

**MARTYR ARETHAS**

**MARTYRED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**

**SAINT ARETHAS** was part of one of the largest “mass murders” of Christians in Early Church History. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Arethas was the governor of the Christian City of Negran in Arabia. King Dunaan, a Jew, ruled Arabia at the time. Having A fierce hatred for Christians, Dunaan issued an edict that all Christians in his kingdom be put to death. He personally brought a large army to the wall of his kingdom Negran, but instead of attacking the city, the devious king restorted to trickery. He announced that his intention was not to force the inhabitants to give up their faith; he only wanted to collect a monetary tribute from them. The next day, the king build an enormous fire and executed all of the town’s clergy. Arethas and his government officials were cast into prison, while the king attempted to convince the towns poeple to renounce Christ. The steadfastly refused, maintaining that “Jesus is God the word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary to bring salvation to mankind. We will did for Him, for to do so will bring us life.’

The king ordered the death of all of Negran’s people - young and old alike. It is said that some 4,300 suffered martyrdom for their refusal to obey Dunaan’s command. When the Byantine Emperor Justin heard of this, he wrote to his friend, Emperor Elesbaan of Ethiopia, urging him to avenge this brutal crime. Elesbaan did so, attacking Arabia and killing Dunaan and his army. Negran was rebuilt again as a Christian city, with a church dedicated to the memory of Arethas.