



Sts. Demetrios & Paul the New Martyrs

May 22nd

The Saint was from the town of Ligouditsa of Arkadia. When he was still a child he was orphaned with another brother, and his father, Elias, married a second woman. Their step mother treated the two brothers poorly, and therefore as soon as they were older they left home. The older brother went to Tripolitsa and became a servant in a Turkish house, the younger brother, Demetrios, became affiliated with some builders who took him from place to place to build things. One time they went to Tripoli and there Demetrios consorted with a Turkish boy. One day, because of a disagreement over money, he left the builders and went to be a servant in a Turkish house. Slowly, however, childhood attachments convinced him to abandon his people and to embrace Islam. When his older brother learned this, he went to meet with him, and tried to convince him of the great evil which he suffered, for he had also converted to Islam.

As soon as their father learned this, he came to Tripoli to find them. What happened to the older brother, we do not know. The younger boy, Demetrios, as soon as he heard that his father was coming, did not dare appear before him, either from shame or fear. Thus the father left without seeing his son. However, his presence had an effect, because Demetrios began to think how he saddened his father and what a great evil he committed, that his father would go to such an effort to come from his town to meet him. He began to regret his decision, and to berate himself, and within him was born words of repentance and return to Christ.

At the first opportunity, he left the Turk's house with goal of returning to his home. However, he did not know the way, so he managed to reach Stemnitsa. There a Christian woman housed him, who told him that he took the wrong road and that he would have to return and set-off with a guide. He returned and waited for a chance to leave. In the meantime, he tried learning the skill of hair-cutting, as the master of his house was a barber, but he was not content in his efforts.

One day he met some Christians, who were going to Smyrna. Thus he decided to change plans and to follow them. From Smyrna he headed to Magnesia of Asia Minor, where he knew some people. There he confessed to a spiritual father, however, because of the presence of many Turks, his spiritual father wanted to send him to a safer place. There was also a plague in that region, so he decided to leave.

With God's illumination and the help of some Christians, he traveled to the Monastery of the Precious Forerunner, which was on a small island of the gulf between Aivali and Moschonisia. There in the safe environment of the Monastery, he confessed to the Abbot and returned to the Church, together with Church order by the Mystery of Holy Chrismation.

Because his conscience calmed, he left the Monastery and worked in Moschonisia for a year in a coffee shop and then in Kydonies as a barber, and made a lot of money. He also donated a beautiful vigil lamp to the icon of the Precious Forerunner in the Monastery.

With the passage of time, however, the love of Christ and the desire for martyrdom was lit within his heart. Then he of course heard of the New Martyrology by St. Nikodemos, and learned about the Neomartyrs, and the desire for confession and martyrdom grew within him. He went therefore to the Abbot of the Precious Forerunner and confessed his desire, and asked him to guide him, that his desire might come to pass.

The Abbot sent him with a letter to Chios, where **St. Makarios Notaras**(<http://logismoitouaaron.blogspot.com/2009/05/shepherd-of-corinth-really-blessed.html>), the former Metropolitan of Corinth (and trainer of other Neomartyrs: **Sts. Polydoros** (<http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com/2009/09/st-polydoros-new-martyr-of-cyprus-and.html>) and **Theodore of Byzantium** (<http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com/2009/02/holy-neomartyr-st-theodore-byzantine.html>)), was living. The Saint received him with much love, consoled him, and praised his love for Christ and his desire for confession. He stressed to him, however, that with repentance man can be saved from whatever great sins he had committed. He urged him to abandon the idea of martyrdom, because of his young age in case he would not be able to bear the tortures and fall into the same serious sin and deny Christ a second time. With many arguments he tried to dissuade him from martyrdom. The Saint listened to what St. Makarios told him without responding, however within his heart the love for Christ was like a fire. Thus he began to struggle spiritually with unceasing prayer, vigil roughly the whole night, countless prostrations, Parakleses to the Most-Holy Theotokos and continuous tears. He cried bitterly as another Apostle Peter for his denial, as if all of these did very little to redeem him. For further asceticism, he went to a narrow cave, despite the cold of winter, where there was a spring, and continued his asceticism, as much as he could.

As he prepared spiritually according to the judgment of his trainer, St. Makarios, and having confessed cleanly all of his sins that he could remember, his spiritual father again counseled him to abandon his goal of martyrdom. Though he was silent externally, his heart however skipped at the idea of confessing his Faith. Thus, not being able to restrain it any longer, he sought permission of his Elder to go to the place where he had denied Christ, to find his brother, to teach him about his fall and also to confess and suffer for Christ. St. Makarios, seeing his steadfastness, having admonished him, prayed and let him go with his blessing, giving him a letter to give to a certain learned spiritual father in Argos, to support him. Traveling to Argos, he did not find this spiritual father, for he was absent. He stayed therefore near a virtuous Christian, waiting the return of the teacher, continuing his spiritual struggle with prayer, vigil, fasting and tears. As the days passed and the teacher was delayed, Demetrios, unable to hold back the flame in his heart, left for Tripoli with a God-fearing Christian. The priests who had learned of the reason of his traveling to Tripoli, because of fear of reprisals by the Turks, tried to convince him to return. The Saint, however, with great humility, calmed their fears.

Having communed the Immaculate Mysteries, he went to the agora of Tripolitsa to see if anyone recognized him, but no one did. In the end, with the blessing of the most-pious priest Anthony he went to his former master's barber shop, and greeted him with: "Christ is risen!". It was the week after the Sunday of St. Thomas. When he asked him who he was, he answered:

"I am the Demetrios, who in this wretched work place denied Christ, and I have come now to shed my blood for Him"
The Christians, as soon as they heard this, left immediately.

A helper of the master who was a Turk, told him:

"What's this, Mehmet, come to your senses, don't you pity your life? The Turks will kill you."

"I've come because of this" the Saint said.

"Eh, come in the yard, I'll cut your throat with the razor."

Immediately the Saint ran and put forth his neck, but the Turk, however, went outside, telling him to find someone else. In the meantime, his former master began to try to get him to return with threats and flatteries, but to no avail. He offered him money to go far away and live as a Christian. But he did not even give in to this.

He only said: "I am a Christian, I'm not leaving. I have come to confess my Faith and to shed my blood for my Christ."

In the meantime, these events were becoming known, and the Christians, wherever they were, prayed for the grace of God to strengthen him, that he complete his struggle in a God-pleasing way, while the Turks seized him and took him initially to the commissioner of the pasha. He asked him who he was and why he left his faith.

The Saint responded in Greek: "I was and am a Christian and I worship my Christ as true God."

Because the judge didn't speak Greek, he asked what he was saying, and some Turk told him: "I was a and am a Turk" in

order for the Saint to avoid martyrdom.

Then the Saint responded in Turkish with his correct homily. The judge ordered him to be imprisoned until he could be seen by the pasha. When he later appeared before the pasha and many high-profile Turks, the pasha tempted him with flatteries, the others with positions, and then terrible threats of tortures.

The Saint again confessed his faith in Christ, at which point the pasha ordered him to be beheaded. The saint was led joyfully bound to the center of the agora. There having stood and prayed, thanking God Who made him worthy of martyrdom, he knelt willingly, however the executioner got him up and led him to his master's barber shop, where he did the same to scare him.

He lifted him up again and hit him and led him to the fish market, where he beheaded him with three strokes, while the Saint said: Remember me, O Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom.:

And though he was turned towards the west, his body turned towards the east after it was beheaded. After a short time later, the martyr's eyes opened and the separated head appeared as if it were alive, to the amazement of the faithful and the shame of the faithless.

The Saints hastened with gladness to take from his blood, his clothes, or from his martyred relic, which bore an incredible fragrance.

After three days the decision was made to burn the holy relic. However, in the end, with a lot of money, they threw it outside of the walls, from it was gathered by the Christians and buried with reverence. Many miracles followed and many miraculous cures were worked with the grace which was granted to the blessed Demetrius by the Lord Who grants struggles.