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Saint Amphilochios Makris of Patmos (16 April)



The future elder was born on December 13, 1889 to Emmanuel and Irene Makris and named Athanasios. He was born into a large family of simple, country folk. Even as an infant, Athanasios was devout, even observing the fasting rules regarding milk products while still an infant. When Athanasios was five, he convinced his newly-engaged godmother to spend the rest of her days in virginity. Athanasios, having preserved himself from worldly temptations, decided to enter a monastery at the age of seventeen. He asked his parents' blessing, which they were happy to give.

In March, 1906, he entered the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, Patmos; in August, having earned the love of the aging brotherhood, he was made a rassophore and given the name Amphilochios. To fight the passions and temptations, Amphilochios would employ strict fasting – ten mouthfuls of food at each meal on standard days, with seven or eight olives on fast days.

In 1911, the abbot of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian sent Amphilochios to Mount Athos in order to learn wood-carving; in March 1913, he was tonsured to the Great Schema by Elder Antoniadis. Two months later, the abbot had the agreement of the brethren of the monastery to ordain Amphilochios; but, because of a self-perception of inadequacy, he asked his traveling companion to continue while Amphilochios went to Egypt and the Holy Lands. Amphilochios asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem to receive him as one of the caretakers of the Holy Sepulchre. While the Patriarch was willing to do this, the Monastery insisted that he return, where they "punished" him by sending him to the hermitage of Apollo, alongside Elder Makarios, which made Amphilochios very happy as he was better able to pray.

However, in 1919, Fr Amphilochios was ordained to the diaconate and, soon after, to the priesthood. He was assigned to the monastery's dependency on the island of Kos, also serving as confessor throughout the Dodecanese. In 1926, he was sent to the Cave of the Apocalypse, Patmos. He spent much time with students of the Ecclesiastical Academy, which produced numerous elders and abbots.

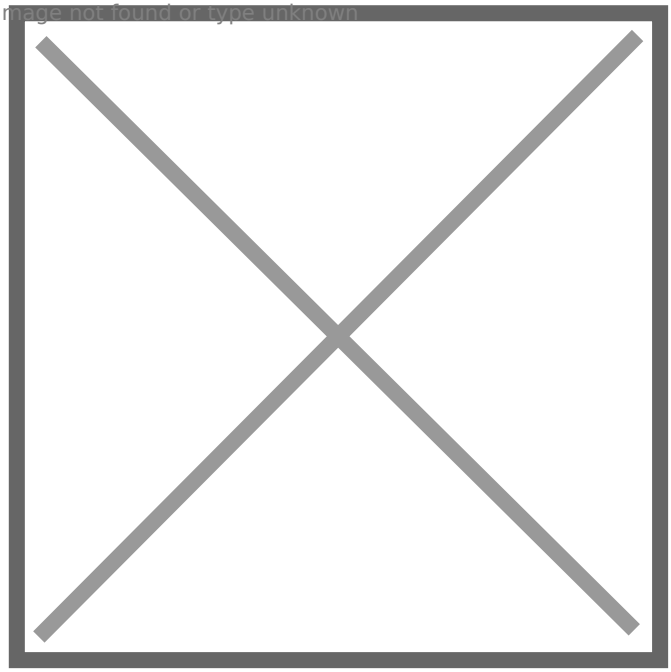
In 1935, the occupying powers of the Dodecanese were the Italians, who influenced

the Church by forcing a system of governance that made it easy to manipulate the Church. However, the Patriarch of Constantinople demanded that this situation be rectified for the new abbot. In response, the brotherhood elected Elder Amphilochios as abbot. Soon after, the seeds of the future female Monastery of the Annunciation began to be planted: the first building housed a training workshop for knitting and weaving, a guise under which to teach children Greek. In response, in 1937, the Italians exiled Elder Amphilochios to mainland Greece, where the Elder received hospitality from the Zoe brotherhood in Athens, from whence he traveled throughout Greece; after which he traveled to Crete, where he became spiritual father of the island.

His exile ended in 1939, and Elder Amphilochios returned to Patmos, being received with great joy. He did not, however, reassume his abbacy, but rather, focused on dependencies and the female Monastery of the Annunciation. The changeover of power in 1942, from the Italians to the Germans, did not greatly impact on the Elder’s life. In 1947, Elder Amphilochios organised a small group of nuns to assist the orphans of Rhodes (at that time, extremely poor) by establishing an orphanage, along with a unit for pregnant women.

At Easter, 1968, Elder Amphilochios received a forewarning of his coming repose, and was given two years to prepare himself and his children for his repose. Anxious for his spiritual children, he asked God with tears for more time to develop his children, after which the Mother of God and St. John the Theologian appeared to him and informed him that his request was denied. Soon after this, he received a bout of flu. Having made his final preparations, he reposed on April 16, 1970.

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Advice For Those Living in the West

“Do not be afraid because of your Orthodoxy; do not be afraid because, as an Orthodox in the West, you will be often isolated and always in a small minority. Do not make compromises but do not attack other Christians; do not be either defensive or aggressive; simply be yourself.”

A Miracle of Elder Amphilochios

By Helen Angelides Torkos
I have the blessed privilege of being a witness to Geronda’s all encompassing work through prayer:

Having been born in Patmos in 1965, I spent every Sunday sitting at Geronda’s feet while he rested under the olive tree that grew beside the Monastery of Evagelismos (The Annunciation). While I waited for my grandfather to emerge from his daily duties inside the Monastery (he was the chanter), Geronda taught me the psalms of the Orthodox church. I recall repetitions of The Lord’s Prayer, The Creed and many of our church hymns. These are my earliest memories of my childhood. I left my beloved Geronda, with his blessing, in October of 1969.

My life today is the way he envisioned it. He chose me to become the adopted daughter of the barren sister of his most beloved spiritual child, Geronda Amphilochios Tsoukos. His vision that this barren woman will have her own child, a son, only upon accepting me as her child was remarkable. My brother was born the end of March 1970, 2 weeks before Geronda closed his eyes for the last time. The

news of my brother’s birth didn’t reach his ears until the day before he left this life and when he was told, he simply looked up to the heavens and smiled. That final day, I know he was praying for all his beloved children, including me, and blessing us all.

Geronda Amphilochios and the Island of Patmos are at the core of who I am and who I am destined to become. My life has taken many turns and at every crossroad his hand is always there to show me the way.

There are many more documented miracles that he is known for….

The Last Sayings of the Elder on the Day of His Repose

– To young children, give great care.

– In the other life, if I have the courage, I will ask Christ to put you in the best garden to see Christ day and night.

– It is disrespectful to eat. I am preparing to appear before the Lord. (Given when he was offered food.)

– Have love between yourselves and the brothers should take care of the nuns. If wrongs occur then you should forgive. Always see things with patience and love.

– Solve issues peacefully rather than carelessly.

– My one sadness really is that I will separate from you. Do not cry, it is a temporary separation. Local, not personal.

– From where I will be I will pray and protect you.

– I loved you with all the power of my soul.

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