

DOUBTS CONCERNING THE HOLINESS OF SAINT NEKTARIOS THE WONDERWORKER

Despite the numerous miracles, and the incorrupt and myrrh-streaming body through which Christ glorified Saint Nektarios, there were still people who questioned and doubted his holiness.

Metropolitan Prokopios of Aegina

Some time after 1936, Metropolitan Prokopios of Aegina visited the monastery for the first time as an Hierarch. In the past, when he was a deacon, he had served Liturgy together with Saint Nektarios. When the nuns described to him the signs of Nektarios' holiness, he mocked them. Metropolitan Prokopios spent that night at the monastery, and he slept in Saint Nektarios' bed because at that time there were no other suitable rooms to accommodate a bishop. During the night—only God knows exactly what he experienced—he was heard groaning loudly. Startled, nun Nektaria ran to see what was going on. When she entered the room she saw him lying underneath the bed in a semi-unconscious state, drenched in sweat and bellowing in agony. When the nuns revived him and he came to his senses, he said to them, “It seems that you were right. Nektarios indeed became a saint ... Let's go to his tomb.” Henceforth he honored the Saint exceedingly, and in 1959 he was the one who formally proposed to the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece that Nektarios be inducted in the Church's catalogue of Saints.

In a Monastery on Mount Athos

In a monastery on Mount Athos, just after Saint Nektarios was canonized, a disagreement arose within the brotherhood: one side accepted the holiness of Saint Nektarios, while the other group of monks questioned if he deserved to be ranked amongst the saints. For, as they proposed, the Metropolitan of Pentapolis was a virtuous man who wrote many beneficial books, but, nonetheless, he had

not done anything extraordinary as the martyrs or confessors or the great ascetics of the past. The Abbot, who was himself a virtuous man named Athanasios, called the monks together and told them, “My children, it is not up to us to decide and deliberate on such matters. Let us instead fast and pray for the next three days, and let us allow God to speak.” During that night, when the monks were holding vigil in their rooms, the Abbot heard a knock on his door. As he turned his head in that direction, the door opened, and Saint Nektarios entered. The Abbot, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit recognized him. Saint Nektarios then proceeded to say to the Abbot: “*Evlogeite* my brother Athanasios. You should know that God indeed glorified me. However, He did so not because I surpassed others in fasting or almsgiving, as the monks correctly pointed out, but because I wholeheartedly forgave all the people who slandered me and persecuted me.”

Archimandrite Nektarios Vitalis

Archimandrite Nektarios Vitalis attests to the following:

“I was a young boy, about fifteen years old, during the 1950’s, and I was working for a certain barber in Peraeus. One day we went together to the island of Aegina and went up to the monastery. At the time, Saint Nektarios had not been officially canonized by the Church. I did not believe that he was a saint. ‘Yeah, right...’ I thought to myself. ‘They want to make everyone a saint!’ I went to venerate his tomb nonchalantly. As I was doing so, I said from within: ‘If you are a Saint, show me a sign!’ As I placed my ear on the gravestone, it sounded like I could hear footsteps from within. I was awestruck. I said in my mind: “OK. You showed me a sign; therefore, you are here. Since you are alive, you are also a saint! But, tell me, will I become a priest, like I desire?’ Then, I heard a voice from inside the tomb saying, ‘Yes, you will become a priest and you will also receive my name.’ That night, during my sleep, Saint Nektarios himself appeared to me and started telling me different things ... Ever since then, he became my ‘dear priest.’”

Priest Haralambos Lalousis

A priest named Haralambos Lalousis, from Lachi, Lakonia, Greece, who was reluctant to celebrate Saint Nektarios and call upon his intercessions during the period prior to his official canonization by the Orthodox Church related the manner with which the Lord revealed to him that Saint Nektarios was indeed a Saint:

“One evening, I saw that I was standing outside my parish church on a beautifully moon-lit, tranquil night. The main entrance to the church was wide open, and chanting could be heard coming from within. Surprised, I proceeded into the narthex to see exactly what was taking place. There is a wall with windows and a door separating the narthex from the nave. I opened the door and as I made a few steps forward, to my amazement, I noticed that there was no iconostasis. The altar was elevated, the floor was remarkably green, and the rest of the church was as it is in actuality. In the middle was the Holy Altar Table, and standing in front of it was a massive Hierarch dressed in exquisite vestments. I only saw his silhouette, but he was serving the Liturgy and summoning for Holy Communion, “To you, it is given ...” as is customary during the Liturgy. As I was standing in front of the sand box toward the back of the church, the Hierarch standing before the Holy Altar Table said in a loud and clear voice, “Close the door.” I, however, instead of shutting the door walked forward with my gaze fixed upon the bishop, who was telling me to “close the door.” Then, having been overcome by fear, I fell to my knees, at which time I suddenly noticed twelve Hierarchs standing around the Holy Altar Table in groups of three. In turn, each of them began receiving in their palms the Immaculate Body from the Great Hierarch who was standing in front of the Holy Altar Table, and circling back as each uttered, “To me, it is given ...” From this position, stunned, I saw in the third group, first on the right, St. Nektarios (exactly as he is depicted in his icon) holding the Body of our Lord in his hands, staring at me with a smile, and his head slightly tilted forward. All the things I was witnessing were so real, that I prepared to cry out, but at that exact moment the vision came to an end.