

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN

“TAKE MY MOTHER, THE EARTH, AND COVER ME WITH IT”

JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN had won wide acclaim in the early church as both an Apostle and Evangelist. Known as the *‘beloved disciple,’* he had certainly done his part in spreading the message of our Lord. He preached throughout Asia Minor. He authored a deeply theological Gospel. He withstood torture, imprisonment and exile. Finally, at an advanced age of well over 100, John was permitted to return to the town of Ephesus and spend his remaining years in a place where much of his missionary work had been accomplished.

Sensing that his earthly life was rapidly coming to an end, St. John took a group of his loyal followers into the countryside on the outskirts of Ephesus. After spending time in prayer, the Theologian commanded his disciples to dig a grave, asking them to make it as deep as he was tall. John then climbed into the grave and made one final request: *“Take my mother, the earth, and cover me with it!”* Sadly, they carried out John’s orders.

Returning to the city, John’s mournful followers reported what had taken place. Tradition has it that a number of people went out and dug up the grave, only to find it empty! It is also said that on May 8th – the Feast Day of St. John the Theologian – a fragrant dust with miraculous healing powers, comes out of the tomb of this much-revered Saint.