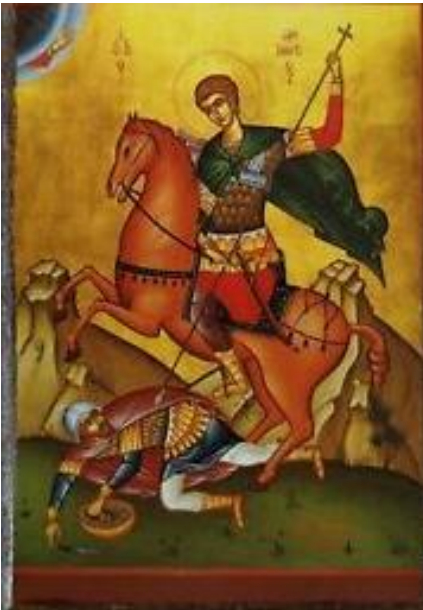


# The Holy & Glorious Great-Martyr Demetrius

October 26

The Great-Martyr Demetrius of Thessaloniki was the son of a Roman proconsul in Thessaloniki. Three centuries had elapsed and Roman paganism, spiritually shattered and defeated by the multitude of martyrs and confessors



of the Savior, intensified its persecutions. The parents of Saint Demetrius were secret Christians, and he was baptized and raised in the Christian Faith in a secret church in his father's home. By the time Demetrius had reached maturity and his father had died, Emperor Galerius Maximian had ascended the throne (305). Maximian, confident in Demetrius's education as well as his administrative and military abilities, appointed him to his father's position as proconsul of the Thessaloniki district. The young commander's principal duties were to defend the city from barbarians and to eradicate Christianity. The Emperor's policy regarding Christians was expressed simply: "Put to death anyone who calls on the name of Christ." The Emperor did not suspect that by appointing Demetrius he had provided him with the opportunity to bring many people to Christ. Accepting the appointment, Demetrius returned to Thessaloniki and confessed and glorified our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of persecuting and executing Christians, **he began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city and to overthrow pagan customs and the worship of idols.** The compiler of his Life, Saint Simeon Metaphrastes

(November 9), says that because of his teaching zeal he became "a second Apostle Paul" for Thessaloniki, particularly since "the Apostle to the Gentiles" founded the first community of believers in the city (1 Thess. and 2 Thess.). The Lord also destined Saint Demetrius to follow Saint Paul on the path to martyrdom. When Maximian learned that the newly-appointed proconsul was a Christian, and that he had converted many Roman subjects to Christianity, the Emperor's rage knew no bounds. Returning from a campaign in the area of the Black Sea, the Emperor decided to lead his army through Thessaloniki, determined to massacre the Christians. Learning of this, Saint Demetrius ordered his faithful servant Lupus to give his wealth to the poor saying, "Distribute my earthly riches among them, for we shall seek heavenly riches for ourselves." He began to pray and fast, preparing himself for martyrdom. When the Emperor came into the city, he summoned Demetrius, who boldly confessed himself a Christian and denounced the falsehood and futility of Roman polytheism. Maximian ordered Demetrius to be thrown into prison. An Angel appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him. Meanwhile the Emperor amused himself by staging games in the circus. His champion was a German by the name of Lyaeos. He challenged Christians to wrestle with him on a platform built over the upturned spears of the victorious soldiers. A brave Christian named Nestor went to the prison to Saint Demetrius, his instructor in the Faith, asking for his blessing to fight the barbarian. With the blessing and prayers of Saint Demetrius, Nestor defeated the fierce German and hurled him from the platform onto the spears of the soldiers, just as the murderous pagan would have done with the Christian. The enraged commander ordered the execution of the holy Martyr Nestor (October 27) and sent a guard to the prison to kill Saint Demetrius. **At dawn on October 26, 306 soldiers appeared in the Saint's underground prison and ran him through with lances.** His faithful servant, Saint Lupus, gathered up the blood-soaked garment of Saint Demetrius he took the imperial ring from his finger, a symbol of his high status, and dipped it in the blood. With the ring and other holy things sanctified the blood of Saint Demetrius, Saint Lupus began to heal the infirm. The Emperor ordered his soldiers to arrest and kill him. The body of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius was cast out for wild animals to devour, but the Christians took it and secretly buried it in the earth. During the reign of Saint Constantine (306-337), a church was built over the grave of Saint Demetrius.

### **Troparion** (Tone 3)

The world has seen you as a defender of those imperiled, and a conqueror of the nation O martyr. \* In cutting down arrogance, you bolstered Nestor by your courage. \* O holy Demetrius, pray to Christ our God to save our souls!

### **Kondakion** (Tone 2)

God washed the Church red in the rivers of your blood, \* and presented you to her as an invincible power. \* Keep this city safe for you are its patron.

### **Prokimenon of a Martyr** (Tone 7 – pew book page 380)

The just man will rejoice in the Lord \* and will put his trust in Him  
*Verse: Hear my voice O God \* when I pray to You.*

### **Alleluia** (Tone 4 – pew book page 381)

*Verse: The just man will flourish like the palm tree \* and grow like a cedar of Lebanon.  
Verse: Planted in the house of the Lord \* he will flourish in the courts of our God.*

### **Communion Hymn** (pew book page 381)

The just man will be remembered forever \* evil news he will not fear.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.