



My Beloved Ones,

On November 8th, the Metropolis of Atlanta observes its Feast Day, the Feast of St. Michael & all the Archangels. As your Metropolitan, it gives me great pride to continue the beautiful tradition established by our beloved First Metropolitan, Alexios, the Archangel Michael Feast and Honors. Like my predecessor, I know that the Body of Christ, our Holy Metropolis of Atlanta, is only as strong as its individual members, and so this evening continues to acknowledge and honor those who defend our faith like our patron saint, Michael, the Archangel.

On November 9th, our Church is blessed to commemorate Agios Nektarios of Aegina, who was born Anastasios Kephala on October 1, 1846, to poor, but very pious Christian parents. He nurtured this love, and by his early 30s, he was ordained Priest, and then consecrated Metropolitan of Pentapouli, in Egypt. As Metropolitan he was both Priest of St. Nicholas Church in Cairo & Secretary to the Patriarch of Alexandria. Some clergy began to whisper evil things, particularly, that His Eminence wished to become Patriarch. The true Christian Nektarios made no defense, and when he was removed from the Episcopal Throne, he departed quietly for Athens.

When spiritual children encouraged him to found a women's monastery on the island of Aegina, he welcomed this gift from the Lord, and from 1904 to 1907, St. Nektarios personally supervised the establishment of Holy Trinity. His fame spread, and many came seeking confession, as well as the healing of soul and body. Even in his later years, he bore slanders without complaint, just as he did not tell anyone of the great pain and sickness he experienced. After praying before an icon of the Theotokos, he instructed his followers that his time was near. Though he was taken to an Athens hospital, he reposed in the Lord on November 8, 1920. His relics still perform miracles for those who pray for him to intercede to God. St. Nektarios was formally recognized as a saint in 1961.

In many ways, this weekend is a series of examples in true humility. On Friday, November 7th, we will honor our Former Metropolitan Alexios: a man who claims that he never felt as though he "worked", because he was so moved for loved God and His Church. On Saturday, we recognize those Archangel Michael honorees who live out their service to God through quiet and humble means. And on Sunday, we have the example of St. Nektarios, to show us the true spirit of Christian love, forgiveness and humility. May this year's Archangel Michael weekend serve to inspire each of us to imitate these God-given examples of Christian sacrifice.

+SEVASTIANOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta