



■ On the occasion of the commemoration of the Icon of the *Panagia Hodegetria* (June 20)

The Mother of God Blesses Hospitality* A Contemporary Miracle

Gerontissa Makrina, Abbess of the Convent of the *Panagia Hodegetria* (“the Directress”), in Volos, Greece, was adorned with many virtues springing forth from her life of genuine asceticism, which had Christ at its center. First and foremost, however, she was distinguished by her heartfelt hospitality and almsgiving.

In various ways, she inconspicuously helped and supported a great number of suffering people in need and distress.

She would constantly exhort us regarding almsgiving: “The *Panagia* does not abandon us. If you give one, the *Panagia* gives one hundred—when we have faith in her! Whatever we give from the house of the *Panagia* is a blessing of the *Panagia*. That is why the Grace of our Lady the *Theotokos* strengthens and helps us.”



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Gerontissa’s virtue of hospitality was apparent in an incident involving a pious Hieromonk that visited the convent with fifty pilgrims from Thessalonica, who asked to stay overnight in order to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

Though it was impossible to provide accommodation for so many people, Gerontissa took pains to provide everyone with a meal and makeshift beds in the three available rooms so that they



could get some rest.

Gerontissa was grieved that she could not offer the pilgrims the comfortable hospitality that she would have liked, so she decided to keep vigil the entire night, thereby participating in their discomfort.

When she went down to the Church the next morning, the Priest and pilgrims ran up to thank her for spending the entire night walking among them and covering them so that they would not be cold.

Gerontissa replied that she had not left her cell at all. They then all understood that it was a miracle of the *Panagia Hodegetria*, and in the afternoon before leaving they chanted a Supplicatory Canon in her honor.



(* *Gerontissa Makrina Vassopoulou (1921-1995), Words from the heart (Volos: Ekdoseis Hieras Mones Panagias Hodegetrias, 2012).*