

“O GOD OF DEMETRIOS, HELP ME!”

The Great Martyr Demetrios was born in the city of Thessalonica in the early years of the fourth century. Although his father was a prominent figure in the Roman army, Demetrios and his parents were secretly Christians. When his father died, Demetrios was chosen by the Emperor to replace him as a military commander of Thessalonica. His orders were simple put all Christians to death! Instead of doing so, Demetrios went about teaching others about Christ and sought to have pagan customs and traditions eliminated. His teaching zeal was so great that he is sometimes referred to as “SECOND APOSTLE PAUL.”

When the Emperor learned of the actions of Demetrios, he came to Thessalonica and had him imprisoned immediately. This was still the “era of the gladiators,” so while there, the Emperor arranged a battle between his favorite warrior Lyaeos and a young Christian named Nestor. Coincidentally, Nestor had learned his faith from Demetrios! The night before he was to fight Lyaeos, Nestor visited Demetrios in prison and received his blessing, which is depicted on the cover of today’s bulletin. Although Lyaeos was a Goliath-like man, Nestor was able to defeat him, causing the arena crowd to proclaim: “Great is the God of Demetrios!” This was more than the Emperor could bear. He ordered Nestor to be beheaded, and he had Demetrios run through with spears. The body of St. Demetrios was secretly buried by his followers. Years later, his relics were discovered and a magnificent church was erected over the place of his relics. For centuries now, fragrant myrrh has flowed from his crypt.