



St. John the Faster September 2nd

Our Holy Father John was born in Constantinople, the Queen of Cities. At first he worked as a goldsmith, and everyone expected him to continue in that occupation. From his youth, however, he was inclined toward the monastic life. He also possessed a rare gift for continence and a natural love for fasting, and thus he was known as “the Faster.” Because of his reputation for virtue, he was ordained as a deacon by Patriarch John III, and later he received the grace of the priesthood. St. John was

found worthy to behold a vision which showed that he would become be a worthy recipient of God’s grace, for the spiritual enlightenment of his flock. He read the Holy Scriptures and other ecclesiastical books every day, thereby enriching his knowledge.

Once, when he was a young man, John was walking with Eusebius, an old monk from Palestine. Suddenly, a bodiless voice spoke to Eusebius: “Abba, do not walk to the right of the great John.” It was the voice of God, foretelling the great service to which John would shortly be called.

After the death of Patriarch Eutychius, St. John was chosen to succeed him. He did not want to accept the office, but he was frightened by a heavenly vision, and so he consented. By the example of his own life he taught all believers to restrain their capricious desires and to control themselves. The hierarch was unable to abide his flock’s blatant disregard for the institutions of the Church. When the citizens of Constantinople decided to give in to their passions by attending a horse show in the Hippodrome on eve of the Feast of Pentecost, the hierarch fell on his knees before God and fervently prayed that the Lord would thwart their impious intention. As soon as the people began to make their way to the Hippodrome, a terrible storm arose with thunder, rain and hailstones so that everyone dispersed in fear and came to realize the inappropriateness of such entertainment.

St John was Patriarch of Constantinople from 582 - 595, and was the first to use the title “Ecumenical Patriarch.”

He was a great faster, intercessor and wonderworker right up to the time of his death. Distinguished for his abstinence and prayer, St. John had such a love for the poor that he refused them nothing from his estate. After his death, his only personal possessions were found to be a wooden spoon, a linen shirt and an old garment. His writings on repentance and Confession are well known.

After a virtuous life of piety, during which he performed many miracles, St. John reposed on September 2, 595. His grace-filled relics were entombed in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

