

“I SHALL NOT DENY MY GOD AND MY KING”

The HOLY MARTYR MAMAS was a saint of the Early Church. Born in Cappadocia, Mamas is known to us today largely through the writing of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory, who chronicled his remarkable life.

St. Mamas came into the world at a time when the church suffered great persecution from the Roman authorities. His parents, Theodotus and Rufina, were devout Christians. They were both cast into prison at a time when Rufina was pregnant, and Mamas was eventually born in a jail cell. Both were to die while in custody, and Mamas was placed in the care of a pious woman named Ammias.

For the first 5 years of his life, Mamas did not utter a word. One day, the lad spoke! Since the first word he said was “Mama,” the name “Mamas” was given to him from that day forth. He grew to become a shepherd.

Like his parents had done before him, Mamas refused to conceal his Christian faith. He was brought before the Emperor Aurelian, who ordered him to deny Christ. The brave boy responded: “I SHALL NOT DENY MY GOD AND MY KING – NOT IN MY HEART OR WITH MY LIPS.” The enraged Emperor ordered his execution, but an Angel of the Lord rescued him and took him to a high mountain near Caesarea. Here Mamas lived alone in prayer and solitude. It is said that his kindness and gentleness even won over the wild animals who lived on the mountain.

Eventually, the persecutors of Mamas found his hiding place. He was taken back for trial and was beheaded.