

ST. NECTARIOS: A SAINT OF OUR TIMES

We all tend to think of saints as being people who lived centuries ago. The popular saint who graces the cover of this morning's church Bulletin, however, was literally a 20th century saint – falling asleep in the Lord in 1920. Yes, St. Nectarios can truly be called “*a saint of our times.*”

St. Nectarios was born in Turkey in 1846. At the age of 14, he went to Constantinople to find work. Instead, it can be said that this is really where he found Christ. Nectarios quickly became known as a brilliant scholar and a well respected theologian. He entered a monastery on the island of Chios at the age of 21, and soon after, he was ordained to the priesthood. The preaching and teaching skills that Nectarios possessed made him a likely candidate for the episcopacy. After becoming a bishop, however, St. Nectarios was victimized by the petty jealousies exhibited by his fellow clergy. Although stripped of some of his hierarchical authority and prestige, St. Nectarios continued to devote his life to serving Christ in whatever way he could. His accomplishments included serving as the dean of a theological school in Alexandria and establishing a convent and school for girls on the small island of Aegina. Scores of pilgrims would flock to Aegina, seeking the wise counsel of this saintly man. After his death, people continued to come and pray before his grave, and many miracles were reported by those who asked for the help and intercession of St. Nectarios. In 1961, he was proclaimed a saint, only 41 years after his death. Known as a “*healing saint*” St. Nectarios is the Patron Saint of cancer patients.