

“The Cross: The Glory of Angels and the Wounding of Demons”*

From the Life of Saint Niphon,
Bishop of Constantiana

A pious Christian once recounted to me the following wondrous event,” writes Hieromonk Peter, the biographer of St. Niphon:

One Saturday evening, when he was praying in the narthex of the Church of St. Anastasios for the customary Resurrectional Vigil, the servant of God Niphon also arrived, as he was wont to keep vigil at the Churches of the Saints.



“I saw, then,” my interlocutor continued, “a multitude of individuals dressed in white walking together with him, some in front and others behind, and they were rejoicing that they were encircling him. Most awesome of all, however, was that a Cross was elevated before him at a height equal with his own, shining as if it were of pure gold. Similarly brilliant Crosses were to the right, left, behind, and above the Saint’s head. They were surrounding him, intermeshed. When a temptation would approach, the Lord, wishing to test him at that moment of struggle, allowed for the Crosses to separate from each other. They thus left a small opening through which the enemies could throw their darts. Throngs of Angels and demons followed the battle. The Saint raised his hands to God in the highest and ascended towards Him with his pure mind. He remained there, aloft, praying. And Satan, seeing him and fearing the wrath of God, said in a tremble to his troops:

“Let us go, you lot, and depart from that Niphon, because he has risen to Heaven and is praying against us to the Great

One. Let us flee, then, before His wrath descends and torments us.’

“And they vanished straightaway. After his prayer, that blessed one descended to earth, came to himself, and, faced with no battle, thanked the All-Good God for having protected him.

“Then the Angels departed in gladness, while the venerable Crosses joined together again, closing the entry and guarding the righteous one.

“Many times,” that good Christian continued to tell me, “the Devil would come with a swarm of demons in order to throw him into a passion, but they were unable to do so because, being surrounded by the power of the Cross, he would mock them and spit at them.

“Thus put to shame, the dark demons would disappear, while he would glorify God all the more for having granted him such power against the unseen enemies.”



* See Hieromonk Peter, *An Ascetic Bishop: St. Niphon, Bishop of Constantiana*, 2nd ed. (Oropos: Holy Monastery of the Paraclete, 1987), pp. 113-114.