

Saint Antipas of Calapodesti's soul icon to be officially celebrated every year in Finland



The feast of the Tenderness or Sweet-Kissing icon of the Mother of God at Valaam Monastery will be celebrated every year in Finland on January 11, one day after the feast of Saint Antipas of Calapodesti, who brought the icon to the monastery in 1865.

The new feast day was established following the decision of the Holy Synod of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland gathered in Helsinki on August 9 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Leo.

Since the local calendar for 2020 has already been printed, the new fest day will be featured beginning with 2021.

During the synodal working session, the hierarchs also approved the texts of the troparion and kondakion.

The story of this icon of the Mother of God is closely linked to the personality of Saint Antipas of Valaam Monastery, who was original from Calapodesti, a small village in eastern Romania.

St Antipas found this icon in a decommissioned cell in Mount Athos, where he lived for over 19 years. Because the icon was in a precarious state, he asked the help of an iconographer named Paisios to have it repaired.

After a while, the iconographer returned the icon completely restored speaking of a miraculous intervention in the restoration process.

Saint Antipas never separated again from this icon until his repose in 1882.

In 1865, when he left for Russia, he took the icon of the Mother of God and placed it in his cell at Valaam Monastery.

The icon arrived in Finland in 1940 when Valaam monastery was evacuated during the 'Winter War' between Finland and the Soviet Union.

In this context, some of the Russian monks founded a new monastic settlement near the town of Konevitsa, Finland, which they called the New Valaam.

The icon was kept in this monastery ever since.

Photography courtesy of the Valaam Monastery

