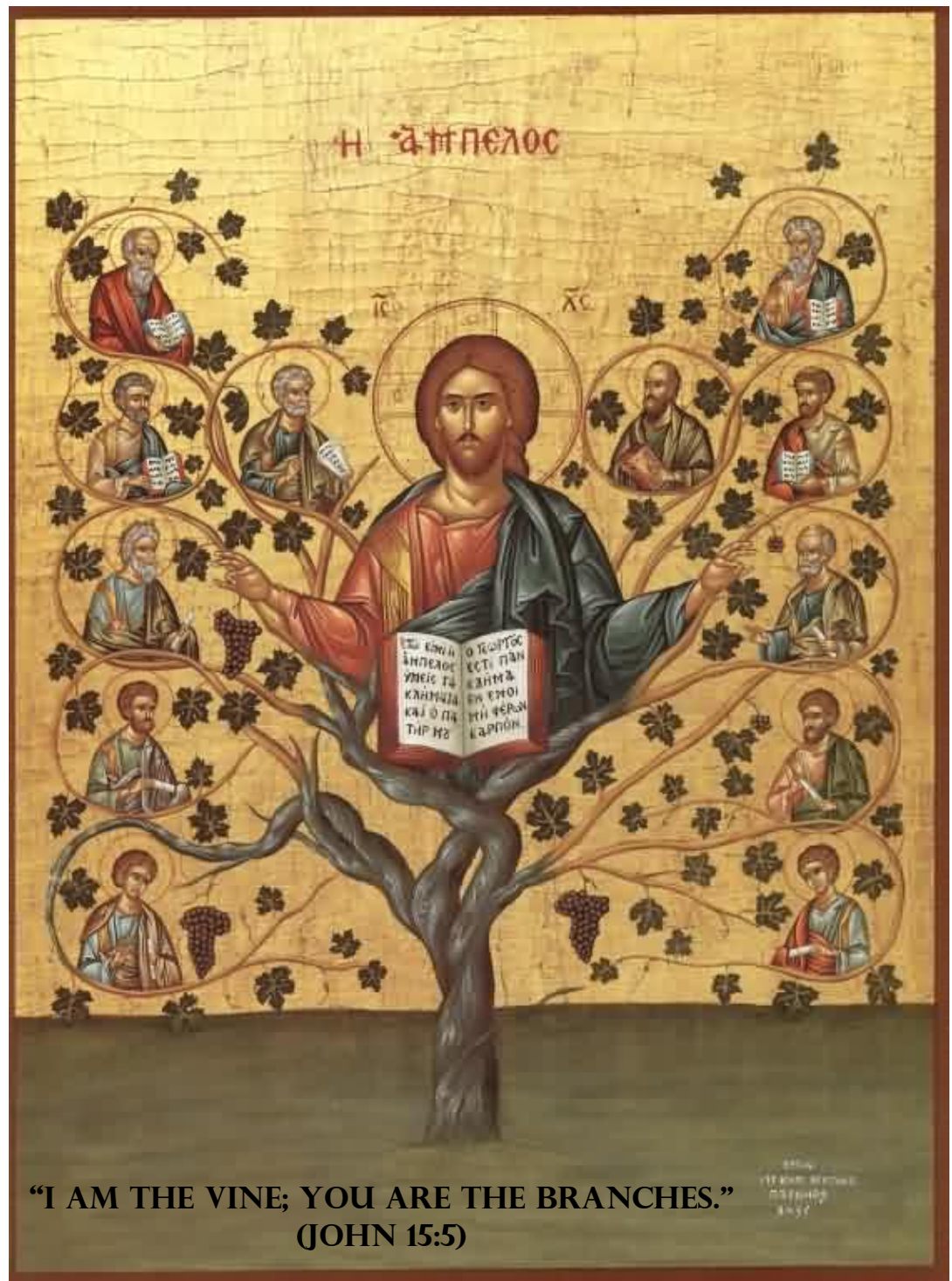


*The Placement
of the
Holy Relics
of
St. James the
Apostle,
St. Matthias
the Apostle,
St. Simon
the Apostle,
St. Timothy the
Bishop and
Disciple of St.
Paul,
and
St. George
the Great
Martyr and
Trophy Bearer*



**"I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES."
(JOHN 15:5)**

*Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church
Wilmington, Delaware
Sunday, February 28, 2010*

Cover page icon courtesy of OrthodoxPhotos.com

© 2010 Booklet compiled and edited by Fr. Gus George Christo, Ph.D.

