



“Thou hast ascended to the heights of chastity and purity, O Father,
and the myrrh flowing from thy bones is a token thereof”

Our Holy Father Theophilos the Myrrh-Gusher*

† 8 July 1548

SAIN'T THEOPHILOS, the true friend (*philos*) of God (*Theos*), was born around 1460 in New Zikhne, in Greek Macedonia, to pious and virtuous parents, who implanted in him the fear of God and the first seeds of the holy and deifying virtues, so that the good ground of his soul might bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

After studying letters and calligraphy, he renounced all the things of the world and dedicated himself to God, being tonsured a monk. Shortly thereafter, he was Ordained to the Priesthood, as one pure and most worthy, and irreproachably served the one Holy Triune God at the fearsome Altar.

He was bound to the virtuous Bishop Akakios of Rendine, who had been Consecrated by St. Niphon of Constantinople (commemorated on 11 August) when he was still Metropolitan of Thessaloniki.

St. Niphon once sent Bishop Akakios and St. Theophilos to Egypt to ascertain the truth of two great miracles that took place there, in 1486, by Patriarch Joachim of Alexandria.

By order of the country's Arab King—which order was issued following intrigues by certain Jews—this most holy Patriarch moved a mountain and unhesitatingly drank a poisoned drink



without suffering any harm.

When St. Theophilus and Bishop Akakios had ascertained the truth of these miracles, they worshipped at the ancient Patriarchate, Sinai, and the Holy Land.

The Saint later returned to Constantinople, where the new Patriarch, Pachomios—who, indeed, was his compatriot—appointed him to the service of the Patriarchate, in which post he remained a good many years.

He then went to the Holy Mountain, where he lived in true ascesis, humility, and obedience at the Monasteries of Vatopedi and Iveron, and later in the desert of Kapsala, being distinguished for his great piety and his love for our Lady the *Theotokos*.

Various manuscripts of his bear witness to his humility, when he says in self-reproach that he is “the sinful and unworthy one,” “wretched, miserable, and tattered,” and a “wretch, guilty of myriads of evils”!

The renown of his holiness drew near him many devotees of Godly life seeking guidance and consolation.

When Thessaloniki was deprived of its Shepherd, Patriarch Pachomios went to the city, and from there he wrote to the Blessed Theophilus, inviting him to come so that his acquaintances could see him—his aim, of course, being to Consecrate him Bishop of the city.

The Saint discovered this plan and, avoiding the dangers arising from the glory of honors, was tonsured to the Great *Schema*, having first renounced the Priesthood, to the sorrow, but also admiration, of the Patriarch.

Cultivating virtue in secret and being advanced in years, the blessed one foreknew his death.

Having been administered Holy Unction, he received Holy Communion and, on Sunday, 8 July 1548, he reposed, saying: “Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit!”

In token of his great humility, he had previously ordered his

disciple, Isaac, not to bury him, but rather to drag him to the woods and to throw him there to be eaten by wild beasts.

Later, his Holy Relics were found and reverently placed in the *Kalyve* of his struggles, at the Church of St. Basil in Kapsala. These Relics began to gush fragrant myrrh as an indication of his God-pleasing way of life and angelic chastity and purity.

In this way, the Lord glorified His faithful servant, St. Theophilos, through whose intercessions may we be vouchsafed the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen!



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