



Commemoration of the Saints, Divine Liturgy

St Theodosius I

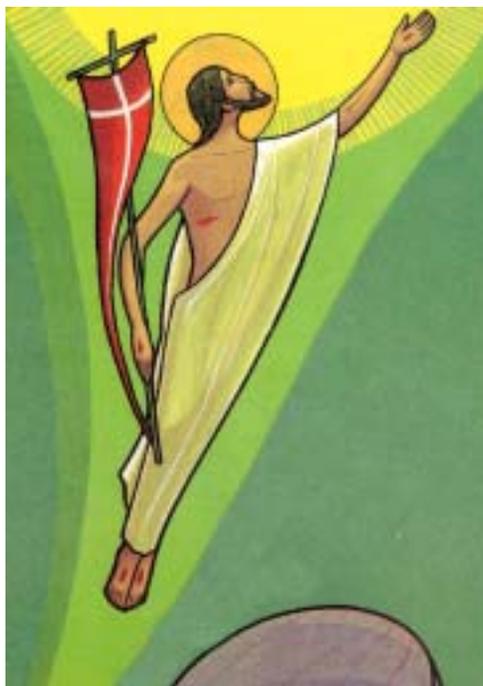
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St Theodosius the first of Alexandria was the thirty-third Patriarch of the See of St Mark (535-567 A.D.). He was the secretary of Pope Timothy III and was chosen to succeed him. When he showed up for his enthronement, a popular rival candidate named Archdeacon Gaianus appeared. Archdeacon Gaianus was a supporter of Julianist theology, which is named after Julian, the bishop of Halicarnarus. Julian attested that the body of the Lord Jesus Christ was incapable of corruption, while the Monophysites (people who believed that the Lord Jesus Christ is one Person and has one Divine Nature, as opposed to another orthodox doctrine that he is one Person with two natures) believed that was true only after the Lord Jesus Christ's Resurrection.

After this event he was driven from the city for several months, but was eventually restored. St Theodosius exchanged letters with Severus of Antioch and exchanged letters of communion with the very sympathetic Anthimus of Constantinople. However, during that time the Emperor Justinian began taking a strict Chalcedonian stance. This stance is a judgement based on the statement of Catholic faith. When the sympathetic Anthimus was deposed in 537, St Theodosius had to choose between accepting the Chalcedon view or exile from his See. St Theodosius chose to live in exile near Constantinople for the rest of his life.



One Person - One Divine Nature

While in exile, St Theodosius guided his church by different means of correspondence. As a confessor for Coptic Orthodoxy, St Theodosius gradually won the support he had previously lacked during his enthronement. After the death of St Severus in 538, he was the leading theologian and ranking hierarch of the anti-Chalcedonian party. His theology followed that of St Severus. He recognized the full humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ while also asserting the single will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In one of his writings he condemned the heresy of the tritheists, who argued that one person and one nature in the Lord Jesus Christ implied three natures and three persons in the Trinity. After Emperor Justinian's death in 565 A.D., St Theodosius was honorably received by the new Emperor Justinian II, but died shortly thereafter. One of his last significant actions was to authorize the consecration of Longinus the priest as Bishop for Nubia.

As I read about St Theodosius, I realized how lucky we have it here in the United States. None of us have to live with the threats of choosing between faith or being exiled. Even though St Theodosius' faith led him to live a life away from his people in exile, he was able to persevere through this trial to become a great leader. His faith and strong will should serve as excellent examples for us all. I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn about one of the Coptic Church's great saints.