With the blessings of His Eminence



*Metropolitan EVANGELOS of New Jersey
our
Spiritual Father, Shepherd, and Hierarch*

The Second Sunday of Great Lent 2010

Orthros 9:00am

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:00am

Celebrant

*Protopresbyter Gus George Christo, Ph.D.
Pastor*



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΑΓΙΑ ΤΡΙΑΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ



His Excellency
The Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington
Roman Catholic Diocese of Wilmington
P.O. Box 2030
Wilmington, DE 19899

September 9, 2009

"...so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them...and they were all healed" (Acts 5:15, 16).

Dear Bishop Malooly, beloved Brother in the Lord:

In extending to you my brotherly greetings, fervent prayers, and best wishes, I give glory to our Lord, Great God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

We jointly share the ancient tradition and practice of the Church regarding the relics of the Saints, which are: safeguarded for the veneration of the faithful, symbols of Christ's bodily and perfect Resurrection from the Dead, of the future age and unwaning day of the Kingdom, and means of transforming corrupt human nature into the image and likeness of Christ. According to the above biblical text, if the shadows of the Saints effect miracles, much more their holy relics, which are imbued with the trenchant energy and grace of the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, I request that with brotherly love and affection for our common history, a "first class" relic of each of the Three Great Hierarchs and Ecumenical Teachers of the Church – Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom – be released to our care at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church of Wilmington, Delaware, in order for these Great Fathers to be forever a source of inspiration and strength to the worshipping communicants, especially during these difficult times.

Please notify me of the status of my request at your convenience. Furthermore, I would be honored if you would accept my enclosed publication for your theological library. Wishing Your Excellency much health, happiness, a prosperous ministry in the Lord's Vineyard, and every good and perfect gift which comes from Above, from the Father of Lights, I remain,

Yours respectfully,

Fr. Gus George Christo

Fr. Gus George Christo, Ph.D., Protopresbyter, Pastor

808 North Broom Street, Wilmington, DE 19806 · Protopresbyter Costa G. Christo, Ph.D. · Tel.: (302) 654-4446 · Fax: (302) 654-4204
Web: www.holytrinitywilmington.org · E-mail: Frguschristo@comcast.net



September 15, 2009

Rev. Gus George Christo
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
808 North Broom Street
Wilmington, DE 19806

Dear Father Christo:

I have before me your letter to Bishop Malooly. He thanks you for the volume you sent him on the Fathers of the Church and has asked me to see what I can do to answer your question about relics for the Three Great Doctors of the Church – Basil, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

At this point I cannot say whether we have such relics. I am inclined to think not but I am asking Donn Devine, the Diocesan Archivist, to do some research. We do have a number of relics at the Archives Office which is located on the grounds of St. Joseph on the Brandywine, 8 Old Church Road, Greenville, DE 19807 (302-655-0597). It is open each Tuesday and by appointment.

In the meantime, I thank you in my own name for your request. We may find something we don't know we had. If not, the search will enlighten us to perhaps another way we can go to satisfy your request.

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph F. Rebman".

Rev. Msgr. Joseph F. Rebman
Vicar General

JFR/jn



26 January 2010

Rev. Dr. Gus George Christo, Protopresbyter
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
808 North Broom Street
Wilmington DE 19806

Dear Father Christo:

With the approval of my immediate supervisor, Msgr. Joseph F. Rebman, Vicar General for Pastoral Services, and the concurrence of the Most Rev. W. Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington, I am pleased to entrust to your custody for public veneration relics of the following saints associated with the eastern churches of Christendom. Each of the relics is encased with a separately identified relic of a modern saint of the western church, as described in the accompanying certificates of authenticity.

- St. James the Greater, Apostle. "ex velo sirico invol. os." (from a silk veil enveloping the bones)
- St. Matthias, Apostle. "ex ossibus" (from the bones)
- St. Simon, Apostle. "ex ossibus" (from the bones)
- St. Timothy, Bishop. "ex ossibus" (from the bones)
- St. George, Martyr. "ex vexillo" (from the standard or flag)

While circumstances of their deaths are uncertain, traditions of martyrdom are associated with the first four also: St. James by King Herod in Judaea; St. Matthias in the Caucasus, St. Simon in Persia, and St. Timothy at Ephesus.

