



THE LIFE OF SAINT MATTHEW THE NEW CONFESSOR (+ 1950)

-BY CONSTANTINE KOURIS-

"Hold high the Orthodox faith, and Sacrifice for Her"

-ST. MATTHEW THE NEW CONFESSOR

ST. MATTHEW, THE ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS AND ALL GREECE, IS TO BE PRAISED FOR HIS ZEALOUS PROTECTION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND IT'S APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION, HIS THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, HIS INCREDIBLE MONASTIC PRACTICE, AND HIS LOVE OF GOD.

ON THE 14TH OF MAY, THE HOLY ORTHODOX CHURCH COMMEMORATES SAINT MATTHEW THE NEW CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS AND ALL GREECE WHO REPOSED IN PEACE.

EARLY YEARS, CRETE-ALEXANDRIA-JERUSALEM

St. Matthew was born on March 1, 1861, in the village of Panethimon, (Kissamos, Chanea, island of Crete, Greece). His family were pious and God fearing Christians known for their strict adherence to the Orthodox faith. He was the tenth child born to Presbyter Haralambos Karpathakis, and Presbytera Kyriaki. He was baptized by his father, Presbyter Haralambos and given the name George, after St. George the Great-martyr. When George reached the age of 12, his father reposed in the Lord. George's older brother Constantine had followed in their father's footsteps and had been ordained a Priest. After the repose of his father, George at the tender age of 12, approached his brother Presbyter Constantine and his mother the widowed Presbytera Kyriaki and received their blessings to enter the nearby Monastery of Chrysopigi in Chanea. George was received into the monastery in October of 1872 by the Abbot Archimandrite Kallinikos. George was then shortly thereafter tonsured a Reader, and was also given a blessing to serve as an acolyte. George's hunger for ecclesiastical and spiritual knowledge was nourished as he studied at the monasteries library. Under Father Kallinikos's tutelage, George studied among many other things, the writings of the Holy Fathers, the Typicon of the Orthodox Church, and the Holy Scriptures. George, who had a beautiful voice, also studied Byzantine Music, and also excelled in the holy art of Iconography.

During that time, the island of Crete was under Turkish occupation. George could therefore not pursue his secular education as the Turks had forbidden the Greek population from receiving any education. So in 1876, after spending 4 years at the monastery, George received a blessing from the Abbot Kallinikos to travel to Alexandria (Egypt), to live with a relative so as to complete his High School education. While attending High School he also worked at a pharmacy which his aforementioned relative owned. Through hard work and determination, he graduated from High School at the top his class. While in Alexandria, he had become acquainted with a group of pious Greek Orthodox laity who were planning a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate Pascha at the Holy Sepulchre, therefore he decided to join them.

In 1880, George along with the group of Holy Land Pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem the day before Pascha. He travelled throughout the Holy Land tracing the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, while also venerating the Holy Places throughout the region. George then proceeded to the Offices of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Hierotheos, so as to receive his blessing. Patriarch Hierotheos, being a holy and clairvoyant man, sensed a unique and divine gift within George. After discussing several theological topics, Patriarch Hierotheos proceeded to successfully convince George to stay and study in the Holy Land at the prestigious Holy Cross Theological School. The curriculum at Holy Cross School was an extremely strenuous one. Over a course of five years, studies included the mastering of the Old and New Testaments, Ancient Church History, Patrologia, Biblical Archaeology, Philosophy, Dogmatics, Apologetics, Canon Law, Civil History, Mathematics, Botany, Languages (Greek, Latin, Russian, Arabic, and French) among many other subjects. George always answered in complete humility showing great reverence when the things of God were discussed. Through his humility, work ethic and love of God, his fellow students and teachers alike came to greatly admire and respect him. In this School George had as co-students Meletios Metaxakis (an Ecumenist, at first Metropolitan of Kition, then Metropolitan of Athens and Patriarch of Constantinople and finally Patriarch of Alexandria) and Chrysostomos Papadopoulos (the Metropolitan of Athens who changed the Orthodox Calendar in 1924). In 1885, George graduated from the Holy Cross Theological School with top honours, and was ordained a Hierodeacon by the Patriarch Nicodemos of Jerusalem, at the Church of the Resurrection of Christ where George continued to serve for another year.

ON MOUNT ATHOS

George's spiritual life flourished, but he was bothered by the hectic life in Jerusalem. He wished to crucify himself to the world, engulf himself in constant prayer and partake of the hermitage of monastic life. George therefore received a blessing from the Patriarch of Jerusalem to go to Mount Athos. On April 30, 1886 George left for the Holy Mountain via sea travel. From the moment he stepped foot on the boat bound for the Holy Mountain, he submerged himself into a sea of calmness through prayer in anticipation of his arrival. Upon arriving on the Holy Mountain, he travelled to St. Anna's Skete, where he began his life on the Holy Mountain under obedience of the Holy Elder Nectarios.

Under Elder Nectarios watchful eye George excelled in all the aspects of ascetism. His spiritual brothers marvelled at the accomplishments of George, and were all drawn to his holiness. Elder Nectarios acknowledging the spiritual gifts of George wished to bestow upon him the then extremely rare honour of tonsuring him a Great-Schema monk. Therefore on September 26, 1886 he was tonsured and renamed Matthew. This rare and holy honour strengthened Ft. Matthew in the spiritual arena as he delved into the rich beauties of monasticism, perfecting the art of

intense fasting and unceasing mental prayer. He kept himself continually busy, if not with prayer, then with manual labour.

After 7 years on the Holy Mountain, the monastic community of St. Anna's Skete along with Elder Nectarios insisted on the ordination of Ft. Matthew to the rank of Hieromonk. Therefore on July 26, 1893, Elder Necatrios and Ft. Matthew travelled to the Holy Monastery of St. Gregory, where he Matthew was ordained a Hieromonk.

Ft. Matthew possessed nothing that might offer any bodily comfort. His cell also was a reflection of his deep love of monasticism, bereft of any comforts. Only out of necessity would he eat, and even then exercising extreme self control. He began composing ecclesiastical poetry which would inspire and bring tears to its readers. Ft. Matthew was beside himself in a state of ecstasy, shedding tears of compunction, while marvelling at the great mercy and love of God towards man. It is during this time that he became the spiritual father and confessor of the Holy Monastery of Simonopetra, the Great Lavra of St. Athanasios the Athonite and the Holy Skete of Kavsokalivia. His fame began to spread throughout all of the Holy Mountain and Greece, his family of spiritual children continued to grow. Hundreds upon hundreds of people, clergy, monks and laymen alike would travel to see Fr. Matthew or write to him to receive his spiritual pearls of wisdom. It is during this time that those who knew him began calling him "*the Holy Father*" (in Greek "*Agios Pateras*").



The Athonite Monasteries of the Great Lavra of St. Athanasios and Simonopetra

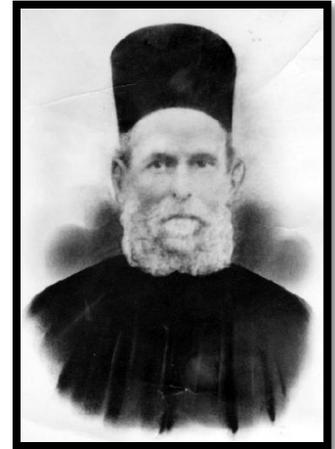
Ft. Matthew laboured intensively and faithfully in the mystical vineyard of Christ. His labours were done with the utmost humility all the while glorifying and thanking God. Ft. Matthew became an elected vessel of Divine Grace, living as a flesh bearing Angel, and a treasury of Divine knowledge, love and humility. He toiled in his ascetic labours in such a way so as to not make others envious of him, but instead inspired them to reach for the spiritual heavens. His all-night vigils, continual prayer, and unceasing tears, were a great spiritual inspiration to all, and were only exceeded by his incredible humility. Ft. Matthew had completely submerged himself into the monastic angelic life, partaking of all of the spiritual fruits which the Holy

Mountain offered. As a soldier is trained for battle, the same way Ft. Matthew trained himself through the mercy of God, to be a spiritual soldier for Christ.

