All Saints' Eve Storybook

Who will be the next...

2018



St. Brigid of Kildare

2019



St. Elizabeth the New Martyr

2020



Sts. Cyril and Methodius

Saint of the Year?

2021

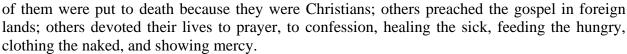


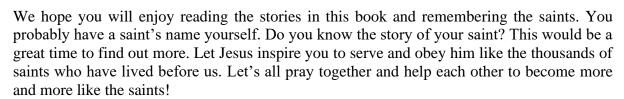
hat is a saint? A "holy one", someone who knows they belong to God and who lives that way. An old-fashioned word for holy is someone who is "hallowed". We still use the word hallowed when we pray the Lord's Prayer every day — "Hallowed be Thy name" — which means we confess the Name of God to be kept sacred and holy.

Our All Saints' Eve book was created to help us celebrate the Feast of All Saints, which is observed by Christians in the western churches on November 1. (In the Orthodox Church we observe the Feast of All Saints every year on the Sunday after Pentecost with a Divine Liturgy on that day). Because "hallow" means "holy" the western Feast of All Saints (or Holy Ones) was also called All Hallows. The night before, October 31, became known as All Hallows Evening, or Halloween. You've heard that word before.

You probably think of Halloween as a time when children dress up in all sorts of costumes, some of them scary, but the name *Halloween* is really a Christian name for the evening of All Saints. So, we thought it would be a great time for us Christians to dress up like saints! It makes sense, doesn't it?

It is important for us to always remember the saints. They show us what it is like to follow Jesus our Savior. Some of them were put to death because they were Christians:





Special thanks this year to authors/artists: Richard Coleman, Sarah Schlueter, Alina Stoenescu, Gabriel Nicolescou, Domitille Nicolescou, Christy Kellar and David Baeckelandt, with additional artwork from Katie Walter and Eva Walter. We really appreciate everyone's wonderful efforts!





St. Helena of Constantinople 330



Delena Augusta was born in 246 AD at Drepanum (Helenopolis) in Asia Minor to parents of humble means. Bishop Ambrose of Milan, writing in the late 4th century, was the first to call her a bona stabularia, translated as "good stable-maid" or "good inn-keeper", meant as a virtue. Helena married Constantius Chlorus around 270. It is said that upon meeting they were wearing identical silver bracelets, so Constantius saw her as his soulmate sent by God.

Their son Constantine the Great was born in 274. Constantius divorced Helena in 294 in order to further his political ambitions by marrying a woman of noble rank, and Helena lived in obscurity for years while close to her only son, who had a deep regard and affection for her. After he became emperor in 306 AD, Constantine showed his mother great honor and respect, granting her the imperial title "Augusta Imperatrix."

In 313 St. Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, guaranteeing religious tolerance for Christians. St. Helena, who was a Christian, may have influenced him in this decision. In 323, when he became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire, Constantine extended the provisions of the Edict of Milan to the Eastern half of the Empire. After three hundred years of persecution, Christians could finally practice their faith without fear, thanks to Helena and her son!

The emperor deeply revered the victory-bearing Sign of the Cross of the Lord and wanted to find the actual Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. He gave his mother Helena

unlimited access to the imperial treasury in order to locate the relics of the Christian tradition and sent her to Jerusalem with a letter to St. Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Although Helena was already in her declining years, she set about the journey with enthusiasm. Searching for the Life-Creating Cross was a long and challenging task involving interviewing both Christians and Jews, and her search remained unsuccessful for two vears. However, in 326, Helena was directed to an elderly Hebrew named Jude who stated that the Cross was buried at the Temple of Venus. As it was a pagan temple St. Helena ordered it be demolished. After praying, the ground began to be excavated, and the Tomb of the Lord was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body.



3

To determine the cross on which the Savior had been crucified, St. Macarius (who had accompanied Helena) alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the dead man was touched by the True Cross of the Lord, the body came to life. Having beheld the raising of the dead, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross, another miracle took place – a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. Elder Jude and other Jews came to believe in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Christians came in huge throngs to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching St. Macarius to elevate it so that even those far off might reverently contemplate it.