The Diocese of Wilmington does not claim ownership of these sacred relics, having held them only as a trustee for the entire Christian community to whose patrimony they belong, and in furtherance of the ancient tradition of honoring and venerating the relics of the blessed. Accordingly, no conditions are associated with this transfer of custody and trusteeship, but if the continuing responsibility becomes burdensome and no other appropriate successor can be found, the Diocese of Wilmington stands ready to again accept responsibility for their care.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donn Devine".

Donn Devine
Archivist
Catholic Diocese of Wilmington



HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΑΓΙΑ ΤΡΙΑΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ



His Excellency
The Most Reverend W. Francis Malooly, Bishop of Wilmington
Roman Catholic Diocese of Wilmington
P.O. Box 2030
Wilmington, DE 19899

February 1, 2010

"There is nothing more akin to the mysteries of Christ than the martyrs, since they have body, spirit, manner of death, and all other things in common with Christ. He was with them while they lived, and after they died He did not leave their dead bodies. He is so united to their souls that He is somehow present and mingled even with this mute dust. So, if it is possible to find the Savior and to contain Him in any visible thing, it would be in these bones." (Nicholas Cabasilas)

Dear Bishop Malooly, beloved Brother in the Lord:

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the gracious and magnanimous ecumenical act of brotherly love from our Sister Church which affords us the unique opportunity of displaying for public veneration the sacred relics of the following Saints / Martyrs held in high esteem by our Churches:

St. James the Greater, Apostle ("ex velo sirico invol. os")
St. Matthias, Apostle ("ex ossibus")
St. Simon, Apostle ("ex ossibus")
St. Timothy, Bishop ("ex ossibus")
St. George, Martyr ("ex vexillo")

It was indeed a real pleasure to have worked with the Rev. Msgr. Joseph F. Rebman, Vicar General for Pastoral Services, and with Mr. Donn Devine, the Archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, whose professionalism and Christian charity are exemplary towards the fulfillment of this gesture.

Wishing Your Excellency much health, happiness, a prosperous ministry in the Lord's Vineyard, and every good and perfect gift which comes from Above, from the Father of Lights for this New Year 2010, I remain,

Yours respectfully,

Fr. Gus George Christo, Ph.D., Protopresbyter, Pastor

The Centrality of Relics in the Church

Christianity in its formative years was a persecuted religion. The primary notion of martyrdom, a martyrdom by death and a baptism in one's own blood, clearly marked that era. The individuals who suffered martyrdom perfectly imitated Christ's sacrifice and martyrdom upon the cross. There existed a direct connection between the cosmic redemptive and expiatory death of Christ and that of the martyrs. Therefore, it was a common practice during the early Christian centuries to erect Churches over the tombs of the martyrs so the bloodless sacrifice, the Holy Eucharist, could be celebrated and the everlasting Kingdom of God ushered and established sacramentally in time and space by the concrete presence of the very body and blood of the resurrected and glorified Son of God, who sits at the right hand of God the Father.

The holy scriptures are filled with examples of people, places and things that are consecrated to the service of God. For example, it is noteworthy to mention in Acts 5:16 of the healing power in the Apostle Peter's shadow, and in Acts 19:11-12 of the restorative power of the handkerchiefs and aprons touched by the Apostle Paul. Indeed, Luke 8:40-48 describes an infirmed yet faithful woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment and was healed. The Apostle and Evangelist John notes in the Book of Revelation (6:9) of his vision where he sees under the altar the souls of the saints who underwent martyrdom for the testimony of the gospel. Scriptural examples account for us how the early Church developed the sacred tradition of: securing holy relics under the altar, placing objects such as garments coming in contact with relics as objects of veneration, and processing with relics. A classic example of the procession of relics appears in the Book of Exodus (13:19) where Joseph's bones were handled sacredly and became part of a four hundred year procession. Moses had vowed that Joseph's bones would find their final resting place in the promised land.

The Church officially canonized the universal tradition of consecrating Churches with the holy relics of martyrs at the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in Nicea in 787 A.D. Legislation was drawn up making the consecration of Churches without relics heretical.

According to the theology of relics presented by St. John Chrysostom in his panegyric homilies, God takes the martyrs' souls and gives mankind their relics until the final resurrection of the dead. Hence, relics are treasures that contain innumerable goods for human beings to harvest. They are symbols of Christ's bodily and perfect resurrection from the dead, of the future age and of the unwaning day of the kingdom. They serve as means of transforming corrupt human nature into the image and likeness of Christ.