A PREACHER THROUGHOUT GREECE

Several Orthodox communities throughout Greece petitioned the Sacred Community of Mount Athos for spiritual help. The Sacred Community of Mount Athos therefore elected and blessed their most prized spiritual athlete, Hieromonk Matthew to travel throughout Greece to preach the Divine Word. In 1910, Ft. Matthew made an open krisis to Prince Constantine (later King Constantine I), for his marriage to the non Orthodox German Princess Sophia. For this reason he was exiled to the Peloponnesus region of Greece.

St. Matthew arrived in Nafplion (a town in Peloponnese, first capital of Greece) on the feast of the Sunday of All-Saints. Upon his arrival, he served an all night vigil, in a remote church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. To this day there are 2 icons at this church which he had painted. They are the icons of the Holy Napkin and the Evangelist Matthew, many still travel great distances to venerate these holy icons, which are signed '*Hieromonk Matthew, Athonite, 1910*'. While in Nafplion, Ft. Matthew made his residence at the Holy Monastery of the Life Giving Spring (in Greek "*Agia Moni*"). Using this as his spiritual base, he travelled the Peloponnese region spreading the word of God, confessing the people, and renewing their faith, while occasionally returning to the Monastery to replenish his strength through intense prayer and fasting. It is during this time that Ft. Matthew became the spiritual father and confessor of the historic Pantanassa Convent in Mystra (the Byzantine capital of the Peloponnese Despotat in 14th c.). That period the monastery was under Abbess Paisia Giatrakos (+ 1945).



Saint Matthew in 1910.

As the fame of Ft. Matthew spread through the region, more and more people would descend on the Monastery of the Life Giving Spring to partake of the all-night Vigils he served. Many would travel for great distances to be confessed by and communed by the hand of "*the Holy Father*". He was a great lighthouse at a time spiritual darkness that inspired many to live a life pleasing to God. Ft. Matthew had a deep connection to the people of the region, as well as a great love for the area itself; this is why he had wanted to establish a monastery in the region, but to due to various circumstances to no avail. The generation in that region that partook of the holiness of Ft. Matthew never forgot his face, and considered his stay to be a blessing from God.

FT. MATTHEW AND SAINT NECTARIOS OF PENTAPOLIS

Still in 1910, Ft. Matthew travelled to Athens, and went to the Rizzarios Ecclesiastical School, so as to meet its Dean, Metrop. Nectarios of Pentapolis (Patriarchate of Alexandria). Ft. Matthew, who in his youth had lived and worked in Alexandria, had heard of the holiness of Bishop Nectarios, as well as the persecution that he suffered. The two holy servants of Christ were immediately drawn to each other in spiritual friendship. Bishop Nectarios was extremely impressed with Ft. Matthew's zeal, missionary work, and Ortho-praxis. He confided in Ft. Matthew about the difficulties he had faced in Egypt, as well as his worries about the direction the Hierarchs of the Church were heading. Bishop Nectarios, a holy clairvoyant, felt the holiness of his spiritual friend Ft. Matthew and decided to raised him to the rank of Archimandrite, adding to that, he gave Ft. Matthew his Epigonation, as a blessing. The Epigonation can to this

day be venerated at the Keratea Convent. Bishop Nectarios and Archimandrite Matthew continued a deep spiritual relationship and continually exchanged letters and maintained contact until Bishop Nectarios's repose, in 1920.

NOTE: *Shortly after the repose of Saint Nectarios of Pentapolis, Ft. Matthew found himself on Mount Athos at the St. Menas the Great-martyr Hermitage, in the Athonite desert, with a small brotherhood of monks. A discussion began among the monks in regards to the Sainthood of Bishop Nectarios of Pentapolis. Ft. Matthew asked the brotherhood to pray and he himself went out to the desert to pray alone. When he returned to the hermitage in the morning, he said "Yes, he is a Saint" and gave his name to one of his monks (the late Monk Nektarios, since 1952 Bishop of Bresthena Matthew II, + 1963). From that time Saint Nectarios took his position in the Hagiologion of the Genuine Orthodox Church, years before his official declaration by the new calendarist Ecumenical Patriarchate.*

A SECOND PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

After Ft. Matthew's visit to the Rizzarios Ecclesiastical School in Athens, he returned to Nafplion. Unfortunately Ft. Matthew fell prey to the jealousy of the local priest who slandered him to the local Metropolitan. These jealous Priests resented the fact that hundreds of laity flocked to the monastery that Ft. Matthew resided in, to be confessed by him, and partake of his holiness. Therefore, Ft. Matthew, being of extreme humility returned to the Holy Mountain so as to avoid any scandal.

In 1911, Ft. Matthew decided to make a second pilgrimage to the Holy Land. En route to the Holy Land he made a brief stop in Constantinople and Smyrna. Upon arriving in Constantinople, he proceeded to the offices of the Ecumenical Patriarch, to receive a blessing to preach in the region. After receiving this blessing, he travelled throughout Asia Minor giving spiritual strength to the persecuted Orthodox communities. These Orthodox communities marvelled at Ft. Matthew's fiery preaching and divine zeal, drawing great strength and guidance from him.

In July of 1911, Ft. Matthew arrived in Jerusalem. He immediately proceeded to the Offices of the Jerusalem Patriarch to receive a blessing to preach in the surrounding areas. Patriarch Damianos received Ft. Matthew with great joy as the fame of 'the Holy Father' had spread as far as the Holy Land. Patriarch Damianos assigned Ft. Matthew to serve at the most Holy Church of the Resurrection of Christ. Ft. Matthew, having heard of the strict monastic order of the nearby Holy Monastery of St. Savvas, wished to partake of the famed angelic life this monastery had become accustomed to. Upon his arrival at the monastery, a great joy filled his heart, his soul leaped to new bounds and he received a God given tranquility which set the stage for a spiritual blossoming. During his time at the monastery Ft. Matthew painted a beautiful icon of the Holy Napkin. He continued writing to his spiritual children never allowing even one letter to go unanswered. The monks of the monastery marvelled at the spiritual feats of Ft. Matthew and his continual pushing of himself to glorify God through his Ortho-Praxis. His monastic life soared with the eagles, while he attained to new heights within the monastic arena.



The Holy relics of Saint Catherine.

Ft. Matthew, prior to leaving the Holy Land, received a divine inclination to venerate the holy relics of Saint Catherine the Martyr. Upon arriving at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Father Matthew was overwhelmed with tears as he approached the relics of Saint Catherine. As he humbly venerated the Holy Relics, he felt a divine strength possess him, as if to replenish him to continue his holy service to Christ and the Orthodox Church. He was so inspired by this event that he painted an icon of the Holy Napkin which he left as a gift at the Monastery. Father Matthew

had visited the Holy Land for a total of 14 months, from July 1911 until September 1912, continuously in prayer, serving, confessing, communing, painting icons, and spreading the Word of God. In September of 1912, he returned to Mount Athos to distribute the spiritual pearls he had gathered in the Holy Land to his monastic brothers and spiritual children.

FT. MATTHEW RETURNS TO MOUNT ATHOS

Upon his arrival on Mount Athos, he returned to his cell in the Holy Monastery of Simonopetra. Inspired by his experiences throughout the Holy Land, Ft. Matthew began pushing himself harder in the monastic arena. He began wearing chains under his monastic wear so that any form of comfort would be foreign to him. He performed all-night vigils continually, tying ropes and chains underneath his arms and around his body suspending himself upright so as to prevent falling asleep. For 3 straight years Ft. Matthew submerged himself in a strict monastic rule, continuously studying the writings of the Holy Fathers, all the while holding the position of spiritual father and confessor of the Holy Monastery of Simonopetra.