While in Jerusalem, St. Helena performed a variety of good works, including giving money to the poor. She also ordered that all places connected with the earthly life of the Lord and His All-Pure Mother be freed of all traces of paganism, and directed that churches be built at each of these places.

St. Helena continued to journey to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than eighty churches – at Bethlehem at the birthplace of Christ; on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven; and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings and where the Mother of God was buried.

Emperor Constantine gave orders to build at Jerusalem a majestic and spacious church in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-Giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The building was constructed in about ten years, but St. Helena did not survive to see the dedication of this temple. Helena left Jerusalem and the eastern provinces in 327 AD to return to Rome, bringing with her large parts of the True Cross and other relics, which were then stored in her palace's private chapel, where they can still be seen today. She entered into the Eternal Kingdom in 330 AD, with her son Emperor Constantine at her side.

The Orthodox Church commemorates the Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by the Holy Empress Helena on March 6^{th} .

Because of her great service to the Church and her efforts in finding the Life-Creating Cross, Empress Helena is called "the Equal of the Apostles".

Troparian in Tone 8:

Your servant Constantine, O Lord and only Lover of Man, Beheld the figure of the Cross in the Heavens, And like Paul, not having received his call from men, But as an Apostle among rulers set by Your hand over the royal city, He preserved lasting peace through the prayers of the Theotokos.

~ Richard Coleman

St. Paul of Thebes 341



St. Paul of Thebes was born in Egypt around 227 in the Thebaid of Egypt. Left orphaned, but rich, he suffered many things from a greedy uncle trying to take over his inheritance. During the persecution against Christians under the emperor Decius, Saint Paul learned of his brother-in-law's insidious plan to deliver him into the hands of the persecutors, and so he fled the city into the wilderness.

Settling into a mountain cave, Saint Paul dwelt there for ninety-one years, praying incessantly to God both day and night. He sustained himself on dates and bread, which a raven brought him, and he clothed himself with palm leaves.

Saint Anthony the Great, who also lived as an ascetic in the Thebaid desert, had a revelation from God concerning Saint Paul. Saint Anthony thought that there was no other desert dweller such as he. Then God said to him, "Anthony, there is a servant of God more excellent than you, and you should go and see him."

Saint Anthony traveled into the desert for multiple days and eventually came to Saint Paul's cave, which was almost completely blocked by a large stone. Falling to the ground before the entrance to the cave, he asked to be admitted. The two men introduced themselves, and then embraced one another. They conversed through the night, and Saint Anthony revealed how he had been led there by God. Saint Paul disclosed to Saint Anthony that for sixty years a bird had brought him half a loaf of bread each day. That day, the Lord had sent a double portion in honor of Saint Anthony's visit. The next morning, Saint Paul spoke to Anthony of his approaching death, and instructed him to bury him. He also asked Saint Anthony to return to his monastery and bring back a cloak he had received from Saint Athanasius. He did not really need a garment, but wished to depart from his body while Saint Anthony was absent.

As he was returning with the cloak, Saint Anthony beheld the soul of Saint Paul surrounded by angels, prophets, and apostles, shining like the sun and ascending to God. He entered the cave and found Abba Paul on his knees with his arms outstretched. Saint Anthony mourned for him, and wrapped him in the cloak. He wondered how he would bury the body, for he had not remembered to bring a shovel. Two lions came running from the wilderness and dug a grave with their claws.

Saint Anthony buried the holy Elder, took his garment of palm leaves, and then returned to his own monastery. Saint Anthony kept this garb as a precious inheritance, and wore it only twice a year, on Pascha and Pentecost.

Saint Paul of Thebes died in the year 341, when he was 113 years old. He did not establish a single monastery, but soon after, many imitated his life, and they filled the desert with monasteries. Saint Paul is honored as the first desert-dweller and hermit.

~Sarah Schlueter

St. Filofteia of Curtea de Arges 1218



n December the 7th, the Romanian Orthodox Church remembers St.Martyr Filofteia.