How does God sanctify saints' relics? The grace and holiness of the Spirit of God moves from the martyrs' souls to their bodies and then to their clothing. From their clothing it spreads to their shoes and, finally, it moves into the very shadows they cast, as evidenced by the shadow of St. Peter that raised a human corpse back to life once it passed over it.

*. Taken from *The Consecration of a Greek Orthodox Church According to Eastern Orthodox Tradition, A Detailed Account and Explanation of the Ritual*, by Gus George Christo, Texts and Studies in Religion, Volume 109, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 2005; pgs. 3-7.

The veneration of relics by the faithful stemmed from the martyrs' imitation of Christ's baptism in death, suffering and sacrifice, and their subsequent emigration into heaven, call to a better and more spiritual life, change from corruptibility to incorruptibility, and spiritual wedding to Christ the Master. Resulting from a martyrdom by death, or a baptism in blood, a martyr became a channel for the power of God and an intercessor between God and human beings. The martyr's holy relics served as the visible and concrete manifestation of all this to the early Church.

Holy relics, adorned with the stigmata of Christ, become vehicles revealing God's power and love toward mankind in several ways. Firstly, they thwart the devil's attack upon Christians and endlessly wound him, as they remind him of Christ's saving death and resurrection that the holy martyrs imitated. Secondly, the relics impart great benefits to the Christians who honor them at special shrines and seek the assistance of the martyrs to whom they belong. The benefits given include: God's compassion and forgiveness of any sin committed, restoration of physical and mental health to the ill and preservation of the healthy, great boldness before God, instruction about Christ's gospel, leadership towards virtue, and cleansing from the unclean spirits that are exorcised. Even the dead may be brought back to life. Thirdly, martyrs' relics function as altars for the celebration of the divine liturgy, and thus grant great benefits to the faithful throughout salvation history, because they are imbued with invisible power, dominion and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the power of the relics of the glorified saints in heaven is the nobility of the Christians and the crown of the Church. Therefore, unlike material treasures, relics are neither diminished nor dangerous when divided. Since they are spiritual things, they increase in value when they are partitioned and multiply when they are divided. Finally, someone who has venerated a saint's relics is readily recognized by his countenance, form, gait, feeling of piety and devotion, by the collection of his thoughts, and by his humility. The movements of his body and the proclamation of his philosophy distinguish him as someone who paid such homage. Scripture proves this point when it remarks: "*A man's attire, grinning laughter and gait show what he is*" (Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach 19:30).

The locations where the relics of God's saints have been deposited are solely according to God's providence. God selects the location for the deposition of a saint's relics with the specific purpose of edifying the people with the truth and power of the gospel, which is clearly revealed by the saint's triumph over his executioners. At these locations or shrines God guides the pilgrim to exhibit the same zeal for the faith as the martyr who presently resides in heaven. The pilgrim's acceptance of this guidance gives God the opportunity to prepare a safe harbor for him and provide comfort for his misfortunes. The shrines become sites of refreshment and renewal as the pilgrim's consciousness is unburdened and his perspective relating to his salvation is recaptured and secured. The pilgrim then leaves the shrine as an "ensouled" and "spiritual shrine" because the saint and his achievements dwell within his thoughts and heart.

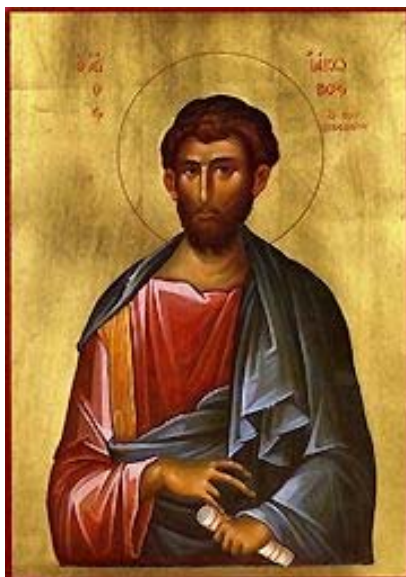
In the final analysis, central to the picture of a saint's martyrdom and holy relics is the life of Christ culminating in His martyrdom upon the cross and vindication through His resurrection. Around that center, we have as primary witnesses to this martyrdom apostles and saints, who not only believed in but actually followed after Christ, and especially those who among them shared in His holy martyrdom. It is quite clear from this picture that the early Church understood the gospel culminating in the martyrdom and glorification of Christ in a most literal way, proclaiming it not only in word but in example and deed. Faith was not an assent to a set of ideas related to Christ, but a way of life, Christ's life. The model of a believer was the person who followed Him to the cross and who became through his own martyrdom a witness to the glory of His resurrection. There is a crude realism to this picture of faith, particularly when one examines it in some of its details, most notably the detail connected with the holy relics of the Christian martyrs; but such a crudity indicates in the most indisputable manner that the Christian gospel is concerned with the entire man and not just with his mind or spirit. The dust of history is transformed into a witness that anticipates its renewal, which has already been commenced in the resurrection of Christ and in the glorification of His martyrs and saints who partake in it through their death. Martyrdom is integrally linked with Christianity because it is the most effective and decisive way of overcoming the existing powers of darkness, represented by sin and satan, and the most effective way of re-establishing the Kingdom of God in humanity and in the world at large.