In 1916, Simonopetras' Community elected Ft. Matthew to serve at the Metohion of the Ascension, in Athens. Upon arriving he was greeted by the Elder Father Panaretos, a Hieromonk (the two deeply respected each other and grew to be great friends). Ft. Matthew brought with him the Ortho-Praxis he had lived all his life, which inspired many within the Church. His homilies became legendary, his spiritual care healing all, attendance continued to grow at the church until there was no room within the church and people would wait outside just to catch a glimpse and receive a blessing from '*the Holy Father Matthew*'

In 1923, after serving the Orthodox communities of Athens for several years, Ft. Matthew again returned to Mount Athos. Upon his return to Mount Athos, he wished to find a place of solitude, so as to progress in the spiritual battle and to receive divine spiritual strength through intense prayer and fasting. After praying to Christ and the Theotokos to find a suitable dwelling, his prayers were answered when he found such a place just outside of the Great Lavra Monastery of St. Athanasios. It is here that Ft. Matthew built a hut; below this hut was a cave where he toiled in his ascetic labours day and night. The cave offered no protection against the intense heat of the day or the rigid cold of the night, but yet these discomforts were not enough for Ft. Matthew. He again began wearing chains under his monastic garb, partaking of dry bread and water only once a week, while receiving his divine sustenance from the Holy

Mysteries of Christ. He truly was living the angelic life, all the while delving deeper and deeper into a spiritual euphoria. While in his cave Ft. Matthew painted a beautiful Holy Icon of St. Anna, which today can be venerated at the Monastery of Keratea. Ft. Matthew also had a deep spiritual reverence for St. Menas the Great-Martyr. He wished to honour the Saint by building a chapel dedicated to him. Therefore with the help of one of his spiritual children, he built a beautiful little chapel which was dedicated to St. Menas.



Above: To the left: a picture of the cave Ft. Matthew resided in. To the right: a picture of the chapel of St. Menas the Great Martyr which Ft. Matthew built.

FT. MATTHEW LEADS THE HOLY STRUGGLE OF THE GENUINE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

In 1924, through freemasonic influence, for the benefit of synchronizing the pan-heresy of Ecumenism, the Ecumenical Patriarch followed by the Church of Greece uncanonically adopted the New Calendar. Through this adoption of the New Calendar, the Church of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarch created a schism within the Orthodox Church, and fell under the numerous Anathemas against the New Calendar. Leading up to the calendar change, the Government had banned all newspapers from being delivered to the Holy Mountain. This was done so as to keep the zealots of the Holy Mountain “*in the dark*” as to the purposed calendar change and ecumenist behaviour of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The zealot monks of Mount Athos upon learning of the ecumenist apostasies and New Calendar adoption of the EP and Church of Greece, immediately severed communion with the innovating Hierarchs, and formed “*The Sacred League of the Zealot Monks*”. Likewise various pious Orthodox communities throughout Greece consisting of clergy and laity severed communion with the new calendarists and continued serving on the Orthodox ecclesiastical “*old calendar.*” As the “*old calendarists*” were left without a Hierarchy, they commemorated “*every Orthodox Bishop*” a petition which is completely canonical in times of apostasy, heresy and schism. Although the new calendarists and those with them had fallen into schism, the old

calendarists placed their faith within our Lord's word which assures us the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Church. Although the "old calendarists" were not specifically aware of their names, there were rightly confessing Orthodox Hierarchs outside of Greece which in no way were in communion with the new calendarists or those with them. Therefore by commemorating "every Orthodox Bishop", the "old calendarists" were in fact commemorating these rightly confessing Orthodox Hierarchs.

In 1926, the "old calendarists" petitioned Ft. Matthew and other Zealot Athonite Elders to take leadership of their Holy Struggle. The "old calendarists" sent Alexandros Simeonidis to the Holy Mountain to plead with Ft. Matthew and return with him to Athens as quickly as possible. Ft.



Saint Matthew leading a GOC procession in 1926

Matthew therefore in 1926 returned to Athens, where he was handed leadership over the "old calendarists". The "old calendarists" began referring to themselves as Genuine Orthodox Christians, so as to differentiate themselves from these schismatic new Calendar counterparts. Under Ft. Matthew's care, the faithful of the GOC were given strength, their faith was solidified, and their focus unified towards the glorification of the Holy Trinity. The GOC under him multiplied to

over 800 communities throughout Greece. Ft. Matthew travelled throughout Greece building churches, and educating the faithful as to the schism of the new calendarists and the dangers of the anathematized new calendar.

FT. MATTHEW ESTABLISHES THE MONASTERIES OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS IN KERATEA AND THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION IN KOUVARAS

In 1927, Ft. Matthew received a divine revelation which inspired him to build, with the help of his spiritual daughter Mariam and 6 other novices, the Convent of the Entry of the Holy Theotokos to the Temple, near the village of Keratea, Attica. As they travelled the region searching for appropriate grounds for the Convent, they passed by the "kaki thalassa" (in English "evil sea"). This body of water off the east coast of Greece had been given this name due to its volatile and loud crashing waves. Ft. Matthew began praying to God, and then made the sign of the Cross over the body of water. To the amazement of those with him, the sea became calm, and to this day is still an extremely calm body of water in contradiction to its name. A short distance from the "evil sea" on the nearby hills is where Ft. Matthew founded the Convent. The aforementioned Mariam went on to be the first Abbess of the Convent. Under Ft. Matthew's spiritual guidance and Abbess Mariam's watchful eye, the population of the Convent in Keratea rapidly grew, at its peak housing over 400 nuns (in '40).

The Holy Convent did not escape the persecution of the new calendarists. At the behest of the new calendarists, the State Police made daily "visits" to the Convent. During these "visits" they

would interfere with the Convents construction, halt supply deliveries, prevent pilgrims from visiting, as well as trying to prevent the serving of Divine Liturgy. The new calendarists persecuted the GOC with a barbarous tyranny. Although the Convent faced much adversity, by the grace of God and under Ft. Matthew's care, those at the Convent faced the persecution with great bravery and zeal. Many members of the GOC in Athens were forced to scatter to the surrounding mountains, living in caves to escape imprisonment. The Convent offered shelter and safety to those who were hunted by the State Police for merely adhering to the traditions of the Orthodox Church.



Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos in Keratea.

As the fame of the Convent grew, it became a place of pilgrimage. On one occasion it was visited by a barren woman who for some time had been trying to become pregnant. This woman had heard of Ft. Matthew's holiness, and that he had performed miracles. Upon meeting the barren woman, and hearing her humble pleas, he read a prayer over her and told her to drink of the water from the spring of the monastery. The woman did as she was told and left. A little over a month later she returned to the Convent frantic with joy. She informed everyone that she and her husband had conceived. When word began to travel of this wonderful miracle, barren women began to flock to the Convent pleading for help. Ft. Matthew would read the same prayer over these women and direct them to drink of the water of the spring, and woman after woman would return some time after to inform the Convent that they indeed had conceived. For this reason a chapel (and later, in 1948, a large church) dedicated to the Life Giving Spring of the Most Holy Theotokos was built over the spring.

Over the next few years, pious men, spiritual children of Ft. Matthew, began joining him; month after month the number of them grew, eventually outgrowing the poor housing capabilities outside the Convent of the Holy Theotokos. So in 1934, he founded the Transfiguration Monastery at the village of Kouvara. The first chapel of the new monastery was dedicating to the Prophet Elias. The monastery grew to a point of over 170 residents.

Through Ft. Matthew's great pastoral care, the Genuine Orthodox Communities of Greece continued to grow. He continued to preach throughout Greece about the dangers of the anathematized New Calendar and Freemasonry, all the while teaching the saving grace of the Orthodox Church. This greatly troubled the new calendarists, who thought that by this point the Genuine Orthodox Church would have disintegrated. They however did not foresee the fiery preaching and holy zeal of the servant of God Ft. Matthew. The new calendarist State Church enraged at the prosperity of the GOC, continued in its persecution of the old calendarists by way of among other things, seizing churches and private properties, beatings, jailing, and segregation within the school systems. The laity of the GOC humbly endured all of this persecution, as they had been given inspiration by Ft. Matthew to suffer with joy when suffering for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Orthodox Church. All the laity of the GOC greatly loved and respected Ft. Matthew, as they realized he had given his very existence over to serving them, the Holy Orthodox Church, and God.