She was born at the beginning of the 13th century in the town of Tornovo, which at the time was the capital of the Romanian-Bulgarian Empire. She was baptized with the name Filofteia, the Greek meaning being "lover of God"

The mother of this saint was a very pious Romanian woman. Through her mother's teachings, Filofteia learned to acquire love for her neighbor, charity, prayer, fasting, and other virtues that beautify the soul of a true Christian. When our saint was a little girl, her godly mother fell asleep in the Lord.

Her father remarried a woman with a very different kind of life than his first wife. She was a woman of the world and did not love Filofteia. In fact, she exhibited a great deal of hate towards her, especially when Filofteia went to Church and prayed or performed any kind of charitable works. Even worse, she provoked her father against her.

But in spite of all the abusive words, the beatings and the difficult jobs, this little girl did not lose the virtues that beautified her soul, nor did she stop her acts of charity.

One of the things she had to do was to take food to her father when he was working in the fields. She would always give half of it to the poor on her way to her father. Once, when she was about 12 years old, he followed her to see what she was doing with the food that she was supposed to be taking to him in the fields. When he saw that she was giving it to the poor, he became so infuriated that he took his sledge axe and threw it at her. He cut her leg so badly that after a short while, she died, giving her soul into the hands of the Savior.

Terrified by the killing of his own daughter, he tried to lift her body up to bury it — but he couldn't. God had made it so heavy that neither her father nor a group of people was able to lift it. Frightened he ran to the Archbishop of the city Tornovo and told him what had happened. He, along with the leaders of the town, priests, monks, and the faithful, went to the place where the body of the martyr Filofteia was lying.

All were sure that they were faced with a divine miracle. The hierarchs and the priests said the prayers of the funeral service and tried to lift up the godly body to take it to the archiepiscopal cathedral. They were still not able to move her body. They understood then that Filofteia was to be treated as a holy relic and that she did not want to be placed in the Cathedral of Tornovo.

Then, some of the servants started to mention the names of certain towns, churches, and monasteries from the north and south of the Danube, to see if her body would be lightened. When the name of Curtea de Arges was mentioned, her body became very light and the authorities reported to the Romanian Prince of the region that they wished for the body of St. Filofteia to be brought back to her country.

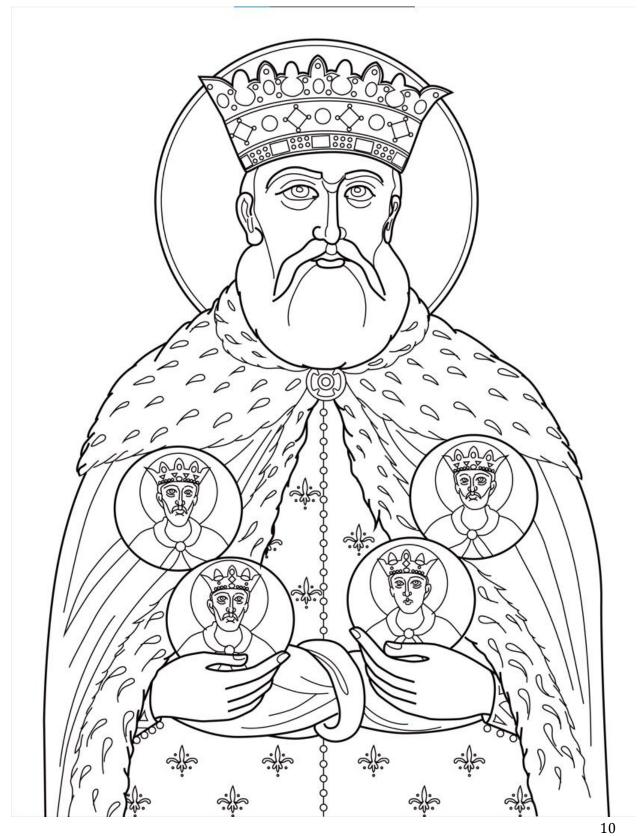
Due to the political turbulence, her body was not brought to Arges until 1393, when the Turks occupied Bulgaria. The great Romanian king, Mircea the Old, set the relics in the metropolitan cathedral of St. Nicholas. For this reason, St. Filofteia is commemorated the day after St. Nicholas (December 7). Now, her relics lay in the most beautiful church of the Romanian land: Curtea de Arges Monastery.

~ Alina Stoenescu



A photo from 1830 of the Curtea de Arges Monastery

St. Constantin Brâncoveanu 1714



Prince upon a time, there lived a wealthy prince in a country called Wallachia. His people were Christians like us. They believed in God, His son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He was a great patron of the arts, and responsible for many books being printed for the first time in Wallachia

A strong nation with a mighty army conquered them, robbed them from their wealth and riches, but this was not enough. The Sultan Ahmed the Third, the head of the Ottoman Empire, ordered the prince be arrested and brought to Istanbul together with his son in law and his four sons.

There the prince and his sons were tortured for four months to reveal the location of their personal wealth. On 15 August 1714, the feast of the Dormition and Constantin Brâncoveanu's 60th birthday, the Ottomans tried to force the prince and his sons to renounce Jesus and embrace Islam.

Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu refused the Sultan's demand, preferring to accept death by decapitation rather than abandoning their Christian religion. He reportedly said: "Behold, all my fortunes and all I had, I have lost! Let us not lose our souls. Be brave and manly, my beloved! Ignore death. Look at how much Christ, our Savior, has endured for us and with what shameful death he died. Firmly believe in this and do not move, nor leave your faith for this life and this world". When one of his young sons was frightened at what was to happen, Constantin Brâncoveanu said: "Of our kind none have lost their faith. It is better to die a thousand times than to leave your ancient faith just to live few more years on earth."

After Brâncoveanu himself was decapitated, their heads were impaled on poles and displayed in a procession through the city. Their bodies were led through the gate and thrown into the waters of the Bosphorus river. Christian fishermen took the bodies from the water, and buried them at the Halchi Monastery, in the city's vicinity.

By accepting their martyrdom, Constantin Brâncoveanu and his sons saved the following generation from abandoning their faith in Jesus. Despite the threat of evil in the world, the prince's example of faith in our Trinitarian God and the Theotokos show how Christians will always be protected from destruction as long as we embrace Christ the Savior.

~Gabriel Nicolescou

St. Alexis d'Ugine



From the written icon of Saint Alexis d'Ugine, we see he was a priest. For almost 40 years, he performed small deeds of holiness day after day. A life of ordinary sanctity.

With the grace Father Alexis received at his ordination, age 28, and his unceasing prayers and readings of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the church, his heart was filled with God's love. His zeal and devotion for God shone on his parish whose spiritual life flourished for 23 years at "the Dormition of the Theotokos", an Orthodox parish close to Saint Petersburg in Russia.

By his kindness, humility and modesty he attracted the fondness of his parishioners. With his special love and caring concern for the young and their Christian education he opened schools and often visited the orphans for whom he demonstrated a special love, sharing with them his knowledge of God's love for all. He lived a simple, ascetic life never forgetting the poor, giving with compassion all he had during his hard life. In his childhood Alexis knew poverty and from this he learned very early to be patient with life's difficulties.

The years that followed brought incredible hardship. During the Bolshevik revolution he experienced the horrific life of their prisons. He kept all his life the mark of cruelty of his persecutors and suffered from them. But he endured all with patience and without animosity.

The following 10 years in exile in Estonia were marked with physical and moral sufferings, during which he never neglected his love for the children, having discussions with them about God and His commandments.

At age 63, Father Alexis fell asleep in the Lord in a French parish in the village of Ugine, serving the Russian community — mainly workers in factories. There, he could have lived a better material life, but he was giving most of what he received to the poor in secret, mocked often by his appearance in his old cassock. He served the liturgy with dignity and contemplation, saying the prayers without hurrying. Showing misericord to the hostiles, he kept silent in front of their attacks and never complained. "Blessed are the meek and humble of heart".

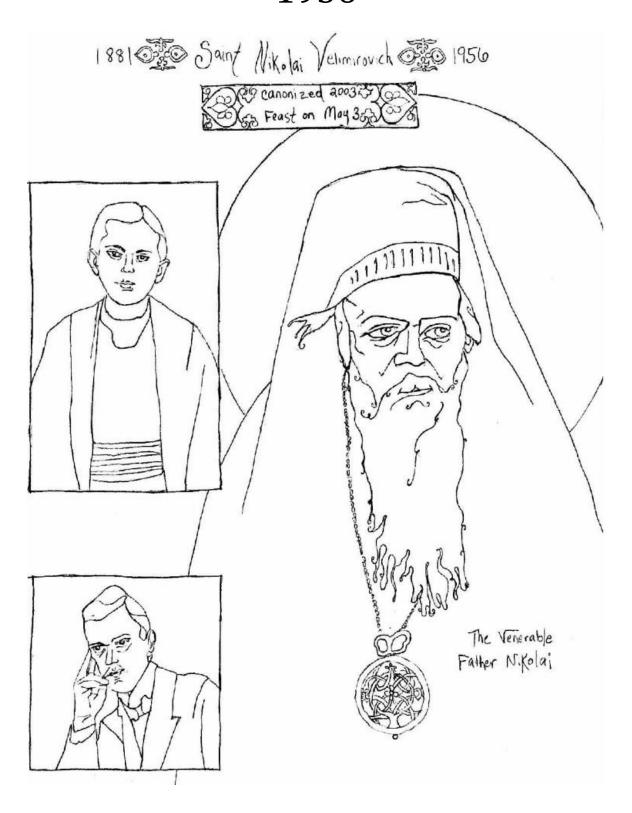
All these years, by his intense and unconditional devotion to Christ, he received the fruits of the Holy Spirit. He lived on earth a saintly life being sure that at the moment of his death he was reconciled with all, even his persecutors, praying, crying and asking for God misericord. He died in hospital from cancer at 67.

" ... nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption" [Psalm 15]

20 years later, the cemetery had to move his burial place, but the workers found that the body of Father Alexis Medvedkov remained supple and uncorrupted, even though he died from cancer, a sign of his Holy life on earth. The saintly priest was canonized in 2004, 70 years after his birth in heaven. His relics remain in a monastery in France. He is remembered, even by those who had been hostile to him, as an exceptionally modest man, shy, full of gratitude, prayerful, outgoing, compassionate, slow to criticize, eager to forgive, generous with what little he had, who never turned his back on anyone in need.

~ Domitille Nicolescou

St. Nikolai Velimirovich



nce upon a time, in the land of Lelich, lived a little boy named Nicky. His parents baptized him right away because he was born so frail. "Little Nicky", as his priest and teacher Fr Andrew fondly called him, was named after St. Nicholas! Little Nicky loved to study. He studied so much, he would hide in the bell tower all summer long, reading and praying with his favorite books. His mother didn't worry about him, because he loved his walks to church with her. Hand in hand they would walk, three miles to church just so they could pray with others and have communion! His father didn't worry about him either. He prayed that Little Nicky would grow up to be a leader in their community and help take care of their little town instead of being a humble farmer like him. Little Nicky was such a good student that in seventh grade he was smart enough to be a soldier in the military academy! But alas, he couldn't pass the fitness test. He was just too small and not strong enough! Next, he applied to the seminary of St. Sava. He was accepted! Perhaps he will be a soldier in the heavenly army!

Little Nicky did very well at St. Sava Seminary. He graduated, then continued with his schooling. He studied so much that he became a Doctor of Theology five times over! He read, wrote and spoke seven different languages. He even became knowledgeable in spiritual and philosophical writings of ancient India. But, one day he got terribly sick and could not recover. For two months he stayed in the hospital. Sickness and disease had plagued his entire life and now it appeared that he was going to die. He promised that if God made him strong and well, he would become a monk and dedicate his life to serving people.

