



■ On the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Holy Great Martyr Panteleimon (27 July)

Illnesses Are Gifts Of God*

*“It is My will, and it is often
to one’s advantage, that one’s body
be sick, that his soul might be saved.”*

In the Kalyve of St. John Chrysostomos, which belongs to the Koutloumousiou Monastery’s Skete of St. Panteleimon, Monk Daniel is still alive and struggling in asceticism. As he himself assures us, and as we have also learned from other Fathers, he has been sick for over twenty years: his head, back, kidneys, heart, feet, and sometimes his whole body, hurt. He has been to many doctors and has undergone many examinations, X-rays, and radiography, all with the same outcome.

The doctors cannot find any bodily disorder; nevertheless, the brother continues to suffer from an inexplicable illness, with which doctors and science are unable to help him.

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A FEW years ago, on July 27, during the Vigil for the Feast of St. Panteleimon, Brother Daniel, with great faith and tears in his eyes, besought St. Panteleimon with these words:

“O Saint of God and Patron of our Skete, you who are a doctor and who, for the love of Christ, were martyred and shed your blood, beseech Christ our Master to grant me my health, so that I, too, will be able to glorify His Name and chant during Vigils in good health.”

Having said this, from his pain and exhaustion, Monk Daniel fell into light sleep and saw St. Panteleimon in a vision kneeling before the throne of God and asking for the brother’s health to be restored.

Monk Daniel heard Christ the Master say to St. Panteleimon:

“My brother, Great Martyr Panteleimon, are you perhaps more compassionate than I? Or do you have greater love for the people than I do? I know that you shed your blood for My sake, but did I not also shed My Blood, and continue to shed it every day, for the salvation of men’s souls? Know that it is My will, and it is often to one’s advantage, that one’s body be sick, that his soul might be saved. This is how I desire many people to be saved.”

When Brother Daniel heard these words, he woke up and glorified the Name of God, also thanking St. Panteleimon for his efforts and intercession. And immediately, as he himself told us, a burden was lifted from him and he was inwardly assured that he must bear his cross and his illness with patience and thanksgiving.



* **Monk Andrew the Hagiorite**, *Gerontikon of the Holy Mountain* [in Greek] (Athens: 1979), pp. 287-288. Publication layout ours.