THE CONSECRATION OF SAINT MATTHEW TO THE HIERARCHY

In 1935, three Hierarchs of the new calendarist State Church of Greece (Metropolitans Germanos of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Zakynthos, together with the retired former Metropolitan of Florina Chrysostom) left the new calendarist schism and expressed their desire to join the GOC. The three Hierarchs then openly read their confession of faith which declared the new calendarists schismatic. This was witnessed by over 25,000 faithful at the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos in Kolonos, Athens. Because the consecrations of Bishop Germanus of Demetrias (in 1907 by Hierarchs of the Church of Greece) and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina (in 1908 by Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarch) took place prior to the 1924 new calendarist schism, their consecrations were valid. It was by this confession of faith, which declared the new calendarists completely schismatic, that the two Hierarchs were received into communion by the GOC with whatever level of Priesthood they had prior to their loss of grace in 1924 when they fell into schism through the New Calendar innovation. Immediately after this, on the same day, Metropolitans Germanos and Chrysostomos, read a cheirothesia on Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, because he had been consecrated Bishop after the Schism of 1924.

Following this, Metropolitan Germanos of Demetrias became the canonical active Bishop of the G.O.C. He thus assumed the position of President and first-hierarch of the G.O.C. and Ft. Matthew humbly handed the 800 parishes into Metropolitan Germanos's care. The three Hierarchs (the first Holy Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece), then proceeded in consecrating 4 more Bishops. These consecrations took place at the chapel of the Virgin Martyr Marina, within the Holy Convent of the Entry of the Theotokos, at Keratea, which St. Matthew had founded. The newly consecrated Bishops and the dates they were consecrated were: Germanus of the Cyclades on May 23(o/s), Christopher of Megara on May 24(o/s), Polycarp of Diavlia on May 25(o/s), and Matthew of Bresthena on May 26(o/s). These consecrations were officially announced via an Encyclical which specifically praised the spiritual labours of Ft. Matthew:

“Thus this past Wednesday (May 23, 1935, Orthodox Calendar) the All-righteous Archimandrite Germanus Varykopoulos was elected and consecrated as Bishop of the Cyclades. On Thursday the Archimandrite and Military Dean, Christopher Chatzis, was elected and consecrated canonically as Bishop of Megaris, being relieved from the headquarters of the Archdiocese of Athens. On Friday, Archimandrite Polycarp Liosis, Parish Priest and Preacher of the Parish of the Presentation of Christ in Piraeus, was elected and canonically consecrated as Bishop of the once shining in days of old Diocese of Diaulia.

On the next day, the Holy Synod gathered under the Presidency of the Most Eminent Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius, and taking into account the very honourable services which the following has offered and continues to offer for the sake of the Sacred Struggle, whom we select for the elevation of Orthodoxy and pacification of the Church, the All-righteous Kathegumen of the Holy Monastery of Keratea, Hieromonk Matthew Karpathakis, graduate of the Theological School of the Holy Cross, and desiring on the one hand that he continue his most honourable services, and on the other hand so that he may be encouraged and strengthened even more in this Orthodox Struggle, [the Holy Synod] unanimously elected and canonically consecrated him as Bishop of the once shining in days of old Diocese

of Bresthena..."

- + Metropolitan Germanus of Dimitridos
- + Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina retired
- + Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos"

Therefore after the consecrations, the GOC Hierarchy consisted of seven Bishops, they were: Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius, Chrysostomos former of Florina, Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, Germanos of Cyclades, Christopher of Megara, Polycarp of Diavlia, and Matthew of Bresthena. All of the Bishops received their ruling diocesan titles and were given different parts of Greece to shepherd. Bishop Matthew of Bresthena was commemorated in the entire Peloponnese region, as well as in Crete, his homeland. He was also commemorated in the three parishes he founded in Athens as well as in the Keratea Convent and Kouvara Monastery in Eastern Attica region. Bishop Matthew was given the Diocese of Bresthena due to its close proximity to the Convent of Pantanassa, located in the Castle of Mistras, in the region of Lakonia. Since 1910, Bishop Matthew had been the spiritual father of this monastery.

Following the GOC consecrations, the new calendarists had the GOC Hierarchy arrested and put on trial. While awaiting trial, the GOC Hierarchy were subject to intense pressure and threats to join the New Calendar State Church. Bishop Matthew valiantly confessed the truth all throughout this "*trial*"; those that heard him were in awe of his God given zeal. Once they were put on trial, all were "*defrocked*" and the consecrations of 1935 deemed invalid by the new calendarists. Metropolitan Chrysostom of Zakynthos, Bishops Christopher of Megara and Polycarp of Diavlia, betrayed the GOC, and rejoined the new calendarists. Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius, Chrysostomos formerly of Florina, and Bishop Germanus of Cyclades were exiled to various monasteries throughout Greece. Bishop Matthew of Bresthena was sentenced to house arrest due to health issues and advanced age and was confined to his Monastery by armed guards. Prior to their exile and house arrest the GOC Hierarchy issued a Pastoral Encyclical which again proclaimed the new calendarists as schismatics and void of grace in their "*mysterics*".

While under house arrest Bishop Matthew carved a small "*cave*" into the wall in his cell. He hid this "*cave*" with a very large icon that was placed in front of it. It was in this "*cave*" that he would retire to for days on end without food or water, so as to submit himself to prayer undisturbed, hidden behind the icon. No one would know where he had gone. The nuns of the monastery worried for him, while the armed guards feared that he escaped.

In 1937, Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius, Chrysostomos formerly of Florina, and Bishop Germanus of Cyclades were allowed to return from exile. Bishop Matthew rejoiced as he was reunited with his fellow Hierarchs. Unfortunately this joy was short lived. Shortly after their return, Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina began preaching a heretical theory that the new calendarists were not actually schismatic put only "*potentially*" schismatic, and that the new calendarist mysterics were valid. This completely contradicted the confession of faith which these 2 Hierarchs helped compose and both signed. That very confession of faith was the foundation of these Hierarchs being received into the GOC and given leadership of it. Being that they now betrayed that very confession of faith, they had

voided the prerequisites required for reception into the GOC, and for them to be handed leadership over it. It was a complete betrayal of the confession of faith which allowed them to be received in the GOC.

These irresponsible actions caused great confusion and protest within the GOC, and the new calendarists capitalized on this state of discord and intensified their persecution of the old calendarists further weakening the GOC. Bishop Matthew concerned with the salvation and well being of his flock, immediately sent an epistle to Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina asking that they condemn this new and unorthodox theory, or at the very least clarify their positions. This epistle was unfortunately completely ignored. Therefore Bishop Matthew sent an epistle pleading for a conveying of a council so as to condemn this blasphemous theory. Again this epistle was completely ignored, and Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina continued in their preaching of their heresy. Therefore Bishop Matthew sent a final epistle severing communion with them for their preaching of ecclesiological heresy. This epistle was followed shortly thereafter by another epistle written by Bishop Germanus of Cyclades, who also severed communion with Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina for the preaching of their ecclesiological heresy.