Well, Little Nicky— or Bishop Nikolai as we shall call him now—got better and did not seem so little anymore. He became much stronger! He remembered his promise to God and became a monk, then a priest... then an archpriest, bishop and a seminary teacher. But there was just one problem. Even though he had done so much school, he never went through seventh and eighth grade. The school made him take another test to prove he could pass those two grades! He turned out to be a very good teacher. He was such a good teacher in fact, that people were shocked and dumbfounded at his learned mind and depth of wisdom. They had no words. He taught philosophy, logic, history, foreign languages and theology. Many of his students became monks, priests and theologians.

Bishop Nikolai did much traveling and teaching. He traveled to Russia, America, Greece, Constantinople and Mt. Athos...all over the world! He helped the formation of Yugoslavia, translating for their president. In America, he wanted to do three things. He wanted the people to understand WWI from the viewpoint of Eastern Europe, he wanted to collect money for children who lost their parents in the war, and he wanted to visit Serbian Orthodox communities, pulling them together into a Diocese. He spent six months traveling America accomplishing all this.

America loved Bishop Nikolai and mourned when he left to go back home. He was missed very much. He had taught Greeks, Russians and Bulgarians how to let go of nationalistic tendencies that threaten communities of Orthodox people from other countries. He separated true Orthodox tradition from local church tradition, so that we can become a more united people.

Then something quite horrible happened. After he left America, the Nazis that invaded Yugoslavia didn't like what he was doing and sent him to the famous prison in Dachau. This was a terrible place with cruel people. He saw great suffering. He prayed to the Virgin Mary to help. With help from God and the saints, the Americans came to rescue the prisoners on May 8 1945,

and so with that, he went straight back to America. He went to live and be with his friends at St. Tikhon in Pennsylvania and to New Gracanica Monastery in Grayslake, Illinois!

One day, after serving a very beautiful Liturgy on Saturday March 17, 1956 he got up from his dinner that evening, bowed politely three times and asked for forgiveness. "What is this?" they asked of themselves after he left. This was very unusual. On Sunday morning, when Bishop Nikolai did not come out of his room, a very pious monk went to fetch him. He was found there, silently kneeling in prayer on earth, while his soul was somewhere in heaven.

Here is a prayer from Saint Nikolai: "O Lord most-wise, strengthen us by your power that we not fear the non-believing world, neither when they lash us with whips or when they insult us with words for your sake." Amen

...And from Prayers by the Lake: "Stories are long, too long; the moral is short — one word. You are that word, O Word of God. You are the moral of all stories."

The dear Saint Nikolai Velimirovich is considered the New Chrysostom for his special gift of preaching and teaching. You can discover many beautiful books written by him—some hard to find—at the Serbian Monastery mentioned above including "Prayers by the Lake", "Prologue" Vol 1 and 2, "Missionary Letters" Vol 1,2,3 and many more. Remarkably, the abbot at the New Gracanica Monastery has a striking resemblance to Bishop Nikolai and is a wonderful teacher of stories to children and families that come to visit. I encourage you to go!

~ Christy Kellar

St. Paisios the Athonite 1994



"Whether we pray for ourselves or for others, the prayer must be from the heart. The problems of others should become our problems"

Arsenios Eznepidis was born in the cradle of saints, Cappadocia - part of Turkey - in 1924. Baptized by and named after Saint Arsenios (another 20th century saint), Arsenios is known today as Saint Paisios of Mount Athos.

From a young age, Arsenios demonstrated a love for God. By age 11 he was fasting regularly and reading the lives of the saints. When he was in his early teens, Arsenios faced his first spiritual angst when a close friend of his named Costas suggested that evidence of Darwin's Theory of Evolution negates Christianity.

In a crisis of faith, Arsenios fled to the woods surrounding his village and spent the night in prayer and prostrations. By dawn Arsenios was exhausted and in despair vowed that even if Jesus was merely a good man, he would still honor and venerate Him. At that moment Our Lord appeared to Arsenios and said "I am the Resurrection". Arsenios replied: "My God, I do not know what You will do, but I surrender myself completely to You completely so that you will make me a human being." The site where Christ appeared to Arsenios is now a church.

