

MIRACLES OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL OF MANTAMADOS

Testimony of Mother Stavritsa the Missionary (+2000)

My name is Stavritsa Zachariou, and I am a Greek American. In 1969 I went to Africa as a missionary. I am presently 75 years old, and I have spent 15 years in Africa, next to our suffering brothers, spreading the Gospel of Christ. I permanently reside in Nairobi, Kenya, frequently travelling to Kampala, Cameroon, and other places, where there is a need for Christ's Gospel to be sown.

I am a missionary of the Archdiocese of America. With the help of God and various benefactors, we built 12 holy Churches in Africa. We built the 10th holy church in honor of the Archangel Michael, and I wanted to paint his icon based on a prototype located on the north gate of the Patriarchate. One day, as I was nearing completion of the icon, the post office delivered a letter to me from Fr. Soterios Trampa. Fr. Soterios is an Archimandrite, who was a missionary for many years in Korea, and who served as a preacher in the Metropolis of Lesvos, as well as the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Athens from 1968 to 1973. Along with his letter, he had enclosed a small pamphlet on the Archangel of Mantamados. That is when I first learned about Mantamados, and the bas-relief icon of the Archangel Michael. Fr. Soterios wrote: "I am sending you a newsletter on the Archangel of Mantamados, so you may become familiar with his wondrous icon. Within this you will see one of his many miracles, which occur daily to the glory of God. I served there in the past, and I especially honor him..."

I began to read the booklet on the Archangel, which contained an account of the miracle of the sword. As I continued reading, I came to the section describing how the sword was given to Mr. Diamante by some unknown person, at which time there was a loud bang that came from the icon I had painted. I quickly turned to see what had happened—O my God!!!!—The Archangel depicted in the icon began to come to life, to take on flesh and bones! I was awestruck! I knelt before it and began to pray with tears, asking for his help and his protection. Shortly thereafter, the icon gradually began to return to its natural state.

I had arranged to go on a mission to Kampala. I had the custom of always bringing an icon of a Saint from my icon corner with me on every trip. That time, I took with me a small icon of the Archangel Michael of Mantamados.

We had arrived at the border of Uganda and Kenya. At that time (1988), Uganda was under military regime. When we speak of a “military regime” in the center of Africa, it means that human life has less value than the life of a blackbird!

As we were passing through, my driver (a Kenyan man who is also my *koumbaro*) did not notice that someone was signalling him to stop, and he kept going. Five fierce motorcyclists surrounded us in no time. They got off their motorcycles, drew their weapons, knelt, and were preparing to open fire at us, and, subsequently, to take possession of our vehicle and all our belongings. This was a common occurrence in that region ...

During that moment, I don't know how, but an unknown force opened the car door... Without thinking, I got out holding the icon of the Archangel in my hands, and shouted at them:

“For God's sake, stop! I have with me the Archangel of God, who is dark-colored like you. Come see him!!!”

Instantly, it was as if someone grabbed them by the hands. They calmed down, laid their weapons on the grass, ran to me, and took hold of the icon as if it was something sacred and venerable. They began to examine it carefully and then started shouting and screaming. Next, they bowed their faces to the ground, and holding my hands, they asked for forgiveness. I then noticed that one of them had sustained a severe injury to his hand from a knife. I took my first aid kit from the car, and proceeded to clean and bandage his wound. In the end, we became friends! The most impressive thing, however, is that during this encounter the word of God was sown, and all five of them accepted Christ, and became Christians!

After all this, I promised the Archangel to come to Greece, to Mantamados, to thank him. And today, I feel very blessed that the Lord made me worthy of fulfilling my promise. I thank Him from the depth of my heart!