THE MIRACLE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE SKY OF CRETE (1937)

On September 14(o/s) 1937, the GOC Church of Crete, which was under the omophorion of Bishop Matthew, had gathered at the church of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross in Mount Kophinas, for an all-night vigil on the occasion of the Feast of the Exultation of the Cross. During the vigil, to the amazement of all, the sign of the precious Cross appeared in the sky, much like it did in 1925. Bishop Matthew's confessing of the Genuine Orthodox faith was a lighthouse among the spiritual darkness and confusion which was created by the treacherous former Hierarchy of the GOC. Likewise this miracle was a lighthouse directing those that were in stasis or confusion to go under the omophorion of the right confessing Hierarch of the GOC, Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

The miracle of the appearance of the Holy Cross in the sky in Crete caused many to leave Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina and join Bishop Matthew of Bresthena. Metropolitan Chrysostomos formerly of Florina became enraged at this, and began by any means possible to slander and persecute Bishop Matthew. He went so far as to write a letter of petition to the Ministry of Religion in Greece asking for the persecution of Bishop Matthew of Bresthena and Germanus of Cyclades and that the decision of the new calendarists regarding the calendar be made obligatory to everyone. The Minister of Religion along with the New Calendar State Church gladly accommodated Metropolitan Chrysostomos formerly of Florina request. Therefore in March of 1938, Bishops Matthew of Bresthena and Germanus of Cyclades were tried at the State Court in Chalkis. Bishop Matthew, a true zealot of Christ, boldly confessed the truth, never compromising the Orthodox confession of faith. But to the dismay and scandal of many, Bishop Germanus of Cyclades betrayed the faith by stating: *"I am not an Archpastor, since I have ceased to be that after I had been deposed."* (Referring to his pseudo and uncanonical deposition in 1935 by the new calendarists prior to his exile.)



Bishop Germanus of Cyclades behaviour set off a round of protests throughout Greece among the faithful of the Genuine Orthodox Church. But this scandalous behaviour was overshadowed by the genuine confession of faith given by Bishop Matthew of Bresthena. Word of the uncompromising zeal that Bishop Matthew showed in the trial began to spread throughout the Genuine Orthodox communities of Greece. The Clergy, monastics, and laity drew great strength and inspiration on hearing of Bishop Matthew's bold confession. They began wearing the persecution against them by the new calendarists for the sake of the Church as a badge of honour, following the example of Bishop Matthew of Bresthena.

Much like St. Mark of Ephesus, Bishop Matthew of Bresthena, even under intense pressure and persecution from the State and from his current and former brother Hierarchs, never compromised the Orthodox confession of Faith. The new calendarists marvelled at the zeal of Bishop Matthew and sent wave after wave of persecution against him, hoping that he would follow the example of the other former Hierarchs of the GOC, and compromise. But Bishop Matthew through his zeal, like a fortress encompassed the communities of the GOC, and protected their confession of faith from the heretical assaults of the treacherous new calendarists and their "old calendar" accomplices. Bishop Matthew had toiled with these Genuine Orthodox Christians since the Calendar change. They were not just faces or names to him, but were his spiritual children who had suffered greatly for their faith. Bishop Matthew had witnessed first-hand the persecution which the GOC had suffered from the very beginning. The torture, the beatings, the jailing, and vandalism which the GOC suffered at the hands of the new calendarists, he had witnessed first-hand. These people he knew by name, he had been to their homes and eaten with them, he had prayed with them, and blessed them. Not only were the laity and clergy of the GOC his spiritual children, they were his brothers and sisters in the Holy Struggle, and by no means, no matter how much persecution he suffered, he would never betray them or the Orthodox Church.



Bishop Germanus of Cyclades continued in his erratic and inconsistent behaviour. Several of his clergy and laity became concerned after reading some of Bishop Germanus of Cyclades encyclicals, and hearing him preach. It was brought to Bishop Matthew's attention that Bishop Germanus was preaching several anti-traditional beliefs. Bishop Matthew wrote an epistle to Bishop Germanus asking him to repent of these anti-traditional and blasphemous beliefs. Bishop Germanus of Cyclades ignored the epistle but responded by beginning to slander Bishop Matthew and refusing to serve with him. Bishop Germanus of Cyclades then continued in his blasphemy by proclaiming that he did not sever communion with Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrius and Chrysostomos formerly of Florina over matters of faith. To the

disappointment of the GOC, Bishop Germanus of Cyclades did not repent but continued on his destructive path, forcing the GOC to sever communion with him. The majority of his clergy and laity left Bishop Germanus of Cyclades and were received under the omophorion of Bishop Matthew of Bresthena. In 1948, Bishop Germanus of Cyclades was arrested and sentenced to a 2 year prison sentence for being a "threat to national security". This was due to Bishop Germanus of Cyclades support of left wing political parties which were trying to overthrow the ruling government.

THE CONSECRATIONS OF 1948

In 1945, the clergy and laity of the GOC began petitioning Bishop Matthew of Bresthena to consecrate Bishops on his own and to re-form the Synod of Bishops. Bishop Matthew while realizing the urgent need for consecrations so as to insure the continuation of the Apostolic Succession of the Genuine Orthodox Church, wished to explore every available option before exercising an economia of the Holy Canons and proceeding with consecrations by himself. Therefore Bishop Matthew in extreme humility pleaded but to no avail with Metropolitan Chrysostomos formerly of Florina to return to the GOC ecclesiology and to assist in consecrations. Metropolitan Chrysostomos formerly of Florina refused to repent of his ecclesiastical heresy as well as refusing to participate in consecrations.

Therefore within Greece, Bishop Matthew of Bresthena was the only Hierarch that held fast to the GOC 1935 confession of faith, and the only Hierarch that believed the Apostolic Succession of the GOC should continue. Bishop Matthew therefore attempted to contact Hierarchs from outside of Greece. Several Hierarchs (according to Archbishop Andreas in Poland), expressed their willingness to participate in consecrations with Bishop Matthew, and gave their blessings for them, but due to various political reasons within their countries of residence they were not able to obtain travelling visas.

Bishop Matthew sent one last appeal dated July 3, 1948, to Metropolitan Chrysostomos formerly of Florina, pleading for a union based on a genuine Orthodox confession of faith, and for his assistance in performing consecrations. Metropolitan Chrysostomos in 1945 publicly swore to the new calendarists that he and those with him would never participate in consecrations. But Bishop Matthew had hope that with the passage of a few years, and with the several humble epistles sent by him, that Metropolitan Chrysostomos would have heeded to the desperate pleas of the GOC and repented of his heresy and his uncanonical refusal to participate in consecrations. But unfortunately Bishop Matthew's pleas fell on deaf ears. Metropolitan Chrysostomos sent an epistle dated July 6th 1948 back to Bishop Matthew, in which he stated that the issue of consecrations was a finished one, and that he would not participate in any consecrations.

Having exhausted every possible option, the Genuine Orthodox Church called an extraordinary clergy-laity meeting. This council discussed the only option which was left to the GOC, Bishop Matthew performing consecrations by himself. Hence, on August 26, 1948, a clergy-laity meeting of the "Matthewite" Synod decided that:

"...Our most Reverend Bishop Matthew of Bresthena should proceed to the consecration of new bishops, insofar as the other pseudo-bishops of the True Orthodox Christians neither understand nor confess

Orthodoxy, nor unite with us, nor even agree to make consecrations. We grant him the authority to proceed both to the election of people and to their immediate consecration, in accordance with the divine and sacred canons and the opinions of our canon law experts, and in accordance with the practice of the whole Church of Christ, which has accepted, in case of necessity (as is the case today) such an act of economia [otherwise known as "leniency" or "dispensation"], as we have just heard from our Chancellor, Archpriest Eugene (Tombros), who explained the validity of the consecration of one Bishop by one Bishop alone in accordance with the law of our Orthodox Church..."

Therefore Bishop Matthew on September 6(o/s) 1948 exercised an economia of the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church by consecrating (and renaming) the Athonite Archimandrite Gideon (former Abbot of Xenophontos' Monastery in Mount Athos), as Bishop Spyridon of Trimythus. (The Genuine Orthodox Church of Cyprus had been petitioning Bishop Matthew to consecrate a Bishop for Cyprus since 1946. The local Canons of Cyprus permit the election of a Hierarchy by the clergy and faithful in times of need. All of the hierarchy within Cyprus had apostatized to the New Calendar, so there was no hierarchy in Cyprus that could assist with the election or consecration). The consecration of Bishop Spyridon took place at the Transfiguration Monastery of Kouvara, in the Chapel of the Prophet Elias. In the days following the consecration of Bishop Spyridon, Bishop Matthew together with him consecrated Hieromonk Andreas (brother of Transfiguration Monastery) as Bishop of Patras on September 13 (o/s). Then on Sept 20(o/s) the Hieromonk Dimitrios (also brother of Transfiguration Monastery) was consecrated as Bishop of Thessalonica. Then on September 27(o/s) the Hieromonk Kallistus (brother of Annunciation Monastery at Corinth) was consecrated as Bishop of Corinth.



From L to R: Bishops Dimitrios of Thessalonica, Spyridon of Trimythus, Andreas of Patras and Kallistus of Corinth.

On September 15 (o/s) 1949, the Holy Synod unanimously elected and enthroned Bishop Matthew of Bresthena as the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece of the Genuine Orthodox Church. What joy the Genuine Orthodox Church felt seeing their Elder, "the Holy Father" Matthew enthroned as Archbishop of Athens and all Greece. I ask the reader to imagine themselves as the laity in 1948-49, imagine the anguish these people felt having suffered so much for the Orthodox faith, having their pleas for consecrations go unanswered for so long. Imagine how the thoughts swirled in their minds that they would be left orphaned without a Hierarchy. Now imagine the joyous occasion of seeing the Apostolic Succession of their Church safeguarded by God's grace by the man who had struggled with them shoulder to shoulder from the very beginning. And then to see him enthroned as the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece. This glorious and historic occasion was and is an inspiration and a miracle, an answer to their prayers to all who were and are Genuine Orthodox Christians.

Afterwards the other 4 Bishops were elevated to the rank of Metropolitans. The joyous occasion was proclaimed through an encyclical which was distributed throughout the "Kingdom of Greece" and abroad. Communities of the GOC all throughout Greece rejoiced, and gave praise

to God. What a historic sight to behold, Archbishop Matthew of Athens and all Greece, Metropolitans Spyridon of Trimythus, Andreas of Patras, Demetrios of Thessalonica and Callistos of Corinth, the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church.

The Holy Synod in November of 1949, held an extraordinary council which declared an Anathema against one of the many enemies of Orthodoxy, Freemasonry. The clergy and laity marvelled at the zeal of their new Hierarchs as they all held firm to the Orthodox confession of faith, even under intense persecution. A few months earlier, on the Feast of Theophany 1949, Archbishop Matthew led a beautiful procession, assisted by Bishops Demetrios of Thessalonica and Callistos of Corinth. The faithful drew great strength from this Holy and joyous event. As mentioned, the consecrations performed by Bishop Matthew gave great spiritual strength and stability to the Genuine Orthodox Church. Genuine Orthodox Churches began to be built, new communities throughout Greece were established, and the membership of the Church grew. But the consecrations, much like the Genuine Orthodox Church itself were subject to resentment and persecution by the new calendarists and their "Old Calendar" accomplices. The new calendarists had been assured by the other "old calendar factions" that they would not participate in consecrations of Hierarchs. Without consecrations to replenish the need for Hierarchs, the new calendarists and other "old calendar factions" believed that the Apostolic Succession of the Genuine Orthodox Church would eventually cease to exist, and the GOC clergy and laity would be forced to submit to the new calendarists. The enemies of the GOC gnashed their teeth and their blood boiled with anger as their satanic plan to destroy the Genuine Orthodox Church was by God's grace foiled by the heroic efforts of Bishop Matthew. With the holy and historic consecrations, the Hierarchy of the Genuine Orthodox Church was replenished, and its Apostolic Succession safeguarded.

THE REPOSE OF ARCHBISHOP MATTHEW (14.5.1950)

The time approached for Archbishop Matthew to leave this temporal life and partake of the everlasting Glory of God. He had fallen sick and was bed ridden. With great humility and gratitude he praised God continually for everything, never complaining of the pain caused by his sickness. He, even as he lay on his deathbed, showed no concern for himself, but instead only showed concern for the Holy Orthodox Church. He had the Hierarchs and clergy gather and exhorted them to serve and protect the Orthodox Church with all their being. He then gave his blessing to all that came to see him.

On Saturday May 14, 1950, on the feast of Pentecost, Archbishop Matthew, the humble servant of God, at the age of 89 years old, surrendered his holy soul into the hands of the Lord. Hierarchs, clergy, monastics and laity hurried to view and venerate the body of St. Matthew the New-Confessor which begat a heavenly aura. All cried



The newly reposed relics of Saint Matthew the New Confessor.

and lamented having been deprived of their Holy Archbishop and Shepherd. As word spread throughout Greece that Archbishop Matthew had reposed in the Lord, thousands of people descended upon the monastery so as to pay their respects to him. All of the True Orthodox monasteries and churches tolled their bells from the day of his repose to the day of his burial, in respect for St. Matthew. Thousands upon thousands of letters and flowers were sent to the monastery as word spread outside of Greece about his repose. His spiritual children from around the world traveled great distance so as to pay their respects to their Spiritual Father.

In preparation for the funeral the monastery was draped in complete humility. But our Lord and Saviour glorifies his Saints, and therefore the monastery although decorated in humility, glowed with a royal splendour. Three days later the funeral for St. Matthew the New-Confessor was held. Hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and laity descended upon the monastery for the funeral, which turned into an enormous procession. As the funeral was in the summer, and in those days they did not have refrigeration for the deceased, many worried that the body of



The myrrh flowing relics of Saint Matthew the New Confessor being prepared for burial.

Archbishop Matthew would stink or start to decompose. But as mentioned before, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ glorifies His Saints. Even after several days of intense heat, the body of St. Matthew did not begin to smell or decompose at all. In fact, as St. Matthew's body was brought out of the Chapel of Martyr Marina, in the courtyard of the Convent, his body began to exude heavenly fragrant myrrh which abundantly flowed from his feet. All present marvelled at this miracle. Some of the myrrh was collected and distributed as a blessing to all present.

Even after this, St. Matthew's body poured forth the heavenly myrrh, continuing through the burial service. Upon exhuming his Relics some years later the heavenly myrrh continued to pour forth. And still to this day, his Relics pour forth myrrh. This myrrh and his holy and precious Relics have been known to be wonderworking and can be venerated today at the Theotokos Convent in Keratea.

In 1959, the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church under the presidency of Archbishop Agathangelos, uncovered the Holy Relics of St. Matthew the New-Confessor. St. Matthew's relics were found to be fragrant, and myrrh streaming. St. Matthew's relics were then reburied, and a beautiful service was composed for him by the nuns of the Keratea Convent. In 1962, his relics were again uncovered and again found to be fragrant, and myrrh streaming.



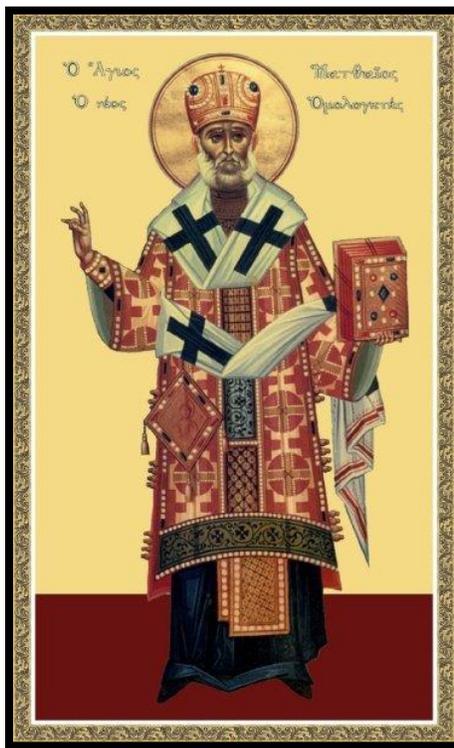
The uncovering of the incorrupt relics of St. Matthew the New Confessor

His entire life had been lived in complete service to God and the Orthodox Church. St. Matthew had served as the spiritual leader of the GOC for 9 years prior to the return of 3 Hierarchs in 1935. It is under St. Matthew's care that the GOC experienced its most prosperous time, growing to over 800 communities throughout Greece. He toiled and laboured establishing these communities, building dozens upon dozens of churches as well as several monasteries. He never in his life communed with the schismatic new calendarists, never betrayed the GOC, and never betrayed the GOC confession of faith or his Apostolic Succession.