Arsenios' teen years witnessed the horrors of World War II firsthand with the invasion of Greece, first by the Italians and then the Germans. Following the war, the Greek Civil War broke out as Communists attempted to take over Greece. One of the major battles of the war took place in Arsenios' hometown of Konitsa. Shortly afterwards Arsenios was himself drafted into the Greek Army. During the war Arsenios sought the protection of the Theotokos to not kill his fellow man and despite volunteering for dangerous missions and praying in the midst of enemy fire, he was never harmed nor forced to harm others.

After the war, Arsenios became a monk on Mount Athos and was tonsured (in 1957) with the name Paisios. As a monk he worked as a carpenter (a skill he had been apprenticed to master). Even among other monks on Mount Athos Fr. Paisios was notable for his humility, dedication, and kindness.

As Fr. Paisios grew in spiritual strength he sought out solitude. With the permission of his Elder, he journeyed to the hermitage of Saints Galaktion and Epimede near Mt. Sinai in the desert. For several years Father Paisios prayed, carved icons, and donated any monies earned to the bedouins in the area. With failing health, Father Paisios returned to Mount Athos for surgery.

Although in poor health, Father Paisios worked and prayed tirelessly. Most nights he slept only 2-3 hours. His spiritual life he sought to share with others through writing (at least 10 of his books have been translated into English). His prayers on behalf of others were blessed by frequent visitations from our Lord, the Theotokos, and various saints. As word spread of his holiness, pilgrims flocked to his cell from not only Greece but around the world. Father Paisios would often foretell of who would be visiting, know details about their lives, and was able to communicate freely with foreigners even though he had never learned any language besides Greek.

Father Paisios was blessed also with the ability to heal through prayer. Numerous accounts were recorded during his lifetime of those with cancer, tumors, blindness, and other ailments healed through the intercessions of Father Paisios.

His ceaseless work on behalf of others and his unceasing prayer life, took its toll on his own body. Less than two weeks before his 70th birthday, Father Paisios went to be with Our Lord. When the news was reported hundreds of thousands visited his grave. Miracles were reported to those who venerated his resting place.

In 2015 the Ecumenical Patriarch declared Father Paisios a saint. His feast day is celebrated on July 12th.

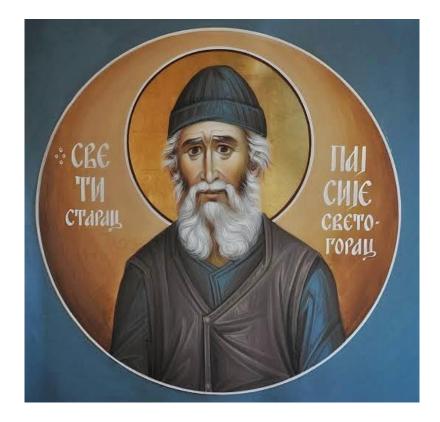
Apolytikion in Tone 1

The offspring of Farasa, and the adornment of Athos, and the imitator of the former righteous, equal in honor, O Paisios let us honor O faithful, the vessel full of graces, who hastens speedily to those who cry out: glory to Him Who gave you strength, glory to Him Who crowned you, glory to Him Who grants through you healings for all.

Kontakion in Plagal Tone 4

The most-famed ascetic of the Holy Mountain, and the newly-enlightened light of the Church, let us praise him with hymns with all our heart, for he leads the faithful towards a perfect life, filling them with rivers of gifts, therefore we cry out: Hail, O Father Paisios.

~ David Baeckelandt

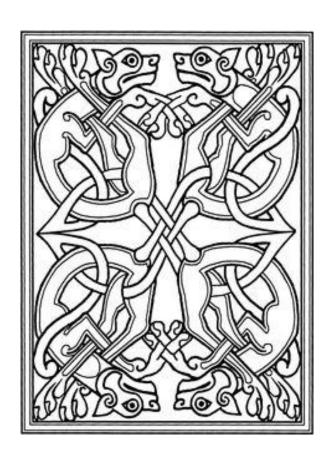


Find the Saints

There are 7 saints nominated in this story booklet. You can find their names in the grid below. Names can go down, across, and in two diagonals, both forwards and backwards.

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