undertake various physical and spiritual hardships in order to humble himself and come closer to God, he acquired many of the heavenly, Christian virtues, as well as the gift of wonderworking, which he used to heal many from their illnesses. For this reason, Archbishop Dorotheos of Thessalonika wished to send him to Constantinople to solve an ecclesiastical matter, and he obediently traveled to the port of Thessalonika. While on his journey to Constantinople, he reposed peacefully on the deck of the boat, and his holy relics were received with honor and veneration in the city of Thessalonika. His holy relics are found in the church where the relics of St. Demetrios the Great are, also, located.

On June 27th we celebrate the feast day of St. Sampson the Innkeeper of Constantinople. He was born in the city of Rome and was raised by wealthy parents and was well-educated. As a student, he mainly focused his studies on the science of medicine and became a physician. When his parents departed from this life, he wished to live in the wilderness, so he distributed his belongings and set his slaves free. As he was journeying from Rome to the East, Christ directed him to go to Constantinople, and so he did. There he immersed himself in living a holy life by reading the Holy Scriptures and participating actively in the life of the Church, and he, also offered his services as a physician free of charge to the poor and sick and, for this reason, he is considered to be one of the Holy Unmercenary saints. As a result of his selflessness, the Lord granted him the gift of wonderworking. His reputation as a skilled physician became known to the Roman Emperor St. Justinian who was gravely ill and, so, he asked St. Sampson to cure him, which he did by praying first and, then, by practicing his medical skills. To thank St. Sampson, he granted St. Sampson's request by building the well-known 'Hospice of Sampson,' which was a home for the poor and a hospital for the sick. Hearing of his great Christian virtues, Patriarch Menas of Constantinople ordained him into the priesthood, allowing him to perform the Holy Sacraments and preach the Holy Word of God. He devoted the rest of his life to serving others, and, after a short illness, he departed from this life in 530 A.D.

On June 29th we celebrate the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Peter was the brother of St. Andrew and they were both fisherman at the Lake of Gennesaret. St. Peter was from the city of Bethsaida in Galilee, and he was very strong in body and spirit. As an Apostle, he was direct, honest, bold and vibrant and these characteristics helped him serve as a missionary to preach the Good News of Christ in Galatia Cappadocia, Antioch, Pontus, Bethania, Asia and Judea. In 64 A.D. he was captured in Rome, condemned to death by Emperor Nero and crucified upside down.

St. Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia and was a Pharisee. He was initially an enemy of Christ and of Christians; his mission, as a zealous Jew, was to arrest, imprison, torture and execute Christians or deliver them to local authorities. When Christ appeared to him on his way to Damascus and he was struck blind, he believed in Him, repented and accepted to be baptized a Christian and was catechized by a disciple named Ananias. He, then, became the Apostle to the Gentiles and preached the Good News to them, established churches in His name, ordained clergy and baptized men and women in the name of the Holy Trinity. He met a martyr's death in Rome sometime between 64-67 A.D. The lives of both St. Peter and St. Paul can be witnessed throughout the four Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as in the Acts of the Apostles, the 14 Epistles of Paul to the churches he established and the 2 Epistles of Andrew. We celebrate both of these holy men together on this day because they both dedicated their lives to preaching the Gospel of Christ and establishing holy churches for the glory of God and the salvation of His people.

On July 1st we celebrate the feast day of Sts. Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenarys. They lived during the reign of the Roman Emperor Carinus and were doctors by profession. They freely treated those in need without payment. Because some individuals were jealous that they were performing miracles through their medical practice, they reported them to the authorities for being Christian and not worship the idols. According to Orthodox Tradition, it is said that they surrendered themselves as Christians to the Roman authorities and were judged by the Emperor himself. Emperor Carinus suffered from back bone disfiguration, and, through the prayers of the Holy Unmercenarys, he was cured. As a result, the Emperor believed their testimony and released them so that they were free to continue offering their physician services to those in need, free of charge. Sometime afterwards, they were murdered by an envious former physician teacher of theirs as they were seeking some herbs together on a mountain. Another tradition states that the saints were tortured and condemned to death by Emperors Carinus and Numerian. Whichever account is true, what we know for certain is that their life ended through martyrdom for their Christian beliefs.

Let us all be righteous in Christ and do whatever is God-pleasing in thought, word and deed, as did St. David the Righteous of Thessalonika. Let us all imitate the Christian philanthropy and unmercenary work of St. Sampson the Innkeeper of Constantinople. Let us all familiarize ourselves with the holy lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Holy Apostles of Christ, by reading the New Testament and especially the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as well as the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of the Apostles. And let us all believe in the power of prayer, our means of communication with our Triune God, and let us, also, contribute our human efforts towards doing God's Will, as did Sts. Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenarys.



+Rev. Ekonomos Fr. Georgios Manias