Although St. Matthew endured many disappointments, betrayals and hardships, his Orthodox confession of faith was never compromised. His monastic labours to this day are revered and looked upon with great admiration and inspiration. His holiness is acknowledged, even by those that betrayed him. He served his spiritual children with all of his being.

We are left with several pieces of his poetry, his inspiring encyclicals and pastoral homilies, the many churches and monasteries he founded, the beautiful icons he painted, and even his holy relics as memories of this holy servant of God. But what greater thing is there to remind us of St. Matthew than the very apostolic succession of the Genuine Orthodox Church. Only through the mercy of God and the holy struggles of this great confessor Matthew did the Apostolic Succession tracing back to the pre schism Church of Greece survive.

St. Matthew the New Confessor fulfilled the main responsibility of a Hierarchy, which is, to pass on the confession of Faith and Apostolic Succession preserved and unchanged. When he did this, a few years later he reposed in the Lord, having protected the Apostolic Succession and Future of the GOC. For having practised every virtue, he was fittingly glorified by God.



SOME OF THE MIRACLES PERFORMED BY ST. MATTHEW

CURING OF A BACK AILMENT

"We were going on holiday to Greece. The day before we left, I suddenly felt a pain in my back. I had slipped a disc. I felt awful. The last time it had happened, I had had to sleep on the carpet in our sitting-room, and could barely move or look after our little son. The doctor came, and I had to walk very straight, without bending, going down through my knees, etc. I had to get my back muscles back into shape again, and it took a long time – about two weeks.

My husband was in ill health, and the next day we had to board the plane. I got out of bed with great pain. I could hardly dress myself. Somehow I had to make it to the airport as I did not want to spoil the holiday for my family. My eldest son and his wife and little son were coming, too. I still don't know how I managed to walk and get on the plane. It was agony. By the time we arrived at the hotel where we were booked in, I was bent over and walking very slowly in great pain. My face showed it. The hotel staff were not very happy to see me in such a state because it seemed as if I were suffering from a terminal illness and this was not very pleasant for the other holiday-makers in the hotel. I had a plank put under my mattress, and my food was brought to me.

Near the hotel was the wonderful women's monastery of the Mother of God in Keratea. I had read about the founder of the monastery, Bishop Matthew, a great wonderworker and confessor of the Orthodox Faith who died in 1950, whose Relics were reported to be fragrant and working miracles of healing. I was convinced that he could help me, so I asked my husband to take me there so as to venerate his skull. My husband hired a car, and he and my son escorted me very slowly to the door of the car. The hotel waiters looked on sympathetically. When we arrived at the monastery, I gingerly got out of the car with great difficulty and in excruciating pain. Supported by two people, I made my way to the little room where the skull was standing on a table in a Bishop's mitre. There was an opening in the mitre on the top of the skull. With great difficulty I stooped to kiss the skull through the opening. Immediately the pain disappeared and I was able to stand up straight! My family was very surprised and delighted. The next day I was playing tennis, which is unheard of for anyone who has just had a slipped disc!

When we returned to the hotel the waiters did not recognize me. I greeted them, but they looked at me as if I were a stranger. "Don't you know who I am?" I asked. "I'm staying here." I felt no pain, and I was walking quickly and upright. They shook their heads in disbelief. I told them what had happened, and as they were all Orthodox believers they had no difficulty in understanding my explanation..."

ST. MATTHEW APPEARS IN A VISION

'After the death of the Holy Father Matthew, I along with the then Bishop of Patras Andreas and the nuns of the Monastery were imprisoned in Kallithea due to the persecution of the un-Orthodox new calendarists. In the same prison there were also political prisoners (communists). A nun, Sister Anna, got sick and the prison staff asked if one of the other nuns could care for her, but no one volunteered. Only a political prisoner had offered her help. This lady had a dream, where a short Elder, who was holding a book was sorting out who was to go to paradise and who was to go to hell. As she neared the Elder, he stopped her and said 'you are for paradise because you are helping my spiritual child, Sister Anna', after which she awoke. Later, during Bishop Andreas visit, she noticed the "konkarda" of the Holy Father Matthew. Immediately she began to exclaim 'that is the Elder from my dream!' The Elder from the dream was in fact St. Matthew the New Confessor. She then gave an Orthodox confession of faith, received a blessing with Holy Myron, and became Orthodox.'

ST. MATTHEW CURES A CHILD ON HER DEATHBED

'A bank officer by the name of Zacharias had a 12 year old daughter that was extremely ill, in fact, near death. Zacharias called the Holy Father and pleaded with him to come read a blessing over his daughter. St. Matthew told the couple that their daughter will get well, but they must dedicate her to the Theotokos, to which they agreed. St. Matthew made the sign of the cross over a glass of water and sprinkled the girl with the blessed water. Immediately the little girl regained consciousness, got up, and was completely healed.'

ST. MATTHEW CURES A PARALYTIC

'A family from Volos, which had a paralyzed member, travelled to the Monastery on a pilgrimage. As their car pulled up, St. Matthew stepped out onto the balcony to see who it was. They family showed him the paralyzed man and pleaded with the Saint for his help. St. Matthew replied, 'only God may make him well', he then made the sign of the Cross over the paralytic, and behold the wonder, the paralytic was cured. All the monks that witnessed this marvel were overcome with emotion and began crying.'

THE APPEARANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

'Four possessed women came to the Monastery and entered the Church while St. Matthew was serving the Divine Liturgy. The demonized women began arguing amongst themselves causing a great disturbance. During the Cherubic Hymn, St. Matthew, came out to cense the people. Suddenly all present felt water sprinkled on them which was from the Life Giving Spring. The possessed women became stiff as boards and silent until the end of the Liturgy. Everyone had assumed that St. Matthew had sprinkled them with the Holy water but in reality during the time of the Cherubic Hymn, the Holy Theotokos had appeared and blessed the Holy Father Matthew, she then took water from the Life Giving Spring and sprinkled the people. The now healed four women when they came to at the end of the Holy Liturgy testified to this.'

ST. MATTHEW EXPELS A DEMON

'Another time, Sister Maria was being held by 5 other nuns to protect her against the physical attacks of the demons. These demons would take Sister Maria into the woods and try to kill her. That particular day, while Divine Liturgy was being served in the chapel of St. Menas, the demons came and took Sister Maria and brought her to the sea to drown her. The nuns immediately notified St. Matthew. St. Matthew then knelt and began to pray to the Lady of Angels the Theotokos, for her to drive the demons out of Sister Maria and return her to him. And behold the wonder! Everyone heard a noise and low and behold who was standing there? Sister Maria, soaked with water up to her neck. She had been in the sea close to being drowned, but through the mercy of the Theotokos and prayers of St. Matthew the New Confessor she was saved.'

ST. MATTHEW HEALS A WOMEN

'There was once a teacher who had a picture of St. Matthew. However she did not believe St. Matthew was a Saint, and threw away the picture. After a while she began having a problem with her vocal cords. Over time, the problem progressed to the point where she could no longer teach. But she never connected her ailment to her throwing out the picture of Saint Matthew. She went to go see a Spiritual Father, who after some questioning, discovered that she had thrown away the picture of Saint Matthew. The Spiritual Father told her about the life of St. Matthew as well as the miracles which he performed, even after his death. She repented of her mistake, and proceeded to the Monastery of Keratea, so as to venerate St. Matthew's tomb. She then drank of the water in the Life Giving Spring, and after a few days her vocal

chords were miraculously cured. What was even a greater miracle was when she returned home after visiting the Monastery in Keratea, the picture which she had thrown away was there.'