The centrality of relics in the life of the Church is best seen during the time of the Christian Roman Emperors. Whenever the celebration of a martyr's feast day occurred in the imperial city of Constantinople, the emperor would humble himself in the public's view by putting off the imperial purple and all insignias of earthly sovereignty, he would dress in simple peasant clothes, enter the imperial Church and venerate the martyr's relics. And once the emperors reposed, they left orders behind for their earthly remains to be interred next to those of the holy martyrs. It was the custom in Constantinople for the emperors to be buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles that housed the awesome relics of Christendom such as the true cross of Christ, the bones of the Twelve Apostles and of numerous martyrs, and the holy fathers of the Church. For this reason, St. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople once wrote:

*In Rome, the emperor, the consuls and the rulers make pilgrimages to the graves of the Fisherman and the Tent-maker. But in Constantinople, those who once wore the diadem are satisfied if they are buried, not even near the Apostles, but outside in the forecourt. So the emperors become doorkeepers for the Fishermen... These find themselves inside, like the lords, but those, as though they were servants, consider it a favor if they may find a place by the outer door. **

Glory to God for all Things. Amen.

**John Chrysostom and His Time, Volume Two, Constantinople: The Later Years*, by Rev. Chrysostomus Baur, O.S.B. Translated by Sr. M. Gonzaga, R.S.M., p. 460. Copyright 1988 by Bu>chervertriebsanstalt. ISBN 3-905238-11-X.



James the Apostle and Brother of John the Apostle

(Feast Day: April 30)

James was one of the Twelve, like his brother John (celebrated on September 26), whom the Lord called "Sons of Thunder," because they became great preachers and because of their profound theology. It was the Saint's boldness in preaching the Gospel that Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, could not endure, and so he took him into custody during the days of the Passover, and slew him with the sword (Acts 12: 1-2); and thus he drank the cup of which the Savior had spoken to him prophetically (Matthew 20:23).

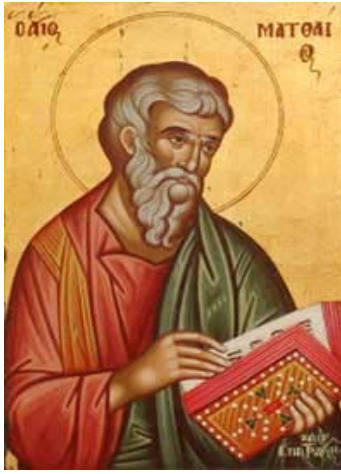
Apolytikion in the Third Tone

O Holy Apostle James, intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of offences.

Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery

Apolytikion courtesy of Narthex Press

Icon courtesy of St. Isaac's Skete



St. Matthias the Apostle

(Feast Day: August 9)

After Judas by transgression fell from his apostleship (Acts 1: 25), and hanging himself out of despair ended his life with a wretched and shameful death (Matthew 27:5), then, that the number of the Twelve not be lacking, all the disciples gathered in one place after the Ascension of the Savior (the number of men and women being 120), and they chose two men from among them, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was also surnamed Justus, and Matthias, and they set them in the midst. Then they prayed to God and cast lots, "and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles" (Acts 1:15-26). And thus, having taken the place of Judas, Matthias fulfilled the work of apostleship and the prophecy concerning Judas, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David: "And his bishopric let another take" (Psalm 108:7). After this, it is said, Matthias preached the Gospel in Ethiopia, and completed his life there in martyrdom.

Apolytikion in the Third Tone

O Holy Apostle Matthias, intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of offences.

Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery

Apolytikion courtesy of Narthex Press

Icon courtesy of http://psallitesapienter.blogspot.com/2008_02_01_archive.html



St. Timothy, Disciple of St. Paul the Apostle

(Feast Day: January 22)

The Apostle Timothy, who was from Lystra of Lycaonia, was born of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. His mother's name was Eunice, and his grandmother's name was Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). He became the disciple of the Apostle Paul when the latter first preached there, and he followed St. Paul during the whole period of the Apostle's preaching. Afterwards, Timothy was consecrated by him as first Bishop of the church in Ephesus. Under the supervision of John the Evangelist, who governed all the churches in Asia, he completed his life as a martyr in the year 97. He was stoned to death by the heathens, because, as some surmise, he opposed the festival held in honor of Artemis (Diana). The Apostle Paul's First and Second Epistles to Timothy were written to him.

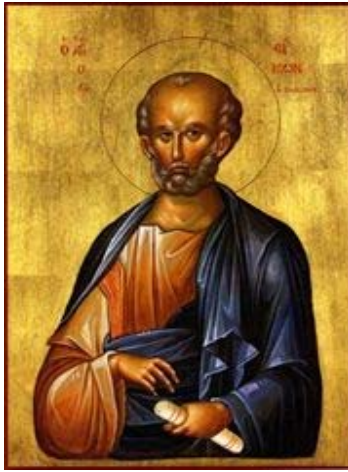
Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Since thou hadst been instructed in uprightness thoroughly and wast vigilant in all things, thou wast clothed with a good conscience as befitteth one holy. Thou didst draw from the Chosen Vessel ineffable mysteries; and having kept the Faith, thou didst finish a like course, O Hieromartyr and Apostle Timothy. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery

Apolytikion courtesy of Narthex Press

Icon courtesy of St. Isaac's Skete



St. Simon the Zealot and Apostle

(Feast Day: May 10)

This Apostle was one of the Twelve, and was called Simon the Canaanite by Matthew, but Simon the Zealot by Luke (Matthew 10:4; Luke 6:15). The word "Canaanite" used by Matthew is believed to be derived from *kana*, which in the Palestinian dialect of Aramaic means “zealot” or “zealous”; Luke therefore translates the meaning of “Canaanite.” Later accounts say that he was the bridegroom at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where the Lord Jesus changed the water into wine, making this the first of His miracles (John 2:1-11). According to some, he is called Canaanite because he was from Cana (according to others, from the Land of Canaan). Simon means "one who hears."

Apolytikion in the Third Tone

O Holy Apostle Simon, intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of offences.

Reading courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery
Apolytikion courtesy of Narthex Press
Icon courtesy of St. Isaac's Skete



**St. George the Great Martyr and Trophy-Bearer
(Icon courtesy of Athanasios Clark)**

(Feast Day: April 23)

According to tradition, George was born to a Christian family during the late 3rd century. His father was from Cappadocia and served as an officer of the army. His mother was from Lydda, Palestine. She returned to her native city as a widow along with her young son after the martyrdom of George's father, where she provided him with a respectable education and raised him in piety. The youth, it would seem, followed his father's example in joining the army soon after his coming of age. He proved to be a charismatic soldier and consequently rose quickly through the military ranks of the time. By his late twenties he had gained the titles of *tribunus* (tribune) and later *comes* (count). By that time George had been stationed in Nicomedia as a member of the personal guard attached to Roman Emperor Diocletian (reign 284–305). In 303, Diocletian issued an edict authorizing the systematic persecution of Christians across the Empire. His Caesar, Galerius, was supposedly responsible for this decision and would continue the persecution during his own reign (305–311). It is believed that George was ordered to take part in the persecution but instead confessed to being a Christian himself and criticized the imperial decision. An enraged Diocletian proceeded in ordering the torture of this apparent traitor and his execution. Then, after innumerable forms of torture, George was executed by decapitation in front of Nicomedia's defensive wall on April 23, 303. The witness of his suffering convinced Empress Alexandra and Athanasius, a pagan priest, to also become Christians, and so they also joined George in martyrdom as consequence. George's body was then returned to Lydda for burial, where Christians soon came to honor George as a martyr.

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Liberator of captives, defender of the poor, physician of the sick, and champion of kings, O trophy-bearer, Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

http://orthodoxwiki.org/George_the_Trophy-bearer





Apostle Simon



Apostle Matthias



St. George
Great Martyr



Apostle James



St. Timothy



GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY