

The Translation of the Holy Relics of St. Nektarios

In 1953 (twenty three years after his repose) Saint Nektarios' sanctified body began to undergo decomposition. The formal exhumation took place at 8:00 pm on September 2nd, 1953. Metropolitan Prokopios of Hydra, Spetses, and Aegina was presiding over the service; Metropolitan Anthony of Elia, and many others were also in attendance. At the time of disinterment, according to the testimony of everyone present, an indescribable fragrance flooded the entire area. Additionally, the next morning on September 3rd during the Orthros service, "When the Praises began, the sacred skull of the holy Hierarch was brought out to be venerated. At that moment, the entire church was inundated with an indescribable fragrance." These extraordinary events were documented in the monastery's book of minutes and signed by the two Hierarchs, the Abbess, the nuns, the mayor of Aegina, the Secretary of the Metropolis, and all the clergymen of Aegina.

A lady who deeply respected Saint Nektarios became quite sad when she heard that his body had undergone decomposition. Saint Nektarios appeared to her, however, and told her, "Do not be sad. I asked the Lord to allow my body to decompose, so that my relics may be distributed throughout the entire world."¹

When the saint's relics were being transferred from the monastery's main chapel to a specially prepared reliquary, the following wondrous event took place: A harlot from Athens was touring the island that day in an automobile with some companions. While driving by the bridge of the Holy Apostles, she started to smell a heavenly fragrance. This profound fragrance remained with her all the way up to their destination at Saint Marina. The fragrance was so overwhelming, that she forgot all about her friends. Having abandoned the vehicle, she began walking barefoot in the direction of the aroma, until she finally arrived at the monastery. Sobbing and deeply repentant, she approached the sacred skull, from which the fragrance was emanating, crying out, "I have sinned!" Having been overcome by feelings of wholehearted repentance and gratitude toward the saint, she removed her gold necklace from her neck and placed it around his sacred skull, and immediately asked to go to confession.

¹ In this manner, God arranged for the healing, sanctifying, and grace-filled relics of Saint Nektarios to reach the ends of the earth. This took place with other Saints as well, whose bodies were initially preserved in an incorrupt state but later decomposed. St. John Chrysostom's body, for example, remained incorrupt for approximately twenty-five years until it was returned to Constantinople in 432 AD. After being carried through the city, his body was taken into the church of the Holy Apostles and placed on the bishop's throne, from where St. John Chrysostom voiced to the faithful, "Peace be unto all." Subsequently, he was buried once more, and his body underwent decomposition—although his right hand and right ear remain incorrupt to this day!