THE APPEARANCE OF THE GREAT MARTYR MENAS

'St. Matthew along with a group of monks and laity were travelling to the remote chapel of St. Menas for Divine Liturgy. During the long journey they became lost. St. Matthew began praying to St. Menas to show them the way to his chapel. To the marvel of all, St. Menas appeared riding his horse, and proceeded to show them the way. All marvelled at the great miracle.'

ST. MATTHEW EXPELS A DEMON

'There was a very beautiful woman named Alexandra who was around 22 years old, who was from Theavas. She was at the Monastery in Keratea with her parents and 12 years old sister. Alexandra was possessed by 7 demons 25 days ago. Her parents, being pious Orthodox, seeing their daughter in this condition brought her to the Monastery in Keratea for help. Alexandra screamed continuously day and night. Three nuns had to restrain her as she continuously tried to run towards the steep hills. Satan through Alexandra began yelling and swearing at St. Matthew, her voice so loud that it could be heard throughout the entire Monastery. Satan howled at St. Matthew, saying 'you wrinkled old man, you will become the Patriarch of Constantinople, there are 160 Angels standing over you!! You wrinkled old man, you are gathering all these people here and burning us, you are taking these people from us, they were ours and now you are taking them.' Everyone that witnessed this was terrified. The demon then turned to the faithful and howled 'what are you doing here, you have your own priests in your villages, go away!! We have conquered the whole world, we have conquered half of Mount Athos, and the Archbishop Chrysostomos (new calendarist) is seated to the right of Lucifer! I will be gone in 4 days, Emmanuel will chase me off at his resurrection will I go...' At the time of Liturgy, all became scared because Alexandra refused to enter the Church, and had to be forced in. During the readings of the Exapsalmon and the 12 Gospels, the demons began swearing at St. Matthew. When St. Matthew came to the 87th Psalm, the demon began grinding his teeth, roaring like a wild animal, proclaiming that all the sinners and demons will fall into the dark hole, but the believers will not go with them. St. Matthew rebuked the demon and told him to silence himself which the demon did.'

The possessed girl's family asked St. Matthew what will happen to their daughter. St. Matthew wanting to know how deep their faith was and so asked them what they wanted to happen with their daughter to which they replied they wished for her to be rid of the demon. St. Matthew answered them that 'the Theotokos will rid her of this demon tomorrow'. The next day was Pascha, as Christos Anesti was chanted, the demon began to scream 'I am going but where am I going, I have far to go'. Alexandra was now on the floor convulsing, roaring, and mooing like a cow. She then bit a finger off of her left hand. As St. Matthew approached her, he made the sign of the Cross over her 3 times while proclaiming "Christ is Risen", St. Matthew then commanded the demon, 'depart and go to your father Lucifer'. The girl's body became as dead. St. Matthew instructed that the bells were to be tolled because the girl's soul was freed from the grasp of Satan. He crossed her 3 times and reached out with his right hand and said 'get up Alexandra'. To the wonder of all, Alexandra opened her eyes and stood up, completely healthy. Truly a glorious miracle performed by the Theotokos through the prayers of St. Matthew the New Confessor.'

THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF ST. MATTHEW THE MONASTERY IS FED

'In 1942, the monks of the monastery set out on their boats to fish. After days on the sea they had caught nothing. St. Matthew went down to the sea and went fishing with the rest of them. St. Matthew made the sign of the Cross over the ocean and said a prayer. That day the nets ripped from the weight of the

captured fish. When the Holy Father got off of the water, a bright light came out of the sea towards the sky. Everyone in the Monastery witnessed this and marvelled as they proclaimed 'miracle'.

ST. MATTHEW'S PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

'During the German occupation, German generals came to see the Holy Father Matthew, the abbot of the Holy Convent of Keratea, and told him the convent was to be moved from it's current location in order to house the wounded German soldiers from Crete. St. Matthew answered: 'Impossible! You can cut off my hand but I will never sign.' (In Greek, this means a refusal to co-operate with the request). The Germans became extremely upset but left planning to come back to force the issue. St. Matthew instructed all the monks and nuns to commence a strict three day fast. At the end of the fast, he gathered everyone together and while distributing antidoron he proclaimed: 'An order has come from above, the Germans will do nothing.' The next day the German generals came to the convent and pleaded for forgiveness from St. Matthew.'

ST. MATTHEW'S PROPHECY IS FULLFILLED

'In 1930 during the persecution of the Orthodox (by the new calendarists), St. Matthew had gone to Theava to preach. One night as he was sitting there, he sighed and prophesized: 'I see a big lion around these villages; all of these villages will turn into ashes.' Years later his prophecy came to be when the Germans surrounded the villages and then later burned the villages to ashes.'

ST. MATTHEW CURES A LEPOR

'There was a man who was suffering from leprosy on his head and face. This man went to visit St. Matthew. St. Matthew gave the man his blessing and instructed him: 'go and wash up at the Life Giving Spring at the Convent. Sure enough the leper went, washed up, and to everyone's surprise the scales fell of him into the water, just as when a fish is descaled. He was completely cured.'

ST. MATTHEW CURES A PARALYTIC

'A monk named Anthimos was busy working at a great height and fell a great distance to the ground breaking his spine. He was transported to Athens where the doctors who examined proclaimed: 'there is no hope for this man'. (As per chance?) St. Matthew was also in Athens at the metohion on Alexander the Great Ave. The paralyzed monk was brought to the monastery. Mother Mariam asked the monk what the doctors had said, to which the reply was: 'no hope'. St. Matthew asked for the monk to be brought to him. St. Matthew then took a glass of water and made the sign of the cross over it. St. Matthew then ran the blessed water down the back of the monk along the spine, and proclaimed 'this will be your medication.' To the amazement of all, the monk recovered from his life threatening injuries. The doctors marvelled as no amount of examination could explain this miracle.'

ST. MATTHEW'S PROPHECY IS FULLFILLED

In 1932, St. Matthew prophesized that Mother Mariam would be jailed and martyred for the Orthodox faith. In 1950, after the repose of Saint Matthew, Mother Mariam was in fact imprisoned and martyred for her adherence to the Genuine Orthodox Church.

ST. MATTHEW EXPELS A DEMON

'On August 15, 1938, just prior to the Vespers service at the Convent in Keratea, there appeared a woman possessed by 25 demons. As Saint Matthew was entering the Church while the bells were ringing, the possessed woman began to scream and roar. Saint Matthew lifted an icon and commanded: 'devil stop until the Doxologia'. The woman roared one final time and then stopped. During the procession of the Epitafios of Panagia, the demon began to yell: 'she is lumunious, glorious day, she is luminous, the wrinkled one (Saint Matthew) is accompanied by 300 angels in the heavens.' St. Matthew approached the

possessed woman and touched her with his Holy Staff, the demons squealed in agony: 'There are 25 of us, we are leaving, we are leaving immediately.'

ST. MATTHEW'S PROPHECY IS FULLFILLED

'A woman from the island of Chios came to the Monastery. St. Matthew welcomed her and asked: 'where are you from?' 'From Chios' she replied. St. Matthew told her: 'I must talk to you. When you return to Chios tell everyone to repent, because very soon there will be a large earthquake.' The woman returned to Chios but disobeyed St. Matthew and did not say anything about the earthquake or repentance. Sure enough, shortly thereafter a large earthquake struck the island. The woman's home was completely destroyed.'

ST. MATTHEW EXPELS A DEMON

'A possessed man was brought to the Convent in Keratea with the hopes of curing him. He entered the church during Divine Liturgy and layed down in front of the Holy Gates. As St. Matthew exited the Alter holding the Holy Mysteries, the man began to violently and loudly bark like a dog. As St. Matthew passed over him the man became dead silent and was made well.

Through the prayers of Saint Matthew the New-Confessor,

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy of us!

