

2. Martyrs Onesiphorus and Porphyrius (+ 290)

No information about their native lands and the place of their martyrdom has been preserved. They suffered during the persecution of Diocletian (284-305) because they used to bury the Relics of the Holy Martyrs. After cruel tortures they were tied to wild horses, which dragged them over the stones until they died.

1. St. Theoctiste of Lesbos, Greece (9th – 10th c.)

She was born on the island of Lesbos, Greece. At an early age she was left an orphan and her relatives sent her to a monastery to be raised. In 846, when she was already 18 years old, Arabs invaded the island. They captured all the inhabitants, loaded them on a ship and took the captives to the desolate island of Paros, so that they might examine them in order to assign a value to each when they were sold at the slave-market. The Lord

helped the young Theoctiste to flee and the Arabs did not catch her.

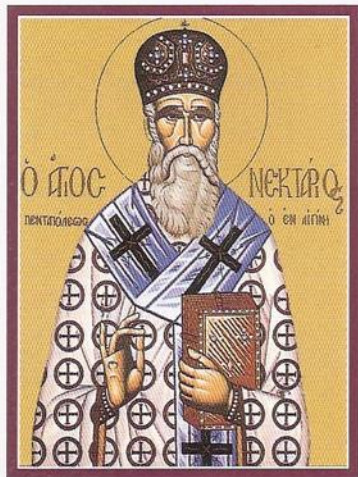
From that time she dwelt on this island for 35 years. An old Church in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos served as her dwelling and her food was sunflower seeds. On being discovered by chance by a hunter, she asked him, if he happened to come to the island again, to bring her a particle of the Pre-sanctified Gifts. A year later, the hunter again arrived upon the island and brought her a small vessel with a particle of the Holy Mysteries. She reposed in peace the next day. Today her Head is to be found in Leucas Monastery (Icaria, Greece).

3. St. Symeon the Translator (10th c.)

One of the best-known Byzantine hagiographers, he was born in Constantinople during the reign of the Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886-912). His outstanding intellectual ability and erudition brought him advancement in the administration to the rank of Imperial Counselor, in the reigns of Constantine VII, Romanus II, Nicephorus Phocas, John Tsimiskes and Basil I the Macedonian. As Crete was occupied by the Arabs, he was sent together with General Hemerius to negotiate with them. He succeeded brilliantly, but on his return he asked the Emperor's permission to become a monk.

St. Symeon occupied himself in collecting the Lives of the Saints, which were scattered in a multitude of manuscripts and often written in a style unacceptable to the refined taste of those days. By a huge effort, he collected and edited more than 146 extensive Lives of Saints, which remain the basis of the Synaxaria to this day.

Note: To his memory is dedicated the Centre for Hagiographical Studies which was established in 1982 in Athens by the translator of this *“Illustrated Synaxarion of the Orthodox Church”*, Antonios Markou.



5.

world and submit her will to her guidance. In the Palace building, which the pious Emperor gave to his daughter, there gradually emerged a monastery, known for its strict monastic rule. They both reposed in peace.

St. Onesiphorus the Confessor of the Kiev Caves (+ 1148)

5. St. Nectarius the Wonderworker of Aegina, Greece (+ 1920)

He was born in 1846 at Selyvria, Thrace, of pious but poor parents. After finishing elementary school, he was sent to Constantinople to continue his education, at the same time working in a shop. When he was 20 he left Constantinople for a teaching post on the island of Chios, where he became a monk. Thanks to the generosity of a pious islander and to the protection of the Patriarch of Alexandria Sophronius, he was able to complete his Theological Studies in Athens University. In 1885 he arrived in Alexandria, where he was ordained a Priest and later was consecrated Metropolitan of Pentapolis.

When certain members of the Patriarchate became jealous of his success and slandered him to the Patriarch, he was dismissed from his See and exiled to Athens, where he found himself alone, ignored, despised and even lacking his daily bread. He spent several years as a Preacher and as Director of the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School of Athens. In 1904 he was founded the Holy Trinity Monastery on Aegina island and retired there in 1908. A well-known author, he wrote a large number of works on Theology, Ethics and Church History. He lived as an angel in the world, and was granted the gift of miracle-working by God. He reposed in peace in 1920. Since 1940 his body has been shown to be **incorrupt**. The list of his miracles grows longer every day and his shrine at Aegina, where his Relics are to be found, has become the most popular place of pilgrimage in Greece. His new Church there is one of the largest in the world (with room for about 9000 people).

St. John the Short

He struggled in the Egyptian desert, in the monastery of St. Pimen the Great. He was a gentle, humble and work-loving monk. One day his Elder took a dry wooden stick and planted it in the ground saying, "*water it every day until it produces fruit*". For three years St. John carried water and poured it on a dry stick, until it became covered with leaves and bore abundant fruit! His Elder took the fruit to the brethren saying, "*Take and eat the fruit of obedience!*"

4. Sts. Eustolia and Sopatra

St. Eustolia was a native of Rome and became a nun there. When she was visiting Constantinople to venerate the holy places of the Imperial City, she happened to meet **Sopatra**, the daughter of the Emperor Maurice (582-602), in the Blachernae Church. After conversation with the St. Eustolia, Sopatra finally decided to leave the