



Commemoration of the Saints, Divine Liturgy

St Demetrius The Vinedresser

ΔΗΜΕΤΡΙΟΣ

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St Julian the 11th pope of Alexandria was on his deathbed when an angel from Heaven came to him in a dream. The angel told St Julian that the 12th pope, the one that would follow after him, would be the man who would present him with a cluster of grapes the next morning. The next morning a peasant vinedresser, who had found a bunch of grapes growing out of season presented the grapes to the Patriarch. The pope, upon remembering the angel's message, said to the bystanders: "this man will be your next pope as an angel from the Lord has told me it is to be so last night in a dream." So, they took the vinedresser by force and bound him. On that very day, St Julian passed away into God's arms, and St Demetrius was made Pope.

The fact that God sent one of his angels down to St Julian to declare St Demetrius the next Pope foretells of his righteousness and virtue. He was not only ordained a pope by the priests of that day, but by God himself. Being chosen by our Lord, prophesied about the work that would be done by St Demetrius in the name of God as a Pope.

This holy man had a special gift from God. When the Divine Liturgy was over and everybody came up to receive Communion, the Lord Jesus Christ came and revealed to St Demetrius a person's sins. St Demetrius would then tell the person why he could not partake of the communion so that the person would confess his sins. The people of Alexandria ceased sinning for fear of the Pope finding out and making them ashamed of their sins. As you see, God worked through His Holiness St Demetrius to help his people. First, He made the people lessen their sins and then confess their sins before they take Communion.

Even though, God gave St Demetrius the power to help people, some people resented the Pope's reproof, and these people muttered and grumbled about the fact that never had a Pope from St Mark the Evangelist down to the 11th Pope, St Julian been married. Because of the discontent in the people's hearts, God wanted to make St Demetrius purity manifest, so he sent an

angel to St Demetrius to instruct him tell about the secret of his married life.

But St Demetrius did not want to disclose that even though he had been married 48 years, he had never known his wife and that he had remained a virgin. The angel responded by reprimanding him saying: "It is not right that you serve yourself alone and let others perish because of your secret and the doubt in their hearts." So, the next day after the Divine Liturgy he asked the people to stay in the church because he had something to tell them.

He brought his wife in front of the congregation and placed flaming coal in between he and his wife and then he put the flaming coal with his hands in both of their shawls. When the coal did not burn their clothes or him, he told them that they had had an arranged marriage. Both had desired to be brother and sisters only. They have never had embraces of this world and they looked upon each other's faces alone. He also explained that the Angel of the Lord covered them with his wings each night. When the people heard this, they were amazed and ashamed of their thoughts and asked to be forgiven.

The miracle performed by St Demetrius with the burning embers signified how they had extinguished the flame of lust. Can you imagine living with a beautiful, or handsome spouse, sharing the same room and the same bed and only looking upon each other faces? Think of all the pregnancies that have occurred without marriage and how people today are indifferent to that fact, while this holy man has lived with his wife for 48 years without an embrace.

St Demetrius struggled not only to remain pure, he also strived to rise from an illiterate peasant to an educated Pope. This was done so that he could have knowledge to become a teacher for the people. His education protected them from any unorthodox teaching by men who wanted to lead God's sheep astray.

May St Demetrius guard us and protect us all and may his blessing be with us. Amen.