



## St. Mark of Ephesus January 19th

St. Mark (nee Emmanuel) was born of pious parents in 1392 in the queen of cities, Constantinople. His father was called George and was the Chief Justice of Sakellion and deacon of the Great Church, his mother was Maria, the daughter of the pious doctor Luka. Both parents tried and succeeded in raising little Emmanuel in teaching and upbringing in the Lord. But the death of their father left him and his younger brother John orphans at a tender age.

When the young Emmanuel completed his studies he assumed the administration of the patristic school and soon was recognized as the brightest teacher of the declining city. Among his students who later excelled were George Gennadius Scollarius, the first Patriarch following the fall of the city, Theodore Agallianus, Theophanus, Metropolitan of Midia and his brother John Eugenikos. In 1436 and while still a Hieromonk, the Patriarch of Alexandria named him as his representative at the convened synod on the Union of Churches. The same year Emperor John Paleologos forced him to accept the Metropolitan throne of Ephesus which became vacant that year. The emperor showed his great appreciation he nurtured for St. Mark, by naming him General Exarch of the Synod. This saint was forced to follow the Patriarch and the rest of the representatives to Italy. St. Mark went to the synods with the best intentions and demonstrated his conciliatory stance with the speech he composed for the Pope, even before the start of the proceedings of the Ferrara Synod. Some Orthodox representatives, even criticized Mark for his conciliatory stance in the dialogue with Cardinal Cessarini and demanded that from then on the Metropolitan Bessarion of Nicea should speak instead.

On the 5 July 1439, the union was endorsed and as reported by Syropoulos, most of the Orthodox representatives signed against their will fearful of the emperor. When the Pope asked if Mark had also signed and received a negative response he remarked orally, "well we have accomplished nothing".

The 4th of May 1440 Saint Mark was forced to flee from the Royal City, because his life was in danger and to go to his metropolitan area, Ephesus, that was under the Turks. There having shepherded for a short while his sane flock, he was forced again, now due to the Turks and unionists, to leave Ephesus and board a ship destined for the Holy Mountain, where he decided to live the rest of his life. However when the ship made a stop at Limnos, the Saint was recognized and arrested under imperial order and was imprisoned there for two years. During this period of imprisonment he suffered greatly, but as he wrote to the Hieromonk Theophanis of Evia "the word of God and the power of truth cannot be tied down, instead it proceeds and prospers and most of the brothers encouraged by my exile check the scamps and transgressors of the true faith.

After he was released from prison, Saint Mark, because of his sickness, he could not withdraw to the Holy Mountain, but returned to the monastery in Constantinople where he was received by the people with honours as a saint and confessor. The persecutions, the despising and the pressures worsened the state of health of the holy father, so that on the 23rd June 1444 having called by his side his spiritual children and passed on the leadership of the anti union struggle, he departed to the Lord. He was 52 years old.

### **Apolytikion of Mark, Bp. Of Ephesus in the Third Tone**

All-laudable and most divine Mark, \* in thee the Church found a great zealot \* by thy confession of the holy and sacred Faith; \* for thou didst champion the doctrines which the Fathers taught \* and didst cast down darkness' boastful pride. \* Wherefore pray thou to Christ God for them that honour thee, \* that we be granted the forgiveness of sins.

### **Kontakion of Mark, Bp. Of Ephesus in the Third Tone**

Clad, O godly-minded one, with an invincible armor, thou didst dash to pieces the pride of the Western rebellion; thou wast brought forth as the champion of Orthodoxy, as the Comforter's own instrument and pure vessel. For this cause, to thee we cry out: Rejoice, O Mark, thou boast of the Orthodox flock.